The introduction of quality management to Local Authority leisure services

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THE INTRODUCTION OF QUALITY MANAGEMENT TO LOCAL AUTHORITY LEISURE SERVICES

by

Leigh A. Robinson

A Doctoral Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy of Loughborough University.

June 1999

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This thesis is dedicated to the memory of Professor Sue Glyptis whose guidance and wisdom is missed by all.

Professor Susan Glyptis
1953 - 1997
THE INTRODUCTION OF QUALITY MANAGEMENT TO LOCAL AUTHORITY LEISURE SERVICES

Abstract

In the last decade, local authority leisure managers of the United Kingdom have operated in a constantly changing environment brought about by legislation, an ongoing increase in competition and increasing consumerism. Public sector leisure professionals have had to develop management strategies that not only allowed them to conform to legislative changes, but were flexible enough to respond to rapid increases in competition and customer expectations. One of the responses to this changing context has been the introduction of quality programmes into the management of public leisure facilities. This thesis establishes and investigates the rationale for the use of quality management as a management strategy within the public leisure sector. The research has three key objectives:

- to establish what senior local authority leisure professionals consider to be the influences on the use of quality and quality programmes in local authority leisure facilities;
- to establish how senior local authority leisure professionals conceptualise quality and quality management;
- to establish what role these professionals played in the adoption of quality programmes within their local authority leisure facilities.

The research was carried out in two phases. Firstly, a UK wide local authority postal survey was administered in order to establish the extent to which the phenomenon of quality management had been adopted by local authority leisure services. The second phase of the research utilised an embedded, multiple case based methodology carried out in 6 local authorities. This enabled a detailed investigation into the reasons underlying the use of quality programmes within public leisure facilities.

The findings of the survey indicated that by 1995, quality programmes had become a widespread feature of local authority leisure facility management: of the 240 respondents (49% response rate), nearly two thirds (65%) were using quality programmes and many (45%) were using more than one. The research also showed that characteristics like political control, local authority population, number of facilities and the presence of an independent leisure department had no significant impact on the decision to implement quality programmes within the local authority's leisure facilities. As a result, the decision to implement quality programmes could not be attributed to any obvious characteristic which meant that the decision to do so had to be investigated in more detail - the function of the second phase of the research.

In the second phase of the research, a high degree of commonality was found across the six selected authorities, with four dominant themes emerging. Firstly, it was apparent from the research that an awareness of rising consumerism, identified by increasing customer expectations of public leisure facilities had laid the foundations for the emergence of formal quality approaches. Secondly, the impact of consumerism was exacerbated by an increasingly competitive leisure market which resulted in leisure professionals implementing the techniques of new managerialism. This was considered to indicate the increasing professionalism of the industry, identified as a third influence in this phase of the research. Finally, it was apparent that CCT had not only often directly required the use of quality programmes through contract specification, but had accelerated the development of new managerialism within the public leisure industry. The study concluded that leisure professionals had been influential in the decision to use quality programmes within their facilities and therefore had been significant agents of change in the development of local authority leisure services provision in the last decade.
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INTRODUCTION

This research project is concerned with changes that have occurred in the management of local authority leisure facilities in the United Kingdom in the 1990s. This is a multi-faceted topic which sits at the juncture of diverse interests and has attracted attention from many perspectives: from academics, policy-makers and practitioners; from local communities and their representatives; from proponents of policy analysis, management sciences and community studies. This preface therefore sets out the particular perspective from which the current study has addressed the phenomenon of change in local authority leisure provision and locates it in relation to the standpoints of others engaged in this area. In doing so, it aims to show how the approach both complements and extends knowledge and understanding in this area.

THE EMERGENCE OF LOCAL AUTHORITY LEISURE SERVICES PROVISION

The provision of sport and recreation opportunities by local authorities has been a comparatively recent phenomenon and although historically providing for limited range of leisure opportunities, it was the 1970s before local government's role in leisure facility provision was firmly established. This was in part due to the 1965 central government commitment to the policy of 'Sport for All' and the 1975 White paper on Sport and Recreation, both of which have been described by Henry (1993, p. 19) as "granting leisure services the status of a welfare right as part of the 'general fabric of social services'". More importantly, however, particularly in terms of facility provision, the 1974 local government re-organisation saw a massive increase in local investment in leisure. This investment was made both by local authorities who were disappearing as a result of re-organisation and those new authorities that subsequently emerged. The extent of this investment has been outlined by Henry (1993) and he highlighted a 10 fold increase in the number of sports centres and a 50% increase in the number of swimming pools between 1972 and 1978. As a result, by the late 1970s, the leisure facility framework that exists today was practically in place.

One consequence of this investment was a gradual, but persistent, local government increase in expenditure upon public leisure. Unfortunately, this increase in expenditure occurred in a period of economic decline within the UK and in the context of a central government commitment to decrease public sector expenditure. As such, the election of the 1979 Thatcher-led Conservative
government, committed to budget restraint and local government reform, was seen by many as a potential threat to the public provision of leisure opportunities established by policy in the 1960's and investment in the 1970s. In reality, public leisure provision remained relatively unscathed until the late 1980s when the compulsory tendering of Leisure Management was included in the 1988 Local Government Act. This opened up the possibility of the removal, from local authorities, of the management of the sport and recreation facilities that they provided.

CONTEMPORARY LOCAL AUTHORITY LEISURE SERVICES PROVISION

Although Compulsory Competitive Tendering was perceived by analysts to be a major harbinger of change in the provision of local authority leisure services, there were many other indications of the need to change, during this period. The Audit Commission had, since 1986, outlined the need for a more efficient and effective management of local government services, arguing that a focus on internal operations was not acceptable. In 1987, the Local Government Training Board published their seminal report on the need to become closer to the customer, suggesting once again that local authority providers were too inward looking in their delivery of services. In relation to leisure provision, the Audit Commission publication of Sport for Whom? in 1989, was openly critical of the way in which local authorities had been providing leisure services. This, alongside growing public concern at how public services were being managed meant that change was inevitable and by the beginning of the 1990s, it was apparent that local authority leisure providers would need to manage their services in a manner fundamentally different from how they had done so before.

These influences were brought together in the aforementioned CCT legislation of 1988 which required local authorities to submit the management of their leisure services to competitive tender. Introduced ostensibly with the aim of opening up local authority leisure services management to market competition, CCT required leisure services departments to “become the clients of contractors who managed their services” (Henry, 1993, p. 99). Although the legislation permitted local authorities to bid for and win their own contracts, CCT required changes in department and committee structure, a review of operations to express the terms of the contract and the development of methods of monitoring contractor performance. Consequently, although the extent to which the management of public leisure services was opened up to market competition is debatable as there was little commercial interest, the delivery and management of local authority leisure services were fundamentally altered as a result of the tendering process.
There is now little debate that the changes that have occurred in local authority leisure provision since the late 1980s have had far-reaching consequences for the way in which these facilities are managed. This has been particularly evident in the increasing adoption of management approaches and techniques traditionally associated with commercial sector leisure providers. Within the past two decades, the use of such techniques has become widespread within the delivery of public services and is considered by analysts to be an indication of a greatly altered management approach to the delivery of such services.

Of these management approaches and techniques, arguably, the most prevalent is quality management and its associated techniques which became necessary as consumer demands for services of high quality began to emerge within the public sector in the 1980s. Widely used to infer services and products of a high standard, the concept of 'quality' has become a guiding principle for managers in all sectors of the economy. In recognition of the role of quality management in the public sector, the Association of County, District and Metropolitan Councils (1992, p. 2) stated that

"quality has a role to play in helping local authorities to provide the right services, at the right time, in the right place, to the right people and for the right price."

The emergence of quality management in local authority leisure services began in the early 90s and was evidenced by the Oasis Leisure Centre in Swindon being awarded BS5750, the first externally accredited quality programme within public leisure. Other quality programmes have since become available through the introduction of the Charter Mark in 1991, Investors in People in 1994 and Quest in 1997. Alongside these, a number of in-house quality initiatives like customer care programmes began to become evident and by the mid-1990s it was apparent that quality management was a prominent feature of local authority leisure services management.

Prior to this, there were few mechanisms for ensuring that local authority services were of a high standard, as local authorities operated in a manner that focused on internal operations, rather than outcomes. It has been argued that this is no longer the case and Skelcher (1992, p. 1) has suggested that the now popular use of the term customer to refer to those previously described as tenants or claimants was "a visible indication of the profound and deep-seated changes which are now occurring" in local government. It is quality management, epitomised by the use of
quality programmes, which is the focus of this research, which seeks to establish why this management phenomenon has been introduced to local authority leisure services.

The factors that have brought about the deep-seated change described by Skelcher (1992) are multiple, complex and integrated. Firstly, as a result of the consumer movement, the 1980s heralded growing public expectations of goods and services of high quality in all areas of provision. This movement was characterised by customers who sought to be satisfied and were prepared to seek redress if they weren't. Although initially concerned with consumer goods, this active role of customers, backed up by statutory rights, inevitably led to a focus on the quality of local authority services.

Secondly, the political and economic context within which public services have operated has changed significantly within the last 20 years. Farnham and Horton (1996) have described how the post war settlement that legitimised the role of the state in the provision of welfare services, crumbled in the 1970's, primarily due to the inability of the UK economy to meet the costs of such service delivery. As a result, the historical acceptance of the need for local government as the provider of welfare services was undermined, as criticisms over efficiency and bureaucracy grew in line with their costs. In response to this, the Conservative administration, elected in 1979, began to implement a programme of legislation which challenged the traditional role of local government. Using growing public concern with the inefficiency and quality of public services as a justification, consecutive Conservative governments sought to reduce the power of public organisations and attempted to apply market principles to the delivery of many local authority services.

Finally, the above changes have occurred in conjunction with an apparent increase in the importance of senior local authority leisure professionals in decisions relating to service delivery. A managerialist approach to service delivery has become evident in the last two decades and is thought by analysts such as Coalter (1986) and Henry (1993) to be an indication of an increasingly professional public leisure industry felt to have manifest itself in the use of 'commercial' management techniques. This perceived increase in professionalism, alongside the developments previously discussed, has contributed to significant change in the environment in which local authority leisure services operate. This thesis is particularly concerned with one consequence of this change: local authority leisure facilities managers' increasing use of the techniques of quality management in the delivery of their provision.
THE STUDY

The changes in local authority leisure facilities management with which this research is concerned can be analysed at three levels. Houlihan (1991) has outlined how analysis can be carried out at the micro level - the analysis of actors within organisations; the meso level - the analysis of organisations and their interactions and at the macro level - the analysis of the wider societal environment. This study is primarily concerned with analysis at the micro level as it takes the standpoint that a fuller understanding of organisational change comes from a consideration of factors within the organisation as it responds to external pressures for change.

In adopting this approach to organisational change, this thesis differs from the approaches that have dominated other studies in this area and the analyses of the changes that have occurred within the management of local government have been carried out from several perspectives. Of contemporary prominence are those analysts who consider the changes evident in public sector management to be an indication of a shift in local government from a Fordist approach to service delivery, based on Keynesian methods and corporatist practices, to a post-Fordist approach based on entrepreneurism, managerialism and flexibility (Henry, 1993; Ravenscroft, 1998).

This analysis of public sector change with its basis in regulation theory is primarily structural in nature. Regulation theory seeks to explain the relationship between "forms of economic activity and the social, political and cultural arrangements which sustain such activity" (Henry, 1993, p. 172). As a result, such analysts suggest that the move from Fordism to post-Fordism has led to the emergence of smaller, semi-autonomous units of service delivery (Ravenscroft, 1998) or as described by Henry (1993, p. 181) as organisations that are "organismic, flat and flexible". The consequence of this is "an opportunity for good managers to emerge" (Ravenscroft, 1998, p. 144). Within the public sector, this structural approach attributes the emergence of the new management practices, typified by quality management, as a response to legislation which has altered the delivery mechanisms of public services.

This type of analysis gives less attention to the role of those within organisations and implicit in this structural explanation of organisational change is that, should the forms of economic activity change, the arrangements for sustaining it and the management of these arrangements would also change. It is therefore theoretically possible to suggest that public services could return to Fordist methods of service delivery, managed by hierarchical, procedural management. This thesis presents an alternative analysis in its assumption that organisational change has been chosen...
or negotiated by those within the organisation itself i.e. those within the organisation believe in the need for change and in the need for a particular change. As such, a change in structure would not necessarily result in an change in management style. In order to evaluate this, the research investigates the decision to implement change in the form of quality management within local authority leisure facilities from the perspective of senior leisure officials and facility managers.

Given this standpoint it is essential for this research to utilise a theoretical framework that allows investigation of the actions and interactions of factors both within the organisation and external to it. In order to do this, the framework must have the capacity to explore the macro and meso environments in general, as well as allowing the focus on the micro level required by the approach taken in this research. Thus the changes apparent within local authority leisure services are to be analysed within the framework of the Model of Strategic Change (Figure 1) developed by Pettigrew (1987). This is a three-dimensional model which requires the researcher to focus on the context, content and process of change and the interactions between them.

**Figure I: The model of strategic change**

![Image of the model of strategic change](Source: Pettigrew, 1988, p.5.)

The three concepts are used by Pettigrew to organise the analysis of change as they provide a structure for considering why a particular change has occurred within a particular organisation. The context of change refers to the environment in which the organisation operates, the content of change refers to the particular change that is occurring, while the process of change refers to the actions of parties within the organisation as they move the organisation from its present to its changed state. This not only provides the opportunity to consider key environmental factors, but allows these to be placed in the context of the historical, political and individual influences of the organisation under study.
The use of this framework is particularly appropriate for this research because of its special ability to allow an exploration of how factors within the operating context affect and have been affected by the use of quality management and the process of implementing quality management techniques. It is also valuable in its ability to analyse how individuals within an organisation have gone about the process of choosing quality management to respond to the environmental context. Much more importantly, however, the Model of Strategic Change is unique in its suggestion that quality management itself can impact on both the individuals with the organisation and their response to the context, and that the use of quality management can affect the operating context, rather than simply being a response to it. As such, the Model of Strategic Change allows the thesis to adopt the standpoint outlined above.

This thesis seeks to establish firstly, the factors that were perceived to have promoted the need for change in the management of local authority leisure facilities and secondly, why quality management was considered to be the appropriate form of change. The research has the following objectives:

- to establish what senior local authority leisure professionals consider to be the influences on the use of quality and quality programmes in local authority leisure facilities - Pettigrew's context of change;
- to establish how senior local authority leisure professionals conceptualise quality and quality management - Pettigrew's content of change;
- to establish what role these professionals played in the adoption of quality programmes within their local authority leisure facilities - Pettigrew's process of change.

The study therefore takes the view that a particular change or set of changes is chosen or negotiated by individuals in the organisation and as a result seeks to investigate the influence of key actors on the decision to introduce quality management. In adopting this stance, the research is therefore able to investigate the extent to which the choices and negotiations of individuals have been significant influences on the introduction of change in local authority leisure services in the last decade. Through its investigation of the role played by key actors on the decision to adopt quality management approaches, it complements analyses conducted at the macro and meso levels and provides an additional dimension of analysis to contribute to broader and fuller understanding of the development of local government leisure services in this era.
Concern with the quality of local authority leisure services is nothing new: there has long been debate about the implications of funding for service standards. Concern with Quality as a distinct management concept is, however, a phenomena of the past decade, emerging as public leisure managers have sought to respond to changes in their operating context. Although public leisure provision has a history of periodical transformation, it is the speed, magnitude and diversity of the current changes which have made this past decade distinctive. Faced with a multitude of diverse influences upon management within the leisure context, public leisure managers have become concerned with the delivery of services which meet high standards of quality.

Traditionally associated with levels of standard (i.e. low quality, high quality) the contemporary management use of the term Quality has evolved to indicate a good or excellent service, and proponents of the Quality Movement such as Crosby (1979), Deming (1986) and Juran (1988) have espoused the principles of Quality Management as the way forward to ensure organisational success. The procedures followed to introduce these principles have been termed Quality Programmes, the application of which is considered, by those above, to lead to increased efficiency and effectiveness within organisational operations. This is brought about by increasing customer satisfaction and therefore revenue, and decreasing wastage, and errors and thus, costs.

The emergence of Quality Management within local leisure as an industry-wide concept first became apparent in the early 1990's and was evidenced by two main features. Firstly, the concept of 'customer care' - concern with customer satisfaction - began to emerge as being of importance to leisure managers, indicated by the increasing prevalence of the concept within the professional press, as a focus for training courses and, perhaps more tellingly, within product advertising. Secondly and in parallel, was the increasing prominence of the BSI accredited Quality Programme, BS5750, which was promoted by the Audit Commission (1993) as being valuable in the management of CCT contracts.

These two aspects of Quality Management, to be discussed in Chapter three, formed the basis of increasing professional concern with the concept of Quality within public leisure services delivery. Throughout the 1990s this expanded to incorporate

1 The terminology associated with the contemporary management understanding of Quality as excellence will have capital letters for this chapter. This is to enable to the reader to develop an awareness of the terminology associated with this phenomenon.
the use of a wide variety of Quality Management methods, initiated the publication of a variety of prescriptive sources on Quality Management (e.g. Mosscrop and Stores, 1990; Mills, 1992; Sheppard and Studd, 1994), and eventually led to the industry-wide adoption of the Quality vocabulary associated with the movement. In addition, Quality and its management became established on the agendas of the industry's professional bodies, evidenced by the commissioning of the aforementioned articles and the themes of industry conferences. Most significantly, however, belief in the value of Quality to the management of the leisure industry led to the development of Quest, a leisure specific Quality Programme endorsed and promoted by the professional bodies, leisure quangos and other interested parties. From this it is apparent that Quality and Quality Management were considered not only to be appropriate for the public leisure industry, but desirable.

It would appear that there can be little argument about the increased presence of Quality approaches within the management of public leisure services; however, the rationale for this development is less clear. Is the concern with Quality an indication of change within the management of local leisure services? Is it a response to other changes? Or is it a mechanism for change itself? To answer such questions, it is necessary to consider the circumstances which have led public leisure managers to use the management practices associated with the concept of Quality.

The following discussion provides an introduction to the three main dimensions of change, debated within the literature, which have influenced the public leisure management concern with Quality. Firstly the influence of the general growth of Quality is considered. The concepts of Quality and the management of Quality evolved from the manufacturing sector, over time progressing to public services as the consumer movement gained momentum. The nature of this progression is one of the key influences on the recent emergence of Quality within the management of public leisure facilities. Secondly, the adoption of Quality approaches has also been strongly affected by changes within the public sector, particularly in the relationship between central and local government; the challenge to local government by recent Conservative administrations has been a second significant influence. Finally, the more widespread use of the language and concepts of Quality within public sector leisure provision has also been encouraged by developments within local authority leisure services themselves.
1.1 THE GROWTH OF QUALITY WITHIN THE UNITED KINGDOM

Initiated by outstanding Japanese success in the production of consumer goods, the concept of Quality and its management has emerged as a key issue for managers across all sectors and all types of organisation (Dale, 1994; Wille, 1992). In comparison to other advanced westernised economies, Britain was slow to embrace the notion of Quality Management. Dale (1994) and Kirkpatrick and Martinez Lucio (1995) noted the initial reluctance of the British response, despite the demonstrable success of American and Japanese firms who espoused the principles of Quality Management. This hesitancy was in part due to a lack of central government commitment, but primarily resulted from the unwillingness of managers to be involved. It was only when British firms were rapidly disappearing from world markets and losing their grip on the domestic market and there were signs that poor quality of product or service had played a decisive part in their downfall, (Dale, 1994, p.41) that such attitudes began to undergo substantial revision.

It was in this context of declining economic performance that the National Quality Campaign (NQC) was launched in 1983, which subsequently became the main impetus for the management of Quality within the UK. Initiated by the Department of Trade and Industry, in response to mounting evidence of a direct link between good product quality and good company performance, the campaign was used to develop a framework to facilitate Quality achievement in the manufacturing sector.

The framework developed by the NQC incorporated training activities, the establishment of the National Quality Information Centre, and the establishment of the Association of Quality Consultants to regulate professional competence. The focal point of the NQC initiative (and arguably the most influential and tangible of its undertakings) was, however, the establishment of the use of the aforementioned BS5750, the UK series of Standards for quality. Devised by the British Standards Institute (BSI), the BS5750 Quality Programme came to be seen as evidence of a Quality approach within organisations and the National Quality Campaign's own success was increasingly gauged by the number of registrations to the Standard. Government support for the Campaign was evident in two forms - through support available to small and medium companies to enable them to obtain accreditation, and through increasing Government insistence that such accreditation was held by its suppliers.

The prominence of BS5750 was significant in allowing the NQC to establish and promote the role of accredited Quality Programmes within the management of
Quality. Although British Standards have been prevalent and indeed compulsory, within manufacturing for decades, the award of BS5750 has become, rightly or wrongly, synonymous with a measure of overall organisational Quality. The success of this Programme as an indicator of Quality was such that the BS5750 series became the basis for the international quality standards, developed by representatives from twenty countries and released in 1987 by the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO). Within Britain itself, where the development of organisational Quality had in the past been hindered by the sometimes nebulous nature of the concept, the increasing adoption of Quality Programmes had by the late 1980s given Quality Management an identity and focus it had previously lacked.

The success of the National Quality Campaign was indicated by four features. Firstly, the number of organisations that were registered as Quality assessed increased from 6000 to 15000 between 1984-93. Secondly, educational institutions took on board the need for training in Quality Management leading to a large number of graduate and postgraduate management courses offering Quality Management as an integral part of the programme (Dale, 1994). The third indicator of the success of the NQC was a developing interest in using BS5750 in the service sector, which led to the issue in the early 1990s of a second part to the Standards, ostensibly to deal with the growing interest in BS5750 from non-manufacturing organisations. Fourthly and perhaps most significantly, there was increasing evidence of the role that Quality was playing in the advancement of the consumer movement.

Beginning in the late 1950s, the consumer movement aimed to provide customers with enhanced information about value for money, competition and legal rights of redress. By the end of the 1980s it was evident that suppliers faced increasing demands from the general public for high quality products and services in all aspects of their lives. Pfeffer and Coote (1991) and Sanderson (1992) described how the consumer movement, founded on the concept that customers rejected goods and services of a low quality, led providers to improve the quality of provision or go bankrupt. In their review of Quality assurance in welfare services, Pfeffer and Coote outlined how this movement was "an expression of individuals' efforts to empower themselves as customers by joining forces with each other" (1991, p.15).

By the 1990s, organisations had begun to respond to the increased consumer power they faced - both in terms of increased purchasing power and the legal right of redress - by becoming customer focused and concentrating on the delivery of Quality goods and services. In the service sector, this led organisations to adapt the
Quality Management techniques and principles that were to be found in the manufacturing sector and allowed organisations to compete on the basis of superior quality. Quality Management and the use of Quality Programmes thus began to spread throughout the service industry.

The expansion of Quality Management into local government began in the late 1980s and gained momentum in the early 1990s, and occurred for three main reasons. Firstly, the foundations of Quality Management were laid by the work of Clarke and Stewart (1987) and the Local Government Training Board (LGTB) (1987), who promoted the need for local authorities to become customer focused and concerned with Quality. The impact of this upon public services was significant and will be discussed in detail in Chapter two. Secondly, legislative and resource constraints imposed by the central government policy initiatives were intended to develop a local government concern with effectiveness as well as efficiency and this fostered a concern with quality. Finally, the impact of the consumer movement was replicated in local government as public service providers were faced with increasing financial constraints and financial accountability, alongside a demand by the public for Quality services. In response, they looked to the commercial service sector to learn the management principles and techniques that led to the financial success of organisations such as British Airways and Disney. The writings of so-called 'management gurus' like Tom Peters suggested that Quality or 'excellence' was that key (Peters and Waterman, 1982; Peters and Austin, 1984). This led to the adoption of Quality Management techniques such as Quality Programmes within the local government sector (Clarke and Stewart, 1987 and LGTB, 1987).

The first criticisms of Quality Management emerged when the concept of Quality began to be embraced by public sector managers. Researchers such as Holloway and Neilson (1992) and Gaster (1992) argued that this approach to management had been subject to little objective evaluation and therefore the consequences of Quality Management in the public sector were unknown. Walsh (1991) felt that the delivery of Quality in public services would be difficult as a result of its problematic, value-driven assessment. He felt the evaluation of Quality to be impossible given the heterogeneity of customer expectations, the need to deliver some public services to customers who do not want them, and problems in defining what constitutes Quality. Kirkpatrick and Martinez Lucio (1995) were more vociferous in their arguments against the direct transference of the concept of Quality from the commercial sector. In their comprehensive discussion of the politics of Quality within the public sector, Kirkpatrick and Martinez Lucio (1995) outlined how this concept had been used to increase managerial control over professionals and to
introduce a market orientation to the delivery of public services. This, they felt, was a reflection of "a more general belief in the superiority of the commercial enterprise and the values and assumptions of private sector management" (Kirkpatrick and Martinez Lucio, 1995, p.2).

The historical focus of Quality Management is on the delivery of goods and services of a high standard to ensure that major customer groups have continued to be customers. Debates over resourcing within commercial operations have traditionally been resolved by referring to the needs of the groups that have generated the greatest income and as a result, these groups have defined what is meant by Quality within operations. Consequently, Quality Management has been inherently linked to commercial success and it was on this basis that Kirkpatrick and Martinez Lucio challenged the traditional notion of Quality in public service delivery.

They discussed the limits to choice and exit that are present in many public services and outlined the difficulties with the concept of value for money and definitions of Quality. Arguably, however, what is of greater concern is the ability of Quality and Quality Management to consider fully the multiplicity of stakeholders that influence public services (Clarke and Stewart, 1987; LGTB, 1987; Robinson 1997). Given its focus on paying customers, it can be argued that wholesale commitment to the traditional notion of Quality will mean that some legitimate customer groups of local authority services are likely to be disadvantaged.

Although the legitimacy of transference of Quality and Quality Management to the public sector has been challenged at the conceptual level, it is clear that it has nonetheless been accepted and adopted by the managers of many public sector organisations (Gaster 1992, 1995; Pfeffer and Coote, 1991; Sanderson, 1992). At local government level, Leisure Services have often been to the fore of this movement and there is now copious evidence of the emergence of Quality in its commercial form within public leisure management. The professional press and leading management consultants such as Peter Mills and George Torkildsen have lauded the values of Quality Management and the leisure quangos have supported the development and subsequent use of 'Quest', aimed predominantly at public leisure facilities. Thus, despite the commercial orientation of the concept of Quality and its narrow focus on paying customers, the acceptance of Quality Management within commercial organisations appears to have led to it being adopted by public leisure professionals.
1.2 **THE CHALLENGE TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

The increasing evidence of a developing Quality consciousness apparent within public sector organisations in Britain in the early 1990s was, to most commentators, just one indicator of the seismic shift that had been taking place in local services provision for nearly a decade.

Local government in the United Kingdom is now in the process of a radical and quite fundamental transformation. The changes taking place under the auspices of the Thatcher Government reflect more than a shift in an administrative fashion. They involve a radically new conception of local government, with, potentially at least, a sharply reduced role for elected politicians and indeed local politics as it has been practised previously. The future of local government is not yet entirely clear and will not be until the full implications of a number of trends now in process are finally worked out.  
(Butcher, Law, Leach and Mullard, 1990, p.7)

Debate about the structure and function of local government is of course nothing new and certainly not peculiar to the 1980s and 90s. The post war years had seen repeated attempts to restructure local authorities to ensure their greatest efficiency in supporting central government. What distinguished the debate of the last two decades, however, was a fundamental change in the way in which central government, under Conservative rule, viewed local authorities. This led to an explicit and hostile challenge to their role. From 1979, under successive Thatcherite administrations, the debate was no longer about *how* local authorities should exercise their responsibilities, but about *whether* certain activities should remain direct local government responsibilities at all (Butcher *et al*, 1990).

Central government control of local authorities stems from the principle of 'ultra vires' which was established by the 1835 Municipal Corporations Act. As a consequence, local authorities are

literally the creatures, the creations of parliamentary statute.  
Their boundaries, duties, powers, memberships and modes of operation are laid down by Acts of Parliament.  
(Wilson and Game, 1994, p.23)  

They are therefore intrinsically affected by the policies and legislation of Westminster.

The relationship between central government and local government has been extensively discussed and dissected (e.g. Jones and Stewart (1985); Keith-Lucas and Richards (1978); Stoker (1991); Wilson and Game (1994). From this literature it is evident that central government has rarely been at ease with the concept of local government discretion over service decisions and spending. Initiatives which have
asserted central government control over local authorities have been prevalent throughout the history of local government and central government has been most comfortable with local authorities in the role of service providers, assisting with the administration of central government statutes. This was particularly evident at the end of the Second World War which led to the creation of the Welfare State when central government became a major service provider and regulator of local government, in an attempt to guarantee uniform and equal treatment in social services. These were provided by local authorities as agents of central government and the resulting effect was a decline in the little discretionary power that local authorities had over service choice, as their function became primarily concerned with administering centrally generated policies.

Although there was an increase in central control over service decisions during this period, the role of local government was relatively unchallenged. This is because the reasons for local government provision of education, housing, social services, recreational facilities and waste collection and disposal had been taken for granted for so long, as scarcely to need defending. Important debates did take place on the internal organisation of major services, but not over local government's continued responsibility for them. (Butcher et al, 1990, p.11)

Thus, despite a decrease in local control and growing criticism over inefficiencies and bureaucracy, support for local authorities appeared innate as central government policy continued the expansion of the role and function of local authorities based on the belief that local government was generally considered to be a 'good thing'.

With the advent of the Conservative government in 1979 this laissez-faire acceptance of the value of local government was eroded and then ceased. Committed to decreasing direct taxation and public expenditure, the policy initiatives of successive Conservative governments were associated with the doctrines of sound money, free markets, individual freedom, stable family life and traditional morality (Butcher et al, 1990). On the basis of these principles, central government policy challenged the assumption of local government as a 'good thing' and inexorably removed power from local authorities.

The attempts by the Conservative administrations of the 1980s to modify and greatly limit the role of local authorities stemmed from an ideological commitment to the principles of individual choice, market freedom and enterprise. By the 1990s, these principles - termed Thatcherism and continued under the leadership of John Major - had influenced all sectors of the economy. Government concern with the
development of an 'enterprise' culture promoting the right to manage, led to a decrease in the power of unions, a consolidation and protection of Britain's place in the world-wide economy and a commitment to the revitalisation of the private sector.

Undeniably, however, the greatest impact of central government policy was on public services as the government attempted to overcome what it termed a 'dependency culture' fostered by a strong public sector. The development of the enterprise culture that the Conservatives valued so highly was dependent on wide-scale adoption of market principles and managerialism (Farnham and Horton, 1996, Kirkpatrick and Martinez Lucio, 1995) - principles that the public sector was not considered to possess. This perceived deficiency led to a series of legislative initiatives that, almost without exception, challenged the historical acceptance of the role of local government in the delivery of public services.

The predominant theme of the legislation affecting local authorities was the reduction of local government power and most policy initiatives reduced or removed the powers of local authorities. The main challenges to local authorities came from two sources. The first of these was a series of ongoing financial policies aimed at reducing local authority spending, initiated by the 1980 reform of the grant system. This enabled central government to determine what local authorities should be spending and allowed them to penalise overspenders. In all, twenty changes in local government financing were introduced between 1979 and 1995 (Farnham and Horton, 1996) resulting in a decrease in locally determined expenditure to an all time low of 15%. The legislation included the introduction of rate capping in 1983, the introduction of the community charge in 1989 and the replacement of the community charge by council tax in 1993. The combined effect was that central government gained significant control of local spending, reducing the power of local authorities to act autonomously to meet the needs of their electorate.

The second significant challenge to local government resulted from Government commitment to reducing the size of the public sector. This impacted upon local authorities in a number of ways and affected the basis on which a wide range of local services were delivered. On the premise that "the biggest impediment to efficiency is monopoly" (Carnaghan and Braceywell-Milnes, 1993, p.24) legislation was introduced to remove direct control of service provision. Two examples of this were the mandatory selling of council houses incorporated into the Housing Act (1980) and the implementation of local management of schools through the Education Reform Act (1988).
It was, however, the introduction of Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT) via the Planning and Land Act (1980) and the Local Government Act (1988) that most clearly embodied Conservative intentions about the reduced role local government was to play. CCT was introduced to ensure that the provision of services which were offered by local authorities was opened up to market competition. The underlying belief of this policy was that market testing would ensure efficient and cost effective services and as a consequence local authorities were required, by statute, to embark upon a programme of tendering for service provision. The legislation of 1980 and 1988 therefore presented a quite fundamental challenge to the principles on which local service provision had previously been founded.

The wide-scale change sought by Conservative policies during the 1980s provoked intense and often hostile reactions from local government. Contemporary commentators suggest, however, that the degree of change which occurred was in practice much less than the rhetoric of the time suggested. Carnaghan and Bracewell-Milnes (1993) argued, for example, that there was little evidence that local authority services had been opened up to competition on the scale envisaged, mainly because there had been little interest from the commercial sector. Nor had CCT contributed greatly to service improvements as the emphasis appeared to be primarily on cost monitoring (Carnaghan and Bracewell-Milnes, 1993). Indeed, the overall success of the policies of the Conservative government in achieving their intended objectives has been debated. By the mid-1990s local government was still the main provider of the majority of public services and the reduction in the size of the public sector could be mainly attributed to privatisation and contracting out policies (Farnham and Horton, 1996). Although the role of local authorities may have continued primarily as before, it is apparent, however, that contemporary local authority services were being managed in a manner fundamentally different from that of the past. Over the last decade, the introduction of management techniques traditionally associated with commercial organisations had become prevalent in local authority services.

To some extent this sea-change in local government management, to be discussed in detail in Chapter two, can itself be regarded as a success of Conservative policies. The significance of legislation in bringing about this change is, however, unclear. An alternative explanation for the introduction of these techniques has attributed their growth to the emergence of a new management culture within public services. This ‘New Managerialism’ is based on a set of beliefs,
at the core of which burns the seldom tested assumption that better management will prove an efficient solvent for a wide range of economic and social ills.

(Pollitt, 1993, p.1)

This perspective suggested that documented changes in the management of public services amounted to more than a series of ad hoc responses to legislation and represented instead the presence of a coherent management philosophy (Hood, 1991; Farnham and Horton, 1993, 1996). Elements of new managerialism within current local authority management are considered to include tighter financial controls, decentralisation of management responsibility, and an emphasis on the attainment of concrete goals (Farnham and Horton, 1993). In addition, Common, Flynn and Mellon (1992) noted the introduction of performance-related pay for managers, the use of short term contracts, and the increasingly common presence of performance indicators within the public sector. On this basis Farnham and Horton (1993, p.51) claimed that many private management techniques are now being widely used in the public services and that "the language and practices of 'business' are becoming common to the public sector."

1.3 CHANGE IN PUBLIC LEISURE SERVICES

That changes have occurred in local authority management is not therefore contested. What is to be debated is whether these changes indicated the embracing of a new management philosophy or whether they were simply the inevitable result of government legislation. The current research is primarily concerned with how these influences have been manifested in Leisure Services, a relatively young area of local government activity for some time regarded as the Cinderella of local authority provision.

Prior to the Thatcherite era central government involvement in local leisure services provision had been experienced spasmodically. Unlike other publicly provided services, central government has never taken on a role as a direct provider of leisure services and the nineteenth century Acts affecting leisure provision were, and have remained, enabling rather than mandatory. This historical reluctance to become directly involved in leisure provision reinforced the need for the already present, non-governmental leisure providers which led to the mixed economy of leisure that is apparent today. The prominent roles of the commercial and voluntary sectors, established in the nineteenth century and continued ever since, have allowed central government to argue that there is no need for direct intervention. This differentiated leisure from many other local authority services, particularly during the creation of the Welfare State, where, in contrast to the provision of universal services, central government concern with leisure was focused on the
CHAPTER ONE: DIMENSIONS OF CHANGE

provision of excellence with the establishment of the Arts Council in 1946 and the development of the National Centres of Excellence during the post-war period.

It was the 1960s before central government began to consider sport and recreation as a relatively distinct policy area. This change in attitude was encouraged by the findings of the 1957 Wolfenden Committee on Sport which recommended the development of policy relating to leisure aimed at social control and improving the health of the nation (Hargreaves, 1982; Henry, 1993; Houlihan, 1991). In addition, there was a perceived need to enhance Britain's prestige at international competition. What was arguably more important, however, was the increasing demand from the general public for wider access to sport and recreation opportunities and as a consequence, although still refraining from making leisure provision mandatory, central government policy began to address the public provision of leisure.

This led to the appointment of a Minister for Sport in 1962, the establishment of the Advisory Sports Council in 1965 and the adoption of a policy of 'Sport for All' in 1966. It was the latter which had the most direct impact on local authorities as the commitment to 'Sport for All' led to a rapid increase in the number of leisure facilities provided by the public sector as attempts were made to provide leisure opportunities for expressed demand. As a consequence, the role of local authorities in leisure provision, predominantly as a provider of facilities, became firmly established in the eyes of the community.

Central government involvement was then evident in the 1970s in a range of 'Recreation as Welfare' policies that deployed targeted forms of sport and recreation provision as strategies to alleviate problems among the more deprived population sectors and areas of the country. For the most part, however, direct provision of leisure services lay in the hands of local government, with local authority expenditure rising unevenly, but persistently, from the mid-70s onward. Thatcherite policies brought inevitable change, firstly through tightening financial constraints, but later through the introduction of major legislation that directly challenged current practice in leisure facility provision. Through the introduction of Compulsory Competitive Tendering for leisure in 1989, local authorities lost the automatic right to manage the facilities they provided.

The extension of CCT to leisure services management was perceived at the time as a major milestone in the development of local leisure provision. Along with other factors this represented a large potential shift in the role of the authority from direct provider to enabler and the literature published over this period highlighted
the concern and uncertainty about the speed, scale, direction and effects of the change that would ensue. Benington and White (1988) outlined the need for a radical reappraisal of service provision and delivery and Fitzjohn (1988) suggested the need for local authorities to become more facilitating in their provision for sport, while Henry (1988) and Coalter (1990) argued that the future face of leisure services would be dramatically altered in response to factors affecting local government. The need for change was justified by the Audit Commission (1989), who for the first time publicly expressed the necessity for a balance between social and financial objectives in the provision of public leisure facilities, suggesting that local authority leisure services were characterised by poor investment decisions, poor facility coordination and subsidy of activities that lent themselves to trading. These criticisms were similar to those previously levelled at the provision of other local authority services.

The strong reaction to CCT among local authority leisure providers was heightened by concern over the vulnerability of this area of provision. Significant reductions in locally determined expenditure had already led to fears that leisure, as a discretionary service, would be a prime target for realising budget cuts. Despite this, Taylor and Page's (1994) work subsequently suggested that leisure services did not suffer disproportionally. Thus, although ongoing budget cuts did occur and were experienced to some extent by most local authority leisure services (Taylor and Page, 1994), it was the introduction of Compulsory Competitive Tendering that was seen as the harbinger of fundamental changes to public leisure management. This was regarded by some as the most significant central government intervention in public leisure provision since industrialisation.

The subsequent inclusion of Leisure Management in the Local Government Act (1988) had substantial implications for the organisation of local authority leisure services departments. CCT legislation laid down a number of requirements that necessitated changes to both departmental structures and finance systems. Amongst these were the need to keep separate accounts for individual contracts and not to act in an anti-competitive manner. In order to achieve this the Audit Commission (1989) strongly recommended the restructuring of leisure departments into Client and Contractor roles.

On completion of the first round of tendering in 1993, it appeared that the compulsory competitive tendering of leisure services had met with the same limited success experienced by other local authority services. There was little evidence that the management of local authority leisure facilities had been greatly opened up to competition. Research carried out by the Audit Commission (1993) showed that
local authorities' own Direct Service Organisations (DSOs) had won 82% of sport and leisure management contracts and that of those contracts put out to tender in England, only 18% had attracted 3 bids or more. As with other services, commercial interest in public leisure facilities was minimal. It has been argued, however, that CCT nonetheless became a catalyst for the 'commercialisation' of management within leisure services, partly as a result of the tendering process itself, which forced local authorities to review their strategic and operational practices. Certainly, the wider use of management techniques traditionally associated with the commercial sector became increasingly prevalent in public leisure services following the introduction of CCT (Lawrence, Standeven and Tomlinson, 1994; Nichols and Taylor, 1995).

To what extent these changes in management style and techniques derived directly from the impact of CCT, and to what extent they arose from other contemporaneous influences on local government leisure managers at this time, is unclear. An alternative to the 'CCT explanation' for the introduction of commercial management techniques has been offered by Coalter, Long and Duffield (1986) and Henry (1993) who have identified and discussed the presence of 'professionalism' within the management of public leisure services, attributing changes in management style and technique to the increasing professionalism of the industry.

The concern with the professional status of leisure management has been debated periodically, primarily by researchers such as Murphy (1986), Coalter et al (1986) and Henry (1993). In his consideration of the emergence of a leisure profession Henry (1993) outlined the development of 'semi-proessions' which have emerged during the post war period and suggested that the development of public sector leisure management reflects the development of other liberal welfare semi-professions. The process by which occupations move towards profession status is known as professionalisation and is typically indicated by these features:

- the practice of the occupation is founded on the basis of sound theoretical knowledge whose application is valued in society;
- the acquisition of this knowledge is founded on a long period of education and training;
- the occupation subscribes to an ideal of altruistic public service rather than being motivated solely by profit;
- the occupational group has control over recruitment and can regulate entry;
- there is a well organised colleague group which uses disciplinary powers to enforce an ethical code of conduct.

(Coalter, 1990, p.173)

Murphy (1986) used these features to assess the status of leisure management and concluded that it was not a profession, a conclusion supported by Coalter et al
(1986) who also argued that the establishment of a profession was not desired by so-called leisure professionals. They suggested that managers' desire for the benefits of professional status was tempered by a concern that the process of professionalisation, of qualification and enhanced status could become an end in itself.

(Coalter et al, 1986, p.88)

Coalter et al's research identified two areas of concern among leisure officers. Firstly, there was an awareness that the accessibility of leisure would make it difficult for professionals to derive status from expertise and judgement. Secondly, there was a lack of consensus among those interviewed over the form that professionalism should take within leisure services, with many leisure professionals subscribing to the Marxist concept of liberal welfare professionalism, typified by a concern with social control. In contrast, however, Coalter et al (1986) found that senior local authority officers felt that the growth of professionalism was desirable as this was considered as being "equivalent to an increase in management expertise and the more efficient use of resources" (Coalter et al, 1986, p.88). This reflects industrial professionalism - professionalism based on a concern with maximising efficiency.

This debate between what Coalter et al (1986) called the 'service developers' and the 'managerialists' was later considered by Henry (1993, p.112) who noted that it is predominantly around the distinction between liberal welfare and industrial semi-professions that struggles concerning the 'identity' of the leisure profession are taking place, as the market orientation has grown.

While the relative significance of legislation and professionalism upon the introduction of commercial management techniques into public leisure facilities requires more detailed consideration and is addressed in this research, it is clear nonetheless, that together they have contributed to the culture of new managerialism within the management of public leisure services. Evidence for this from authors such as Farnham and Horton (1993, 1996), Henry (1993) and Hollis, Ham and Ambler (1992) is considered in chapter two, which outlines the extent of the changes that have affected the structure and management of local government and local authority leisure services in recent times. Although the extent of local authorities' direct provision of leisure facilities emerged relatively unscathed from the Conservative policies, it is apparent that its management has fundamentally changed.
The development and the management of local authority leisure services provision since the 1970s has therefore been underpinned by three strands of change. Firstly, there has been the growth of the Quality movement in Britain and in particular the extension of the Quality ethos to public sector services. Secondly, changes in individual areas of local government provision have taken place within the overall context of shifting relationships between central and local government. Finally, public sector leisure services employees have themselves witnessed increasing professionalism within their area of work and the drawing closer of commercial and public sector leisure management practices. It is the convergence of these three streams that appears to have facilitated the growing use of Quality Programmes in the management of public leisure facilities. The final section of this introduction now considers how the processes through which this has occurred can be most effectively illuminated by drawing on the literature on organisational decision making and change. This will provide a conceptual framework for the research project is primarily concerned with the analysis of the underlying rationale for the introduction of Quality Programmes.

1.4 Analysing Change in Organisations

In their review of the current perspectives on organisational change, Spurgeon and Barwell (1991, p.32) have highlighted how research into organisational change has "produced a rich crop of ideas but has not resulted in any one complete or coherent theory," which highlights a dichotomy that exists within management literature and research. Firstly, there is a body of literature that is concerned with prescription that defines, describes and applies management theories to organisations. In short, it tells managers how to manage. The second body of literature to be found in the study of management is concerned with the theory of management itself. This seeks to establish and test principles and concepts within management in order to explain the phenomenon of management and organisations.

The discussions of Pettigrew (1987), Pettigrew, Ferlie and McKee (1992) and Spurgeon and Barwell (1991) of the literature available on organisational change, provide evidence of this distinction. For the most part the 'change' literature is primarily concerned with the development of policies and procedures for the introduction of organisational change and is less helpful as a basis for analysing why change occurs. There is therefore an over-concern with the planning and implementation of change and rather less concern with the relationship between processes and variables that explain why the need for change in organisations originates.
It is nonetheless possible to identify themes running through the theoretical explanations of organisational behaviour, which have commonly been categorised in three ways. Firstly, there are those approaches that are described as 'rational', which have as their premise the concept that change can be planned, implemented and assessed in a systematic and measured manner. Secondly, organisational change can be considered structural in nature, in that the organisation's response to change is dependent on its shape. Finally, there are theories that are best described as process-based, that view organisational change as a consequence of the process of interactions between people, history, environmental context and politics of the organisation.

Overall there has been a progression away from the more rigid conceptual frameworks embodied by the rational-linear approach, which was most prominent in the early writings in the field. These subsequently came to be quite widely criticised for their assumption that decision making is routine and analytical. Pettigrew et al (1992) and Spurgeon and Barwell (1991) have reviewed these criticisms and the subsequent development of less formulaic, structured, approaches to understanding organisational decision making, including approaches centring on organisational structure, planning and decision making, incrementalism, contingency, organisational inertia and organisational development (Burns and Stalker, 1991; Pugh, 1990; Quinn, 1980). These perspectives are more helpful in addressing complex situations in which multiple forces for change combine, such as that of the current study. They are still, however, primarily concerned with prescription and this weakness has been highlighted by Pettigrew (1985, 1987) and Pettigrew et al (1992) who stated that:

studies of organisational change are ....often preoccupied with the intricacies of narrow changes, rather than the holistic and dynamic analysis of changing.

(Pettigrew et al 1992, p.6)

The emphasis within the literature on the development of a programme for implementing change within the organisation is partially explicable given the need for what Egan (1985) described as 'working models' of change - practical models which prescribe the procedures necessary for those seeking to implement organisational change. The limitation to this, however, is that in order to fully understand and explain organisational change and its implementation, it is necessary to understand all of the processes and issues that may have influenced the decision to implement change. Thus, analysis of organisational change must take account of the organisational environments, the type of change under consideration and the development of change programmes; in other words...
theoretically sound and practically useful research on change should involve the continuous interplay between ideas about the context of change, the process of change and the content of change, together with skill in regulating the relations between the three.

(Pettigrew, 1985, p.19)

From this multi-faceted stance, Pettigrew developed the analytical model outlined in Figure 1.1. The assumption underlying this model is that strategic change within organisations cannot be regarded solely as a rational process undertaken by analysing the environments, suggesting alternatives and planning. Rather it is a complex, iterative process that is shaped by the interests and commitments of individuals and groups, the forces of bureaucratic momentum, gross changes in the environment, and the manipulation of the structural context around decisions.

(Pettigrew, 1987, p.658)

Academic perception of this model is positive. Johnson (1993) noted how this structure allowed the complexities that managers face to be objectively explored, Walsham (1993) discussed its value in analysing complex change and Spurgeon and Barwell, (1991, p.45) have noted how the model captures the "richness and complexity of real organisational change."

They went on, however, to outline what they perceived to be the main limitation of the model. They considered the predictive value of the Model to be limited, arguing that it was not possible to predict the direction of future organisational change primarily because the Model did not suggest alternatives to the existing change. This is of little relevance to the current study which is concerned with generating an understanding of change which has already occurred.

Figure 1.1: The model of strategic change

![Figure 1.1: The model of strategic change](Source: Pettigrew, 1988, p.5.)
In recognising the significance and potential complexity of the multiple factors that provide the context and stimulus for organisational change, the model reflects the dominant features of the focus of the current research. As we have seen, the introduction of Quality Programmes into the management of local leisure services facilities is known to have occurred during a period of multiple environmental change for public leisure managers. The processes by which these different forces of change led to the specific introduction of Quality Programmes in the leisure facilities of many authorities - and did not do so in others - is unclear. Pettigrew's model provides an appropriate conceptual framework for investigating how this new approach to leisure facility management has emerged.

The model identifies three dimensions: context, content and process. The context of change refers to those environmental factors that have influenced, restrained or provided the opportunity for change within the organisation. Referred to as the 'why' of change, consideration of the context within which the organisation is operating is important as organisational change should be seen as linked to both intra-organisational and broader contexts and one should not try to understand projects as episodes divorced from the historical, organisational or economic circumstances from which they emerge.

(Walsham, 1993, p.188)

Although each environmental factor is important in its own right, they do not act in isolation, but react and interact with each other and on occasion cancel each other out (Isaac-Henry, Painter and Barnes, 1997). It is the knowledge of these contextual factors and their interactions that provides the basis for understanding why change occurs in the organisation. A review of the operating contexts affecting public leisure managers suggested that the features outlined in Table 1.1 are issues that may have influenced the decision to implement Quality Programmes in public leisure facilities.

From this list three dominant contextual issues can be identified that are worthy of further consideration as particularly important influences on the opportunity for change. The first of these issues is the role of consumerism and increasing customer expectations of public services upon the management of local authority leisure facilities. The second to be examined is the role of government legislation in the decision to introduce Quality Programmes, as the past two decades have been characterised by unprecedented changes in the legislation affecting local government. The final issue to be considered is the change in management culture indicated by presence of new managerialism and the associated increasing
professionalism of public leisure facility management. This perceived cultural change is important as it has been suggested that it has led to the introduction of commercial management techniques, like Quality Programmes, into the public sector. Each of these issues, and the relationship between them, is examined in greater depth in Chapter two.

Table 1.1: Contextual influences on public leisure providers

- Central policy initiatives to:
  - reduce the public sector borrowing requirement
  - reduce the size of the public sector
  - create a mixed economy of welfare
  - create competition inside the public sector
- Increases in health and safety legislation
- Changes to employment law
- Change in central government
- Increasing consumerism
- Ageing of the population
- Decreases in labour pool
- Poor public image of local authorities
- Demand for 'open government' and accountability
- Decreases in budgets
- Recession
- Increases in competition for customers
- Increasing influence of the 3 E's (efficiency, economy and effectiveness)
- Increasing concern with 'Value for money'
- Changes in data storage, transfer and retrieval
- Improvements in leisure technology
- Change in management culture
  - New managerialism
  - Increasing professionalism
- Impact of politicians

(Source: Farnham and Horton, 1996; Gaster, 1995; Hender, 1993 and Lawton and Rose, 1994.)

The second category of Pettigrew's model, the content of change refers to the particular change under study. In this research the analysis of the content of change concerns what public leisure managers perceive Quality to be and how this is managed. This allows a consideration of why Quality Management has been considered an appropriate tool for use in local leisure facilities in response to the contextual factors highlighted above. The content of change is considered in Chapter three.

It is the process of change which forms the focus of this research as it seeks to explain why the phenomenon of Quality Management came to be present within local authority leisure facilities. In their critique of the Model of Strategic Change,
Spurgeon and Barwell (1991) discussed how the model suggests that change within organisations often originates with a small subset of people who have become aware of a mismatch between the demands of a changing environment and the current performance of the organisation.

(Spurgeon and Barwell, 1991, p.49)

The process by which this occurs has been described by Pettigrew (1987, p.658) as the “actions, reactions and interactions from various parties as they seek to move the firm from its present to its future state.” It is clear from the discussions above that the management of public leisure facilities has fundamentally changed as a result of the complex environmental factors that have impacted upon local authority leisure services. The most direct responsibility for responding to and implementing change as a result of these contextual factors has lain with the local authority leisure facility managers, and it is these upon which this research is focused, in order to understand why these managers have implemented this particular technique within their facilities. The research therefore investigates the decision to implement Quality Programmes within local authority leisure facilities from the perspective of senior leisure officials and facility managers. In doing this, the research aims to establish i) the factors that were perceived to have promoted the need for change in the management of their facilities, ii) why Quality Programmes were considered to be the appropriate form of change and iii) the influence of local authority leisure professionals on the decision to change. Thus the model developed by Pettigrew (1987) provides the opportunity to consider not only key environmental factors but allows these to be placed in the context of the historical, political and individual influences of the organisation under study. The research has three key objectives:

- the context of change: to establish what senior local authority leisure professionals consider to be the influences on the use of quality and quality programmes in local authority leisure facilities;
- the content of change: to establish how senior local authority leisure professionals conceptualise quality and quality management;
- the process of change: to establish what role these professionals played in the adoption of quality programmes within their local authority leisure facilities.
CHAPTER TWO: THE INTRODUCTION OF QUALITY MANAGEMENT - THE CONTEXT OF CHANGE

The previous chapter suggested three factors present within the operating context of public leisure services that may have been influential in the decision to use quality programmes within the management of local authority leisure facilities as they brought about the need for change. Pettigrew (1987) has suggested that it is not sufficient to treat context either just as descriptive background or as an eclectic list of antecedents that somehow shape the process.

(Pettigrew 1987, p.656)

Rather contextual factors and their interactions need to be evaluated to assess their influence in bringing about change and this chapter therefore looks at the impact of an emergence of a customer focus within public services, legislation and changes in culture in the management of local authority leisure facilities and assesses their relative significance in promoting the pursuit of quality management in these facilities. It focuses in particular on how the three areas of change identified, have materially affected the way in which local authority leisure facilities have come to be managed.

2.1 CUSTOMER FOCUS IN LOCAL AUTHORITIES

The need for a customer orientation in local government was promoted in the mid 1980s by the previously mentioned work of Clarke and Stewart who, in response to the expansion of the consumer movement into public services, began to focus research on the need for local government to become customer oriented. The direct applicability of the consumer movement to the public sector was challenged as it was recognised that customers of public services differ in many aspects from the customers of commercial organisations (Clarke and Stewart, 1987). In response to these recognised differences, Clarke and Stewart (1987) suggested that the management techniques associated with consumerism should be introduced into public services in a modified form. In conjunction with the Local Government Training Board, they went on to depict the fundamental changes needed in the management of public services in their development of the concept of the 'public service orientation' (PSO).

The PSO was based on four principles:

- a local authority will be judged by the quality of service provided within the resources available;
- the service provided is only of real value if it is of value to those for whom it is provided;
those for whom services are provided are customers demanding high quality services and citizens entitled to receive it;
• quality of service demands closeness to the customer and the citizen.

(LGTB, 1987, p.4)

In this way the PSO mirrored the management practices advocated by Peters and Waterman (1982) who promoted the 1980s 'excellence' movement in the private sector, while it also stressed the need to give weight to the political process of consultation. This was intended to lay the foundations for the public sector quality movement.

2.1.1 CUSTOMER ORIENTATION IN PUBLIC SERVICES

In the last ten years Farnham and Horton (1996), Pfeffer and Coote (1991) and in particular, Fenwick (1989) have suggested that a number of recent local government initiatives demonstrated a consumer perspective within local authority management and were evidence of the emergence of a public service orientation in local authorities. These included:

• direct collection of public views by customer surveys;
• attempts to provide access to services through initiatives such as outreach work;
• an increased access to information predominantly in the form of leaflets and increased information outlets;
• the formulation of subjective indicators of performance;
• changes to administrative style and managerial style inspired by notions of 'excellence' in management.

The clear focus upon customers epitomised in these initiatives was described by Sanderson (1992, p.7) as a "shift from bureaucratic production orientation to a post-bureaucratic service orientation" or, more simply, by the LGTB (1987), as service for the customer rather than to the customer.

This shift led to a focus on delivering services that met the actual requirements of the customer rather than their perceived requirements (LGTB, 1987) and represented a redirection of attention from the service deliverer to the customer. This heralded the emergence of a customer orientation within public services. Within the outlined initiatives, however, it was apparent that the focus was on customers/users of public services with little consideration for the citizen. As a result, it appeared that the concern with the citizen expressed in the PSO, which ostensibly differentiated the PSO from consumerism, was 'tokenistic', rather than guiding. This point was reflected in Clarke and Stewart's (1987) discussion of why citizens should be included in this orientation, which appeared to have little to offer
to public service providers in the way of guidance to ensure that citizens would be included in the delivery of quality services. The discussion offered by the LGTB (1987) did outline methods of consultation with the general public; however, the LGTB also suggested that consultation should be carried out primarily with people who benefit from the service. Thus, although it appeared that in principle the PSO tailored quality management for the public sector, in practice it was likely to encourage service providers to focus on the customer as a priority over the citizen, thus reinforcing the traditional orientation of quality management.

This orientation was furthered by the development and launch of the 1991 Conservative government’s Citizen’s Charter. In response to criticisms of decreasing social and political accountability brought about by legislation and structures to improve financial accountability, the Citizen’s Charter was introduced to make public services more politically accountable to the public and to raise the overall standard of provision. The Charter aimed to improve quality, choice, standard and value in public services (HMSO, 1991) and outlined seven principles of public service, many of which embodied the principles of consumerism. These seven principles were:

- Standards - setting, monitoring and publication of explicit standards that can be expected;
- Openness - full accurate information about how public services are run, costs involved and performance;
- Information - full and accurate information on services in plain language;
- Choice - choice and public consultation to be offered wherever possible;
- Non-discrimination - services should be available to all;
- Accessibility - services should be run to be convenient for the customer;
- Redress - a well publicised and readily available procedure for redress.

(HMSO, 1991)

The Citizen’s Charter made it mandatory for public services to adhere to these principles in their everyday management, but the penalties for not doing so have never been clearly defined and are, at present, at the discretion of the District Auditor. Despite this absence of meaningful sanctions, Pollitt (1994) and the Audit Commission (1994) considered that the Citizen’s Charter had been successful in reminding public sector managers of their accountability to the public as it had forced the collection of information to enable monitoring and increased the openness of local authority management. Pollitt (1994), however, also criticised the Charter for its predominant concern with users rather than citizens as, like the PSO, the Citizen’s Charter appeared to legitimate a focus on paying customers within public sector management. As a result, although the Citizen’s Charter
promoted a focus on customers and improved service delivery, this was likely to be at the expense of non-paying customers and the citizen, thus reflecting the impact of consumerism.

2.1.2 CUSTOMER ORIENTATION IN LOCAL AUTHORITY LEISURE SERVICES

The impact of consumerism on local authority leisure facilities was even more significant than in other local authority services as managers have been faced with an increasingly discerning market and greater competition. For public leisure facilities, competition had not only come from local alternatives, but also from leisure providers abroad. In addition, those that provided leisure opportunities had to compete with all other claims on the discretionary income in customers' pockets. In their discussion of quality within the public leisure service, Sheppard and Studd (1994) considered that the very nature of leisure made a customer focus important as

leisure is a concept of time. It is the time when people have the greatest choice and discretion about what they do. So in an age when there are increasing demands on our time and new and exceptional opportunities on offer, people can and are becoming increasingly discerning about how to spend both their precious time and disposable income.

(Sheppard and Studd, 1994, p.1)

The opportunity for choice, which differentiates leisure from most other public services, alongside the requirement to generate revenue, reinforced the need for local authority leisure managers to be customer focused in their service delivery. Customers could choose whether to make use of the local authority service, they could choose which leisure service to use and they could change their habits at any time. In response to this, public leisure managers began to manage their operations in a manner that reflected commercial provision, and adopted the consumerist initiatives identified by Fenwick (1989). Courteen (1995) discussed the widespread use of customer surveys, while the use of out-reach workers, particularly in sports development, was identified by Coalter and Allison (1996) and Eady (1993). The use of subjective indicators of performance was highlighted by Craig (1995) and changes in administration and management style were noted by Henry (1993). The most significant response to consumerism and competition was, however, the development of management initiatives which were incorporated into the concept of customer care which focused on the major customer groups of leisure facilities. Customer comment cards, market research and staff training gained prominence in the late 1980s as public leisure facility managers responded to increasing competition and increasing expectations. The customer consultation which became
compulsory with the introduction of the Citizen's Charter further supported the spread of customer care initiatives throughout the public leisure industry.

From this it is apparent that Pollitt's (1994) criticism of the customer orientation of the Citizen's Charter was particularly relevant to public leisure services. This was reinforced by the type of data collected for the development of the Citizen's Charter's leisure indicators, as the Audit Commission only required the reporting of the paying customers of leisure facilities. More importantly, however, the focus on the paying customer within local authority leisure may have actively worked against the rights of citizenship. For many public services, particularly social services, the focus on the user may be justified as customers are commonly drawn from the less advantaged sectors of the community and are arguably the individuals most in need of the service. As such, it could be argued that those not using the service do not need the service and therefore do not require consideration. This is not the case for leisure where the focus on the paying customer may have led to the exclusion of needy groups, as non-users, rather than not needing the service, may face particular barriers to accessing it. Thus, customer focus in public leisure facilities brought about by consumerism, competition and the Citizen's Charter may have undermined the traditional rationale for its existence.

It would appear that consumerism and increasing market competition led to the emergence of a customer focus which laid the foundations for quality management within local leisure services management. In response to pressures for customer orientated services, public sector leisure managers instigated customer care initiatives within their organisations with the goal of improving the quality of service provision. Consumerism was therefore a significant factor in encouraging changes in the management of local authority leisure facilities, with public sector leisure managers beginning to pursue the use of quality programmes in their services, as customer care became a priority.

2.2 THE IMPACT OF LEGISLATION

The use of quality programmes for customer care purposes does not, however, account for the full magnitude of the change in the management of public services. Customer focus and customer care programmes require good customer communication, but do not necessarily bring about the wide-spread transformation of management style and techniques that were outlined by Farnham and Horton (1993, 1996), Henry (1993) and Lawton and Rose (1994). To attempt to account for this, it is necessary to consider the impact of legislation upon contemporary local government. This may also have encouraged the presence of quality management in
CHAPTER TWO: THE CONTEXT OF CHANGE

local authority facilities, as providers sought appropriate responses to legislative changes.

2.2.1 LEGISLATION AND PUBLIC SERVICES

The central government challenge to the historical role of local government in the delivery of public services was expressed in legislative initiatives aimed at reducing the power and the size of the public sector. In their review of local government, Stewart and Stoker (1989) identified three sets of issues underpinning the policies of successive Conservative administrations that facilitated change in the management of public services. Reflecting the policy themes identified in Chapter one, Stewart and Stoker firstly outlined how government policy was committed to reducing the self-sufficient role of local authorities in public service provision by encouraging partnerships in service delivery. Secondly, the introduction of competition, through Compulsory Competitive Tendering, was considered to be a drive for increased efficiency, customer orientation and choice in public services. The final set of issues was characterised by a concern with the customer and legislation, as outlined earlier, put pressure on local authorities to become more responsive to the needs of customers.

The drive for quality management is compatible with these policy themes and in promoting the radical changes affecting local authorities, central government consistently argued that the quality of public services would increase. The prominence of the rhetoric of quality improvement in government reforms since the early 1980s led Kirkpatrick and Martinez Lucio (1995, p.1) to claim that by "emphasising quality, Conservative governments have tried to present change as legitimate and in the public interest." They went on to say that

unlike previous debates about how to improve the standard of public services, during the 1980s Conservative governments engaged explicitly with the concept of quality imported directly from the private sector."

(Kirkpatrick and Martinez Lucio, 1995, p.1)

This engagement was evidenced in the early 1980s, by central government's concern with quality and quality improvement being expressed through the concept of providing value for money, which was, at the time, the prevalent commercial definition of Quality. Inherent within this, was a battery of techniques for implementing quality assurance and quality control, epitomised by the BSI standard, BS5750, which led to the previously identified Government insistence on supplier accreditation. This concern with quality improvement led to the
establishment of the Audit Commission in 1982, which was charged with the role of monitoring the management and value for money of local government.

Concern with quality also provided the context for the introduction of Compulsory Competitive Tendering, as competition was considered to improve organisational efficiency and thus value for money (Kirkpatrick and Martinez Lucio, 1995). By the mid-1980s, however, the emphasis on value for money was receiving criticism in the commercial sector (Peters and Waterman, 1982) as it was considered to have promoted cost cutting practices to the detriment of service quality and profit. In response to similar criticisms in the public sector, the Audit Commission (1989) agreed to a change in policy emphasis as it considered that councils were under pressure to provide more responsive services to more demanding consumers.

This shift in emphasis was most publicly articulated in the Citizen's Charter. Ostensibly a central response to increasing public expectations of operational accountability and quality of public services, the Citizen's Charter was a clear example of central government's use of quality management concepts to justify change. Requiring widespread changes to management information and the introduction of complaints and redress procedures, the Charter was an attempt to pull together the variety of quality initiatives that had been launched in local government during the 1980s. It represented the Major-led Conservative government's attempt to standardise the notion of quality within public services. As discussed previously, it contained a clear emphasis on the paying customer and therefore was also a continuation of the attack upon traditional local government which had commenced with the Thatcherite policies of the previous decade. This was emphasised by Lovell (1992) who considered that

if the improvements in the customer service required by the Citizen's Charter are to be effective and long lasting, changes in structures and systems will need to be accompanied by change in culture and management style.

(Lovell, 1992, p.395)

The focus on customers promoted by the Charter was rapidly combined with the previous concern with value for money as the Citizen's Charter was closely followed by the White paper, *Competing for quality*. Here it was claimed that:

competition is the best guarantee of quality...The government's model of an enabling authority will promote more effective and business-like management which pays more attention to customer requirements and value for money.

(HM Treasury, 1991, pp.1-2)
The need to combine these two elements to ensure quality provision provided the justification for the continuation and expansion of CCT, despite widespread concerns at its cost-cutting focus. In 1994, however, in response to concerns regarding this cost focus, the Secretary of State allowed local authorities to consider quality management in the assessment of Compulsory Competitive Tendering bids. This was a significant shift away from the past insistence on the acceptance of the lowest viable bid and followed in the wake of increasing evidence that CCT was failing in its objective to improve service quality (Carnaghan and Bracewell-Milnes, 1993; Colling, 1995; Craig, 1993). The subsequent guidance document released by the Local Government Management Board (1994) encouraged the assessment of quality management against pre-determined quality criteria, thereby enhancing the competitiveness of quality programmes in assessing bids in the tendering process.

Central government use of quality management as a tool for introducing change continued with the 1997 change of government as the Blair-led Labour administration came to power committed to the concept of 'Best Value'. Based on the principles of accountability, transparency, continuous improvement and ownership (The Scottish Office, 1997) the underlying rationale for Best Value was, once again, quality management and a customer focus. Building on the public service orientation developed by Clarke and Stewart, a central commitment to quality management was inherent in 'Best Value' which was seen as being "not just about economy and efficiency, but also about effectiveness and the quality of local services" (Armstrong, 1997, p.2). As an agenda for change, 'Best Value' was intended to become increasingly prominent within local authorities as it replaced CCT in the new millennium.

### 2.2.2 LEGISLATION AND PUBLIC LEISURE SERVICES

Compulsory Competitive Tendering was introduced into Leisure Services in 1989, with the dual objectives of decreasing the cost of local government and improving services to users. The potential role of quality management within CCT was substantial, as responsibility for maintaining service quality remained with local authorities through contract specification and monitoring (Audit Commission, 1989). The legislation might therefore facilitate the decision to implement quality programmes into public leisure facilities in two ways. Firstly, the use of quality programmes was seen as a possible tool for meeting the requirements of monitoring and quality assurance (Audit Commission, 1993 and Curry and Monaghan, 1994). Secondly, quality programmes could be seen to provide a competitive edge to assist DSO bids for the management contracts (Holmes, 1993).
The rhetoric of quality has provided central governments of the past two decades with a lever for changing the role and structure of local leisure services. Based on the premise that the initiated policy changes would bring greater value for money and improved service delivery, central government used quality management concepts to justify the fundamental changes affecting public leisure services provision. The implementation of this programme of legislation occurred alongside the expansion of consumerism within public services which provided the central government justification and direction for the changes required by the legislation (Kirkpatrick and Martinez Lucio (1995). This suggests that CCT, the Citizen's Charter and other legislation may have promoted the introduction of quality management within public leisure facilities as managers were required to use quality programmes as a response to legislation. It is apparent that the legislation legitimised a focus on the paying customer, reflecting the commercial orientation of quality management in some public services brought about by the impact of consumerism.

Although it is clear that the legislation discussed above has allowed, or indeed promoted, a commercial focus to the delivery of public leisure services, there is also evidence of a change of culture in the management of public services which has led to the 'commercialisation' of public service management. This provides a third explanation for the use of quality programmes within local authority leisure facilities - that the use of these management tools reflects an increasingly commercial approach to public leisure facility management.

2.3 THE CHANGING NATURE OF PUBLIC SECTOR MANAGEMENT

The post war establishment of the Welfare State led to a significant growth in all parts of the public sector after 1945, but particularly in local government as it was the key provider of many of the services considered to be essential for the state's welfare. By 1979, local government employed over three million people (Farnham and Horton, 1996) and professionals within local authorities played a fundamental and often paternalistic role in service provision by determining what was needed, when it was needed, and how it would be delivered. As a consequence, the management associated with this form of government was typically described as bureaucratic, incorporating these features:

- a concern with the individual's position and responsibility within the organisational hierarchy;
- an assumption of a 'job for life';
- work conducted according to prescribed rules with written records kept of each transaction;
• officials selected according to merit, trained for their function, controlling access to the knowledge stored in files.

(adapted from Lawton and Rose, 1994)

From the mid 1970s, however, the welfare state and its management faced rising criticisms over alleged inefficiency and ineffectiveness. The welfare state was considered to encourage public spending and was thereby inflationary and placed excessive tax burdens on the electorate. Corresponding criticisms aimed at the management of public services were made by political commentators and the public at large and focused on the absence of financial management systems, measures of performance and cost control. In addition, it was argued that the professionals responsible for the running of public services lacked appropriate managerial skills. By 1978 public disillusion with local authority services which "appeared to be provided by insensitive, monolithic bureaucracies in conformity with rigid and apparently unnecessary rules" (Elcock, 1996, p.180), was at its greatest.

2.3.1 THE EMERGENCE OF NEW MANAGERIALISM IN PUBLIC SERVICES

Radical change began with the election of the Conservative government in 1979. Elcock (1996, p.180) described this Conservative administration as being "innately hostile" to local authorities, seeing them as "bloated, unresponsive bureaucracies which needed to be converted into leaner, fitter organisations." This belief was still evident in the report Performance review in local government released by the Audit Commission (1988, p.1), nearly a decade later. Here it was stated that the continued existence of local government "depends on its ability to be competitive, offer consumer choice and provide well managed, quality services."

The Audit Commission released a series of documents and papers between 1986 and 1988 in which it argued that, in order to respond to the need for greater accountability and spending restraint, local government needed to introduce a comprehensive system of performance review (Table 2.1). Based on a model used in the commercial sector, the Audit Commission argued that local authorities should evaluate the effectiveness of their services, consider outcomes as well as inputs and outputs, and monitor and review performance as a matter of course. It was felt that this process of performance review would address the management weaknesses that the Conservative government thought to be inherent within local authorities. Once again the focus was on the user and there was tacit acceptance of the superiority of the practices of commercial management over those of the public sector.
Table 2.1: Performance review in local government

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Setting service aims and objectives</th>
<th>Monitoring performance</th>
<th>Reviewing performance against targets and comparisons</th>
<th>Identifying changes and priority issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What are we trying to do?</td>
<td>How do we measure it?</td>
<td>How well are we managing what we have?</td>
<td>Why and what do we need to change?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To provide an efficient and effective service</td>
<td>Resources/costs:</td>
<td>Are we economic/efficient with resources?</td>
<td>We need to be more efficient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To target our service at those it is intended for</td>
<td>Customers:</td>
<td>Are we delivering to the right customer?</td>
<td>We aim to reach/have fewer/more customers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To organise our service in the best, most cost effective way possible</td>
<td>Service delivery organisation:</td>
<td>Are we matching resources to customers in the most effective way?</td>
<td>We could organise service delivery more effectively/efficiently</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To specify and then deliver a high quality service</td>
<td>Service delivered:</td>
<td>Are we delivering the type and standard of service we set out to achieve?</td>
<td>We want to deliver:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End results/outcomes:</td>
<td></td>
<td>What is happening as a result and what do our customers think about it?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Adapted from Audit Commission, 1988)
The introduction of such techniques into the management of public services was a feature of the culture of new managerialism that was emerging within them. Transferred from the private sector, it can be argued that new managerialism led to the presence of commercial management initiatives such as quality programmes within local authority services, as central to this philosophy were the assumptions that:

- social progress requires continuing increases in economic productivity;
- productivity increases come from applying sophisticated technologies;
- the application of these technologies can only be achieved through a disciplined workforce;
- business success depends on the professionalism of skilled managers;
- to perform their crucial role, managers must have the right to manage.

(Pollitt, 1993, pp. 2-3)

Managerialism not only incorporated the use of commercial systems and techniques into public services, but also promoted and justified a central role for managers and management within public organisations.

Historically there has been little evidence of the presence of a coherent management philosophy within local government as, although local authorities have occasionally adopted private sector techniques and structures, management in local government has reflected a bias towards reactive administration and bureaucratic process (Farnham and Horton, 1993). Aspects of new managerialism within public services are, however, relatively easy to identity and Hood (1991, pp. 4-5) described how new managerialism in local government has a number of parameters:

- hands on professional management;
- explicit standards and measures of performance;
- greater emphasis on output controls;
- shift to disaggregation of units;
- shift to greater competition;
- a stress on greater discipline and parsimony of resource use.

Farnham and Horton (1993, p.238) identified similar features as evidence of new managerialism:

- a rational approach to management, which emphasises the role of strategic management in setting objectives and clarifying policy issues;
- the development of performance indicators enabling comparisons and measures of achievement to be made and providing information upon which future decisions can be determined;
- the creation of a flexible, responsive and 'learning' public organisation;
• changes in organisational structures designed to separate policy from administration and creating executive units with delegated responsibility for service delivery, whether internally to other parts of the organisation or externally to the public;
• the development of the public service orientation.

In their review of the impact of the legislative changes of the 1980s, Farnham and Horton (1993) went on to outline the many benefits that they perceived new managerialism to have had for the public sector. Firstly, they suggested that public organisations were 'leaner and meaner' with less staff, less waste and a more rational approach to decision making. Secondly, they argued that public services had attempted to be more responsive to those using their service, had provided increased access to information and had accounted in detail for resources. They identified a decrease in the power of unions and professional bodies which made professional workers more accountable to managers and the general public. Finally, they indicated an increased flexibility of management within the public sector as a result of new managerialism which had led to a commitment to the 3 E's - efficiency, economy and effectiveness - and the seeking of value for money.

The role of legislation in the development of new managerialism within public services was significant. Central government's commitment to the principles of enterprise between 1979 and 1997 led Farnham and Horton (1993, p.46) to suggest that the Conservative programme of legislation was predicated upon the view that private sector economistic, rationalist and generic management is the ideal model of management to be aimed at. It is seen as superior to the public administration or public management models and, if the efficiency and quality of public service provision is to be improved, then private sector management practices and ideologies need to be imported into public organisations.

By cutting financial resources, opening up a variety of local authority services to competition and espousing the value of quality management to service delivery, government legislation intended to force local authorities to operate in a commercial manner. Through legislation, central government looked to emulate commercial management within the public sector which led Common, Flynn and Mellon (1992) to consider that a new breed of public sector managers was necessary to manage along commercial lines, or at the very least, to have adopted the language of 'business'.

It is important to note that during this period the main indicators of successful management performance were financial. There was little obvious attempt to measure the achievement of social goals, nor were there penalties for failing to meet
expressed social objectives. The main sanctions were for financial performance. This apparent lack of concern for the underlying rationale of public services further legitimised the adoption of the commercial approach to the management of public services indicated by the features outlined above.

2.3.2 THE EMERGENCE OF NEW MANAGERIALISM IN PUBLIC LEISURE SERVICES

A review of local authority leisure services led to criticisms similar to those made of other public services as the Audit Commission (1989) identified several weaknesses in the management of public leisure services. Firstly, they felt that many local authorities were unclear about the aims of their leisure service and stressed the need to balance social and financial objectives. In the keynote report *Sport for whom?* the Audit Commission noted that:

> objectives are rarely quantified and success or failure in meeting objectives rarely measured or monitored. It is easy to 'move the goalposts' and explain any unexpectedly high deficit by invoking social objectives.

(Audit Commission, 1989, p.2)

Investment decisions were also considered to be poorly thought out and the Commission called for a greater co-ordination between authorities and alternative providers. The method of price subsidy followed by most local authorities was challenged, as were their methods of monitoring performance. Again, the private sector models of strategic review, competition and improved co-ordination were suggested as the way forward.

Evidence of the presence of new managerialism within public leisure services is to be found in a variety of sources. Although not without criticism, the increased use of planning and the development of standards and measures of performance was noted and discussed by Bovaird (1992) and Craig (1995). The increase in information available for decision making was considered by Nichols and Taylor (1995) and Nichols (1996), while increases in managerial responsibility and the presence of a market oriented approach to management within public leisure services was identified and explored by Henry (1993). From this literature it appears that new managerialism emerged as a coherent management philosophy within public leisure services. What is not clear is how this philosophy has emerged within the management of local authority leisure services.

The introduction of new managerialism within local authority leisure services can be attributed to two possible causes. Firstly, as the earlier discussion suggests, legislation promoted the use of commercial management techniques such as
strategic planning, zero based budgeting and quality management, as public leisure managers responded to changes in legislation by adopting the management techniques that appeared to work in the private sector. Research carried out for the Sports Council and the Sports Council for Wales supports this, presenting evidence of a shift towards cost effectiveness, increased use of information technology and a customer focus. The 1994 report claimed that

ultimately the public was seen as benefiting the most from the changes.....many believed the main advantage of CCT was a greater orientation and focus on the customer.

(Lawrence, Standeven and Tomlinson, 1994, p.35)

In addition, the role of CCT in promoting the generation of management information was noted by Nichols and Taylor (1995) and Nichols (1996) who concluded that Compulsory Competitive Tendering was the catalyst for the generation of greater information on the costs of the service, levels of demand and the requirements of users. The Citizen’s Charter was thought to have had a similar impact on local authority leisure services and Thomas (1997) discussed research that identified how the Charter Mark led to improvements in staff friendliness, teamwork and job satisfaction. The role of the Audit Commission was also prominent as it pushed for the introduction of techniques based on the performance review model presented earlier.

Although there was evidence that the impact of Conservative policy had not been as comprehensive as was desired (Centre for Leisure Research, 1993 and Coalter, 1995), it also became clear that legislation, in particular CCT, promoted the transference of commercial management techniques into the management of public leisure facilities (Bovaird, 1992 and Nichols, 1996) and thus fostered the culture of new managerialism.

A second explanation, however, for the emergence of new managerialism, or new public management, was that it had been the result of the increasing professionalism of the management of public leisure services. Industrial professionalism within the management of public leisure services has been discussed by Coalter et al (1986), Coalter (1986) and Henry (1993) and provided an alternative to the ‘legislation’ explanation for the presence of new managerialism.

The development of the market orientation identified by Henry (1993), that has continued throughout the 1990s, is likely to have brought about the increasing development of industrial professionalism within public leisure services management. The styles and techniques associated with industrial professionalism are those required to develop a customer focus and to manage the impact of
legislation. Consequently, the actions of leisure professionals in responding to these factors are likely to have resulted in the introduction of commercial management techniques into public leisure management and led to the emergence and expansion of new managerialism.

Evidence of this form of professionalism was provided by Henry (1993) who discussed how the management style within public leisure services had changed to reflect commercial management practice (Table 2.2). These features, alongside the profusion of literature in the professional press advocating commercial practice, a remarkable increase in the number of educational institutions offering leisure management programmes (Hanson, Minten and Taylor, 1998) and the ongoing publication of the Sport Council’s Factfile, suggest an increasingly professional industry.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rationale for provision</th>
<th>Welfare reformism</th>
<th>Economic realism</th>
<th>The flexible state</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time scale</td>
<td>Late 1970s/early 1980s</td>
<td>Mid 1980s</td>
<td>Late 1980s/early 1990s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dimensions of provision</td>
<td>Activity/group focus</td>
<td>Community focus</td>
<td>Market focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objectives</td>
<td>Maximise participation</td>
<td>Maximise opportunities for 'problem groups'</td>
<td>Economic efficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management Styles</td>
<td>Decentralised</td>
<td>Decentralised, advocacy, catalytic role</td>
<td>Expert marketeer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode of consultation</td>
<td>Consultant</td>
<td>Partnership</td>
<td>Market research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes to client</td>
<td>Encouragement of under users</td>
<td>Positive support of disadvantaged</td>
<td>Identify appropriate market segments; customer care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception of facilities</td>
<td>Service provision and delivery</td>
<td>Shared resources</td>
<td>Products to be designed to meet needs of target markets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme emphases</td>
<td>Informal, fun and sociability, elitism played down</td>
<td>Proactive, creative, developmental</td>
<td>Selling lifestyle, health and fitness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Adapted from Henry, 1993)

In recent years, the presence of new managerialism in local authority leisure management has not been contested. What is unknown, however, is the extent to which the changes discussed by Henry (1993) are a result of an increase in
professionalism in the management of public leisure facilities or whether they are the inevitable result of government legislation. There is evidence to support Henry's (1993) argument that the industry had become increasingly professionalised leading managers to choose appropriate management tools.

In their recognition of the presence of new managerialism within the public sector, Farnham and Horton (1993, p.27) identified the role of policy in facilitating the development of new management practices within local authorities. They commented that without the shift in emphasis to the 'enabling' state

the managerialist ideas and practices, based on private sector orthodoxy, would have been unlikely to have taken root as they have done.

It is evident that the use of commercial techniques has become common within the management of local authority leisure facilities as a result of the emergence of new managerialism. This provides a third explanation for the use of quality programmes within local authority leisure facilities. What is not clear, however, is the relative significance of legislation and professionalism on the emergence of new managerialism and the associated use of commercial management techniques. This research seeks to inform this debate.

2.4 CONCLUSIONS

An analysis of the context into which quality management has been introduced suggests that there are three factors which have raised the issue of quality management within public leisure services. There is evidence to suggest that consumerism and market competition led to a customer focus and the subsequent introduction of customer care practices; that legislation encouraged the use of quality management and promoted the use of commercial management techniques and that an increase in professionalism within the industry led to the emergence of new managerialism within the management of public leisure facilities. There therefore appear to be three possible rationales for the introduction of quality programmes in local authority leisure facilities:

1. Public leisure professionals implemented quality programmes because customer care became a priority in public leisure facilities;
2. Public leisure professionals were required to use quality programmes as a response to legislation;
3. Public leisure professionals adopted a more 'commercial' approach to the management of their facilities.

While it is clear that these three rationales have influenced the issue of quality management within public leisure services, it is difficult to determine to what
extent they can be regarded as distinct from each other. For example, customer care can be considered an integral part of a 'commercial' approach to management and, as discussed earlier, legislation has been introduced with the apparent aim of promoting this approach to management. As such, the relative importance of each of these reasons in bringing about change within public leisure management is unclear, as is their interaction.

In the context of the current research it is nonetheless important that each is considered separately, for while it is apparent that the three are closely interwoven and often converge, in content they differ in important ways, varying in how they suggest that change has been brought about in local authority leisure facilities. Has this been a result of an internal drive from public sector leisure professionals, external encouragement from a broader societal shift to consumerism and individualised rights, or a necessary response required by mandatory legislation? As such they provide a starting point for the analysis of the use of quality management within public leisure facilities and the extent to which these three factors have collectively and separately contributed to the need for quality management within local authority services is one of the foci of this research.
CHAPTER THREE: THE INTRODUCTION OF QUALITY MANAGEMENT - THE CONTENT OF CHANGE

The analytical model presented in the first chapter has as its underlying premise that the understanding of strategic change within organisations can only be brought about by a thorough knowledge of the content, context and process of this change. Chapter two evaluated evidence of the existence of a number of factors in the context of change, identifying three substantive influences on the introduction of quality programmes into local authority leisure facilities. In this chapter the focus is on the content of change as the content of quality management provides the foundation for understanding how quality programmes could be used to address the changing public leisure context outlined in the previous chapter (Pettigrew, 1987). The content of quality management is established by considering firstly, what is meant by quality and secondly, how it is managed.

The literature that informs these dimensions can be considered prescriptive in that it belongs within that body of literature that aspires to tell managers how to manage. Although much of this literature is based on organisational research, it has a tendency to accept the validity of the concept of quality within management. As a result, much of the writing and research available on the content of quality presents the concept in a positive light and there is a dearth of published literature which challenges the applicability of quality management to the public leisure sector. Most of the material presented and discussed below has been written for the leisure ‘professional’ and provides evidence of the acceptance of quality as a valid management concept among those employed within the public leisure industry (Mills, 1992, Mosscrop and Stores, 1990, Sheppard and Studd, 1994).

3.1 THE MEANING OF QUALITY

The general acceptance of the word quality into management ‘speak’ has not extended to a generally accepted definition of what is meant by quality. This has led to the over-abundance of definitions identified by Davidson and Bailey (1995). Their review of the literature on quality provided a detailed consideration of the main definitions of quality and identified the logical progression in their development from the manufacturing to the service sector. This led to the conclusion that many of the current formulaic definitions of quality were, in fact, inadequate or inappropriate for public services.
Nonetheless, it is considered important to have an indication of what is considered to be quality as this provides the direction for quality management and quality programmes (Robinson and Wolsey, 1996). It also provides a benchmark for the measurement of quality and Stabler (1996) commented that without an agreed definition of quality, its assessment would be impossible as the terms used in the definition should highlight what is important when aiming to deliver a quality service. For example, the definition offered by Deming (1986) focuses on the need to exceed customer expectations which emphasises the role of the customer in the delivery process; Juran (1988) emphasises conformance to requirements; while the definition of the British Standards Institute refers to the need to consider the characteristics that make up the service to be delivered:

quality is the totality of features and characteristics of a product or service that bear on its ability to satisfy a given need.

(BS4778, 1987, p.1)

Finally, Clark’s (1992, p.23) definition extends this by not only referring to the customer and the features of the service, but also identifying the need for managing the delivery of the service:

quality is how consistently the product or service delivered, meets or exceeds the customers' expectations and needs.

The weaknesses of the above definitions have been discussed by Davidson and Bailey (1995). The main problem is their tendency to become forgotten slogans, which led Gaster (1995) to suggest that the formulation of a generic definition of quality for public services may be inappropriate. Instead she proposed that the need for guidance could be met in three ways: by identifying customer groups, by specifying the service to be delivered and by the management of customer satisfaction. Together, she suggested, these could be combined to guide the quality management activities of the organisation.

3.2 A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE CONSIDERATION OF QUALITY MANAGEMENT

Gaster’s (1995) three principles move away from simply providing a slogan for the guidance of quality activities within the organisation and begin to suggest how quality can be managed. Building on the above features it is possible to add a fourth dimension - the need for clear objectives - to establish a framework for quality management and provide a structure for the consideration of the content of quality across four dimensions:

- the identification of key interest groups;
- the establishment of quality objectives;
• the management of the characteristics of service quality defined in certain key dimensions;
• the understanding of the gap between expectations and experience of a service - the 'satisfaction' gap.

This framework has two functions. Firstly, it has considerable potential value as a template for the management of quality within local authority leisure facilities. Within the current study, it is, however, more significant as a conceptual model to provide a structure for the analysis of the content of quality management within public leisure facilities. In this capacity it provides a coherent approach to determining what quality management is perceived to mean within public leisure services. The following discussion of the content of quality examines each dimension in turn.

3.2.1 THE IDENTIFICATION OF KEY INTEREST GROUPS

The need to firstly identify key interest groups is considered fundamental to the provision of a quality service as it is the requirements and interests of these groups that determines what constitutes service quality. The identification of key interest groups and an awareness of the role that they play in service design, represents the fundamental shift in public service management that was espoused by Clarke and Stewart (1987) and the LGTB (1987) in their development of the public service orientation.

The aforementioned limitation of the PSO in considering the role of citizens within the delivery of quality services is evident when considering the identification, by leisure professionals, of paying customers as being the key interest group in the delivery of quality services. Holmes (1993) and Melhuish (1991) discussed the need to meet customer requirements when implementing ISO9002 in leisure facilities. The professional bodies, ISRM (1995) and ILAM (1996) have both produced guidance on 'customer' care aimed at improving service for users and Mosscrop and Stores (1990) consider customers as those who interact with the organisation. Although Sheppard and Studd (1994) and Robinson (1997) noted the presence of non-using customers, they also suggested the need to prioritise paying customers. This focus is supported by the Sports Council's development and endorsement of Quest, which focuses on paying customers. Although public services are all affected, to some degree, by the needs and expectations of direct and indirect customers, staff, politicians, professionals and citizens, meeting the often conflicting requirements of all of these groups is difficult and, it has been suggested, unnecessary (Robinson, 1997). For public leisure managers, the changing environment within which they operate is likely to have brought about the
priority of the paying customer and of politicians and staff. This is due to the need
to generate income brought about by decreasing financial resources subsequently
leading managers to adopt the commercial principles inherent within quality
management. As discussed earlier, this commercial focus was legitimised by the
legislation of the 1980s and although this commercialism appears to be in conflict
with the principles of full accountability espoused by legislation, it does offer an
explanation for the evident focus on the paying customer to the exclusion of other
stakeholders.

3.2.2 THE ESTABLISHMENT OF OBJECTIVES FOR QUALITY

The establishment of objectives for quality would appear essential as these, in
theory, should provide the direction for quality management and quality initiatives.
The definitions outlined earlier go some way to providing a focus for quality
management activities, but they are likely to be too vague to be of operational use.
Given the Audit Commission's (1989) criticisms of local government weaknesses in
expressing objectives in terms which are vague, conflicting, difficult to achieve and
unmeasurable, the process of defining clear quality objectives is likely to facilitate a
move towards an increasingly commercial approach to the management of public
leisure facilities and therefore new managerialism.

In principle, the establishment of objectives for quality could act as a guide in
making choices about the quality programme to be used to manage the quality of
service delivery and thus, provide the rationale for the presence of quality
programmes in public leisure facilities. For many public leisure managers, however,
it is likely that their objectives for quality management are prescribed by the choice
of programme, particularly by those externally assessed programmes to be
discussed below. As a result, the presence of quality programmes within the
management of public leisure facilities is likely to have less to do with objectives for
service quality and more to do with other influences on the management of these
facilities. The identification of these influences and the assessment of their impact
is addressed in this research.

3.2.3 THE MANAGEMENT OF THE CHARACTERISTICS OF SERVICE QUALITY

The third dimension of the quality strategy has been established by the work of
Parasuraman, Zeithaml and Berry (1985) who identified a number of factors that
customers use when evaluating service quality. Subsequent research by Skelcher
(1992) and Curry and Monaghan (1994) tailored these for the local government
context. It has been argued that these characteristics (Table 3.1) need to be
Table 3.1: Characteristics of public service quality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reliability</td>
<td>Consistency of performance and dependability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsiveness</td>
<td>Willingness of staff to provide service and timing of service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competence</td>
<td>Possession of the required skills and knowledge to perform the service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Access</td>
<td>Approachability and ease of contact.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courtey</td>
<td>Politeness, respect and friendliness of contact personnel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication and voice</td>
<td>Keeping customers informed and allowing customers to contribute to service specifications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credibility</td>
<td>Trustworthiness, honesty and believability.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security</td>
<td>Freedom from danger, unnecessary risk and doubt.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer oriented</td>
<td>Knowing customer requirements and giving customer individualised attention.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tangibles</td>
<td>Physical evidence of the service.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


These criteria provide the operating principles for the substantive content of quality management, which is the use of quality programmes. It has been suggested by Sanderson (1992) that quality programmes should simply be viewed as working practices and that these practices should be 'built in' to the organisation's activities to ensure the provision of quality. This is because quality programmes have been developed to assist with the management of the above criteria, at a level that is perceived to be of an acceptable quality. The choice of quality programmes available to local authority leisure managers is extensive and a small selection is presented in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: The main quality programmes available to public leisure providers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>Focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ISO9002</td>
<td>Assists with quality assurance through the development of a manual of operations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investors In People</td>
<td>Promotes staff training and development to ensure organisational objectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charter Mark</td>
<td>Focuses on customers and communication.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QUEST</td>
<td>Focuses on all aspects of facility management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Quality Management</td>
<td>Aims to encourage organisation culture of quality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer care programmes</td>
<td>Focuses on customers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It has been argued by Gaster (1992) and Skelcher (1992) that quality programmes can assist with the management of the parts of the leisure service that can be specified, standardised and are primarily within management control. As a result, their role in the management of quality is apparent as many of the characteristics of quality outlined above require the specification of standardised features. These then need to be delivered at a standard that is acceptable to the identified key interest groups. The potential role of quality programmes in the management of the aforementioned characteristics of service quality is presented in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3: The role of quality programmes in the management of service quality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>Characteristics of service quality most managed by the programme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ISO9002</td>
<td>Reliability, competence, access, security and tangibles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investors in People</td>
<td>Responsiveness, competence, credibility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charter Mark</td>
<td>Responsiveness, communication and voice, customer orientated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QUEST</td>
<td>All aspects of the service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Quality Management</td>
<td>All aspects of the service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer care programmes</td>
<td>Responsiveness, competence, communication and voice, customer orientated.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the literature it is possible to identify two categories of quality programme, those that are externally developed and assessed and those that are developed in-house and are not assessed. The first group of programmes (Table 3.4) is developed, prescribed and assessed by external awarding bodies. Externally awarded programmes are considered to have advantages in terms of external recognition and validation and have been used to meet the monitoring and quality assurance requirements of CCT (Audit Commission, 1993; Leybourne, 1995; Mills, 1992). It is also possible to argue that these programmes have an additional advantage in that they provide a structured means of focusing on the quality of operations as they require a full assessment of the relevant organisational systems. For example, LiP focuses on staff development and training, ISO9002 on organisation procedures and the Charter Mark upon customers and customer care. The objectives of each programme are clearly defined, by the awarding body, providing a direction for quality management and these programmes often include measures of success. They have, however, a tendency to be inflexible, require adherence to a formatted structure and are relatively costly to gain and maintain. The main externally awarded programmes available to public leisure managers are ISO9002, Investors in People, the Charter Mark and, more recently, Quest.
### Table 3.4: The characteristics of externally assessed quality programmes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Award/certification body</th>
<th>ISO9002</th>
<th>Investors in People</th>
<th>Charter Mark</th>
<th>QUEST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No limit.*</td>
<td>No limit.*</td>
<td>100 per year.</td>
<td>No limit.*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As long as the organisation complies with the standard.</td>
<td>Any organisation.</td>
<td>3 years.</td>
<td>2 years.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Must satisfy 20 standard procedural requirements and have them running 3 months before application is assessed.</td>
<td>Must satisfy 24 assessment indicators aimed at improving performance through development of staff.</td>
<td>Nine criteria based on the principles of public service.</td>
<td>Must meet minimum standards in 25 management criteria.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submission of a quality manual of procedures as required by the standard.</td>
<td>Submission of an action plan which gives clear evidence of resources for training and developing employees.</td>
<td>Written applications no longer than 10 pages and supporting information providing evidence that each criterion is reached.</td>
<td>Organisation makes self assessment measured against criteria then applies for assessment.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approx. £1500 for initial registration, £1000 every year following.</td>
<td>No charge and there is often funding available from TEC's to assist application.</td>
<td>No charge.</td>
<td>Minimum of £750 for initial assessment plus £600 to maintain registration.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Initial 3 day assessment visit and twice yearly checks following accreditation.</td>
<td>Assessment of written application and site visit to talk to employees.</td>
<td>Panel assesses written application and visits all short-listed organisations.</td>
<td>Mystery customer visit and one day assessment visit.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Adapted from Charter News, 1995) *Means that any number of organisations who meet the requirements of the award can be accredited.*
The second group of quality programmes is considered to offer a more flexible and tailored approach to quality management (Dale, 1994; MacNeil, 1994). Quality programmes developed within the organisation have no required format and can be developed and extended in line with the organisation's aims, direction and, most importantly, resources. Although these programmes are likely to be based on published initiatives, they lack external validation which may lead to a minimalist approach to quality management. The successful use of in-house programmes requires an organisation-wide commitment to quality, particularly from senior management and the development of a culture of quality. The main two internally developed programmes are Total Quality Management and customer care initiatives.

The following discussion outlines the characteristics of the main quality programmes used in local authority leisure facilities and considers their role in the management of service quality.

ISO9002

Originally developed by the British Standards Institute for the manufacturing industry, ISO9002 (the current version of BS5750) sets out how an organisation should establish, document and maintain an effective quality management system. Based on a manual of defined operating procedures and standards of performance, BSI have argued that the existence of such a system demonstrates an organisation's commitment to quality and its ability to satisfy customer requirements.

Information on ISO9002 is contained in Mills (1992), who considers, in detail, the application of this programme to the leisure industry. In addition, a number of other writers (Curry and Monaghan, 1994; Sanderson, 1992) have evaluated its content and operation and have suggested that the process to be followed in order to achieve accreditation of ISO9002 is relatively straightforward but somewhat laborious. Firstly, the organisation needs to register its intent with BSI who then sends out information on the process of development and accreditation. When applying for the quality award, the organisation is required to produce a quality manual that shows that systems which conform to the clauses of the Standard (Appendix one) are in place.

All operations undertaken by the organisation must be identified and procedures need to be developed for ensuring the consistency of these. This means drawing up work instructions for staff who are carrying out these operations and requires the specification of associated standards. All clauses of the Standard must be
considered, although an appropriate response may be an explanation of why the clause does not apply. The manual must also outline a set of corrective actions for dealing with problems.

The manual is then approved by BSI or an associated certification body and needs to be implemented within the organisation. In order to ensure that the procedures are followed and that the standards are achieved, regular internal audits are recommended. Once this process has been satisfactorily completed and the procedures have been in place for three months, the organisation requests an external audit. Registration is gained when the auditors have carried out a detailed check to ensure that the organisation successfully operates the quality system laid out in the manual. Once registered, the systems must continue to be followed as there are bi-annual inspections for as long as registration is maintained.

The potential value of ISO9002 to public leisure providers appears to be twofold. Firstly, most local authorities are concerned with improving the quality of their service and ISO9002 claims to assist with this. Secondly, there is potential value in the registration of ISO9002 for CCT reasons, either as a way of reducing the monitoring needed of contracts or to make the DSO bid for contracts more competitive (Holmes, 1993).

One obvious strength of this quality programme is that it requires organisations to identify all operations, to write procedures for these operations and then to set associated performance standards. This appears valuable in managing the quality of the specified service and has a role to play in ensuring that operations like staff training and satisfaction measurement are carried out. ISO9002 can also assist with the reliability of the leisure service by ensuring that the operations of the local authority are carried out in a consistent and standardised manner. Customers can expect the service to be consistent from day to day and between facilities within the local authority. The incorporation of staff training and development activities into the work instructions helps to ensure that staff are competent and accessible. The main role, however, that ISO9002 has to play in the management of the characteristics of service quality (Table 3.1) is the management of security and tangibles. Maintenance programmes, cleaning schedules and staff rotas all lend themselves to being incorporated into the quality manual as it is easy to draw up work instructions for these processes and relatively easy to set acceptable standards.

ISO9002 is recognised to have an inherent weakness in that although it requires the systems incorporated into the manual to meet set standards, these standards
are not evaluated by the auditors. It is therefore possible to successfully obtain registration of ISO9002 without setting standards that guarantee a quality service, or indeed setting standards that are acceptable to customers. If there is a requirement to obtain registration, e.g. for CCT purposes, there is the option of setting standards which are easy to obtain in order to achieve registration. Thus, registration of ISO9002 in these cases will be no indication of the provision of a quality service.

**INVESTORS IN PEOPLE**

The Investors in People (lIP) initiative is based on a national standard of action and excellence in the continued development of the human resources of the organisation. Information on Investors in People in leisure management is contained within Criten (1994); however, any organisation reaching the recognised standard in these four criteria receives the investors award and is classified as an 'Investor in People':

- **Commitment:** from management to develop all employees in order to achieve business objectives.
- **Regular planning and review:** of training and development needs for all employees.
- **Action:** to train and develop individuals on recruitment and throughout employment.
- **Evaluation:** of the organisation’s investment in training and development to assess achievement and improve effectiveness.

(Employment Department Group, 1994, p.2)

There are several potential advantages of lIP in an industry that relies on staff to deliver services of a high quality. Criten (1994) discussed evidence from the Employment Department which showed that this quality programme led to accredited organisations demonstrating improved profitability and a more committed and adaptable workforce. Evidence from the Institute of Manpower Studies (1994) suggested that organisations involved with Investors in People are significantly more advanced in their human resource and business planning than those without lIP.

From this, the role of lIP in managing service quality is evident. Although it is impossible to guarantee an appropriate response from staff, it appears reasonable to suggest that a good training and development programme, linked to the objectives of the organisation, is likely to increase the quality of the customer/staff interaction by improving morale, ensuring knowledge and skills and increasing communication. As a result, lIP can make a significant contribution to the management of quality by improving staff responsiveness, competence and credibility.
The time and financial commitment required to resource Investors in People is considered to be a disadvantage for many smaller local authorities; however, it can be argued that employers should have these resources available as a matter of course. It can also be argued that liP is awarded to organisations that demonstrate little other than good practice in the management of people and the need for a quality programme to encourage organisations to carry out such management practice is concerning. In addition, there is some disadvantage to making Investors in People an achievement in that organisations who are sceptical of the value of liP may ignore the human resources aspects of their organisation.

THE CHARTER MARK

The Charter Mark scheme is an integral part of the Citizen's Charter and has the objective of recognising and rewarding excellence in the delivery of public services. Contenders are required to outline how they meet nine criteria:

- Standards: standards of service delivery must be set, monitored and published;
- Information and openness: full and understandable information must be made available about the running of services;
- Choice and consultation: providers must consult with users and should provide choice where possible;
- Courtesy and helpfulness: users can expect a convenient, courteous and helpful service from identifiable staff;
- Putting things right: services must have a complaints procedure leading to an apology, an explanation and a remedy;
- Value for money: services should be run in an efficient and economical manner;
- Customer satisfaction: providers need to be able to demonstrate customer satisfaction;
- Measurable improvements in the quality of service: providers must be able to demonstrate continuous improvements in services;
- Innovative enhancements: Improvements must be made to services without an extra cost to users.

The Charter Mark is different from other externally assessed quality programmes as only 100 awards are made each year and this external recognition of service quality is likely to be an important reason for the use of this programme. The importance of this may be explained by the fact that the Charter Mark is only open to public services and therefore has a direct relevance to public leisure managers as a benchmark of service quality.

The strengths of the Charter Mark are the need for local authorities to address the desires of customers through consultation, to provide services that are convenient to users and to provide information in an understandable form. It is inherently customer oriented and also assists with the management of the characteristics of responsiveness and communication and voice.
There are several weaknesses of the Charter Mark which result primarily from its association with the Citizens Charter. Firstly, the criteria for success were developed by the government without consultation with the users or providers of public services. There has also been a tendency to concentrate on economy and efficiency, rather than effectiveness - a weakness of much of the legislation of the 1980s (Pollit, 1994; Gaster, 1992) - and there has been little serious attempt to ensure equality of access. In addition, the Charter Mark is intrinsically linked to the Conservative government which may make it unattractive to Labour-led local authorities.

The main weakness of the Charter Mark from a citizen's point of view is, once again, the focus on the user to the detriment of other customer groups. Although the Citizen's Charter advocates the need to consider the general public and full accountability (although not enforcing this to any degree), the Charter Mark has a clear orientation towards users of leisure services as indicated by the demands of the above criteria.

**QUEST**

Quest is the leisure specific quality programme which aims to:

- define industry standards and good practice and encourage their application and development in a customer focused management framework,

(Associated Quality Services, 1996, p.1)

by encouraging managers of leisure facilities to consider their operations from the customer's point of view. Launched in September 1996, Quest has been supported and promoted by a wide range of industry representative organisations, which includes the four home country Sports Councils who have endorsed and financed the drive for the initiative.

It is too soon to assess the impact of Quest upon the public leisure industry, however, in theory, it should be a significant improvement on the previously mentioned quality programmes as it is based on a TQM approach to quality (see below). The assessment of this programme focuses on operations within:

- facilities operation;
- customer relations;
- staffing;
- service development and improvement

and requires managers to address all aspects of their operations and their customer satisfaction. Although it is possible to manage most aspects of service quality via ISO9002, Quest is the only accredited programme that requires the management of
all characteristics of service quality and is therefore superior in this respect to the
Charter Mark and Investors in People. It is also likely to be better than ISO9002 as
it requires service improvements.

TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT

Total Quality Management is considered to be distinctive as a quality programme
and is differentiated from other quality programmes as its focus is on the
organisation as a whole, rather than specific operations within the organisation. It is
defined as

an approach to improving the competitiveness, effectiveness
and flexibility of a whole organisation. It is essentially a way of
planning, organising and understanding each activity and
depends on each individual at each level. For an organisation
to be truly effective, each part of it must work properly together
towards the same goals, recognising that each person and each
activity affects and in turn is affected by others.

(Oakland, 1993, pp. 22-23)

On a more cynical note, Dickson (1994 p.3) has referred to TQM as "a complex
statement of the blindingly obvious", however, the attainment of an organisational
quality culture has been advocated as the way forward for all organisations facing
competition in the 1990s (Carson, 1990). TQM is promoted as a management
philosophy, encompassing these aspects of the organisation:

• a customer orientation, both internal and external, throughout
  the organisation;
• clear and appropriate organisational objectives;
• the commitment and involvement of all staff led from the top of
  the organisation;
• a commitment to seek to improve continuously the operations of
  the organisation;
• the use of systems and procedures to assure quality;
• the regular monitoring, measure and feedback of all operations;
• the education and training of all staff to ensure that they have the
  necessary knowledge and skills for the quality philosophy.

The advantages of TQM have been outlined by Botterill (1990), Dale (1994), Mawson
(1993), Sheppard and Studd (1994) and Mosscrop and Stores (1990). They have
suggested that increased staff commitment to the organisation, a customer focus
and the development of a quality culture all contribute to the success of
organisations that have pursued Total Quality Management. In addition, TQM has
been advocated as a way of guaranteeing success for organisations facing
competition.

If TQM successfully addresses the aspects of the organisation outlined above, it is
clear that this programme will allow the comprehensive management of service
quality. The commitment and involvement of staff through communication, education and training assists with the service characteristics of reliability, responsiveness, competence, access, courtesy and credibility and thus goes further than LiP in managing the quality of staff. The use of systems and procedures to ensure quality assists with the reliability, security and tangibles of the service in the same manner as ISO9002. Finally, the customer orientation of TQM, like that of the Charter Mark, ensures that customers are the focus of the organisation which leads to the delivery of services perceived to be of a good quality.

It has been argued that Total Quality Management goes beyond simply managing the characteristics of service quality as it provides a structure for the overall management of quality along the lines of the framework for quality management outlined at the beginning of this chapter. TQM espouses the need to set clear and appropriate objectives to manage the service, to ensure quality and to monitor and measure all operations. As a result, Total Quality Management can address the weaknesses in the management of public leisure facilities identified by the Audit Commission (1989). TQM would, therefore, appear to be the quality initiative to pursue.

It is possible to argue, however, that Total Quality Management has several disadvantages which means that the possibility of achieving it in the management of public leisure facilities can be contested. Firstly, as this initiative is developed in-house, it means different things to different people and this has ensured that there is no consistent approach to TQM, nor can there be any guaranteed outcomes. In addition, this means that comparison between organisations is inevitably difficult, if not impossible, given the differing approaches to quality that have been called TQM. Secondly, Haywood-Farmer and Nollet (1994) noted that TQM is no 'quick fix' programme and its implementation needs to be viewed in terms of years, rather than months. This often leads to staff disillusionment and demotivation, particularly if a change of organisational priorities requires the introduction of new initiatives. Thirdly, the success of TQM is dependent upon a variety of principles, such as the need for clearly expressed objectives and associated performance indicators, which will present barriers to the attainment of TQM in public leisure facilities (Robinson, 1997). Finally, the political culture of local authority leisure services may inhibit the development of a true culture of quality which is intrinsic to the success of Total Quality Management.

As a result, although TQM has been described as the 'ultimate' quality programme, in reality the number of organisations that can claim to have achieved TQM is negligible. Even those organisations promoted as being excellent by Peters and
Waterman (1982) and Peters and Austin (1984) have had difficulty in maintaining the culture of quality over a long period of time. The attainment of Total Quality Management as described in theory is therefore unlikely and should be considered as a goal and not as a reality. The process of moving the organisation towards a TQM culture is, however, likely to lead to improvement in the quality of services.

**CUSTOMER CARE**

The increasing frequency of customer care initiatives was the first indication that the quality movement was beginning to emerge within public leisure management. The concern with the customer brought about by the consumer movement led local authority leisure managers to embark upon a series of activities that have been incorporated into customer care programmes. Customer care programmes are non-assessed and encompass activities which ensure that the customer is the focus of the organisation. Concentrating on communication with customers, these quality programmes incorporate comments/complaints/suggestion schemes, customer questionnaires and user panels. In addition, they include staff training to support the customer focus.

The underlying principle of a successful customer care programme is that the quality of the service is as the customer defines it, thus highlighting its role in the management of customer satisfaction (Stone and Young, 1991). The potential advantages of customer care programmes are those of being customer focused - increased customer satisfaction resulting in increased revenue and motivated staff. They are also developed to suit the specific needs of the local authority and can be managed within the resources that are available to the leisure service.

The disadvantages of the customer care approach to quality appear twofold. Firstly, there is a danger that public leisure managers will take a minimalist approach to customer care, considering customer care training for staff to be adequate to ensure the provision of quality services. The characteristics of service quality, presented in Table 3.1, indicates that this approach would not be enough for the management of quality. Secondly, effective management of one aspect of customer care may set up unrealistic customer expectations of the service to be delivered as customer care programmes do not help with the quality of the tangibles of the service.

**3.2.4 THE CUSTOMER SATISFACTION GAP**

The final dimension to be considered in the content of the quality strategy is how the customer satisfaction gap is identified, understood and managed. This refers to
the gap between customer satisfaction with the level of service quality and the actual service quality that is delivered. Gaster (1992) considered this dimension to cover attitudes, behaviour, impressions and expectations of customers. For many public leisure managers this is likely to present the biggest problem in managing quality as it requires the acknowledgement and management of the differences between customer expectations and service performance.

The main issue to be addressed by public leisure professionals in the management of customer satisfaction is the need to measure the quality of their operations. Stabler (1996) has argued that without a measurement of service quality, the gap between the quality of service expected and that delivered will be difficult to manage. This is because customer satisfaction is inherently subjective, influenced by timing and circumstances and reacts to external influences. It therefore needs to be measured to be assessed. The various methods of measuring service quality have been discussed by Robinson (1997) and Robinson and Wolsey (1996); however, there is a tendency for local authority leisure managers to assess quality through numeric indicators as typified by the Citizen's Charter indicators for sport and leisure outlined in Figure 3.1. This tendency was also addressed by Williams (1998) in her discussion of the evaluation of service quality, where she questioned the validity of numeric indicators of quality within public leisure facilities.

**Figure 3.1: Performance indicators for Sport and Leisure**

- Number and cost of swimming pools in the local authority.
- Number and cost of indoor sports facilities provided by the council.
- Numbers using these facilities.
- Amount of park land and open space provided by the local authority.
- Number of sports pitches provided by the local authority.
- Council expenditure on parks and open spaces.
- The local authority's strategy to support children's play.
- Council expenditure on children's play.

(Source: Audit Commission, 1994, p 14)

Despite the weaknesses of the current methods of assessing customer satisfaction Stabler (1996) is adamant that the delivery of services that meet high standards is inherently reliant upon the measurement of performance in terms of customer expectations. He goes on to argue that researchers and practitioners must focus on the development of a meaningful measure of quality to ensure the management of quality. Alternatively, Patmore and Tomes (1994) have suggested that an assessment of customer satisfaction with the quality of service can be established through consultation with customers and that quality management is likely to require ongoing communication with customers to provide the information base
which enables the organisation "to review its service specifications and to codify or recodify the way in which it delivers its services" (Patmore and Tomes, 1994, p.4).

It is possible to argue, however, that the assessment of customer satisfaction only establishes the size of the satisfaction 'gap'; this then needs to be managed. Given the role of quality programmes in managing the aspects of service quality identified by Curry and Monaghan (1994), Parasuraman et al (1985) and Skelcher (1992), their potential value in managing the customer satisfaction gap is evident, providing a further explanation for the presence of quality programmes in the content of quality management within public leisure facilities.

3.3 THE IMPLEMENTATION OF QUALITY PROGRAMMES

Having made the decision to introduce a quality programme, it is possible to identify a variety of factors that are inherent in the successful implementation of quality programmes within local authority leisure facilities. Deming (1986) Armistead, (1990) and Patmore and Tomes (1994) have argued that an all pervading quality culture is required to ensure success, and that it is essential to have support from senior management. Dale (1994), Porter and Parker (1993) and Wille (1992) have identified the need for good training and communication to support the introduction of the programme while the Audit Commission (1994), Fenwick (1989) and Stone and Young (1991) have highlighted the need for the measurement of operations and the use of subjective and objective performance measures to evaluate success.

The success of quality programmes is therefore contingent upon these features being present within local authority leisure facilities and the process of implementing quality programmes will facilitate their development. Consideration of these factors indicates that they are characteristics inherent within successful management and therefore the process of implementing quality programmes furthers the commercial approach to the management of leisure facilities started by developing the content of the quality strategy.

The implementation process outlined in Figure 3.2 and discussed by Mosscrop and Stores (1990) is a systematic approach based on the rational analysis of organisational needs and perceived requirements. Although this research has criticised this approach to understanding organisational change it is important to establish a coherent plan of action once the content of the change has been determined. This ensures that the characteristics outlined above are present within the quality strategy pursued by the organisation.
Mosscrop and Stores (1990) have highlighted the importance of an audit of the current organisational position and emphasise the need to use quality task forces to assist with the development of the quality programme. These two points are reiterated by Dale (1994) who suggests that a systematic approach to the introduction of quality management is necessary in order to overcome any resistance to change.

Figure 3.2. The implementation of quality programmes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential costs</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Potential benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Internal audit</td>
<td></td>
<td>External audit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working parties on key issues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition of action plans</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measurement systems</td>
<td>Training</td>
<td>Public relations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Mosscrop and Stores, 1990)

3.4 CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has considered the possible content of the management of service quality in local authority leisure facilities which appears to promote the use of management techniques traditionally found in the commercial sector. The content of quality management evidently requires the use of clear objectives, communication and the measurement of performance. From this the role of quality management in responding to changes in the public leisure sector begins to become apparent, highlighting the value of the Pettigrew (1987) model to the current study as it allows an understanding of why quality management can be considered appropriate for the context into which it is being introduced. Although the content of quality management has the many dimensions discussed in the chapter, this research focuses on the most formalised and substantive of these - quality programmes - in order to establish how quality management has been used as a tool to respond to the outlined changes.
CHAPTER FOUR: THE INTRODUCTION OF QUALITY MANAGEMENT - THE PROCESS OF CHANGE

It has now become evident that during the late 1980s and 1990s local authority leisure services managers were operating in a changing environment which ultimately led to fundamental reconsideration of both purpose and procedures. It is apparent that the situation contained two of the three elements identified by Pettigrew - on the one hand a political, social and economic context in which a variety of influences were converging to stimulate change and on the other, the availability of an identifiable mechanism, in the form of quality management, through which such change might be adopted or undertaken. What this research is concerned with is the third element - the basis on which many leisure professionals came to introduce change in this form, or the question of why leisure professionals introduced quality programmes in the management of local authority leisure facilities.

Chapter two identified a number of diverse factors within the internal and external operating contexts that had driven change within the management of public leisure facilities. It is evident that the impact of consumerism, legislation and increasing professionalism led to a need for management change, evidenced by the emergence of new managerialism that many analysts identified (Bovaird, 1992; Henry, 1993 and Nichols and Taylor, 1995). Chapter three discussed the content of quality management, outlining how it could be a potential solution to the changes required by the above factors. At present the extent to which quality management, as a mechanism for change, has been adopted by local authority leisure professionals is uncertain. There is, however, extensive evidence of its adoption in generic service management and the consideration of this material leads to the conclusion that as a mechanism for change, quality management has many features which may make it attractive to the public leisure industry.

With a description of the content of the change under study and the identification of the contextual factors impacting on it, established in Chapters two and three, it is now necessary to examine the third element of the Model of Strategic Change - the process by which this particular solution to the context has come about within some local authority leisure facilities. This is the role of this chapter.

In order to understand the mechanics of the process of introducing such strategic change within organisations it is necessary to consider the key individuals or groups that are involved within strategic decision making within local authority leisure facilities. This focus is in accordance with Pettigrew et al (1992, p.9) who
have argued that the most critical factor in understanding the decision to introduce change is an awareness of "the way actors in the change process mobilise the contexts around them and in doing so provide a legitimacy for change."

This legitimising process is important. Organisations are naturally resistant to change (Pfeffer, 1981, Pugh, 1990 and Quinn, 1980) and unless it is perceived to be necessary and legitimate by influential actors within the organisation, change is unlikely to be accepted and therefore integrated. There are two facets in the legitimising of change within organisations which need to be considered. Firstly, the decision of which change to be implemented must be acceptable to the key 'actors' - individuals and groups - within the organisation, particularly those who will be responsible for the implementation of the chosen change. This requires an analysis of the influences upon decision making by these individuals within the organisation under study.

The role of local authority leisure professionals in the decision to introduce quality programmes is likely to be paramount as firstly, they are responsible for the content of change - they have to guide the successful introduction and operation of quality management. Secondly and perhaps more importantly the presence of new managerialism in local authority leisure facilities indicates a commercial approach to management, as does the evidence of industrial professionalism provided by Henry (1993). As such, leisure professionals are likely to be influential in the decision to implement a commercial management technique such as quality programmes. These two dimensions mean they are key actors in the process of introducing quality programmes in local authority leisure facilities. The current study therefore focuses on the influence of local authority leisure professionals on the decision to introduce quality programmes into public leisure facilities.

The second factor to consider in the legitimising of change is that the change must be accepted as being legitimate by all individuals within the organisation. This requires an analysis of the culture of the organisation under study as firstly, this indicates whether the proposed change is likely to be considered legitimate and secondly, whether the change has become accepted into the language, values and actions of the organisation.

4.1 **POWER AND INFLUENCE IN DECISION MAKING**

It is commonly accepted that decision making within organisations is not a rational process (Bacharach and Lawler, 1980; Baron and Green, 1990; Pfeffer, 1981 and Pettigrew, 1987); rather choices within organisations are "shaped by
political/cultural considerations, though often expressed in rational/analytical terms" (Pettigrew, 1987, p.659). As a result, decision making is considered to be reliant upon negotiation and compromise and upon the exercise of power, as the influence of individuals and groups upon this process is dependent upon the relative power that they are perceived to have (Bacharach and Lawler, 1980; Lawton and Rose, 1994; Pettigrew et al, 1992; Pfeffer, 1981 and Spurgeon and Barwell, 1991). In order to understand the role of public leisure professionals in decisions made in local authorities, we therefore need to examine the extent to which they have power in the relevant decision making process.

Despite the vast body of academic literature considering power in organisations, there is no generally accepted definition of power, although it has been continually debated within political philosophy (Pettigrew et al, 1992). One definition of power that has been offered defines it as the "the ability of one person or group A to get another person or group B to do what A wants" (Lawton and Rose, 1994, p.78). This implies that power is not possessed but manifests itself in terms of relationships with others and as a result, power within organisations is not fixed.

Organisational power is considered to come from a number of sources. In their seminal work on power and politics within organisations, Bacharach and Lawler (1980) outlined how organisation structure, personal characteristics, expertise and opportunity brought about by access to information provided the opportunity to be powerful. Pfeffer (1981) identified somewhat different sources of power. He suggested that power comes from dependence and the ability to control resources. He also proposed that actors that can cope with uncertainty will be powerful in organisations as they are able to continue to function effectively. Finally, he suggested that individuals or groups would be powerful if they had the ability to affect the decision making processes of the organisation. Lawton and Rose (1994) identified a number of bases for power within public services, most reflecting those outlined above. They, however, added the concept of 'professionalism' as they argued that professionals within most public services were considered to have power simply by having professional status.

From this it is apparent that the influence of individuals and groups upon the decision making process is therefore dependent upon how they are perceived in relation to the change under discussion and/or the stage of introducing change. In his pioneering work on power and decision making, Lukes (1974) suggested that power in decision making can be identified in three ways; Firstly and rather simplistically, he stated that the individuals and groups that win debates within decision making can be perceived as powerful. This suggests that power is
transitory and can be distributed among key actors, depending on negotiation. Secondly, he suggested that power could be attributed to groups or individuals who decide what can be discussed or debated, an aspect of decision making to be considered in more detail below. Finally, he suggested that an individual or a group may be powerful within an organisation if they have the ability to shape values, beliefs or desires within that organisation.

At first consideration it would appear that power within local authorities would be based on organisational structure and authority as, although professionals have knowledge and personal power, they are ultimately constrained by the authority given to leisure councillors by the political process. This would suggest that politicians are fundamental to decision making and therefore the implementation of quality initiatives are determined by political influences. It is apparent, however, that the role of politicians within local authority leisure services is not as great as this would suggest; evidence from Nichols (1996) showed that local authority councillors are increasingly reliant on leisure professionals.

This reliance on leisure professionals is perceived to be due to the diverse nature of leisure. This has led to an increasing reliance upon the information and advice offered by leisure professionals within local government services, brought about by the changing policy context within which local authorities now operate. Although local government politicians have always been reliant on information and advice from professionals, the policy changes outlined in the second chapter have increased the complexity and amount of decision making required of politicians. This is likely to have led to the leisure professional having a greater influence upon the decision making process, supporting Lawton and Roses’s identification of professionalism as a form of power. Thus, if leisure professionals have identified the need for quality management, it is more likely to be perceived as a legitimate strategy as a result of their ability to influence strategic decision making. In support, Nichols (1996) noted the increased commitment needed from politicians in strategic planning in local authority leisure services, suggesting that planning will require a greater commitment of councillors’ time than they have given in the past. If councillors are not involved at this level of planning the direction of the service is likely to be driven by officers or the market.

This change in influence was initially discussed by Dunleavy (1980) and also supported by Henry (1993, p.127) in his review of the relationship between leisure professionals and politicians where he suggested that the traditional platitudes about the separate spheres of political and administrative responsibility had become increasingly difficult to support.
Henry described how Neve (1977) considered the perceived salience or importance of the issue under discussion to be a key factor in determining an officer's ability to exert influence over policy. From this Henry (1993, p.115) felt that leisure itself has traditionally been viewed as a policy area of low salience. Given this low salience, one might expect leisure policy to be an area of considerable professional involvement.

The potential for professional generated strategy becomes greater when considering Pfeffer's (1981) discussions of how individuals can influence choices by their aforementioned ability to affect some part of the decision process. He suggested that choices could be affected by key individuals within the change process in three ways. Firstly, choices can be influenced if individuals can affect the values and objectives used in making a decision. For example, this suggests that if the value of quality management in dealing with pressures for change can be communicated by key 'actors', it is likely to be perceived as a legitimate change.

Secondly, choices can be affected if individuals can control the alternatives considered in the decision making process, or can influence the information that is available about alternatives. From this it becomes apparent that the control of information and knowledge via the professional control of agendas and policy documents can undermine the traditional power of the politicians within local government services and enhance the power of professionals over decision making. This is further promoted by the provision of information to support decisions which is usually the responsibility of senior professionals. Dunleavy (1980) highlighted this in his discussion of how local policy is generated and evidence for this is again provided by Nichols, (1996) who presented examples of leisure officers not presenting councillors with all of the possible costed options. In the current context, this would, for example, provide senior leisure professionals with the opportunity to present quality management as the legitimate option for change.

Lukes' (1974) third dimension of power is covert and operates without conflict and negotiation. As a result of the exercise of this dimension of power, individuals within the organisation commit to actions and values without conscious effort or consideration - legitimising the change. An explanation for this is to be found in Bacharach and Lawler's (1980) work in which they assessed the relative impact of authority and influence upon decision making and concluded that influence has a far greater impact upon decision making than authority. They suggested that this is because influence is multi-directional and requires voluntary submission, as opposed to flowing downwards and being imposed. It was also suggested that the bases for influence such as personal characteristics, expertise and opportunity are more accessible than the structural power of authority, leading individuals within
organisations to identify more closely with influence, than authority, when making decisions. This suggests that the commitment of senior leisure professionals to the proposed change is paramount as senior managers shape the values and beliefs of organisations (Schein, 1985).

Thus it is arguable that despite the historical authority of leisure councillors, leisure professionals are likely to be the most significant in the decision to implement quality management as a consequence of influence, control of information and professionalism. Although it is apparent that an understanding of power within decision making allows the assessment of what strategic decisions are considered legitimate, an assessment of the culture of an organisation is perhaps more important as it suggests why individuals and groups within the organisation respond in the manner that they do.

4.2 CULTURE IN ORGANISATIONS

Defined as the

basic assumptions and beliefs that are shared by members of an organisation, that operate unconsciously and that define in a basic ‘taken-for-granted’ fashion an organisation’s view of itself and its environment,

(Schein, 1985, p.6)

organisational culture shapes the organisation’s goals and objectives, specifies the relationships that exist within the organisation, and defines the valued qualities. More importantly, however, organisational culture

solves the basic problems of survival in and adaptation to the external environment and integration of its process to ensure the capacity to survive and adapt,

(Schein, 1985, p.51)

thus highlighting the importance of understanding organisational culture when attempting to understand organisational change.

The historical stress upon rules, roles and authority led Handy (1985) to describe the culture of local authorities as being defined by roles, which he considered to be the culture of bureaucracies. Lawton and Rose (1994) have built upon this and in recognition of the changes that have affected the public sector in the last decade, suggested that the culture of local authorities can be characterised as being an amalgamation of these cultures:

- a political culture: the political dimensions of the organisation determines its culture;
- an administrative culture: concerned with rules, roles and authority;
• a legal culture: where much of the work of the organisation is governed by statute;
• a market culture: where the organisation is exposed to the market through competitive tendering, contracting out and internal markets.

It is apparent from the discussion outlined in Chapters one and two that there has been a change in management culture within local authority leisure facilities. The presence of new managerialism within public services and the reasons for its emergence have been discussed, in general, by Farnham and Horton (1993, 1996) and Hood (1991) and in leisure services, specifically, by Bovaird (1992), Henry (1993) and Nichols and Taylor (1995). This suggests that a commercial management technique such as quality management may be considered an appropriate tool for bringing about change within local authority leisure facilities.

Cultural change is, however, difficult to achieve and Schein (1985) has argued that the basic assumptions that underlie organisational culture are neither confrontable nor debatable. As a result, he feels that culture change will only occur "because of an externally induced crises or because of internal forces for change" (Schein, 1985 p.271). Local authorities have clearly faced an externally induced crisis brought about by consumerism and legislation. What is likely to have been more important, however, is the impact of the internal forces for change. As identified earlier, the role of leisure professionals is likely to have been paramount in the decision to change, leading to the process of introducing quality management.

This is because the successful introduction of quality programmes relies upon a culture that firstly, accepts the need for quality management and secondly, accepts the need for change. This led Johnson (1993, p.63) to comment that the extent to which change can successfully be introduced depends on

the extent to which managers from within the organisation are able to feel confident about the need for change and are constructively critical of their own history and its culture.

This emphasises the role of managers in the development and maintenance of organisational culture, highlighted by Schein (1985, p.171) in his discussion on leadership where he stated "you cannot separate the process of leadership from the process of building culture." Within leisure services, it appears essential that senior leisure professionals are committed to the proposed change in order for it to become part of the organisational culture and thus legitimate. The increasing professionalism of the public leisure industry discussed in Chapter two is likely to have led to senior managers who can firstly, identify the need for change and secondly, the means by which to change.
A knowledge of culture comes from an analysis of the symbols and language which are prevalent within the organisation and the impact of culture upon decision making is apparent when considering that it provides the organisation with the symbolism and language that can assist with the introduction of change. For example, Pettigrew et al (1992, p.22) have described how within the NHS certain decision arenas have produced highly ritualised forms of behaviour in which the use of 'hot button language' which can placate pressure groups...and maximise political support, is more important than the quality of the internal decision making.

Within local authority leisure services, the terminology and practices associated with new managerialism not only indicate the legitimacy of a commercial culture of management, but are likely to have led quality management to be considered an appropriate strategic response to change as local authority leisure managers became customer focused. Given the impact of CCT, the need to be customer orientated and the increasing professionalism of the service, the emergence of quality management within local authority leisure facilities could be considered almost inevitable as a result of the external and internal pressures for change.

4.3: SUMMARY

Pettigrew (1987, p.658) has described how the transformation of the firm is seen as an iterative multilevel process with outcomes emerging not merely as a product of rational or boundedly rational debates, but also shaped by the interests and commitments of individuals and groups, the forces of bureaucratic momentum, gross changes in the environment, and the manipulation of the structural context around decisions.

From the discussion in chapter two it is apparent that during the 1990s there was a need for local authority leisure services to consider the quality of their service, brought about by consumerism and legislation. The third chapter outlined how this quality can be defined and managed and offered an explanation as to why quality programmes might be considered to be an appropriate response to the need to change. The discussion in this chapter has suggested that the actual decision to implement quality programmes is influenced by a variety of factors which have an impact on the final decision to pursue change and the type of change to be implemented.

Little is known about the influences upon the decision making process within local authority leisure services and decisions that are made, clearly depend upon a negotiation between different cultures and power groups, all within a political
context. This research is therefore primarily concerned with understanding the influences upon the decision to introduce quality management within public leisure facilities as it seeks to understand why local authority leisure professionals have implemented quality programmes into their facilities.

It is clear that an understanding of the rationale for introducing quality programmes is a complex process and involves an investigation of the actions and interactions of the variety of factors discussed in this and the previous chapters. The Model of Strategic Change provides a framework for a systematic analysis of the theoretical background to the introduction of quality management and quality programmes and will facilitate the analysis of the results that are obtained by the procedures outlined in the next chapter.
CHAPTER FIVE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this chapter is to consider and evaluate the methodology that was followed in this research. This research aims to establish why senior managers have chosen to use quality programmes in the management of their public leisure facilities by seeking to establish the process by which quality programmes have become present within local authority leisure facilities. The objectives of the research are as follows:

- to establish what senior leisure professionals consider to be the influences on the use of quality and quality programmes in local authority leisure facilities;
- to establish how senior leisure professionals conceptualise quality and quality management;
- to establish what role these professionals played in the adoption of quality programmes within their local authority leisure facilities.

To inform these objectives, the key questions to be answered by this research are:

- How have contextual factors brought about the need for quality management?
- Why was the concept of quality management and the use of quality programmes perceived to be a suitable response to the changing leisure context?
- Why was quality management chosen as the response to the changing leisure context?

The investigation made use of a multiple-method research design. The first phase postal survey of UK local authority leisure services provided a foundation for the detailed case based, second phase of the research. The first part of this chapter contains the justification for this research design and the second provides detail on the implementation of the study. Prior to the detailed consideration of this particular research, it is necessary to outline the general methodological issues that were considered in the formulation of the research design, as a consideration of these issues allows an argument to be presented for the chosen methodology.

5.1 THE PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RESEARCH

The first methodological issue to be considered was the underlying philosophy of the research problem, as from this it was theoretically possible to have derived the research methods. Within social sciences research, the literature identifies two main research philosophies that appear to differentiate themselves primarily on the basis of their position on what constitutes acceptable knowledge (Bryman, 1989). These contrasting epistemological viewpoints, known as positivism - the epistemological premise that the social world exists externally and can be measured
CHAPTER FIVE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

via objective measures - and phenomenology - the view that reality is socially constructed rather than objectively determined, are considered to have dependent research paradigms. That is they have the values, methodological rules and solutions (Table 5.1) that provide models for research (Bulmer, 1984; Bryman, 1989; Easterby-Smith, Thorpe and Lowe, 1991). As a consequence, it has been argued that researchers, having determined the underlying philosophy of the research, are obliged to follow the associated research paradigm delineated by the use of qualitative or quantitative data collection methods.

### Table 5.1: The key features of the philosophical paradigms

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic beliefs:</th>
<th>Positivist</th>
<th>Phenomenological</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The world is external and objective.</td>
<td>The world is socially constructed and subjective.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observer is independent.</td>
<td>Observer is part of what is observed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science is value free.</td>
<td>Science is driven by human interests.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researchers should:</td>
<td>Focus on facts.</td>
<td>Focus on meanings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Look for causality and fundamental laws.</td>
<td>Try to understand what is happening.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce phenomena to simplest elements.</td>
<td>Look at the totality of each situation.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formulate hypotheses and test them.</td>
<td>Develop ideas through induction from data.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preferred methods include:</td>
<td>Operationalising concepts so that the phenomena can be measured.</td>
<td>Using multiple methods to establish different views of phenomena.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking large samples.</td>
<td>Small samples investigated in depth or over time.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: de Vaus, 1991)

This simplistic theoretical viewpoint has, however, been challenged (Bonoma, 1985; Bryman, 1989; Bulmer, 1984; Easterby Smith et al, 1991). Easterby Smith et al (1991 p.22) noted that

> even self confessed extremists do not hold consistently to one position or the other.....there are many researchers, especially in the management field, who adopt a pragmatic view by deliberately combining methods drawn from both traditions.

The idea that social science research can encompass aspects of both philosophical positions was also supported by Bryman (1989) and Bonoma (1985, p.201) who stated "if the methods set used is narrow, a balance of enquiry is less likely to be achieved", while Bulmer (1984, p.20), when describing existing research, came to the conclusion that

> there was no one 'best' method and each method has its strengths and weaknesses. Different styles of research are not
concretely different types of study, but analytically different aspects of a common mode of inquiry, social research.

Consideration of the above arguments suggests that, although positivism and phenomenology are apparent opposites, in practice the philosophical basis for the enquiry can combine the two epistemological positions. Consequently, research design does not need to be confined to one viewpoint or other. In fact, Bryman (1989, p.254) has argued that

good research consists of ... not being wedded to a method irrespective of the problem being examined. In the end, a method will be good or bad only in relation to that problem. The advantages of blending methods are considerable and a major theme...has been that the arguments about the epistemological distinctiveness of quantitative and qualitative research is not and should not be taken to be a barrier to such integration.

This leads to the supposition that other factors are important when considering the research strategy. A review of relevant literature indicates that there are three additional factors that have an influence on research design. These are the research objectives, the background to the research, and the practical constraints imposed upon the researcher by external factors (Bryman, 1988; Yin, 1994). In this research, the first two factors were of prime importance and a review of the background to the research and its objectives indicated that reliance on either quantitative methods or qualitative methods to the exclusion of the other was inappropriate, as was a single method of data collection.

This was considered to be inappropriate for a number of reasons. Firstly, the objectives of the research require the construction of the concept of quality from a practitioner's point of view. A full understanding of how senior leisure professionals defined quality and quality management would have been difficult to achieve without the opportunity to clarify and refine which would have been difficult via quantitative techniques. Secondly, the objectives required a full analysis of the reasons for the introduction of quality management which required detailed discussions with those involved. Conversely, the need to identify the criteria for case selection, to quantify the phenomenon and to assist with generalisation, required the use of quantitative methods. Finally, the data that was needed to meet the objectives is historical and would benefit from validation from more than one source both between and within methodologies.

The background to the research discussed in the previous chapters highlighted a need for both an explanatory and descriptive study. This is in part due to a lack of existing research in this area, but is primarily necessary to understand fully the phenomenon of quality management within local authority leisure facilities. It was
CHAPTER FIVE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

initially important to establish the existence and extent of the use of quality programmes which lent itself to a survey method of research. More importantly, however, the research objectives required a thorough understanding of the factors that led to the use of quality and quality programmes in the management of public leisure facilities. This required a multi-method research design to provide the opportunity to inform, explain and clarify. The Model of Strategic Change devised by Pettigrew (1987) provided a structure for this research as it allowed an appreciation of the actions, interactions and reactions of the factors which led to the presence of quality management in public leisure facilities, in the form of the use of quality programmes.

A review of the context into which quality programmes have been introduced (Chapter two) suggested that the contextual factors outlined in Table 5.2 led to change within the management of public leisure facilities. In addition, they may have directly influenced the decision to implement quality management leading to the use of quality programmes for the reasons outlined below.

Table 5.2: Factors providing the opportunity for change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Explanation for the use of quality programmes</th>
<th>Contextual factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Required to as a result of legislation.</td>
<td>Compulsory Competitive Tendering.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Financial directives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Citizen's Charter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer care is important in public leisure services.</td>
<td>Consumerism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Citizen's Charter.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Public Service Orientation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An commercial approach to management.</td>
<td>New managerialism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Increasing professionalism.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An understanding of the content of quality management is also important in explaining the rationale for the use of quality programmes as this enabled the research to evaluate why quality management could be perceived to be an appropriate response to the above changes by establishing what role quality management and quality programmes played, or were expected to play, in the management of change.

The fundamental question, however, that this research set out to answer is that given the influences for change that were present in the operating context and the understanding of what quality and quality management means to senior local authority leisure professionals, why did the managers of the public leisure facilities in the authorities under investigation introduce quality programmes as the way forward? In order to answer this question the research needed to establish, analyse
and evaluate the influences on the decision making process followed in these local authority leisure services. This process could only be carried out via qualitative research as qualitative research is in a better position to view the linkages between events and actions and explore people's interpretations of the factors which produce such connections. (Bryman, 1988, p.102)

There was therefore a need for the use of both qualitative and quantitative research methods and as a consequence, a research design was followed allowing data to be collected through a variety of methods. The strengths of this design lie in the quality of data collection and analysis assisted through triangulation (Bryman, 1989, Bulmer, 1984, Yin, 1994). In addition, it allowed a progression of the development of the research instruments where the data collected via one instrument informed the development of the subsequent tool. This assisted with validity and thus improved the quality of the research results.

5.2 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

The second methodological issue that was considered in the research design was its legitimacy as a means of collecting the data needed to answer the research questions and to meet the research objectives. This required the concepts of validity, reliability and generalisability to be taken into account in the design. Yin (1994) has argued that careful attention to the criteria of construct validity, external validity and reliability will assist in overcoming the scepticism surrounding social research caused by its potential for lack of rigour and objectivity in comparison with the natural sciences.

5.2.1 VALIDITY

Construct validity is concerned with the establishment of appropriate operational measures for the concepts being studied and is often problematic in qualitative research. It is frequently difficult to identify clear measures of change due to the interrelation of a multiple of variables acting upon the phenomena under investigation which can lead to subjective judgements when information gathering. Yin (1994) suggested two steps to ensure construct validity, both of which were followed in this research. Firstly, the researcher must select specific types of changes to be studied and in this research the change under investigation is the leisure managers' adoption of quality programmes in the management of public leisure facilities. Secondly, there is a need to demonstrate that the selected measures of these changes do indeed reflect the changes that are under research
and in this research the presence of quality programmes was considered to be an obvious indication that the management of local authority leisure facilities were concerned with quality management.

An over-concern with construct validity is, however, not necessary in this research as it is explanatory and aims to offer an understanding of why quality programmes are used rather than studying the effect of their use, which would have required a measure of their effect to be developed. Nonetheless, the first tactic used to increase construct validity was to establish the effect of a variety of variables upon the use of quality programmes. This was done in the first phase of the research and allowed the researcher to eliminate several characteristics of local authorities, such as population and number of facilities, which had no statistically significant relationship with the respondents' decision to implement quality programmes. A second method of increasing construct validity was the use of multiple sources of evidence which assisted with the data triangulation of results (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Hakim, 1987 and Yin, 1994). Finally, a chain of evidence is available to the external observer by using the case study protocol presented in Appendix two to consider the final conclusions.

External validity is concerned with ensuring that the research measures what it is meant to measure and as a result establishes the domain to which a study's findings can be generalised. In practice, external validity is ensured by the same logic that underlies the use of experiments - that of replication - as similar results achieved over a series of research projects infers the validity of the research question and methods. Replication over time was not possible within the constraints of this research, however, in the first phase of the research external validity was enhanced by following the rules of 'good' research outlined by King, Keohane and Verba (1994) and the replication of questions in various forms. In the second phase, validity can be only be inferred; the use of fully justified selection criteria and the similarity of the results that were found across the case studies infers that the current research was valid. Validity was also assisted in this research by the piloting of both phases of the research and the careful construction of the questionnaire and the interview schedules as discussed later.

5.2.2 RELIABILITY

Reliability ensures that applying the same procedure in the same way produces the same results and is present when a researcher can follow the procedures outlined by an earlier researcher and obtain the same or similar results. This differs from replication which requires the same results to be achieved from different cases. The
The goal of reliability is to minimise the errors and biases in a study and is facilitated by the recording of the explicit research procedures as is found in this chapter. Although the reliability of this research can only be assumed as it is pioneering and the 'test-retest' approach to reliability was not possible (Bryman, 1989) it seems reasonable to suggest that researchers using the aforementioned case study protocol would be expected to find similar results.

The case study protocol provides a guide for the researcher and contains the procedures and general rules that are to be followed during data collection and analysis. Yin (1994) suggested that the following sections are necessary for a protocol to be effective in assisting with reliability:

- an overview of the case study project;
- field procedures;
- case study questions;
- a guide for the case study report.

In addition, the case data base, which contains the data or evidence that is obtained from the research, enables other investigators to review the evidence directly. Apart from improving the reliability of the research this is useful in assessing the construct validity of the second phase of the research by allowing the chain of evidence to be followed.

5.3 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research was carried out in two distinct phases (Table 5.3). The first was a postal questionnaire survey of all UK local authority leisure services, while the second phase was case study research conducted in the leisure departments of 6 local authorities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research methods</th>
<th>Research purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Questionnaire</td>
<td>To establish the extent to which quality programmes are in use in local authority leisure facilities, the type of programmes used and the initial explanations for their use.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi-structured interviews and archival analysis</td>
<td>To investigate the meaning of quality and quality programmes in the management of local authority leisure provision; to establish a full understanding of why these management tools are used by leisure managers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The postal questionnaire was necessary to establish, in quantitative form, the extent to which quality programmes were being used in the management of public leisure facilities as there would have been little purpose in progressing with this research without evidence of the phenomena to be researched. The questionnaire
also offered the opportunity to make an initial analysis of the reasons why quality programmes had been implemented in local authority leisure facilities, thereby contributing to the design of the second phase methodology.

In addition to identifying the extent of the use of quality programmes in local authority leisure services, the survey allowed an initial ‘categorisation’ of the reasons for implementing quality programmes. To provide greater detail on this matter which is significant given the explanatory nature of this research and a key focus of the research objectives, case study research was carried out in second phase of the research. This allowed a full investigation of the factors influencing the decision to implement quality programmes.

5.3.1 **PHASE ONE: SURVEY OF LOCAL AUTHORITY LEISURE PROFESSIONALS**

Survey methods in social science have been categorised into two broad types - the descriptive and the analytical. Descriptive surveys are designed to establish the characteristics of individuals, groups or situations and the frequency of these within a given population, while analytical surveys aim to test hypotheses developed about the relationship between two variables (Bulmer, 1984). From this it is clear that a descriptive survey was appropriate for this research given its explanatory nature. A questionnaire was chosen over other forms of surveys, such as structured interviews, as it has technical advantages in terms of using limited resources to approach a large number of geographically dispersed respondents (Bryman, 1988).

Given the lack of existing research in this area the questionnaire provided the opportunity to assess whether the research questions were, in fact, able to be tested. If quality programmes were not in use within the management of public leisure facilities the direction of the study would have altered significantly or would have been abandoned. In addition, the questionnaire provided information on the types of quality programmes were being used and began the process of establishing why they were being used, both valuable contributions to the objectives of the research. Finally, the results from the questionnaire, in conjunction with the theoretical background of the research, allowed criteria to be generated for case selection, enabling the second phase of the research to proceed.

Survey methods have faced criticisms on philosophical, technical and political grounds (de Vaus, 1991) which have challenged its validity as a research technique. Many of the criticisms have been aimed at the positivist nature of surveys, in particular questionnaires. Criticism has been levelled at the empiricist nature of the
CHAPTER FIVE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

research instrument, its inability to provide context, and its perceived inability to explore meaning (de Vaus, 1991, Hakim, 1987). Others have criticised a perceived inability to generalise from surveys (Bryman, 1988) which is considered by others to be a strength of the survey method. Marsh (1984, p.96) outlined the major difficulty with survey methods.

It is impossible to avoid the problem that asking people questions, as an instrument of measure, itself 'reacts' upon the person who is being asked the question and affects the response.

In a comprehensive defence against the critics of survey methods she went on to argue, however, that much of the criticism has been generated by poor research technique, rather than an inherent weakness in these methods (Marsh, 1982, 1984).

Challenges to the validity of the questionnaire as a survey method can be addressed by careful construction and extensive piloting, both of which were carried out in this research. It is also worth noting that the questionnaire did not seek to establish causal relationships, rather it sought to identify and describe factors for further investigation. Although this does not mean that the above criticisms can be disregarded, it does place their significance in perspective within the context of this research. With regard to the criticisms aimed at the positivist nature of the questionnaire survey, this study aimed to establish context and investigate meaning in the second phase of the research, once again reiterating the strength of the multi-method approach followed.

The analysis of questionnaire surveys is relatively straightforward if they are structured in a clear and unambiguous manner. de Vaus (1991) has described how there are three factors which affect the analysis of data and these are: the number of variables being examined, the level of measurement of the variables and whether the data is to be used for descriptive or inferential purposes. The first factor refers to the number of variables that the research wishes to consider at any one time and the second factor to whether the variables are nominal, ordinal and interval/ratio. The final factor is concerned with how the researcher wishes to use the data and the type of statistical test that will be applied.

de Vaus (1991) went on to comment that the complexity of these factors determines the type and level of analysis to be carried out. The analysis of questionnaires by computer has, however, become common and eases the process. The most common analysis package is the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) which allows a full range of contemporary statistical processes to be run and applied and
was the method employed in this study. SPSS has the ability to deal with large quantities of data, handles missing variables and produces output in tabular and graphic form. The main disadvantage to this package is the memory that it requires to run (Easterby-Smith et al, 1991). In addition, the integrity of the data is reliant on good data inputting and the use of appropriate tests.

5.3.2 PHASE TWO: CASE BASED METHODOLOGY

Case based methodology has been defined by Yin (1994, p.13) as an empirical enquiry that

investigates a contemporary phenomena within its real-life context, when the boundaries between phenomena and context are not clearly evident and in which multiple sources of evidence are used.

He also suggested that case study research

copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion and benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis.

(Yin, 1994, p.13)

The strength of this methodology lies in its ability to incorporate both qualitative and quantitative research instruments within the boundaries of a given case (Bryman, 1989) rather than over a sample. Case study research therefore acts as the “social research equivalent of the spotlight” (Hakim, 1987, p.61) and is important in allowing the researcher to discover and investigate variables that may appear insignificant over a population or a sample, but have major significance within the case under study. This is important for description and essential for explanation and Hakim (1987, p.63) went on to claim that “case studies potentially overlap with virtually all other research designs, offering their combined and complementary strengths.”

The applications of case study research are varied. Yin (1994) has outlined five different applications: explanatory, descriptive, illustrative, exploratory and meta-evaluative. Although this research has some aspect of descriptive application it was primarily concerned with explanation, in that it was trying to establish why senior leisure professionals used quality programmes in the management of their public leisure facilities. The explanatory nature of this research is not to be confused with the exploratory use of case studies which aims to investigate the outcomes of an intervention or phenomena. Given the lack of existing research in this area it was
necessary to establish why quality programmes were being used before exploring the impact that they have.

The use of case study methodology has been criticised over the potential for a lack of rigour and objectivity, caused by researchers who have allowed equivocal or biased views to influence the direction of the findings and conclusions. Although difficult to ensure, the objectivity of this research was promoted by the techniques that were used to make the research methods valid and therefore the inherent subjectivity of the research is diminished. Of far greater concern, is the claim that case studies provide little basis for generalisation due to a lack of quantification (Bryman, 1988). Both Yin (1994) and Rose (1991) felt that this concern arises over a confusion as to the type of generalisations to be made from case study research. They referred to analytical generalisation - which is to expand and generate theory - as being the role of case based research rather than statistical generalisation - which is the enumeration of frequencies. Bryman (1988) commented that this concern with generalisation has arisen from a tendency of positivistic researchers to approach the case study as though it was a sample of one in order to quantify theories. He went on to discuss the role that case study research has in contributing to theory rather than to frequency.

There is little doubt that the above concerns are valid and in the current study they were addressed in three ways. Firstly, by following the principles of scientific research outlined by King et al (1994) the research allowed inferences to be drawn from the data collected. Secondly, there is a full justification of the criteria used for case selection in order to have facilitated representativeness and to have reduced bias. Finally, the use of a multiple case design enabled the triangulation of data. Other concerns regarding the length of time it takes to carry out case based research and the presentation of results have been countered by Yin (1994) in his comprehensive discussion of case study methodology.

CASE STUDY DESIGN

Yin identified four basic types of case study design in which the main variables are single case design versus multiple case design and holistic cases versus embedded cases. Single case design has formed the basis of much social research (Rose, 1991; Finch, 1986; Yin, 1994) primarily as a 'revelatory' case where the phenomena does not lend itself to scientific investigation. Single case designs are also appropriate when testing well formulated theory or as a unique case where multiple cases do not exist, common in clinical psychology. Finally, there is a role for single case
design in the piloting of research before embarking upon the full research programme.

The fundamental weakness of single case design is, however, its susceptibility to flawed inference and consequently poor validity. Although ensuring validity goes some way to overcoming this weakness, without replication or comparison there is always a danger of subjective bias influencing the generalisations that can be made from the evidence. The main argument for multiple case design is aimed at addressing this key weakness.

The logic underlying the choice of a multiple case design is replication (Yin, 1994) as the evidence from multiple case studies is more convincing and the overall study is usually considered more robust. Yin (1994) went on to suggest that each case must be carefully selected to ensure literal replication or theoretical replication. The first predicts similar results, the second contrasting results but for predictable reasons and from these evidence to support a theoretical proposition can be derived.

Rose (1991) considered this emphasis on the logic of replicability to be too constrictive and past research has shown that it is difficult to achieve (Bryman, 1988, 1989). Rose (1991) suggested that the logic of comparison is the alternative basis for the choice for multiple case design; where information on the same variables is collected across units. King et al (1994) give more detail on this in their discussion of 'structured, focused comparison' which stresses the need for the systematic collection of the same information about the same variables based upon sound theoretical guidance. They argued that without this it is impossible to draw causal inferences and thus the research becomes descriptive rather than explanatory. As this research is explanatory, six cases were used for comparison and the same information was collected on the same variables from the selected sample of case studies.

The second variable to be considered in case study design is whether the case studies should be holistic or embedded, which refers to the number of units of analysis to be used in each case study. Holistic case studies rely on one source of evidence and aim to generate an overall picture of the phenomena being studied and are of use where it is difficult to identify clear sub-units. There are clear disadvantages to the holistic case study, however, primarily in terms of validity as reliance on one source of primary evidence fails to provide the triangulation of evidence that is one of the key features of case study methodology (Bryman, 1988, Bulmer, 1984).
Alternatively, embedded design provides the opportunity to obtain and investigate evidence from a number of sub-units within the case study. For example, this research made use of evidence from leisure officers and managers from a number of public leisure facilities within each 'case' local authority. Although researchers using this type of design occasionally fail to extrapolate from the sub-units of analysis to provide an overall picture (Yin, 1994), embedded design offered strengths in terms of increased evidence, research focus, validity and triangulation within cases. As a consequence, a multiple case, embedded design based upon the logic of comparison was followed in this research.

**METHODS INCLUDED IN THE CASE STUDY RESEARCH**

The research required a predominantly qualitative approach to the case study phase and Easterby-Smith et al (1991) have suggested that the three main types of qualitative methodology are observation, interviewing and diary methods. Although all three have strengths that could have contributed to this research, the role that interviews play when

> it is necessary to understand the constructs that the interviewee uses as a basis for her opinions and beliefs about a particular matter or situation

(Bulmer, 1984, p.13)

suggested that interviewing was the most appropriate methodology. A consideration of the other two methods reiterated this as the research aimed to investigate what had occurred in the past and therefore observation and diary methods were not appropriate. Consequently, interviews formed the basis of this phase of the research.

Ranging from the highly structured positivistic approach of market research, to a free ranging discursive approach, it was the mid point of semi-structured interviewing that was chosen for this research. Fully structured interviews would not have allowed the investigation of organisation specific variables nor allowed the researcher to follow up important topics of discussion, while unstructured interviews may have meant that the necessary lines of enquiry were not investigated. As a result, the opportunity to carry out interviews, guided by a topic structure, but flexible enough to allow deviation to follow main lines of enquiry, made semi-structured interviewing important for this research.

An issue for further consideration is the impact of the interviewee on the data collected by the use of the above technique. Answers to questions seeking to explain behaviours and phenomenon within organisations will inevitably be affected by the personal experience of the interviewee as "organisational reality is something that
people actively devise" (Bryman, 1989, p.141). The experience, knowledge and role that an individual has within their organisation will therefore shape their responses to interview questions, underlining the inherent subjectivity of this research method. This is inevitable when asking participants to explain a phenomenon (Bryman 1989); however, the impact of this subjectivity can be reduced by collecting evidence about the phenomenon from a variety of sources within the organisation (data triangulation) and by the use of techniques which increase the validity of the research.

As a consequence, the information obtained from the interviews was supported and supplemented by an analysis of relevant management documentation. Burgess (1991) considered that this method of research has been under-utilised in social research and alongside Bryman (1989) and Jones (1991), has suggested that there is valuable information to be obtained from unsolicited records, such as reports and minutes, which have been produced without the research in mind. From the discussions of these researchers, the benefits of the analysis of primary unsolicited documents are clear. Firstly, as this evidence is produced without an awareness of the research project, the possible biases to be found in interviews and questionnaires at the data collection stage are avoided. Secondly, the data can be reviewed on several occasions without the associated difficulties that accompany the repetition of other research methods. Documentary evidence can also provide information over a long time span which overcomes the reliance on respondent memory; a key weakness of other research methods. Finally, as outlined by Yin (1994) the main strength of documentary analysis within case study research is that it can corroborate evidence from other methods and this was the main purpose of this method within the current study.

The value of documentary analysis to the research is apparent, but this method is not without limitations. Firstly, the documents have been written for a specific purpose and a specific audience and as a result, are somewhat subjective. Secondly, there may be difficulties in standardising the analysis of documents as the type, quality and quantity may vary widely. Finally, Bryman (1989) expressed concern at the validity of the links that researchers have made between concepts and data when carrying out document analysis. With these weaknesses in mind Calvert (1991) suggested that the following questions need to be considered when assessing the value of documentary evidence:

- Is the document what it purports to be?
- What is the relation of the author to the event?
- What is the record trying to show?
- What does the document mean?
This enables the researcher to assess the suitability of the documents and allows the utilisation of appropriate and relevant documentation.

ANALYSIS

Analysis of case study evidence has traditionally been difficult due to a lack of clear and universally accepted techniques. This has led to the aforementioned criticisms of subjectivity and validity which Yin (1994) felt can be combated by a general analytical strategy which outlines priorities of what to analyse and why. The ultimate goal of the strategy is to treat the evidence fairly, to produce compelling analytic conclusions and to rule out alternative interpretations. He suggested that there are two general strategies for the analysis of case study evidence. The first of these relies on the theoretical propositions of the research and the second involves the development of a case description. The first of these strategies is preferable as it follows the theoretical propositions from the literature which lead to a set of research questions, which in turn establish the objectives and design of the case study. Yin (1994) argued that the propositions should shape the data collection plan and therefore give priorities to the analytical strategy.

He went on to suggest that there are four main techniques that can be used in the analysis of the evidence that increases the validity of the results. These are pattern matching, explanation building, time series analysis and programme logic modelling and it is the second of these that is most appropriate for this research. Explanation building seeks to stipulate a set of causal links about a phenomena and is mainly relevant to explanatory case studies as it allows the gradual building of an explanation for a phenomena through the process of refining the theoretical propositions and the consideration of alternative explanations. As it is an iterative process there is a danger that the researcher may drift away from the original topic of interest and constant reference to the objectives of the research is necessary.

It could be argued that the evidence from the second phase of the research should be analysed by ‘grounded theory.’ This is the process by which analytical categories can be developed inductively from the data through scrutiny of the evidence (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Grounded theory is based, however, on the principle that the theories explaining the phenomenon will arrive from the evidence collected from the case studies, rather than being guided by theoretical propositions. Glaser and Strauss (1967) feel that existing literature should be ignored, thus allowing the generation of new theories which are not tainted by concepts more applicable to different areas. Bulmer (1984) has provided a comprehensive criticism of grounded theory, which was supported by Graham (1991) and both doubt the salience of the
emergence in explanations from data analysis. Moreover, grounded theory was not applicable for this research as the research process began with theoretical propositions which were tested and refined during the process of the research.

5.4 DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The following section outlines the actual process of the research and considers how the evidence was collected to answer the research questions.

5.4.1 PHASE ONE: POSTAL SURVEY

As there was no existing research in this area it was impossible to ensure a random and reliable sample of local authorities with and without quality programmes which would have been necessary to establish whether there were characteristics of local authorities that encouraged or discouraged the use of quality programmes. As a result, it was decided that a population survey of United Kingdom local authorities was appropriate in order to obtain comprehensive data on the use of quality programmes in local authority leisure services. This decision was facilitated by the relatively small size of the population (486) and the resources support offered by the Institute of Sports and Recreation Management.

The desire to survey the geographically dispersed population of local authorities meant that the questionnaire had to be the postal, self completion survey contained in Appendix three, which carried with it the potential weaknesses of poor response rate and poor interpretation (Veal, 1992). These weaknesses were addressed by firstly, the careful construction of the survey instrument and secondly, pre-piloting and piloting the intended method. Following peer review of the survey instrument it was pre-piloted on 15 local authority senior leisure officers who had expressed a willingness to be involved in the research. As a result of this, the questionnaire was amended slightly to increase the number of 'tick boxes' and closed answers where appropriate. This was done to decrease the time needed to answer the questionnaire which was thought would increase the response rate. It was then piloted on a random selection of 50 local authorities where it was sent to Chief Leisure Officers. As a result of piloting, it became clear that there was no confusion over the information needed although one minor change was made to the questionnaire. This was the removal of 'Customer Care' from the list of quality programmes in Question one and from Section two. It was felt that the term 'Customer Care' was too broad and a more accurate response would be gained from asking respondents
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to detail 'Other' quality programmes, which included formal Customer Care programmes.

The questionnaire was sent to the Chief Leisure Officers of 486 local authorities (including those who took part in the pilot) and 240 valid responses were received. Of these 155 local authorities were using quality programmes in their leisure facilities and 85 were not. The level of analysis required of the data was relatively simple - the analysis was univariate, these variables were nominal and the majority of the data was used for descriptive purposes, although the Chi Squared test was run on some data. The data was analysed by SPSS and the results are presented in Chapter six.

5.4.2 PHASE TWO: CASE STUDY RESEARCH

The first stage of the research indicated that the reasons for using quality programmes to be found in chapter two were, in fact, the reasons why senior public leisure professional had introduced quality programmes in their leisure facilities. On this basis, the second phase of the research went on to investigate these findings in greater detail and led to the selection of case studies that enabled the background and the findings of the first phase of the research to be investigated fully.

SAMPLE

Both Yin (1994) and Rose (1991) are clear that the selection of case studies cannot be based on the type of sampling logic that is used in quantitative research. Yin (1994) considered this sampling logic to be inappropriate as case studies should not generally be used to assess the incidence of phenomena as they are resource intensive. In addition, if sampling logic is applied the investigation would need to cover the phenomena and all of the variables within its context, requiring a huge number of cases.

The case studies chosen in the research were selected by the focused sampling technique promoted by Hakim (1987, pp. 141-142) who suggested that this sampling method is useful for case study research as it is

the selective study of particular persons, groups or institutions, or of particular relationships, processes or interactions that are expected to offer especially illuminating examples or to provide especially good tests for propositions of a broad nature.

The emphasis of focused sampling is on establishing specific reasons why particular cases should be selected for inclusion in the research and although
Hakim (1987) acknowledged that this method of sampling is in direct opposition to traditional sampling methods, she suggested that focused sampling is most relevant when case study research follows a national survey as cases can be selected with reference to a relationship exhibited in the survey. She claimed that this use of focused sampling offers the benefits of both worlds - generalisability from the national survey and the more detailed information from the intensive study. (Hakim, 1987, p.142)

The applicability of focused sampling to this research is evident and the knowledge gained from the review of literature and phase one of the research enabled the development of case selection criteria. There was one obvious selection criteria - potential cases had to have been using a quality programme in the majority of their sport and leisure facilities. The need for a majority ensured that the decision to implement quality programmes was not an isolated decision and assisted with data triangulation as the implementation decision could be investigated from several sources.

In effect, the above criteria was an ‘eligibility’ criteria in that local authorities without quality programmes in the majority of their facilities were not included in the sampling frame. This was necessary to ensure that the research was based on local authorities with a substantial involvement with quality programmes. A second ‘eligibility’ criteria that was also considered necessary was that accredited quality programmes had to have achieved registration as this indicated an investment in quality management.

The review of literature suggested that three reasons helped to explain the use of quality programmes in local authority leisure facilities:

1. Public leisure professionals implemented quality programmes because customer care became a priority in public leisure facilities;
2. Public leisure professionals were required to use quality programmes as a response to legislation;
3. Public leisure professionals had implemented quality programmes because they had adopted a more ‘commercial’ approach to the management of their facilities.

This set of reasons constituted the third selection criteria that was used to choose the sample and enabled the investigation of variations within the sample. Thus, the research moved from being a single case design to a multiple case design and the process of case selection will be discussed in detail in Chapter seven.

This research made use of minutes, memos, strategic documents and reports which were analysed to verify and support the information obtained in interviews. The
material also suggested other topics of interest that were pursued during the research process and in some cases provided a chronological order of events which was useful in developing an understanding of the implementation process.

The majority of the data was, however, collected by the semi-structured interviews that were carried out with senior leisure professionals in the case study authorities. Jones (1991) provides a good guide to the procedures involved in carrying out semi-structured interviews in which she noted that interviews are not without their difficulties. She stated that the presence and personality of the interviewer are variables in the research process and that the interviewer affects the data at all stages. In support of this, Easterby-Smith et al (1991) discussed the need for interviewing skills, the effect of social interaction and the need to obtain the trust of the interviewee.

Of greater importance is the need to ensure that comparison is possible between interviews in order to increase the validity of the research (Burgess, 1991). In this research, comparison was facilitated by the use of the interview schedule set out in Appendix four. Validity was also enhanced by a clear link between the questions asked in the research and the research objectives (Table 5.4).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Category of questioning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To establish how senior leisure professionals conceptualise quality and quality management.</td>
<td>The meaning of quality and quality management. Initiatives used*.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To establish what senior leisure professionals consider to be the influences for the use of quality and quality programmes in public leisure facilities.</td>
<td>Customer impact on quality. Initiatives used. The impact of government legislation on quality management. Political influences on quality management. Management culture within leisure services. Culture change within leisure services. Political influences on quality management. The implementation process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To establish what role these professionals played in the adoption of quality programmes within their local authority leisure facilities.</td>
<td>(*Questions in some categories provided information for more than one objective).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Consistency is difficult when carrying out semi-structured interviews as their very nature allows for diversity in questioning; indeed this characteristic was the reason for their inclusion in this research. The interview schedule, however, assisted with the consistency of topics as it allowed all interviewees to have the opportunity to address all relevant topic areas. In addition, within these topics there were specific questions that all interviewees were asked, thus increasing the consistency of the
interviews. This, alongside the use of open questions and care taken by the researcher to remain objective, assisted in keeping the bias inherent within the interviews to a minimum.

An additional area of potential bias comes from the type of individuals selected for participation within the research. As stated earlier, interviews were carried out with senior local authority leisure professionals. This was necessary to meet the objectives of the current study as these individuals were responsible for the management of services of good quality through the introduction of quality programmes within their leisure facilities. As a result of the role of these individuals within the organisation, the evidence obtained from the interviews was detailed enough to enable the objectives of the research to be met.

Alternatively, however, the role of these individuals within the organisation meant that they had a vested interest in the success of the use of quality management. Although this research was not evaluating the impact of quality programmes within local authority leisure facilities, it is likely that the responsibilities of the professionals interviewed will have led to them to firstly, suggest the success of these initiatives, but more importantly, to promote their role in this success. In addition, these type of interviewees are more likely to attribute changes within local authority leisure services to professionalism and their role as managers.

Hakim (1987) has described research carried out within one stakeholder group as being partial, suggesting that it does not provide a holistic explanation of the phenomenon under investigation. She has, however, also argued strongly for the use of such research techniques saying

people's own definition of a situation is an important element of any social process, even if it does not provide a complete account or explanation and may include self-justificatory reports.

(Hakim, 1987 p.146)

As a result, although the choice of interviewee will have introduced an element of selectivity into the current study, it was felt that this was firstly, inevitable as a result of the detailed evidence required and secondly, acceptable, indeed necessary, in order to meet the research objectives. This selectivity was, however, reduced by the validation of the interview evidence from several sources, including objective measures of performance provided in management documents.

A further area in which selectivity and potential bias must be considered is in the area of data interpretation. It is difficult for researchers not to bring some element
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of subjectivity to their analysis of data as they interpret results. Indeed, interview results become subjective from the point when the researcher decides that a topic of discussion is worthy of further investigation. The process of interview analysis is outlined in Chapter seven, however, a variety of techniques for reducing possible bias were used. One important method was to ensure that interviews followed the structure outlined in Appendix 4. Secondly, all of the interviews were recorded and transcribed which ensured that all discussion was available for analysis rather than edited notes. These transcripts were also sent to the interviewees for validation to reduce any misinterpretation or unclear findings.

PILOTTING: QUALITY MANAGEMENT IN MANSFIELD DISTRICT COUNCIL

The need for piloting the chosen research methods has been discussed by de Vaus (1991), Veal (1992) and Bryman (1989) as a means of reducing errors in subsequent work by providing a 'dress rehearsal' for the research. Yin (1994) took this one step further and suggested that in case based research the pilot is more than a pre-test as it can be used to develop the line of questioning to be pursued or to assist with conceptual clarification. In this research, a pilot was carried out for both pre-testing and development purposes. Firstly, the pilot enabled an evaluation of the type of documentary evidence that was appropriate to meet the aims of this research. Secondly, the pilot allowed the schedule for the semi-structured interviews to be refined and developed. Piloting also offered the researcher the opportunity to consider the analysis and presentation of findings.

Mansfield District Council (MDC) was selected as a pilot organisation following an agreement to assist the research from its Chief Leisure Officer. It met the selection criteria discussed earlier and was geographically convenient for the researcher, which enabled easy access as the research method was trialed.

There were two main findings from the pilot. The first was that documentary information was available to the researcher as MDC readily provided copies of strategic documentation, leisure committee minutes and financial information. In addition to enabling an analysis of the type of information to be obtained from documentary sources, this also allowed a list of documentary sources to be drawn up for use in the field research proper which assisted with a systematic and comparable research structure.

One difficulty arose in the documentary research in that the researcher expected to see evidence of the implementation and development of the quality programmes in this material. This was not evident and following questioning it was apparent that
this type of process was unlikely to be documented due to a perceived lack of flexibility. Verbal explanations of the development and implementation of quality programmes were, however, readily available.

The second and most important development of the pilot was the testing and refinement of the questions to be used in the semi-structured interviews. An initial set of questions was prepared from the literature review and analysis of the results of the interviews showed that these questions were effective in generating comprehensive information which met the objectives of the research. On the basis of the piloting, the case study design was validated and implemented.

5.5 CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has discussed issues of general methodological interest and has justified and evaluated the methodology that was followed when trying to establish why senior managers of local authority leisure services use quality programmes in the management of their public leisure facilities. The remaining chapters present and evaluate the outcomes of the study.
CHAPTER SIX: QUALITY PROGRAMMES IN PUBLIC LEISURE FACILITIES

This chapter presents the results of the first phase of the research which, via a postal survey of UK local authorities, aimed to establish the extent to which quality programmes were being used in local authority leisure facilities. In addition, it intended to provide an initial test of the theoretical explanations for the use of these programmes, which is the primary aim of this research, to be examined in detail in its second phase. The first section of this chapter provides an overview of the phenomenon of quality management within public leisure facilities, laying the foundations for the subsequent chapter which profiles the case studies used in the research. The second section of this chapter presents the results of the questions relating specifically to the quality programmes used by respondents and considers their impact upon the management of local authority leisure facilities.

The questionnaire was sent to the Chief Leisure Officers of 486 local authorities and 240 valid responses were received. Of these 155 local authorities were using quality programmes in their leisure facilities and 85 were not. The characteristics of the respondents are outlined in Appendix five. The Chi-squared test was applied to a variety of these characteristics and showed that there were no statistically significant differences between the respondents to the questionnaire and the population as a whole (Appendix six). In addition, the Chi-squared test showed that, within the responses received, these variables did not show a significant statistical association with the choice of whether or not to implement quality programmes. As a result, although the questionnaire is likely to have encouraged responses from local authorities with an interest in quality programmes, the respondents to the postal survey can be considered to be representative of local authority leisure services in their general characteristics.

6.1 OVERVIEW OF THE INDUSTRY

Figure 6.1 shows that 155 local authorities (65% of respondents) were using, or intended to use, quality programmes in the management of their sport and recreation facilities. This provided evidence of the presence of quality management within public leisure facilities as approximately one third of all local authorities were committed to the use of quality programmes within their leisure facilities. The results also established that 70 of these local authorities were using more than one quality programme.
These results include local authorities that were still in the process of obtaining accreditation to externally assessed programmes, although accreditation had to have been sought within 3 months of responding. It was considered that any local authority leisure services this close to seeking accreditation was likely to be committed to the management of service quality and to be carrying this out through the principles of their chosen quality programme.

Figure 6.1: Use of quality programmes in public sport and leisure facilities

6.1.1 PROGRAMMES USED IN THE MANAGEMENT OF PUBLIC LEISURE FACILITIES

Figure 6.2 presents the relative popularity of the quality programmes used in the management of sport and leisure facilities. It is apparent that Investors in People (IiP) was the most commonly used quality programme in public leisure facilities with 60% of respondents who had implemented quality programmes, using this programme to manage service quality within their facilities.

Figure 6.2: Quality programmes used in the management of public leisure facilities

(n = 155/240 - multiple responses could be given)
The second most popular was ISO9002, with 41% of respondents who were managing quality were doing so with this programme, followed by TQM programmes and the Charter Mark, both used by 19% of quality programme users. Other quality programmes, used by 20% of such respondents, were primarily Customer Care programmes or Customer Charters with 25 out of 32 local authorities using this type of initiative in the management of their sport and leisure facilities. At the time of the research QUEST had not been launched and therefore did not feature in these results.

Many local authorities (45% of programme users) were using more than one quality programme in the management of their leisure facilities. The most common combination of quality programmes was the use of Investors in People and ISO9002 (17%) followed by Investors in People and TQM (13%) and Investors in People and other programmes (12%).

The human resource and staff development focus of LiP, which is particularly appropriate in a people based industry such as leisure, may account for its popularity. Investors in People was more commonly used than ISO9002, notwithstanding that at the time of the research (1995), the majority of the professional literature and discussion about quality programmes in the leisure industry focused on ISO9002. Only 64 local authorities were committed to ISO9002, showing that this programme was considerably less popular than LiP as a quality initiative. One explanation for the perceived success of ISO9002 was its availability before other accredited quality programmes, enhancing its prominence within the industry. In addition, its role in assisting with Compulsory Competitive Tendering requirements, to be discussed later, is likely to have enhanced perceptions of its popularity.

There were relatively high numbers of local authorities using the Charter Mark to manage the quality of their sport and leisure facilities, given the programme's association with the Conservative government. This is likely to be due to two reasons. Firstly, the Charter Mark builds on the principles of the Citizen's Charter which are mandatory for local authority leisure services and this may have encouraged local authorities to apply. Secondly, the award of the Charter Mark indicates external recognition of the delivery of high quality public services which has made it attractive for leisure managers who have been awarded a greater number of Charter Marks than any other single public service.

The long term nature of TQM in bringing about a quality culture has often prevented organisations that are looking for an immediate solution from
implementing this programme. This, alongside a lack of external recognition, may account for the relatively low numbers of local authority leisure facilities that were using TQM to manage quality, given the strengths of Total Quality Management.

6.1.2 REASONS FOR THE USE OF QUALITY PROGRAMMES

Most respondents gave two reasons for their use of quality programmes. These were being implemented not only to improve services, but also to increase efficiency and 32 local authorities gave this combination of reasons. Fifteen local authorities were hoping to improve services and accountability and sixteen were hoping to improve services and competitiveness. This suggests that the management of public leisure services were using quality programmes as they had adopted a more 'commercial' approach to the management of their facilities. This argument is explored in more detail in the second phase of the research.

The largest single reason given for the use of quality programmes was the need to improve services for customers (Table 6.1), indicating the importance of customer care to respondents. This suggests that, as argued in Chapter two, quality programmes had become popular because managers of public leisure facilities had perceived customer care to be important within public services, again to be considered in more detail in the case study research.

Table 6.1: Reasons for using quality programmes in public leisure facilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>% of respondents using quality programmes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To improve services</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To improve efficiency</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To meet CCT contract requirements</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To increase competitiveness</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To follow a council directive</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To increase competitiveness</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To increase accountability</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Respondents could give more than one reason. n = 155)

The third reason for implementing quality programmes, given by 35 respondents (23%) was 'to meet CCT contract requirements'. The need to introduce quality programmes to comply with CCT procedures is unique to local authority managers. In addition, a further 25 (16%) local authorities had implemented quality programmes 'to increase competitiveness' either when tendering for facility
management (9), or to meet the revenue requirements of CCT contracts (16). Both sets of responses indicated the importance of CCT in encouraging the introduction of quality programmes in public leisure facilities.

6.1.3 REASONS FOR THE USE OF INDIVIDUAL QUALITY PROGRAMMES

The reasons given for the use of specific quality programmes reflected, in part, the overall reasons for the use of quality programmes in general. Most local authorities cited service improvements as a reason for the use of their quality programmes (Table 6.2), however, the main reason for the choice of quality programme reflects their individual strengths in managing quality. The exception to this is the Charter Mark which was primarily implemented because of external recognition.

Table 6.2: Reasons for the use of individual quality programmes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>LiP (%)</th>
<th>ISO9002 (%)</th>
<th>CM (%)</th>
<th>TQM (%)</th>
<th>Other (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To improve services</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To meet CCT contract</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>requirement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff motivation and</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To follow a council</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>directive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To increase competitiveness</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To standardise operations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For external recognition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To continuously improve</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*see discussion of Investors in People
** see discussion of Total Quality Management

The single largest reason for using LiP was that it was a council commitment for all services (30). As the quality of local authority services is largely determined by the staff that deliver them, LiP is as appropriate for the whole authority as it is for leisure services. In addition, the award is made for the demonstration of good HRM policies which are centrally developed, leading to the organisation as a whole being able to demonstrate excellence in the management of people and thus achieve the award.
The staff development focus of liP was expected to make it attractive for use in public leisure facilities, and the findings of the postal survey supported this (Table 6.2) as 49 respondents cited staff training and motivation as the reason for choosing liP. Other respondents felt that liP was right for the industry as they felt that it was the most appropriate quality programme for the leisure industry as a result of its focus on staff.

Twenty five respondents were using ISO9002 in order to meet a CCT requirement. This was the largest single reason given for the use of this programme and indicated the perceived value of ISO9002 to the CCT process. In addition, it has been suggested that ISO9002 assists with the reliability of the leisure service by ensuring that the operations of the local authority are consistent. Customers can expect standards of service to be consistent from day to day, facility to facility, and between staff members and it would appear from Table 6.2 that the perceived opportunity to improve services by allowing a standardised approach was a significant reason for the use of ISO9002.

It is evident that the external recognition associated with the award of the Charter Mark was popular with those local authorities who have chosen to use this programme in their management of sport and leisure facilities, as it was the main reason for using this programme (15 respondents). This differs from the responses found for the previous two programmes where external recognition was not a major factor. liP and ISO9002 are, however, open to all organisations and have no limit to the number of awards that can be made. As a result, it is possible that this reported difference in the importance given to external recognition was due to the fact that the Charter Mark is only open to public services and awarded on a competitive basis to the best 100 applicants.

Those that support a TQM approach to management have advocated this programme as the way of guaranteeing organisational success for organisations facing competition. The results of this research indicated that managers of public leisure facilities subscribe to this belief, with 19 local authorities using Total Quality Management to increase organisational competitiveness. Respondents also cited the opportunity to benchmark performance as a key reason for using TQM (12 respondents).

Most of the quality programmes described in the ‘OTHER’ section were customer care programmes or customer care charters. These programmes tended to be non-assessed, developed in-house and encompassed such activities as feedback questionnaires, user panels, suggestion boxes and staff training. One strength of
in-house programmes is that they can be developed to meet the specific needs of the organisation and thus directly improve services. As a consequence, it was unsurprising that the main reason for implementing these quality programmes was to improve service delivery, with 15 local authorities citing this as a reason for adopting them. Ten local authorities had implemented their quality programme to meet CCT requirements.

6.1.4 REASONS FOR NOT USING QUALITY PROGRAMMES

Eighty five (35%) respondents were not using quality programmes in the management of their leisure facilities. The main reasons for this were related to the perceived resources necessary to use quality programmes (Table 6.3). Quality programmes are inherently resource intensive particularly in terms of staff time, although advocates of the approach argue that the financial costs of quality programmes may be recouped through increased efficiency and improved service provision. As a result, even local authorities who support the concept of improving service quality may choose not to use quality programmes if resources are scarce and other priorities are deemed more important.

Table 6.3: Reasons for not using quality programmes in public leisure facilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of resources</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other priorities</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manage quality in other ways</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appraisal underway</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programmes are of debatable value</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does not meet the needs of the department</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Respondents could give more than one reason. n = 85)

It was notable that only 12 respondents queried the value of quality programmes. This suggests that managing the quality of service in local authority leisure facilities was an important issue even for those local authorities who were not committed to quality programmes. This was supported by the findings that 21 of the local authorities that were not using quality programmes, were managing quality in other ways. In addition, 14 local authorities were in the process of appraising the quality programmes available to public leisure providers, with the intention of implementing these in future.
The results of this phase of the research provided evidence of the presence of quality management approaches within contemporary local authority leisure facilities, with at least one third of local authorities using quality programmes in the management of their leisure facilities. In addition, there was some evidence of interest in the quality approach among current non-users of quality programmes, some of whom were in the process of assessing the merits of the variety of available quality programmes, while others were managing quality in other ways. This does not, of course, take account of non-respondents, among whom less interest may be expected.

The single largest reason given for the use of quality programmes was to improve services to customers. Very few respondents, however, felt that customer care was the only reason for the use of quality programmes and most claimed to be also using their initiatives to improve service quality, financial performance and competitiveness - all indications of a more 'commercial' approach to the management of local authority leisure facilities. A third reason for the use of quality programmes was that local leisure providers were using quality programmes because of CCT requirements or because they were required to as a result of a council directive. These reasons are explored in greater detail in the second phase of the research outlined in the next chapter.

The reasons given for the use of individual quality programmes reflect the focus of each programme and thus their perceived strengths. As a result, it would appear that where possible, local authority leisure providers have chosen to implement quality programmes based on the aspects of service delivery that they considered needed to be addressed. There are two main exceptions to this. Firstly, the Charter Mark was introduced mainly because of the associated external recognition of the quality of service, rather than for its customer focus. Secondly, although ISO9002 was introduced by some local authorities for its ability to standardise operations, the single largest reason for its use was for CCT purposes.

The second section of this chapter presents further findings of the postal survey, providing more detailed information on the types of quality programmes used by respondents and the perceived benefits, disadvantages and impact of the main quality programmes in use within public leisure facilities.
Chapter Six: Quality Programmes in Public Leisure Facilities

6.2 THE USE OF INDIVIDUAL QUALITY PROGRAMMES

Table 6.4 outlines the main characteristics of the quality programmes used in the management of local authority leisure facilities. The discussion below outlines the perceived benefits and disadvantages of these programmes.

Table 6.4: Characteristics of quality programmes in use in public leisure facilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Accredited</th>
<th>Management of the Characteristics of Quality</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ISO9002</td>
<td>Assists with quality assurance through the development of a manual of operations.</td>
<td>Accredited by BSI and awarded to any organisation meeting the criteria. Awarded for as long as requirements are met and is audited every 6 months.</td>
<td>Reliability, competence, access, security and tangibles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investors in People</td>
<td>Promotes staff training and development to ensure organisational objectives.</td>
<td>Accredited by Training and Enterprise Councils and awarded to any organisation that meets the criteria. Awarded for 3 years.</td>
<td>Responsiveness, competence, credibility.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charter Mark</td>
<td>Focuses on customers and communication.</td>
<td>Awarded by the Charter Mark Unit to best 100 applicants from public services. Awarded for 3 years.</td>
<td>Responsiveness, communication and voice, customer orientated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TQM</td>
<td>Aims to encourage organisation culture of quality.</td>
<td>Developed in-house.</td>
<td>All aspects of the service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer Care</td>
<td>Focuses on customers.</td>
<td>Developed in-house.</td>
<td>Responsiveness, competence, communication and voice, customer orientated.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.2.1 INVESTORS IN PEOPLE

Investors in People was the main quality programme used by respondents with 92 local authorities using liP to manage service quality within their leisure facilities. The main reported benefits of liP were related to staff issues with 79 responses relating to staff involvement, morale (44) and development (35) (Table 6.5). liP claims to improve the quality of organisational service by making staff aware of and committed to, organisational goals. It would appear from this research that the programme was perceived to be relatively successful in achieving this with many respondents (39) reporting that the programme had increased organisational awareness.
Table 6.5: Benefits of Investors in People

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff involvement/morale</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase organisational awareness</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff training</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve services</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve efficiency</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External recognition</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(n = 92)

Table 6.6 shows that the main complaint about Investors in People was that the programme was time consuming, with 25 local authorities highlighting this as a disadvantage. Eleven local authorities felt that Investors in People was not recognised by the public and eight local authorities felt that the programme had too narrow a focus. On the whole, however, respondents perceived there to be few disadvantages with IIP and seven local authorities considered the programme to have no disadvantages at all.

Table 6.6: Disadvantages of Investors in People

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disadvantage</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time consuming</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource expensive</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of recognition</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too narrow a focus</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paperwork</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No disadvantages</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(n = 88)

6.2.2 ISO9002

ISO9002 was the second most popular quality programme with 64 local authority leisure services using this in the management of their leisure facilities. The opportunity for consistency and standardisation promoted by ISO9002 was considered to be the main benefit of the programme with 29 respondents reporting this as the programme’s main advantage (Table 6.7). Other benefits were related to this and 25 respondents cited clarification of procedures as an advantage of the programme.
Although BSI have argued that accreditation of ISO9002 demonstrates to customers that an organisation is committed to quality, it would appear that local authority leisure providers did not consider this to be a major feature of this quality programme as only 14 respondents mentioned external recognition as a benefit of the award. It is possible, however, that its inclusion in CCT contracts was due in part to the external recognition of the award. Alternatively, ISO9002 could have been included in CCT contracts to assist with the monitoring of the contract and/or to assist with the DSO bid.

Table 6.7: Benefits of ISO9002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For consistency/standardisation</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clarity of procedures</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External assessment</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve services</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff involvement</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve efficiency</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review/audit of practice</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(n = 60)

Critics of this quality programme highlight its disadvantage as being the time consuming, resource intensive bureaucracy of the programme resulting from the need to standardise and document procedures. This research supports these criticisms (Table 6.8) as 56 respondents cited reasons of this sort as being disadvantages.

Table 6.8: Disadvantages of ISO9002

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantage</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paperbound/bureaucratic</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time consuming</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource expensive</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No guarantee of quality</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inflexible</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of recognition</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No disadvantages</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(n = 60)

It has also been suggested that an inherent weakness of ISO9002 is that organisations are free to set their own quality standards which do not necessarily need to be high. This, however, appears to be a relatively minor disadvantage from
the perspective of leisure facility providers, with few local authorities reporting this as a disadvantage of ISO9002.

6.2.3 THE CHARTER MARK

The Charter Mark was used by 30 local authorities to manage quality in their leisure services. It has been suggested that the main benefit of the Charter Mark is that it is an external recognition of service quality within the public service under review. The research supports this (Table 6.9) as the main benefit of the Charter Mark was indeed considered to be its external recognition of the delivery of quality services. This, alongside the suggestion from 7 local authorities that the Charter Mark offers the opportunity to ‘benchmark’ services, supported the argument that it is the award process that makes the Charter Mark attractive to providers of public leisure facilities.

Table 6.9: Benefits of the use of the Charter Mark

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>External recognition</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer focus</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benchmark</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuous improvement/TQM</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff involvement/morale</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ease of assessment</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(n = 30)

As outlined in Table 6.10, five local authorities felt that there were no disadvantages to the Charter Mark as a quality programme.

Table 6.10: Disadvantages of the Charter Mark

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disadvantage</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of recognition</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Politics</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of awards</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor assessment procedures</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource expensive</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No disadvantages</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(n = 28)

Nonetheless, the main disadvantage cited was also related to external recognition with 14 local authorities suggesting that the Charter Mark was not well recognised
by the general public. Although the Charter Mark had been developed to acknowledge local authorities which provide quality services, respondents felt that central government had been relatively unsuccessful in communicating this to the general public.

6.2.4 TOTAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT

Total Quality Management was used by 30 local authorities to manage quality in their leisure facilities. The main benefit of TQM was thought to be its opportunity to improve services with 8 local authorities citing this as a benefit of their programme and 8 citing the opportunity to continuously improve as a benefit (Table 6.11).

Table 6.11: Benefits of using Total Quality Management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefit</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff involvement/morale</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve services</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuous improvement</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistency of operations</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation success</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(n = 27)

Table 6.12 outlines the perceived disadvantages of TQM. 'Lack of recognition' was thought to be the major disadvantage associated with TQM, due to its lack of external validation.

Table 6.12: Disadvantages of Total Quality Management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disadvantage</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of recognition</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource expensive</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inflexible</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No disadvantages</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(n = 28)

This contrasts with the findings relating to the Charter Mark which highlighted the importance of external recognition to some leisure managers. Furthermore, although the external recognition of ISO9002 and iIP was not a major factor in leading leisure providers to use these programmes, it was an issue for some respondents. This may provide one explanation for the relatively small number of
local authorities choosing to use Total Quality Management in the management of their sport and leisure facilities. Five local authorities felt that there were no disadvantages associated with their TQM programme.

6.2.5 ‘OTHER’ QUALITY PROGRAMMES

Fourteen local authorities cited the focus on customers as a benefit and ten local authorities found benefits in terms of service improvements (Table 6.13).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6.13: Benefits of ‘other’ quality programmes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Customer focus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet requirements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff involvement/morale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Eleven local authorities felt that their quality programme had no disadvantages (Table 6.14). This may be due to the fact that many of these programmes were developed to suit the specific needs of the local authority and could be managed within the resources that were available. As a result, any disadvantages could be avoided by developing the programme in order to meet current priorities and these programmes were unlikely to require (or indeed to receive) the resources associated with externally assessed programmes or a formal Total Quality Management programme.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6.14: Disadvantages of ‘other’ quality programmes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resource expensive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of recognition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No disadvantages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6.3 THE IMPACT OF QUALITY PROGRAMMES ON PUBLIC LEISURE FACILITIES

Table 6.15 shows that the majority of respondents felt unable to comment on the direct impact of their quality programmes on the management of their facilities. Those that did felt that quality programmes led to improved service to customers, improved management and assisted and motivated staff. With the exception of TQM, it was felt that quality programmes did not necessarily increase revenue and
facility usage. Their role in decreasing costs was perceived to be greater, with the exception of the Charter Mark, as respondents who offered an opinion felt that quality programmes decreased costs.

Table 6.15: The impact of quality programmes on public leisure facilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes (%)</th>
<th>No (%)</th>
<th>Don't know (%)</th>
<th>Total to total (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Improved service to customers</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investors in People</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISO9002 (n = 60)</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charter Mark (n = 30)</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TQM (n = 36)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Increased usage</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investors in People</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISO9002</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charter Mark</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Quality Management</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Improved management</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investors in People</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISO9002</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charter Mark</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Quality Management</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reduced costs</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investors in People</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISO9002</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charter Mark</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Quality Management</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Increased revenue</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investors in People</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISO9002</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charter Mark</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Quality Management</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Assisted staff</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investors in People</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISO9002</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charter Mark</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Quality Management</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Improved motivation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investors in People</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISO9002</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charter Mark</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Quality Management</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Increased communication with customers</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investors in People</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISO9002</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charter Mark</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Quality Management</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
These findings did not indicate immediate financial advantages to the use of most quality programmes. Instead, they suggested that quality programmes were seen as valuable in terms of improving services to customers through direct service improvements and through improved management and motivated staff. It may be that these benefits will in the longer term lead to financial gains for the managers of local authority sport and leisure facilities, but this has yet to be seen.

There were some variations in the benefits attributed to different types of programmes. Those respondents who offered an opinion about the effect of Investors in People felt there were clear benefits to the programme in terms of service and management and to staff morale and assistance. In addition, respondents felt that Investors in People led to increased usage and decreased costs; therefore, although IIP did not necessarily increase revenue, it did have the ability to improve services and improve financial operations.

Local authorities who had achieved accreditation of ISO9002 felt that the programme had resulted in improved management and staff assistance. It had also led to improved communication and increased staff motivation. Respondents were not convinced of the associated financial benefits of ISO9002; those that offered an opinion were divided on whether ISO9002 increased revenue and usage, or decreased costs. It would appear that although ISO9002 may have improved service, it did not necessarily improve the financial situation of the organisation. As a result, for public leisure managers who are working in financially constrained circumstances or need to improve the financial situation of the organisation, ISO9002 may not be the most appropriate quality programme to use in the management of public leisure facilities, unless the local authority has an alternative reason for the use of this programme, e.g. to meet CCT requirements.

Users of the Charter Mark were also not convinced of the financial benefits of their quality programme, particularly in terms of decreasing costs to the organisation. It would appear that the Charter Mark, like ISO9002, did not provide all the benefits of quality programmes claimed by those who advocate their use. It is also interesting to note that the Charter Mark was perceived as doing little to increase communication with customers. One of the requirements of the Citizens Charter and thus the Charter Mark is that local authorities must be more open in their management of services, with an emphasis on consultation with customers. It would appear that local authority leisure providers felt that the Charter Mark did not necessarily facilitate this. This may be due to the communication processes of the Charter Mark already having been in place within the service as a result of the
Citizen’s Charter meaning that the Charter Mark did not necessarily lead to a specific increase in communication with customers.

6.4 CONCLUSIONS

This phase of the research provided evidence of the use of quality programmes and quality management within public leisure facilities and therefore established that the research questions were able to be tested. It demonstrated the initial validity of the arguments for the use of quality programmes which were presented in Chapter two as the results of this phase of the research suggested that the three factors identified there, i.e. a customer focus, legislation and commercial management techniques, had indeed influenced the decision to use quality programmes.

The survey findings showed that the choice of individual quality programme had been based on a variety of factors. All programmes had been implemented to improve service delivery; however, IIP, TQM and customer care programmes were primarily implemented because of their respective perceived strengths in staff matters, organisational success and customer focus. These reasons reflected each programme’s focus, suggesting that these programmes were identified as being able to address specific priorities within operations. In contrast, although ISO9002 was implemented to standardise operations, the single largest reason given for its use was for CCT requirements. In addition, the Charter Mark was implemented primarily for its associated external recognition of the delivery of quality services and this suggests that for these two programmes the focus of the programme was less important than other benefits considered to be bestowed by its use. As a result, it is apparent from the first phase of the research that the reasons for the use of individual quality programmes were diverse.

On this basis, the second phase research examines why programmes were considered an appropriate response to the influences outlined above and provides detail on how they came to be chosen as the way forward for local authority leisure providers operating in a context of multi-faceted change. The results of the case study research, carried out in 6 local authority leisure services departments and presented in the following chapter, provide detailed evidence of how quality programmes have come to be present in these local authority leisure facilities and examines the rationale for the use of quality management approaches within public leisure facilities.
CHAPTER SEVEN: THE RATIONALE FOR QUALITY MANAGEMENT IN PUBLIC LEISURE FACILITIES

This research aims to establish why local authority leisure professionals have chosen to use quality programmes in the management of their leisure facilities. The preceding chapter outlines evidence of the phenomenon of quality management epitomised by the use of quality programmes and provides initial explanations for the reasons underlying the use of quality programmes. The detailed analysis undertaken through the case studies in order to fully understand the phenomenon of quality management came from the results of the second phase of the research which are presented in this chapter. The case study research provided the opportunity to investigate the action and interactions of the organisational environments, the principles of quality management and the decision to implement quality programmes in order to understand why, by 1995, quality programmes are being used in at least one third of local authority leisure services departments.

7.1 CASE STUDY SELECTION

The discussion in Chapter six outlined the three selection criteria that were used to choose case studies for inclusion in this phase of the research. Firstly, local authorities had to be using quality programmes in the majority of their facilities. Secondly, accredited quality programmes had to be fully implemented prior to the time of the research. Finally, the reasons for introducing quality programmes were used to investigate variations within the sample. The review of literature suggested that there were three main reasons for the use of quality programmes within local authority leisure facilities:

1. Public leisure professionals implemented quality programmes because customer care became a priority in public leisure facilities;
2. Public leisure professionals were required to use quality programmes as a response to legislation;
3. Public leisure professionals adopted a more 'commercial' approach to the management of their facilities.

and the findings of the first phase of the research provided evidence to support these.

Analysis of the responses to the questionnaire survey, however, led to two refinements. Firstly, it became apparent that local authorities were not only using quality programmes because they were required to as a response to legislation, but some local authorities were implementing quality programmes as a consequence of council directives. As a result, the second reason outlined above was amended to
state that quality programmes were being used in the management of public leisure facilities because managers were required to do so. Table 7.1 shows the number of respondents that cited each reason as an explanation for their use of quality programmes.

Table 7.1: Reasons for the use of quality programmes in public leisure facilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Number of responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Public leisure professionals have adopted a more 'commercial' approach to the management of their facilities</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer care has become a priority</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public leisure professionals have been required to use quality programmes</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Secondly, the analysis of the responses to the questionnaire (Table 7.2) indicated that these reasons for implementing quality programmes were not mutually exclusive and that very few respondents attributed the use of quality programmes solely to a need to be customer oriented. The majority of those that claimed to have implemented programmes for customer care purposes also claimed to have a more commercial approach to management.

Table 7.2: Analysis of reasons given for the use of quality programmes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for using quality programmes</th>
<th>Number of responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Reasons 1 and 3 combined) Public leisure professionals have implemented quality programmes because customer care became a priority in public leisure facilities and public leisure professionals have adopted a more 'commercial' approach to the management of their facilities</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public leisure professionals have adopted a more 'commercial' approach to the management of their facilities</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Reason 2) Public leisure professionals are required to use quality programmes</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Reason 1) Public leisure professionals have implemented quality programmes because customer care became a priority in public leisure facilities</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Reasons 2 and 3 combined) Public leisure professionals are required to use quality programmes and have adopted a more 'commercial' approach to the management of their facilities</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Reasons 1 and 2 combined) Public leisure professionals have implemented quality programmes because customer care became a priority in public leisure facilities and professionals are required to use quality programmes</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All three main reasons.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other reasons.</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Respondents could offer more than one reason for the use of quality programmes)
Indeed, the implementation of programmes for commercial and customer care purposes was the most popular reason given by respondents and was therefore incorporated into the research design. A more commercial approach to management was the second most common reason given by respondents for the use of quality programmes while the required use of quality was the third most common reason. Both needed to be incorporated into the research design. The final selection of the cases was carried out using criteria reflecting the three main sets of reasons given by local authorities for using quality programmes. The first of these combines two explanations for the use of quality programmes, while the second and third are single reasons:

1. Public leisure professionals have implemented quality programmes because customer care became a priority in public leisure facilities and public leisure professionals have adopted a more 'commercial' approach to the management of their facilities;
2. Public leisure professionals have adopted a more 'commercial' approach to the management of their facilities;
3. Public leisure professionals were required to use quality programmes.

In selecting the case study authorities, consideration was given to a range of characteristics including the authority population, number of facilities, political control, type of CCT contract and the presence of an independent leisure department. The Chi-squared test (Appendix six) showed that within the responses received, these variables did not show a significant statistical association with the choice of whether or not to implement quality programmes. For this reason, sample selection was based solely on the criteria relating to the rationale for introducing quality programmes. Two cases within each of the above categories were investigated, meaning that six local authorities were involved in the second phase of the research.

The first two selection criteria identified 132 local authorities that were eligible for inclusion in the second phase of the research. The local authorities who were willing to be involved in this phase were categorised on the basis of the third selection criteria outlined above and six case studies (Table 7.3) were selected at random to be involved in the case study research.

Table 7.3: Selected case studies for the second phase of the research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for Inclusion</th>
<th>Local Authority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Customer care is a priority and officials have adopted a more commercial approach to the management of their facilities.</td>
<td>King's Lynn &amp; West Norfolk Borough Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officials have adopted a more commercial approach to the management of their facilities.</td>
<td>Erewash Borough Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Required to use quality programmes.</td>
<td>Calderdale Borough Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Warrington Borough Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Newcastle City Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>North Lincs. District Council</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER SEVEN: THE RATIONALE FOR QUALITY MANAGEMENT IN PUBLIC LEISURE FACILITIES

The research process carried out in each local authority (Table 7.4) will be discussed in greater detail within the presentation of each case study.

Table 7.4: The research carried out in local authorities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local Authority</th>
<th>Number of Interviews</th>
<th>Documents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council [KLWB]</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Quality policy, Sport and Recreation strategy, application for their Charter Marks, customer contract.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warrington Borough Council</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Customer contract, Charter Mark application, strategic documentation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erewash Borough Council</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>EBC strategic plan, CCT tender specifications, leisure centres service plans, customer research.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle City Council</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Quality manual, staff handbook, corporate policy objectives, financial performance data, budget information, business plan, committee minutes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calderdale District Council</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Quality manual, District Sport and Recreation strategy, Sport and Leisure business plan, budgets, in-house evaluations of quality policy and committee minutes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Lincoln District Council</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Quality policy, service and business plans, CCT tender evaluation procedures, committee minutes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The general characteristics of the local authorities under study (Table 7.5) show that the local authorities included in the second phase of the research were, at the time of the research, a mixture of borough and district councils with the inclusion of one unitary authority. All of the local authorities included in the research are Labour controlled, although King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council was under Conservative control until 1997.

The local authorities vary in their budgets for sport and leisure facilities. At one extreme, Calderdale Council has a disproportionately large budget in comparison with the other local authority leisure services, reflecting an ongoing commitment to investment in leisure provision. Conversely, the budgets of King's Lynn and West Norfolk and, more particularly Leisure Newcastle, are relatively small in comparison with the other authorities. In the case of Leisure Newcastle, this DSO manages several small facilities with low budgets, enabling Leisure Newcastle to manage a large number of facilities on its leisure facilities budget.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Council department</th>
<th>Political dominance</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Budget (£)</th>
<th>No. of sport and leisure facilities</th>
<th>No. of staff employed in sport and recreation</th>
<th>Initiatives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KLEW District Council</td>
<td>Norfolk</td>
<td>Leisure and Tourism</td>
<td>Labour</td>
<td>131000</td>
<td>1155000</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warrington District Council (Golden Gates Leisure)</td>
<td>Cheshire</td>
<td>Community Services</td>
<td>Labour</td>
<td>18000</td>
<td>2088000</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erewash District Council</td>
<td>Derbyshire</td>
<td>Leisure Services</td>
<td>Labour</td>
<td>106000</td>
<td>2140000</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle City Council (Leisure Newcastle)</td>
<td>Tyne and Wear</td>
<td>Community and Leisure</td>
<td>Labour</td>
<td>259541</td>
<td>4934000</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calderdale Metropolitan Borough</td>
<td>West Yorkshire</td>
<td>Leisure Services</td>
<td>Labour</td>
<td>192000</td>
<td>5245000</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Lincolnshire Unitary Council (Scunthorpe Recreation Management)</td>
<td>Humberside</td>
<td>Commercial Services</td>
<td>Labour</td>
<td>153000</td>
<td>2056000</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There are further variations between the case study authorities in the size of their workforces. Golden Gates Leisure (Warrington) maintains a large staff base, which includes a large number of instructors, cleaners and lifeguards who, although used as casual staff, are contracted to the organisation. This contrasts with Erewash and King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Councils where permanent staff numbers are low and casual staff are non-contracted staff.

Finally, the case studies include local authorities that are using a range of quality programmes:
- Investors in People
- ISO9002
- Charter Mark
- Total Quality Management
- Customer care programmes
- British Quality Foundation award

The results of the research were analysed within the framework of the Model of Strategic Change (Pettigrew, 1987). The concepts identified in the review of literature provide a structure for the consideration of the information obtained from the interviews and documents, which were analysed for issues of context, content and process. Once categorised, recurring themes were identified, refining the process of analysis. When this initial analysis had been completed the results were considered in detail to establish and evaluate causal links, actions and interactions of the themes. This process allowed the construction of an explanation of why quality programmes were being used in each local authority.

This analysis, presented and discussed below, was done on a case by case basis using the multiple sources of evidence from each case previously described. From this, case reports were constructed and sent to those involved in the research in order to check content and interpretation, which assisted with the validity of the research. The second phase of analysis was carried out across the case studies, identifying and discussing the themes and issues which offer explanations for the use of quality programmes in local authority leisure facilities. This discussion, presented in the following chapter, led to the conclusions of the research.

The remainder of this chapter presents the results of the individual case studies. The structure of each case study follows a standardised format. An overview of the local authority and the leisure service is presented, followed by a presentation of the content of quality management within the service. Within this, the quality management methods are outlined and the interviewees' definitions of quality are considered. The second section of each case report considers the rationale for the
introduction of quality management. This is followed by a presentation of the main influences in the introduction of quality management within the local authority's leisure facilities.

Within the case study reports the terms 'commercial' and 'professional' are used in the manner in which the interviewees used them. The techniques of new managerialism were considered by the managers to indicate a 'commercial' approach to management and they referred to techniques such as strategic planning, financial management and marketing as indicators of the 'commercialism' of their facilities. It was clear that new managerialism and the use of techniques traditionally associated with the commercial sector were considered to be firstly, different from what had gone before and secondly, desirable.

'Professional' was used in a similar manner and referred to the approach to management which was characterised by new managerialism and utilised 'commercial' management techniques. Many of those interviewed felt that the use of such techniques indicated a professional approach to management and that those who used these techniques were professionals. In many cases, interviewees considered the two words to be interchangeable. In addition, the term professional was used in its colloquial sense - to indicate competence and skill in the work place i.e. as a term of approval or praise. Interviewee referred to perceived improvements in facility management as indicating the increasing professionalism of local authority leisure services management. It was also apparent that interviewees felt that 'professional' management was desirable as managers were seen to be more accountable and less protected than they had been in the past. There was a perception that leisure managers were now having to be 'proper' managers, responsible and accountable for the strategic and operational direction of their facilities and that this was a fundamental improvement on the management approaches that had been typical.

The use of these terms in this manner clearly distinguishes interviewees' responses from the terminology traditionally associated with the concept of a 'profession' discussed by Coalter (1986, 1990), Coalter et al (1986) and Henry (1993). In the latter analyses, discussed in Chapter one, the traditional definition of a professional is considered to be an individual who gains possession of specialised skills through a formal education process, while professionalism is the demonstration and spread of these skills, via qualification, amongst those employed within the field.

From this it is apparent that the interviewees' use of professional and professionalism was not intended to suggest that public leisure facility management
CHAPTER SEVEN: THE RATIONALE FOR QUALITY MANAGEMENT IN PUBLIC LEISURE FACILITIES

had become a 'profession' characterised by the features outlined by Coalter (1990). There was no discussion of a shared body of expertise and values unique to leisure management, nor of any significant role of ILAM and ISRM in promoting the changes in management practice identified by those interviewed. As such, interviewees did not use these terms to suggest the professionalisation of leisure management as an occupation; they were used, rather, to describe the results of change with the implication that this was change for the better.

The case studies are presented in pairs for each of the three selection criteria used. King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council and Golden Gates Leisure (Warrington Borough Council) are authorities that have introduced quality programmes because customer care became a priority in their public leisure facilities and their leisure professionals have adopted a more 'commercial' approach to the management of their facilities. Erewash Borough Council and Leisure Newcastle are authorities that have introduced quality programmes because their leisure professionals have adopted a more 'commercial' approach to the management of their facilities, while leisure professionals in Calderdale Council and SRM (North Lincs. Council) have been required to implement quality programmes.

The case studies are presented as follows:

- King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council
- Golden Gates Leisure
- Erewash Borough Council
- Leisure Newcastle
- Calderdale Council
- SRM
7.2 KING'S LYNN AND WEST NORFOLK BOROUGH COUNCIL

Situated on the east coast of England the Borough of King's Lynn and West Norfolk is predominantly rural and has a population of 135000 primarily resident in the local authority's three major towns of King's Lynn, Downham Market and Hunstanton. The district is a popular holiday and tourist area as a result of its historical importance, coastline and abundance of walks, gardens and water sports. Leisure and Recreation are important to the economy of the local authority which has resulted in ongoing investment in new and existing facilities.

At the time of the research, King's Lynn and West Norfolk (KLWN) Borough Council had a combined Leisure and Tourism department which was one of eight departments responsible for the management and delivery of the local authority's services. The structure of the local authority and its leisure and tourism service is presented in Figure 7.1 which shows that the service was responsible for sport, arts and tourism development. The service employed 60 permanent staff in its Sport section, had an annual budget of £1155000 for sport and recreation centres and was accountable to a Leisure Services committee.

There were 4 leisure centres within the local authority and all were managed by the Sport and Leisure DSO, as were the swimming pools covered by a separate contract. The first round of CCT contracts had been awarded to the DSO in 1991 over external competition, on a deficit guarantee/profit share basis. In 1997, the second round of contracts was awarded uncontested, on the same basis. The Head of Leisure Services was twin-hatted as he acted as both Client Manager and Contracts Manager which, although contrary to the guidelines issued by the Audit Commission, he felt enabled the contracts to be managed in the most effective manner. CCT had generally led to a redistribution of staff as senior managers became responsible for the management of the contract while less senior staff were based on site, with a related increase in responsibility.

In 1996 there was a significant swing away from the Conservatives to Labour, which resulted in Labour control of the local authority. This was felt to be responsible for the uncontested nature of the second round of CCT as briefings by the Leisure and Tourism Manager made it clear that the council was committed to the DSO retention of the management contracts.
Figure 7.1: King’s Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council
King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council was included in the research as an example of a local authority that was using quality programmes because customer care became a priority and the borough's leisure professionals had adopted a more commercial approach to the management of service quality. Interviews were carried out with individuals (Table 7.6) in positions of senior or facility management, identified by the Head of Leisure and Tourism, as having an extensive involvement in the decision to implement quality programmes and the management of service quality.

Table 7.6: Individuals interviewed in King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Reason for inclusion in research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Head of Leisure &amp; Tourism</td>
<td>Overall responsibility for Leisure Services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure Services Manager</td>
<td>Overall responsibility for CCT contracts and responsible for the culture of quality within the service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facility Manager One</td>
<td>Responsible for day to day facility operations and ensuring service quality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facility Manager Two</td>
<td>Responsible for day to day facility operations and ensuring service quality.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Relevant documents (Table 7.7) were reviewed for information relating to quality management, strategic direction and customer orientation.

Table 7.7: Documents included in the research carried out in KLWN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document</th>
<th>Reason for review</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sport and Recreation Strategies (1993, 1995)</td>
<td>Provided the context for the operations of the DSO and outlined a continuing commitment to the provision of quality services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contract specification (1996)</td>
<td>Provided details of the contract to be awarded in the second round of bidding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charter Mark applications (1993, 1996)</td>
<td>Detailed the DSO's approach to the delivery of quality services and provided evidence of the extent of new managerialism within the service. They also provided evidence of improvements in the delivery of quality services and committed the service to ongoing quality management.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These included the service's applications for the Charter Mark which outlined the significance of quality management within the organisation and contained appendices outlining customer research and the financial performance of the DSO. Documentation relating to other quality programmes either did not exist or was felt to replicate information in the above documents.
7.2.1 THE CONTENT OF QUALITY MANAGEMENT

**METHODS OF MANAGING SERVICE QUALITY**

The quality of the leisure facilities was managed by a variety of initiatives (Table 7.8). Beginning with a series of quality initiatives that were considered to be part of a TQM programme promoted by the local authority, the Leisure and Tourism service was one of the first such services in the country to be awarded a Charter Mark.

During this process, it became clear that the sport and leisure facilities of the borough needed to improve their procedures, written documents and work instructions which led the Leisure Services Manager and the Head of Leisure and Tourism, to decide to proceed with ISO9002.

**Table 7.8: The evolution of quality management within KLWN Borough Council**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Council-wide Total Quality Management programme. First round of contracts - awarded to DSO.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Council awarded Investors in People.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td>Council re-awarded Investors in People.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Leisure and Tourism awarded ISO9002. Leisure and Tourism re-awarded Charter Mark. Decision to include quality programmes in contracts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Council-wide commitment to British Quality Foundation. Second round of contracts - awarded to DSO.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In an attempt to move the local authority's quality approach away from what was described by the Leisure Services Manager as 'initiativitis', the British Quality Foundation self-assessment criteria were introduced into the local authority by Leisure Services in order to provide a coherent approach for improving quality.

The integrative nature of the package of programmes outlined above was described by Facility Manager One who outlined how:

Investors in People looks after the staff, the Charter Mark provides you with results that show how well you are doing and makes sure your work has a customer focus, which is then monitored. ISO9002 looks at procedures and the way that you do things and makes sure that they are continually monitored. The BQF is a wider view and it looks forward - it's a SWOT
analysis of your business and allows you to formulate a long term plan. They've all got a way of interlinking.

There was a commitment to customer consultation and feedback incorporated in the CCT specification which required the department to obtain 2500 customer comment cards per annum, carry out user and non-user surveys and run 'have your say' sessions with customers. In addition, the key areas of the Charter Mark were integrated into the ISO9002 system:

to ensure that our approach to quality remains customer focused.  

(KLWN, 1996a)

The Tourism and Leisure Service had played a leading role in quality management within the council, as it was the first service to be awarded the Charter Mark and the first service to obtain both the Charter Mark and ISO9002. In addition, it had recently led the council's drive to obtain the BQF award.

The development and implementation of the quality programmes followed an established format. Once the need for the programme was established, staff were then asked for contributions for the content of the programme. 'Quality groups', made up of representatives from each facility, were organised to review and refine the procedures necessary for each award. At all stages there was ongoing consultation with staff, in conjunction with staff training which emphasised the need for quality management. At this point the new procedures to be implemented by the programme were also introduced.

The time-scales for implementation ranged from 8 months for the Charter Mark to 18 months for ISO9002, which the interviewees felt enabled the programmes to be developed thoroughly. Once the programmes were in place, they had been reviewed on a six monthly basis by the staff committee under the guidance of the quality representative, and in the case of ISO9002, by external auditing.

Given the number of quality initiatives used within KLWN it is perhaps not surprising that senior officers felt that the department had a thorough implementation process. Interviewees described an authority-wide culture of quality which they felt had been engendered by the presence of a corporate quality committee, a mission statement incorporating quality actions, and the appointment of a quality representative in each sport and leisure facility.

The success of the quality initiatives was felt to have been demonstrated by customer research (Table 7.9). Customers were, on whole, very satisfied with the
service they received from the local authority. In addition to this, there were financial indications of successful management of the sport and leisure facilities within KLWN Borough Council. A new fitness suite at the Oasis Leisure Centre had increased income by £12000 in 1995/96 and by £27000 in 1996/97. A similar facility at Lynnsport generated income of £45000 in 1994/5, £90000 in 1995/6 and grew again in 1996/97 to £172000 (KLWN, 1996a).

Table 7.9: Customer satisfaction with KLWN's leisure and tourism service

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building related</th>
<th>1994/95 Satisfaction</th>
<th>1995/96 Satisfaction</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>88.7</td>
<td>88.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>91.2</td>
<td>92.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telephone response and manner</td>
<td>92.4</td>
<td>91.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information and signs</td>
<td>89.4</td>
<td>91.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bookings</td>
<td>91.2</td>
<td>90.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>92.7</td>
<td>92.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value for money</td>
<td>86.6</td>
<td>89.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall</td>
<td>92.4</td>
<td>92.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>90.6</td>
<td>91.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: KLWN, 1996a. N = 2500)

In addition, the quality of the leisure service offered by the Leisure and Tourism Department had been recognised nationally by the award of the Sports Council's 'Service to Sport' and the department's approach to quality was thought to be encapsulated in the strap line 'a quality leisure service' which was considered to epitomise the culture of quality that was thought to be prevalent within the local authority leisure service.

This integrative approach to managing quality within the department and within the local authority as a whole, was incorporated into the Compulsory Competitive Tendering specification which required management to agreed service standards. A review of the conditions of contract and specification for the management of sport and leisure facilities (KLWN, 1996b) showed that the contract requires accreditation to ISO9002, and conformance to the principles of Investors in People and the Charter Mark. Contractors were also required to adopt the self assessment criteria of the BQF. From this it is clear that the contract had a significant role to play in the management of the quality of service within KLWN Borough Council. In addition, the local authority included the assessment of service quality as a component in the evaluation of the second round of CCT contracts.
Nonetheless, some possible problems were identified. Facility Manager Two expressed concern at the competitive nature that she perceived to be underlying the department's approach to quality management. She felt that some individuals lacked a practical understanding of the issues surrounding quality, commenting that:

because a particular magazine says you should have customer care, it is put in place. It doesn't mean that everyone understands the concept or grabs the grass roots of it. It's not part of the consciousness, it's a piece of paper, a theory.

In support of the 'initiativitis' identified earlier by the Leisure Services Manager, this manager went on to describe the culture of quality as being 'awards-driven' and competitive, attributing this to the management culture generated by the male dominated management team. She felt that one of the most valuable quality initiatives was associated with the early internally developed TQM programme. Nonetheless, she did believe that ISO9002 had been of great assistance to staff within the sport and leisure facilities and that Investors in People had improved staff development.

DEFINITIONS OF QUALITY

KLWN Borough Council had no corporate definition of quality to guide services, nor had the Leisure and Tourism Department. Nonetheless, the research found a common focus in the definitions of quality used by those interviewed, with a clear emphasis on the customer. Quality was defined as needing to focus on the customer to ensure that they were satisfied enough to return to the facilities. For example, the Leisure Services Manager felt that:

at the end of the day it is all about trying to satisfy the perceptions of the customers who use our services and make them want to come for a repeat visit to our facilities

and

it means producing standards of service in our facilities that mean that customers will be encouraged to return to use our facilities.

(Head of Leisure and Tourism)

This emphasis on customer care was made by all and the importance of getting it 'right first time' was discussed, supported by the Sport and Recreation Strategic Plan which emphasised the need to supply 'the right products in the right place at the right time' (KLWN, 1995a).

This research showed that KLWN Borough Council's Leisure Service had an integrative approach to quality management which was considered to be facilitated
by an authority-wide quality culture. Quality management formed part of the
overall council management philosophy which was expressed through its mission
statement which contained the following:

• caring and consulting with its customers
• ensuring value for money
• setting and meeting service standards
• valuing and investing in employees

(KLWN, 1995b)

This commitment to quality management led the Head of Leisure and Tourism, to
claim that the local authority:

genuinely does not want to stagnate, we want to be proud of it
at the end of the day. We are all at work genuinely not wanting
to stagnate, we want to be stimulated and one of those ways is
to be constantly searching to provide something better.

The comprehensive range of awards obtained by the Department provided evidence
of external recognition of their success in managing quality. The ongoing nature of
the approach to quality was considered to be demonstrated by the membership of
the British Quality Foundation. Those interviewed were adamant about the need for
a customer focused, high quality provision of service to maintain customers and
this, alongside the documented commitment from the local authority, indicated that
consumerism had impacted upon the content of quality management within the
Leisure and Tourism department. In addition, the definitions offered by those
interviewed highlighted the need to encourage customers to return to the facilities
indicating an awareness of the need to be competitive.

7.2.2 THE RATIONALE FOR QUALITY AND QUALITY PROGRAMMES

Quality and quality management had been used by the borough's leisure services to
provide a strategic direction for the department. The cultural and strategic role of
quality within KLWN was explained by the Head of Leisure and Tourism, as
providing:

something to take what was a new department forward,
something to provide the raison d'être, the underlying motive
for the department. That was the start and we've gone from
strength to strength.

The Leisure Services Manager, was considered to be the driving force behind quality
management within the department and the Head of Leisure and Tourism felt that
he had been the catalyst for all of the quality initiatives used within Leisure and
Tourism. He was also responsible for the authority-wide adoption of the BQF. The
influence of the Leisure Services Manager on the decision to implement quality
programmes was considered to be a reflection of the relationship between professionals and leisure councillors, which was described by Facility Manager One as being officer-led. He did, however, attribute this relationship to the perceived success of the Leisure and Tourism Department, commenting that:

> If we weren't doing it they would have more to say about it, but we're probably seen as a market leader in the initiatives that we take so they are happy to follow along. If we weren't quite so proactive in delivering a good service then I think they'd have a lot more to say about it.

This was supported by the Head of Leisure and Tourism who thought that:

> the drive and commitment for quality is officer based and the councillor role has been of support. They've been very supportive as they like what they can see and it provides them with a benchmark so they can say to their voters you can be proud of the leisure services that the local authority offers because we have these nationally recognised awards.

The local authority emphasis on quality provided a foundation for the concern with quality management which was evident within Leisure and Tourism. More importantly, however, those interviewed attributed this ongoing concern with quality management to the professional nature of management within the department.

This professionalism was thought to be evident in the innovative practices discussed by the Head of Leisure and Tourism who felt that managers had become creative in order to ensure that resources were adequate for a competitive environment. He considered that this had:

> produced new projects, schemes, courses and lessons. Imaginative pricing structures have come in recently which had never been dreamt of before and now these are very very common in order to tempt customers to use our facilities.

In order to remain competitive the leisure service had been managed along more commercial lines as there was a belief that public leisure managers were having to compete with the commercial sector as a result of increasing competition and increasing customer expectations. This led Facility Manager Two to comment that quality management was necessary to:

> remain competitive, the private companies have gone down this route and it has been perceived that local authorities should follow. Customers expect good service quality and we need it to remain competitive in the market.

This was emphasised by the Head of Leisure and Tourism who felt that:

> at the end of the day we have to work within a commercial, competitive environment and we will stretch our resources to do so. This is the case in every council leisure department, so our culture is very competitive and 'profitable'. So it has a sole
ethos of wanting to compete, we are in competition with the private sector and we have to make money from our services or run them with as little cost as possible.

The increasing expectations of customers was noted by all interviewed and it was felt that customers were quicker to complain about poor service, expecting a rapid resolution of problems. This was felt to be indicative of a seismic change in the expectations of the service industry, highlighted by Facility Manager Two, who thought that:

it's the general climate of customer service in the country. Wherever people go they are getting better customer service.

The awareness among the local authority's leisure professionals of the need to compete was thought to have led to firstly, the use of quality programmes and secondly, the commercial approach that was apparent in the management of the sport and leisure facilities. KLWN Leisure Services had a thorough planning process with strategic objectives, clear financial information, performance indicators and time constraints. Managers were required to produce annual plans for each facility, broken down into monthly targets. From this they produced a monthly trading statement incorporating an analysis of performance. Managers were also required to present audited annual accounts and annual reports comparing all usage, income and the overall performance of the centre. The borough operated a Performance Related Pay scheme and the service was managed via service standards set out in the customer contract (KLWN, 1997). The documentation outlined above required the extensive use of commercial management techniques, providing evidence of new managerialism within KLWN Borough Council's leisure service.

There were two explanations offered for this increasing commercialism. Firstly, there was agreement that the individuals employed within the industry have changed, and it was suggested that staff were more 'professional', which had led to a change in management culture:

you've got a lot of self motivated people who want to be doing new things all the time. They want to be making their jobs as interesting as possible, so it's fairly dynamic.

(Leisure Services Manager)

The professional nature of the department was reiterated by Facility Manager One who considered the people employed by the borough's leisure facilities to be:

professionals, not hobby job people who don't understand what they are doing or why they are doing it.
This increasing professionalism was felt to be indicative of the industry as a whole and it was considered that management within the public leisure industry has become characterised by a 'bottom-line' focused approach, driven by financial constraints, a need to be competitive and to meet customer expectations. All of this had led the industry to:

become more professional, there is less slack. The people that are there are professionals...people now have a much wider range of skills in order to do the job.

(Facility Manager Two)

This emphasis on increased skills was highlighted in discussions regarding the leisure industry's emphasis on training and development and it was noted that many training providers were focusing on quality which, in a small industry such as leisure, was felt to lead to a self-perpetuating concern with quality management.

This belief in the professional nature of the industry was supported by the significant role of professionals in the decision making processes of KLWN's leisure services. The initial decision to use quality programmes was initiated by The Leisure Services Manager and promoted by all staff within the service. The relationship with the leisure committee was described as being 'professional-led' and this was supported by The Head of Leisure and Tourism who felt that the concern with quality within the local authority itself was a result of the individuals who were employed by the local authority. He suggested that the authority-wide concern with quality was in part:

due to a combination of officers coming together at the same time. When this all began we had a chief officer team that was more or less of an age, all wanting to make our mark, all wanting to take the council forward.

The second explanation given for this increasing commercialisation was CCT and this was considered to have firstly, contributed to the need to be competitive and secondly, further promoted the increasing professionalism of the industry. This was discussed by the Leisure Services Manager who noted that CCT had:

produced many good things, it's produced some bad things. But the principle of the system has been beneficial in terms of bringing about the desire to change and the desire to provide what customers want, not what we think they want and I hope that will continue.

He went on to outline how he thought CCT was responsible for the change in type of employee, saying:

another result of CCT is that a lot of the older people in leisure went, so you've got a fairly young workforce now and I think that means that the workforce don't have any particularly pre-
conceived ideas, they welcome change, they are more adaptable.

CCT was also considered to have directly raised the issue of quality within local authority leisure facilities as noted by Facility Manager One:

with CCT we have been forced to compete with the private sector as well and because of this there are a lot of good people in local authorities doing a lot of good work. Whereas, they haven't really shouted about it before, quality programmes are an opportunity for them to say 'look we're doing good work, we provide value for money and here's the evidence.'

Other legislation was considered to have played a secondary role in the decision to implement quality programmes. The Citizen's Charter was thought to have had a positive impact on service quality, unsurprising in a local authority that has a Charter Mark. There was a general feeling that the components of the Charter Mark had led to better services, as suggested by Facility Manager Two:

I think the things you have to have in place have improved quality. The fundamentals of the Charter Mark are good customer service if it is being used properly. It guarantees customers a response within a couple of days of complaint. They also get far better information about our services and there is a forum for customers to contribute to quality.

There was also a feeling, however, that having achieved this award Leisure and Tourism had gone on to improve upon this:

the Charter Mark is probably old hat to us now and we're not interested in it any more to be honest.....We've done other things but we aren't actually sitting there saying 'it says in the Charter Mark that we should be doing'... We've moved on.

(Leisure Services Manager)

Figure 7.2 outlines the influences on the decision to implement quality programmes in the Leisure and Tourism Service of King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council. The need for quality management in KLWN Borough Council was attributed to two key factors. Firstly, the Leisure Services Manager had identified a need for quality management within the service and this had resulted in the use of quality programmes. The successful use of quality programmes demonstrated by the customer research and accreditation of programmes, required the introduction and ongoing use of commercial management practices which subsequently led to the spread of new managerialism throughout the service, also facilitated by the professional nature of the service.

This culture change was also thought to be due in part to an increase in training opportunities that focused on quality and the need to be competitive. This need to be competitive, initiated by consumerism, had gained momentum under CCT, and
faced with increasing competition for the leisure pound, managers were using quality management to compete for, and retain, customers. The financial and customer-rated success of the Leisure and Tourism Department indicated their achievement in using quality as a tool for being more competitive.

Figure 7.2: Influences on quality management in KLWN Borough Council

There is no doubt that leisure managers in KLWN Borough Council had a commercial approach to the management of their leisure facilities which was initiated by the use of quality programmes and furthered by CCT. The professional nature of the Leisure and Tourism Service, epitomised in the techniques of new managerialism, had been the main influence on quality management within KLWN.
7.3 GOLDEN GATES LEISURE - WARRINGTON COUNCIL

The borough of Warrington is situated in the North West of England, midway between Liverpool and Manchester. Developed as a new town, Warrington has a population of approximately 185000 which makes it the biggest district in Cheshire. The area combines a mixture of industrial activity, open spaces, parks and recreation and country walks. To enable the people of Warrington to make the most of its leisure time there are numerous leisure, recreation and community centres.

At the time of the research, Warrington Borough Council’s sport and leisure facility management service was operating under the name of Golden Gates Leisure (GGL) and was part of the Community Services Department. Community Services was one of eight departments responsible for the management and delivery of the services within the local authority. The local authority was destined to gain unitary status in 1998, and the structure of the authority and its leisure service had been subject to ongoing review. Figure 7.3 shows the wide range of services which came under the remit of the Community Services Department. Golden Gates Leisure employed 250 permanent staff, had an annual budget of £2088000 and was accountable to the Community Services Committee.

There were four sports centres within the borough, of which three were managed under a deficit guarantee/income share CCT contract. As a result of unitary status, the authority had only been through one round of tendering which was won, uncontested, in 1992 by Golden Gates Leisure. CCT had led to a reorganisation of staff and duties culminating in fewer permanent staff and an increase in part-time and casual staff.

Warrington Borough Council was included in the research as an example of a local authority that was using quality programmes because customer care had become a priority and the borough’s leisure managers had adopted a more commercial approach to the management of service quality.

Interviews were carried out with the people outlined in Table 7.10 who were individuals in positions of senior or facility management, identified by the Operations Manager, as having an extensive involvement in the decision to implement quality programmes and the management of service quality.
Table 7.10: Individuals interviewed in Warrington Borough Council

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Reason for inclusion in research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Operations Manager</td>
<td>Overall responsibility for CCT contracts and service quality. Responsible for the decision to obtain the Charter Mark.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facility Manager One</td>
<td>Responsible for day to day facility operations and ensuring service quality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facility Manager Two</td>
<td>Responsible for day to day facility operations and ensuring service quality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facility Manager Three</td>
<td>Responsible for day to day facility operations and ensuring service quality.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Documents (Table 7.11) were reviewed for information relating to quality management, strategic direction and customer orientation. These included the Charter Mark assessment as this contained external assessment and commentary on the DSO’s performance.

Table 7.11: Documents included in the research carried out in GGL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document</th>
<th>Reason for review</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Golden Gates Business Plan (1996)</td>
<td>Detailed the DSO’s approach to the delivery of quality services and provided evidence of the extent of new managerialism within the service. It provided evidence of improvements in the delivery of quality services and committed the service to ongoing quality management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warrington Borough Council Strategy (1997)</td>
<td>Provided the context for the operations of the DSO and outlined the local authority’s continuing commitment to the provision of quality services.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.3.1 The Content of Quality Management

Methods of Managing Service Quality

The quality of the Leisure Service had been recognised by the award of a Charter Mark. The service was committed to exceeding the expectations of customers and therefore the Charter Mark was considered to be the logical choice of quality programme. This was discussed by Facility Manager Two who commented that:

it was nice to be recognised as providing an excellent service but the results we have had from customers has been far more rewarding than the Charter Mark award....it forced us to come up with something better for the customers.
Table 7.12 outlines the progress of quality management within Golden Gates Leisure and shows key dates in the management of quality. From this it can be seen that all of the quality initiatives used by GGL had a customer focus. There were objectives for quality which were outlined in the Customer Service Commitment (GGL, 1995) and a number of initiatives were used to collect customer information:

- Customer research cards on quality standards;
- Comments/Compliments/Complaints boards;
- 'Are you being served' meetings;
- Annual surveys.

Table 7.12: The evolution of quality management within Golden Gates Leisure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Introduction of customer care programme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>CCT contracts awarded to Golden Gates Leisure (DSO).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Delay to CCT as a result of unification intended for 1998.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Following the decision to obtain the Charter Mark, the Operations Manager sold the benefits of the programme to staff in order to develop the culture necessary for the changes that were to be introduced. He outlined how he:

went around to all of the centres and explained what it was about, what the criteria were and what we hoped to achieve by it and tried to sell the positive side, that this will demonstrate to the world that we have provided a service which we know we are good at.

The Charter Mark application was put together by a small working group comprised of the Operations Manager, his deputy and two facility managers. Facility Manager Two felt that the Charter Mark had enabled the service to:

examine the entire operation, the whole service and come up with something better.

It was the opinion of the Operations Manager, however, that the Charter Mark had not required great changes to the leisure service. He commented how the implementation of the programme had not had a significant impact:

we put in a few more procedures, sharpened up on things like the way we handle complaints, some of the communications side of it like getting more customer feedback. Fundamentally there were not a lot of changes.

There was an obvious difference of opinion regarding the extent of the changes required to obtain the Charter Mark as Facility Manager Three also felt it required additional work.
The process of developing these changes was described by Facility Manager One who outlined how the working party had:

nicked a load of stuff (from King's Lynn) and adapted it to our own needs. Why reinvent the wheel? So a lot of our stuff is similar to theirs.

Initial consultation was carried out with all categories of staff, in all centres. The standards that were devised from these meetings were then revised in the light of feedback from further consultation with staff.

Although managers had different perceptions of the scale of changes required to obtain the Charter Mark, all were agreed about the impact of the Charter Mark upon GGL. It was felt that the process of obtaining the Charter Mark had successfully raised standards in customer care, cleanliness and service quality and allowed recognition of the good work of Golden Gates Leisure. The most significant consequence was thought to be the boost to staff morale and team working brought about by the application process. Facility Manager One described how there was a "buzz about the place" immediately following the award, which was supported by Facility Manager Three who outlined how:

when it came to the deadline of the assessors coming round everyone pulled together and got really excited and went round cleaning, making sure that we looked great.

Both managers felt that staff motivation had subsequently decreased, primarily as a result of the failure of politicians to honour promises of profit share and rewards.

DEFINITIONS OF QUALITY

Golden Gates Leisure aimed to:

provide a value for money quality service for the people of Warrington.  

(GGL, 1995)

The importance of customers in defining quality was highlighted by the Operations Manager:

It is probably more relevant to ask what does it (quality) mean to the customer?...I believe it should be looked at in terms of how quality is for the customer. If they are looking for a quality leisure experience, their expectations need to be met or surpassed.

This emphasis on the customer was made by all interviewed, as was the need to exceed expectations rather than simply meet them. Facility Manager Two felt that quality was only provided when:
customers believe the service they are experiencing surpasses their expectations. It is about being better that their expectations, their perceptions of the service.

Defining quality as exceeding expectations has been criticised on the grounds of the legitimacy of surpassing expectations in a financially constrained environment. It has been argued that the focus of financially constrained organisations should be on meeting customer expectations, in order to ensure that appropriate levels of resources are committed to managing quality. Warrington Borough Council itself recognised this constraint, as the mission statement of the authority commits it to making available:

the best quality local government services that resources allow, targeted where necessary at those who need them most.

(WBC, 1997)

In addition, the council has the following aims:

- to ensure that service users are made welcome, treated courteously and served positively
- to monitor the performance of the services against agreed objectives to ensure economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

(WBC, 1997)

It was clear, however, that all of the individuals interviewed in Golden Gates Leisure were committed to exceeding expectations.

7.3.2 THE RATIONALE FOR QUALITY AND QUALITY PROGRAMMES

The decision to pursue the Charter Mark was made by the Operations Manager, after he had considered several other initiatives, including ISO9002. He chose the Charter Mark because he felt that given a perceived increase in customer expectations, it was necessary to have a programme that focused on the customer. Facility Manager One outlined the decision making process:

we 'ummed' and 'aaared' around the other ones for eighteen months. Then the Charter Mark came along and it seemed to meet what we wanted. It gave us the opportunity to say 'well yes, we can achieve something.' It was a prestige thing to gain for management to achieve it, it was a commitment to a level of service, it was service orientated as well as systems oriented.

The influence of the Operations Manager and other managers on firstly, the decision to implement quality programmes and secondly, the choice of programme was considered to be a reflection of the relationship between officers and leisure councillors which was described by the Operations Manager as being officer-led. He described the process around the decision to implement the Charter Mark:
once we decided we were going to go for it...we did a presentation to elected members, we did a report and said we were going to do it and was that OK? At the end we simply reported that we'd got it.

The impact of politicians on the management of the service was felt by Facility Manager Three to be dependent on the abilities of individuals on the committee. She said:

the last one (committee) we had was great, they gave us lots of support and investment and were commercially minded. But one or two that are on it now haven't got an idea at all. I don't know what their view of service quality is but I wouldn't be surprised if they weren't sure of what it is anyway.

The Operations Manager, however, considered the decision to invest in leisure facilities to have had a political foundation as he felt that:

from a political point of view it is not a bad idea because it is fairly high profile and the local party in power can be seen to be investing in public facilities which is not going to do their image any harm.

As a result, he had found it relatively easy to obtain support from councillors for improvements to sport and leisure facilities.

Given the customer focus inherent within the chosen quality initiatives, it was not surprising that customer expectations were felt by those interviewed to be the stimulus for the ongoing pursuit of quality management within GGL's service. The increase in customer expectations had necessitated quality management as there was agreement that customers now expected more for their money, having become increasingly discerning when making leisure choices. Facility Manager One commented that:

I think customers don't just demand excellent service, they expect it, there is a difference - it's becoming second nature.

This feeling was echoed by the Operations Manager who felt that:

like any other business, people have far greater expectations than they did. In every walk of life, in every sort of service. I think that leisure managers have realised that and have started to focus on the service that they provide and they look for mechanisms to assist in the way they deliver their services.

These changing expectations had been recognised by Warrington Borough Council (WBC, 1997) who documented that the local authority was trying to:

enhance the partnership with Warrington people so that the Council can respond to their expectations and they can understand the Council's actions.
The increase in customer expectations was thought to have become a greater issue as a result of increasing competition for leisure customers and Facility Manager Two felt that without quality initiatives it would have been difficult to maintain a customer base as customers would go elsewhere. He commented that:

"competitively there are only so many slices of the cake to go around and there are more and more leisure providers, both commercial and voluntary within Warrington. Ten years ago it was local authority provision and that was it. Now I think that leisure is one of the quickest and biggest industries in the country."

It was felt that this increase in competition and expectations had led to the customer focus that was prevalent within Golden Gates Leisure as the need to compete and to maintain market share had required managers to become customer oriented. This had led to the commercial approach that was felt to be prevalent in the management of the sport and leisure facilities. Although GGL had no formal strategic plan it did have clear service development plans. Performance indicators associated with the Charter Mark were incorporated into the Customer Service Commitment (GGL, 1995). Managers produced accounts on a four weekly basis, and compared the previous years’ performances against the weighted performance to date. There was an emphasis on financial management reflected in the main performance indicators as it was felt that the Charter Mark guaranteed service quality and therefore the focus on financial performance ensured a holistic approach to service management. There was evidence of a rational approach to management which encompasses service planning, explicit standards and measures of performance. These practices provide evidence of new managerialism within Warrington Borough Council’s Leisure DSO.

Although it was felt that consumerism had led to a commercial approach to management, it is apparent from the research that the need to meet customer expectations and competition had primarily come about because of legislation. This was discussed by Facility Manager Three who felt that that CCT had led managers to adopt commercial management practices:

"we've had to compete with the private sector, we've had to compete for our business. I think years ago there was a philosophy that the service is provided by the council, we just open the doors and let them come in. We didn't really think too much about the quality of what we were giving the customer."

Facility Manager One agreed with this, saying that the change in culture had been essential:

"otherwise you wouldn't survive. We are now running a business, that's the difference, we have income targets. At the end of the day if we don't account for ourselves, we don't get the contract, we don't have jobs."
The role of CCT in changing the management culture of public leisure facilities was thought to be significant, and all were positive about the impact of CCT upon the management of their sport and leisure facilities. Facility Manager Three thought that:

it has raised standards in order to compete for our business. I like CCT, it’s given me a reason to come to work. It’s caused problems and we have to work harder, but before, you used to sit about waiting for things to do. It was boring, I like most of what CCT has done,

while Facility Manager Two noted that:

I think whether you agree or not with CCT, it certainly got rid of - for want of a better phrase - 'dead wood'. I think it enabled us to be a bit more forward thinking, encouraged us to try and be more professional.

This increasingly professional approach to management was also highlighted by the Operations Manager, who said:

the management culture has changed a lot - I am only talking about DSO type operations really. Leisure managers have become more professional. I think it has sharpened up people's awareness of good management practice, particularly marketing, but it has also sorted out a few things about what is accepted and what isn't in terms of staff.

Evidence of the success of CCT in changing the culture within Golden Gates Leisure was provided by Facility Manager Two who felt that CCT had promoted a team approach in the management of the sport and leisure facilities. He said that he had:

never experienced anything like it in my life. What it did do was create a new sense of camaraderie, morale, it was a case of 'we are in this thing together'. There was never any real talk of failure as we did not want to let anyone down. Pre-CCT I don't think you could call us a team. We are now, we are a team, we work as a team.

The general feeling was that the leisure service had made financial savings as a result of CCT and that quality was now far more important because of a need to be more effective and efficient. This was reinforced by the Operations Manager who said:

in a lot of ways, whatever your political persuasion, it is hard to argue against it (CCT) really. If councils have responded the way that Warrington has, it's clearly been beneficial. Our facilities are better, far better than they were in 1991 and at the same time the centres are running at less of a deficit than they were at that time as well.

Similarly, Facility Manager One felt that:

without CCT the level of quality wouldn't have existed because you wouldn't be accountable. You would exist simply as a service which is what we were before the private industries came in.
There were concerns over the negative impact that CCT has had on staff and working conditions within Golden Gates Leisure. There was a feeling that staffing levels were as low as they could go, emphasised by Facility Manager Three who commented:

we're getting to the stage where we're getting a bit cheesed off with the hierarchy. They want more and more. Sometimes we get slated by the monitoring, by the client because standards have slipped and it's usually a time when we are really busy. They always say, 'that's not the point' but when we ask for another centre assistant, there's no chance. So they want more, but they don't want to give anything more.

Commercial management was considered to be essential to meet the requirements of leisure operations; however, there were difficulties in doing this within a local authority context, highlighted by Facility Manager Three. She felt that:

the problem you have are the councillors. They've still got a blinkered view on things. They still see it very much as the local authority providing a service at little cost and subsidising this, that and the other. They are more concerned about the service for all aspects of the community as opposed to being commercial and business minded.

Despite this, the Operations Manager felt that politicians were aware of the need to invest in leisure facilities in order for the facilities to remain competitive. He thought that this investment had been driven by CCT as:

leisure management CCT is not like any of the other contracts because of the income side. In order to maintain your income levels, you need to be competitive. I think members have realised that and they have been forced to invest whether they like it or not.

Figure 7.4 shows the influences upon quality management in Golden Gates Leisure. From this it is apparent that consumerism was the main influence on the decision to introduce quality programmes within GGL. The Charter Mark was chosen by The Operations Manager as a response to a perceived increase in customer expectations. The impact of consumerism is also evident in the definitions offered by those interviewed who feel that meeting customers' expectations was not enough - a quality service exceeded customer expectations.

It was also apparent that those interviewed felt that public leisure managers needed to be competitive in their operations and it was considered that this competitiveness was the combined result of the impact of consumerism, competition and CCT. This had led to the presence of new managerialism within the management of the service which was considered to have led to a continued concern with the delivery of quality services. Quality management itself is unlikely to have brought about new managerialism within the service as the Charter Mark
does not require the widespread use of commercial management techniques needed by other quality programmes. It has been suggested that although consumerism lays the foundations for quality management, it does not require a holistic approach to organisational quality as the need of consumers can be met by focusing primarily on customer satisfaction.

Figure 7.4: Influences on quality management in Golden Gates Leisure

![Diagram showing influences on quality management]

Although CCT did not lead directly to quality programmes within GGL, its role in bringing about new managerialism and an ongoing concern with quality was felt to be significant. This focus was thought to be necessary in order for the DSO to meet the demands of consumerism and competition.
7.4 EREWASH BOROUGH COUNCIL

The borough of Erewash extends across the south-east corner of Derbyshire and has a population of approximately 107000. The borough is predominantly urban in character and the majority of the population lives in the two main towns of Ilkeston and Long Eaton, which are situated on the east side of the local authority.

When the research was conducted Erewash Borough Council had an autonomous leisure department which was one of five departments responsible for the management and delivery of the local authority's services. The structure of the local authority and its Leisure Service is shown in Figure 7.5 which shows that the Leisure Service was responsible for all forms of leisure activity. The Leisure Service employed 70 permanent staff in its leisure and sports centres, had an annual budget of £2140000 and was expected to generate income of £1860000. The service was accountable to a Leisure Services sub-committee which could sit at any time in response to a request from the department.

Figure 7.5: Erewash Borough Council
There were 4 leisure centres within the local authority which were managed by the Leisure DSO, although the Sandiacre-Friesland Leisure Centre was exempt from contracting as a dual use centre. The local authority had taken a proactive approach to CCT as, convinced of the benefits of the contracting out process, in 1986 the local authority invited tenders for the management of its two main leisure centres. As a result, in 1987/88 five year contracts were awarded to Crosslands Leisure - a commercial leisure company established to compete for local authority leisure facilities management contracts.

Crosslands subsequently went bankrupt and the contracts for the management of the 3 main centres were, by 1992, awarded to the Leisure Services DSO. The second round of CCT commenced in 1996 and the DSO was once again awarded the contracts on a management fee basis. In addition, any surplus was divided equally between staff, facility and council. CCT led to a streamlining of staff and duties, the use of more casual and part-time staff, and an increase in automated vending.

Erewash Borough Council (EBC) was included in the research as an example of a local authority that was using quality programmes because its leisure professionals have adopted a more commercial approach to the management of their facilities.

Interviews were carried out with individuals (Table 7.13) in positions of senior or facility management, identified by the Business Support Manager, as having an extensive involvement in the management of service quality.

Table 7.13: Individuals Interviewed in Erewash Borough Council

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Reason for inclusion in research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Business Support Manager</td>
<td>Overall responsibility for CCT contracts and responsible for the strategic direction of quality management within the service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facility Manager One</td>
<td>Responsible for day to day facility operations and ensuring service quality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facility Manager Two</td>
<td>Responsible for day to day facility operations and ensuring service quality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facility Manager Three</td>
<td>Responsible for day to day facility operations and ensuring service quality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facility Manager Four</td>
<td>Responsible for day to day facility operations and ensuring service quality.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Management documents (Table 7.14) were reviewed for information relating to the use of quality programmes, quality management in general, strategic direction, facility performance and council support.
Table 7.14: Documents included in the research carried out in EBC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Document</th>
<th>Reason for inclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leisure Centres Service Plan (1995/96)</td>
<td>Contained detailed plans for guiding the operations of the DSO, including quality management plans. It also provided objectives and performance indicators for management, including quality. It provided information on revenue and expenditure for the leisure centres.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCT Tender Specifications (1996)</td>
<td>Provided detail on how CCT contracts will be managed and the specification to which they must adhere. Included quality management techniques and criteria.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer Research (1996)</td>
<td>Provided information on how customers evaluated the performance of the leisure centres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erewash Borough Council Strategic Plan (1996)</td>
<td>Provided the context for the operations of the DSO and outlined the need for quality in the provision of all council services.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.4.1 THE CONTENT OF QUALITY MANAGEMENT

METHODS OF MANAGING SERVICE QUALITY

The quality of the leisure service was managed by ISO9002, Investors in People and a customer care programme. Table 7.15 outlines the process of implementing quality management within the service and shows the dates that have influenced the decision to use quality programmes in the management of the leisure service.

Table 7.15: The evolution of quality management within the local authority

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Tenders invited for the management of the authority’s two main leisure facilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987/88</td>
<td>Contracts awarded to Crosslands Leisure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Department commitment to quality management as a strategic priority.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Development of customer care policy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>Decision made to include BS5750 in CCT specification.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992/93</td>
<td>Contracts awarded to DSO.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Accreditation of ISO9002.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Council awarded iIP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Second round of contracts - awarded to DSO.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It can be seen from this that the DSO had a commitment to quality management prior to the decision to use ISO9002. This commitment to quality as a strategic priority was introduced by leisure officers to bring about a culture change in a demotivated Client department following the award of the Compulsory Competitive
Tendering contracts to Crosslands Leisure. Most of the facility staff were retained by Crosslands Leisure.

ISO9002 focuses on the standardisation of organisational procedures and accreditation was obtained to provide structure to and standardisation of operations. It was felt that Investors in People, with its staff development focus, complemented ISO9002 by providing a mechanism for staff development and communication. The customer care programme was introduced to initiate the department's commitment to quality management and incorporated staff training and a comprehensive programme of customer consultation and research.

Following the decision to pursue ISO9002, Erewash went through what was described as a thorough process of developing and implementing the programme. The first step was to develop a quality culture within the organisation by introducing quality management to staff on a centre-by-centre basis. Once the need for the programme was established, the procedures were developed, and this phase of the implementation programme was led by an in-house consultant who approached staff to establish their daily activities. These were then documented and reviewed in regular meetings with staff.

Although initially received with some scepticism, the eventual success of ISO9002 was considered to be due to this process of staff involvement. Facility Manager One stated that staff support of the programme had been brought about:

through continual communication and talking to staff and making sure they are happy with the procedures you are putting in. It is no good putting procedures down that they have got to follow if they think there are better ways.

A second factor that was felt to have facilitated the development and implementation of the quality programme was that good procedures were perceived to already exist within the management of Erewash's leisure facilities. This was discussed by Facility Manager Two who commented that:

one of the things that always stuck in my mind was that we were documenting what we were doing because we had done it so well...we must have been doing something right as we just documented what we did.

The process followed to implement ISO9002 into the leisure facilities was thought to be thorough which was considered to partially explains its apparent success. Interviewees felt that the department had developed the quality culture necessary for the effective use of quality programmes and that there was clear support for the programme from senior management. The whole process was considered to be
characterised by the good programme of communication and staff training identified by Facility Manager One. This strategy was felt to have led to the successful implementation of ISO9002 in the sport and leisure facilities of Erewash Borough Council.

Those interviewed felt that there were two other means of managing the quality of their facilities. The first of these was considered to be via ongoing communication with customers as this enabled the service to be developed to meet their needs. Facility Manager Four stated that:

we keep introducing new ideas, new initiatives and getting the customer to tell us what they think. I mean, a lot of it revolves around the customer actually feeding back to us to find out what improvements could be made.

To facilitate this, the leisure facilities had customer comment schemes, carried out user and non-user surveys, and staff were actively encouraged to obtain feedback from customers.

The third means of managing quality was felt to be the Compulsory Competitive Tendering specification that required management to stated standards. A review of the conditions of contract and specification for the management of sport and leisure facilities (EBC, 1996a, 1996b) showed that the contract required accreditation to ISO9002, conformance to the principles of Investors in People and the Citizen's Charter, and a documented customer care policy. In addition, the DSO was required to carry out bi-monthly customer audits and to operate its activities at a 99% contract compliance rate (EBC, 1996a, 1996b).

From this it is clear that the contract has a significant role to play in the management of service quality within Erewash Borough Council. This role was considered to be so significant by Facility Manager Three, the manager of the dual use centre, that he expressed a desire to be managed by the specification in order to establish acceptable standards. He felt he was disadvantaged by being outside CCT as:

it would be nice if someone actually said 'your standards are not what we expect, you need to do this or you're doing too much.' It would be nice to have some input from somewhere.

The success of these initiatives in managing quality was felt to be demonstrated by the customer research (Table 7.16) as customers, on whole, were very satisfied with the service they had received at the authority's two main facilities.
Table 7.16: Customer satisfaction with Albion and Victoria Park Leisure Centres

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Excellent</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Satisfactory</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Very poor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Equipment</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albion Leisure Centre</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria Park Leisure Centre</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Maintenance</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albion Leisure Centre</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria Park Leisure Centre</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lighting and ventilation</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albion Leisure Centre</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria Park Leisure Centre</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Staff</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albion Leisure Centre</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria Park Leisure Centre</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Catering</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albion Leisure Centre</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria Park Leisure Centre</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Safety and security</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albion Leisure Centre</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria Park Leisure Centre</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Level of prices</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albion Leisure Centre</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria Park Leisure Centre</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cleanliness and hygiene</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albion Leisure Centre</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria Park Leisure Centre</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Overall service</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albion Leisure Centre</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria Park Leisure Centre</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: EBC, 1996c. N = 200.)

Further evidence (Table 7.17) showed that user numbers and income remained relatively stable between 1993 and 1996, despite increased competition for customers.

Table 7.17: User numbers and income levels of Albion Centre and Victoria Park Centre

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Centre</th>
<th>1993/4</th>
<th>1994/5</th>
<th>1995/6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Albion - patronage</td>
<td>236883</td>
<td>239781</td>
<td>226410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albion - income</td>
<td>309802</td>
<td>334619</td>
<td>324305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria Park - patronage</td>
<td>236469</td>
<td>239725</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria Park - income</td>
<td>287631</td>
<td>305719</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: EBC 1996a, 1996b)

**DEFINITIONS OF SERVICE QUALITY**

Erewash Borough Council had no corporate definition of quality to guide services, nor had the Leisure Services department. The research, once again, found a
common focus in the definitions of quality used by those interviewed with an emphasis on the customer. For example, Facility Manager One defined quality as:

making sure all of my customers go out of this building feeling that they have had a good time,

while Facility Manager Three suggested that:

it means providing certain standards which the customer will appreciate which means that they will make repeat visits

To encourage these necessary repeat visits, Facility Manager Four suggested that quality should be defined in terms of additional benefits to the customer, rather than price. Price has been traditionally associated with quality, however, she felt that customers came to the facility with a price in mind and then looked to get the most for that price.

Those interviewed were adamant about the need for a customer focused, high quality provision of service and were clear about how this should be defined. The focus on customers was an indication of the impact of consumerism upon the local authority and the approach to the management of quality was felt to be structured and coherent. The commitment to customers was communicated to borough residents via a citizen's magazine called Viewpoint and the local authority included the assessment of quality management in the second round of Compulsory Competitive Tendering bids. All of this led the Business Support Manager to claim that the local authority's approach to service delivery was:

all about making services accessible, affordable and of good quality and ensuring that citizens with disadvantages are taken care of. The local authority is good for quality and value for money.

This was supported by the strategic aims of Erewash Borough Council (1996d) as the local authority aimed to:

- make all of our services more responsive to the needs of residents, business and visitors.
- improve the quality and value for money of services provided to the public using the Council's own employees wherever possible.

7.4.2 THE RATIONALE FOR QUALITY AND QUALITY PROGRAMMES

Following the award of the CCT contracts to external contractors, quality management was considered to be the main vehicle for increasing staff motivation, and bringing about the changes needed to respond to the external environment, which required public leisure managers to become more competitive in their operations. The successful introduction and ongoing use of quality management
CIAP are considered to be the vehicle for culture change as described by the Business Support Manager:

we believe more than anything that quality creates a different culture.

This was also discussed by Facility Manager One who described how a commercial approach to the management of public leisure facilities was necessary as:

you have to nowadays if you want to survive and you want to keep your market share.

She went on to say:

You have to have a quality service, not necessarily a quality system, but you have to be able to give a quality service.

The need to be competitive was considered to have been brought about by two factors. Firstly, the public leisure industry had faced an increase in the number and type of competitors. This was discussed by the Business Support Manager who outlined how local authority leisure facilities:

are also competing with a variety of leisure providers, potential customers go to places like Alton Towers, American Adventure and all of these other places. They are competitors of ours, as well as the swimming pool next door in the adjacent authority.

Alongside this increase in competition, a corresponding increase in customer expectations had also been apparent and there was general agreement that customers were expecting more for their money and had become increasingly discerning when making leisure choices. In support of this, Facility Manager Four, a facility manager, commented that:

we have to consider now that a lot of people are subject to a broad experience of leisure. They've got bigger expectations, they have a bigger picture of the market and what's happening.

These changing expectations had been recognised by the local authority who in their Strategic Plan, assured the local population that they were:

always conscious of the continuing need to provide good quality, value for money services

and that they had:

taken a number of important steps to improve our performance and to be more responsive to your needs.

(EBC, 1997)

The combination of these factors required the use of commercial management techniques as discussed by Facility Manager Three who felt that the management culture of the service had become more commercial as:
there are so many leisure facilities around now that everybody is vying for such a small amount of income so you've got to get people coming back time after time.

There was substantial evidence of a commercial approach to management within Erewash Borough Council. Erewash Leisure Services had a thorough planning process with strategic objectives, clear financial information, performance indicators and time constraints. Managers produced service plans for each facility which acted as a business plan for the current year. Information on users was required by activity, on a daily, weekly and monthly breakdown. Managers had to produce audited annual accounts and an annual report which outlined and compared all usage, income and the overall performance of the centre (EBC 1996b). These management techniques were evidence of the presence of new managerialism within Erewash Borough Council's leisure service.

New managerialism in Erewash's Leisure Services was furthered by the department's commitment to quality as indicated by Facility Manager One who claimed that it was the leisure profession that had developed the emphasis on quality management, saying:

I think it is something that has always been there. It has just been brought forward more now, so that it impacts on management a lot more. We have always done it unknowingly, but now it is sort of packaged, if you like, as a quality service.

This was also supported by Facility Manager Two who felt that quality had always been an issue within services and that Erewash Borough Council had been delivering a quality service prior to ISO9002. This, he felt, was indicated by the fact that they documented and set standards against what they were already doing. He considered that this had come about because of the strategic commitment to service quality.

Professionalism was promoted within Leisure Services by a policy of ensuring that new managerial recruits were appropriately professionally qualified. This had led to the local authority having the most professionally qualified leisure staff per head of population in the country. The Business Support Manager felt that professionalism had encouraged:

managers to become more free thinking. By that I mean, rather than sticking to the traditional way of thinking, they have started to try out different things, to move away from a local authority image. They've had to do this for survival.

There was some concern expressed at the changes that have accompanied new managerialism and Facility Manager Two criticised the increase in paperwork that he perceived had been generated as a result of this change in management style. He
felt that the emphasis on planning, standards and performance management required documentation which had increased significantly in the last decade, decreasing his time for talking to customers. He was fully supportive, however, of the need for change which he felt had led managers to become innovative and market focused.

Legislation was thought to have extended the use of commercial practices as noted by the Business Support Manager, who commented that:

authorities can no longer survive on stand alone tactics particularly when finance in the last decade has reduced by 35% which is a huge sum of money. We've got to get that from somewhere, obviously we have changed the way we think, the way we manage.

CCT was thought to be paramount and all interviewed were positive about the impact of CCT upon the management of public leisure facilities. Facility Manager One thoroughly approved of what had happened to the leisure industry as a consequence of CCT, saying:

it's had its good things, it's had its bad things but overall it has certainly improved the way we manage. It has made us more proactive, we have introduced proper management information systems, we try to be more corporate in our attitude, we try to focus on the customer - we are more customer orientated than product orientated.

The Business Support Manager felt that CCT was more of a facilitator than an initiator for professionalism as:

managers, in my view have always wanted an incentive to manage and this gave them the opportunity to be able to demonstrate their skill.

This was also discussed by Facility Manager Two who stated that:

I believe everyone is (more commercial) and I think it is a good thing. I think CCT has made everyone far more proactive in that I need to be looking at doing things for this centre, not sitting back and waiting for customers to come in.

The direct impact of CCT upon quality management came via the inclusion of ISO9002 in the Compulsory Competitive Tendering specification. This was incorporated into the specification, following the collapse of Crosslands, to make the DSO bid more competitive by deterring competition and enabling the DSO to compete successfully with private bids. As part of the ongoing commitment to quality, the second round of bids included the assessment of quality in the evaluation of tenders. Facility Manager Three outlined how he felt that:

it's become even more to the front now when they are saying 'we're not going to judge bids simply on price' - they are saying that x% is going to be on price and x% on quality.
This was reinforced by the Business Support Manager who said:

quality is actually a yardstick in assessing for all contracts. Price and quality are the two ingredients and in leisure they are weighted 50/50.

There were concerns about the negative impact of CCT upon staff and in promoting a focus on finances, rather than services, which led the Business Support Manager to suggest that:

we have got managers who are more interested in making savings as opposed to spending and maybe not giving that little bit of final satisfaction to the customer.

Commercial management was considered to be essential to meet the requirements of leisure operations; however, the difficulty of doing this within a local authority context was discussed:

I think it is very difficult to manage because we are trying to financially run an operation but with the social objectives of the council. It is difficult because you are governed by your bottom line but there are social objectives...which may become a burden to you if it is not in the specification or contract.

(Facility Manager Four)

It was also felt that public leisure facilities would never become fully commercial in their operations as:

the politicians do still influence various things they want, like their requirements for concessionary use or that kind of social conscience.

(Business Support Manager)

The influence of politicians on the service was evidenced by the inclusion of ISO9002 within the CCT specification, the decision made by the Chairman of the Leisure Committee. Facility Manager One noted that:

our last Chairman had a huge effect on quality, a huge input into everything that we did. He was responsible for suggesting BS5750 (ISO9002). He was a very powerful man.

This was supported by Facility Manager Three who felt that Leisure Services were required to obtain ISO9002 for:

political reasons...He (the chairman) was very much for scoring points...and he wanted all centres to have it before anyone else and wanted it labelled in the papers that his leisure centres had got this particular award.

It was felt, however, that the impact of the current leisure committee had diminished to a role of approval, leading Facility Manager One to suggest that the impact of politicians on the management of facilities is dependent on who the committee members are, as:
there will always be some input from members, but I think the
degree of that depends on the people you have within the
committee.

Figure 7.6 outlines the influences on the decision to implement quality programmes
in the Leisure Service of Erewash Borough Council. The need for quality
management was attributed to several factors. Firstly, the role of quality
management in bringing about the changes needed to manage the changing leisure
context was identified by leisure professionals leading to the stated commitment to
service quality as a strategic priority. This in turn led to the introduction of the
customer care programme prior to the implementation of ISO9002. This suggests
that the professionals within the service have strongly influenced the use of quality
management within the service. The professionalism of the department was also
considered to have promoted the development of new managerialism which was felt
to be evident in the commercial practices outlined earlier.

Secondly, in this local authority, a leisure councillor was recognised as being
influential in the decision to implement quality programmes within the leisure
facilities, as the Chairman of the Leisure Committee selected ISO9002 for
implementation.

Figure 7.6: Influences on quality management in Erewash Borough Council
CCT had two influences on quality management within Erewash Borough Council. It led directly to the use of ISO9002 as it was required by the contract specification, but more importantly, it was felt to have contributed to the need to be competitive. Consequently, faced with increasing competition for the leisure pound, brought about by the combined impact of consumerism, competition and CCT, managers used quality management to compete for, and retain customers, leading to the ongoing and expanded use of quality management within the department. This commitment to quality indicated a belief in the role of quality management in allowing local authority leisure facilities to be competitive in the face of increasing consumerism.
The city of Newcastle upon Tyne is on the North East coast of England and is considered to be the regional capital of Northumbria. Historically industrial, Newcastle has a population of 280000 and caters for 2.7 million visitors per year.

Leisure Newcastle (LN) was the contract division of Newcastle City Council’s Community and Leisure Department and at the time of the research was responsible for the management of the 6 leisure centres and 7 pools which made up a large proportion of the council’s sport and leisure facilities. The Community and Leisure department was one of six departments responsible for the management and delivery of the local authority’s services. The structure of the local authority and its leisure service (Figure 7.7) shows that the department was also responsible for Community Services, Community Policies and Libraries and Information Services. Leisure Newcastle employed 220 permanent staff and had a budgeted annual expenditure of £4787000, of which £2270300 is recouped as income.

All of the facilities managed by Leisure Newcastle had been subjected to CCT and both rounds of tendering - the first held in 1991 and the second in 1996 - were won by Leisure Newcastle on a deficit guarantee/income share basis. In the first round the in-house bid was unchallenged, but the second saw a short list of 3 being drawn up from 7 expressions of interest. This increase in competition was brought about by increased interest from commercial organisations. CCT led to a complete review of staff which had resulted in the redirection and reallocation of staffing resources there was, however, no redundancies.

Political control had always been with the Labour party, however, there had been a recent change in priorities for the council brought about by a change of councillors. This had led to the development of new core policies which promoted social objectives and moved the authority away from commercial operations.

Leisure Newcastle was included in the research as an example of a local authority that was using quality programmes because its leisure professionals have adopted a more commercial approach to the management of their facilities. Interviews were carried out with the individuals outlined in Table 7.18 who were identified by a Principle Officer as having an extensive involvement in the decision to implement quality programmes and the management of service quality.
Figure 7.7: Newcastle City Council

Chief Executives

Public Health and Environment

Community and Leisure Services

Community Services Division

Community Policies

Leisure Newcastle

Libraries and Information

Central Services

Sport & Leisure Management Client Officer

Principle officers

Personnel

Quality Management Officer

Health and Safety

Central Office

City Hall

Swimming Pools Manager

Sports Centres Managers

Maintenance Unit

Marketing Office

Admin. and Finance
Table 7.18: Individuals Interviewed In Newcastle City Council  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Reason for Individual Interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principle Officer - First</td>
<td>Shared responsibility for CCT contracts and service delivery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principle Officer - West</td>
<td>Shared responsibility for CCT contracts and service delivery.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality Management Officer</td>
<td>Responsible for development, implementation and maintenance of all quality initiatives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Client Manager</td>
<td>Overall responsibility for monitoring the CCT contracts and for ensuring the maintenance of quality standards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facility Manager One</td>
<td>Responsible for day to day facility operations and ensuring service quality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facility Manager Two</td>
<td>Responsible for day to day facility operations and ensuring service quality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facility Manager Three</td>
<td>Responsible for day to day facility operations and ensuring service quality.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Management documents (Table 7.19) were reviewed for information relating to the quality programmes in place within the local authority leisure service, quality management in general, strategic direction, facility performance and council support.

Table 7.19: Documents Included in the Research Carried Out in LN  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Documents</th>
<th>Reason for Review</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leisure Newcastle Business Plan (1999)</td>
<td>Detailed the DSO's approach to the delivery of quality services including objectives. Identified operating priorities for LN.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff Handbook (undated)</td>
<td>Provided background on Leisure Newcastle and outlined the objectives for quality to new recruits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department budgets (1996)</td>
<td>Provided information on revenue and expenditure for the department and user information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee minutes (1991-1996)</td>
<td>Contextual background on quality and management within the DSO.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.5.1 THE CONTENT OF QUALITY MANAGEMENT

METHODS OF MANAGING SERVICE QUALITY

The process of quality management within Leisure Newcastle began in 1990 when the decision was made to pursue TQM in order to guarantee business success. It
was considered that this programme would create a better service for customers by encouraging a better service from staff. The TQM programme consists of customer and staff consultation programmes and accreditation of ISO9002 and it was felt that:

only by offering a quality service generated by addressing a TQM programme would the organisation be successful in terms of efficiency, effectiveness and meeting customer needs.

(Collins, 1995)

This led to the implementation of the current procedures used for customer and staff consultation and the commitment of the Quality Management Officer, appointed to advise and promote quality within Leisure Services. Table 7.20 shows key dates affecting quality management within Leisure Newcastle, identifying how ISO9002 was used to ensure DSO success in the first round of Compulsory Competitive Tendering, by ensuring that LN had obtained accreditation to ISO9002 by the time the contract was put out to tender.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1989</td>
<td>Decision is made to include ISO9002 in contract specification. Work begins on ISO9002 in Leisure Newcastle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Introduction of TQM in Leisure Newcastle.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As a result of its focus on operational procedures the use of ISO9002 was justified by its ability to pull together a range of ad-hoc procedures, although there were concerns about the applicability of ISO9002 to services summed up by the Principle Officer- East who felt that:

with hindsight it is not necessarily the right thing for leisure, but it was the best possible thing available at the time and we have adapted it and made it work.

He went on to say:

it's all good stuff, but some of the work I want to be involved with over the next two to three years is refocusing the quality system to ensure that we are delivery a quality service as perceived by the customer as opposed to fulfilling the bureaucratic requirements that we have in place.

Following the decision to pursue ISO9002, interviewees felt that Leisure Newcastle went through a thorough process of developing and implementing the programme.
The first step was to develop a quality culture within the organisation by introducing quality management to managers who were then responsible for cascading this down to staff. All staff were then involved in practical sessions to develop the programme, and this introductory period was described by Facility Manager Two as being:

done in the correct way. There was an introduction to staff slowly through various workshops either with all staff together from all of the facilities which closed the facilities for half a day, then after that there were smaller working groups and little workshops about quality. I think it was introduced in the best possible way.

The Quality Management Officer felt that the 18 month development process was important, saying that:

it could have been done over a desk in about a week but we were very keen to get agreement and co-operation and acceptance of it.

It was felt that the success of this implementation process meant that ISO9002 was fully accepted by all staff. Facility Manager Three thought that this was a result of the programme of consultation and staff training that was incorporated into the implementation strategy. The Quality Management Officer reinforced this, describing how:

it sailed through...it had the effect of pulling people together....it served as something everyone focused on, we were all in it together, a sort of atmosphere of camaraderie at the time.

The importance of staff in the delivery of quality services was noted by all, and staff satisfaction was monitored via annual questionnaires, a staff suggestion scheme and bi-annual staff focus groups. The contribution that front line staff made to customer care was emphasised by the Principle Officer - East, who felt that:

it is easier to recruit someone who has the right attitude and train them to swim, than it is to recruit someone who is a good swimmer and try and give them a disposition towards customer care.

Customer satisfaction was also considered to be an integral part of the quality management programme and was measured and monitored through user and non-user surveys, regular communications with customers in the form of 'leisure links' and complaints and suggestion schemes. Some managers felt that this communication with customers was far more effective in managing service quality than ISO9002, a sentiment expressed by Facility Manager Two who considered the most effective quality initiative to be the customer complaints and suggestion cards:

it's the only way we can find out whether the customer is disgruntled or not - apart from chatting to them. We often sit down and have a chat to find out how they are feeling.
CHAPTER SEVEN: LEISURE NEWCASTLE

The quality programmes used in the management of the sport and leisure facilities were considered to have clear objectives that guided quality management. These were incorporated into the CCT specification and were reinforced by the section’s objective of trying to operate at 100% compliance rate (LN, 1995). The success of these initiatives in managing quality was felt to be demonstrated by the results of customer research that showed that customer complaints dropped by 50% in 1994/5 from 1223 complaints in 1993/4 (LN, 1995). Income remained relatively stable between 1994 and 1996 (Table 7.21), despite increases in competition for customers. This was felt to provide a further indication of the success of the initiatives used in the management of the sport and leisure facilities in Newcastle City Council.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 7.21: Financial performance of Leisure Newcastle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expenditure (£)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income (£)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net expenditure (£)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: LN, 1996)

Leisure Newcastle’s commitment to quality was incorporated into its mission statement and vision of quality (LN, 1995) which stated that Leisure Newcastle would deliver a service which was second to none, achieved by:

- ensuring that all our staff are trained in quality management and customer care;
- valuing the importance of the customer;
- promoting team work and taking preventative action;
- encouraging a climate of involvement and joint problem solving;
- continuous and unending improvement in our people and in our service.

The section’s approach to quality was encapsulated in the strap line ‘quality in action’ which was thought to be an indication of the culture of quality which was perceived to be prevalent within Leisure Newcastle. There was agreement that Leisure Newcastle had led the drive for quality within the council, as was explained by the Client Manager:

> corporately they were almost kick-started by our involvement. But now having taken it on board, there is a corporate team dealing with the question of quality. At least we have some resources behind it and there is a commitment there.

Of concern to many of those interviewed was the perceived change of direction in council priorities within NCC. The council’s new Corporate Policy Priorities (NCC, 1996) made no reference to quality services to the extent that the words ‘quality management’ and ‘customer care’ did not feature in the listed priorities. The local
authority itself had no coherent approach to quality management and was described by the Quality Management Officer as lacking a corporate approach. She said:

I think each department has been allowed to go off on its own....I am sure there is an understanding of the benefits of TQM and what it could do for them, the city as a whole....I think it is just a lack of drive, apathy, there is still a false sense of security. A feeling of we don’t need to respond that quickly, it is not important.

Others were more disparaging. Facility Manager Two described the local authority’s approach as dismal, Facility Manager One as extremely poor; while the Principle Officer - West felt that the awareness of the need for quality was only present in the contracting arms of the council. Without a council-wide commitment to quality, it was considered unlikely that the apathy identified by the Quality Management Officer would be overcome.

**DEFINITIONS OF SERVICE QUALITY**

The definitions of service quality that were offered by those interviewed were an indication of the awareness of the need to provide high quality services within financial constraints. Quality was defined as setting and meeting standards of service delivery within existing resource constraints as was indicated by the definition offered by Facility Manager Two:

best possible service with the best resources available.

The Quality Management Officer felt that quality was:

producing the best possible service at the lowest cost

Once again there was a common emphasis on the customer as they were considered to be the focus of quality management in Newcastle. This was highlighted by the Principle Officer - West who said:

quality is dependent upon the perception of the customer irrespective of whether we think their perception and the reality is the same. So we need to establish our quality standards against customer expectations.

The importance of consistency was also discussed and it was considered important to ensure that customers knew what to expect from leisure facilities. Facility Manager One described this saying:

if we know what we are doing, the customers know what we are doing and they know what to expect.

The Principle Officer - West added that customers:
want to come in and receive or experience a good standard of service. They come in for an experience they are used to and they want to repeat.

These definitions indicated an awareness of the need to focus on customers in the management of facilities. The concern with resources suggested a commercial approach to the management within Leisure Newcastle and indicated a pragmatic approach to the delivery of service quality which is often missing in the definitions available in the literature.

Leisure Newcastle had an integrative approach to quality management which was perceived to have been facilitated by a quality culture. The combination of quality initiatives used within the sport and leisure facilities was felt to have promoted a TQM culture within the organisation, which was likely to have been reinforced by the emphasis on staff consultation and development. The ongoing nature of the approach to quality was evidenced by the pursuit of the award for the European Foundation for Quality Management.

Those interviewed were adamant about the need for a customer focused, high quality provision of service to maintain customers and this, alongside the documented commitment from the local authority, indicated that consumerism had impacted upon the content of quality management within Leisure Newcastle. In addition, the definitions offered by those interviewed highlighted the need to encourage customers to return to the facilities indicating an awareness of the need to be competitive.

7.5.2 THE RATIONALE FOR QUALITY AND QUALITY PROGRAMMES

The decision to follow a TQM approach to management and to implement ISO9002 into the contract specification had been made by the ex-General Manager. His role in promoting quality was described by Facility Manager Two:

Phil was a bit of a disciple with TQM. Had it not been for him Leisure Newcastle would never have introduced any form of TQM or British standard. It was only because he was the disciple, you need somebody, unless you have somebody at the top who identifies strongly with TQM, unless the guy at the top is committed it is a waste of time.

The influence of the General Manager on the decision to implement quality programmes was considered to be a reflection of the relationship between officers and leisure councillors, described by the Client Manager, as being one of support.
The Quality Management Officer, felt that the members of the leisure committee were:

quite proud, they are basking in the glory as opposed to having any hands on involvement.

This supporting role was felt to be due to the amount of information that politicians have to consider in their role as committee members and the Client Manager referred to this saying:

In some respects I feel quite sorry for members. If you are sitting on the committee of a city council the breadth of knowledge that you would have to have to keep abreast of what is going on is enormous.

It was apparent that interviewees considered that leisure professionals had been the major influence on the decision making process that affects the management of the leisure service. The previous General Manager was responsible for TQM and the drive for quality and the current General Manager had embraced a social agenda which led to the development of priorities that move away from commercial management. The leisure professionals appeared to have guided the activities of Leisure Newcastle, with support from councillors.

Those interviewed offered two explanations for the use of quality programmes in Leisure Newcastle. Firstly, it was suggested that customer care and quality have always been a feature of public leisure management. Facility Manager One felt that:

to call it quality is just another word for good management practice isn't it? If this is quality then I must have been a manager of quality for the best part of 20 years.

The Principle Officer - West commented:

I think people are just articulating it more, there are many more schemes or labels to hang on it. I mean, I'd argue that we have always provided a quality service long before the introduction of certain standards, against British standards and all the rest of it.

Facility Manager Three reiterated this belief by saying:

I think we've always done it and it has just become more formal. We've had to formalise it because of increasing competition and CCT.

Secondly, this increasing competition and CCT was thought to have led to a change in management culture which led to the ongoing use of quality programmes as a commercial management approach became prevalent within the section. This was outlined by the Quality Management Officer who described how the change in culture within public leisure services was essential:

given all of the challenges, the competitive strategies, the technological changes and rate of demographic and political
changes. We have to be far more quick to respond to these challenges and changes.

Building on what he had said earlier, Facility Manager Three felt that the management culture of public leisure facilities had become more commercial as:

we need to be maximising our resources to survive. If we hadn't done this it is unlikely that leisure services would still be provided. It is difficult to justify spending money on something that is losing money.

There was substantial evidence of a commercial approach to management within Leisure Newcastle. The section had a thorough planning process with strategic objectives, clear financial information, performance indicators and time constraints (LN, 1995). Each facility had a 5 year service plan that was reviewed on an annual basis. Information on users was required by activity, on a daily, weekly and monthly breakdown. Audited annual accounts were produced monitoring performance against the contract (LN, 1996). User numbers, income and expenditure were provided by each facility and were used for zero-based budgeting.

There were two explanations for the culture of new managerialism within Leisure Newcastle. Firstly, the need to compete with other leisure providers was thought to have led to the prominence of quality programmes in public leisure facilities. This was highlighted by the Principle Officer - East, who noted that commercial management had come about primarily because of an increased number of competitors:

We are facing competition from alternative providers, particularly things like fitness and health. We are in a very, very competitive market.

Facility Manager One felt that quality programmes were important in managing competition as:

the main thing about quality is the fact that you analyse what you've done to look to improve it...it forces you to review and that creates improvement which is what we are looking to achieve.

It was also felt that quality programmes offer public sector managers an opportunity to benchmark their management practices against competitors. The Quality Management Officer referred to this saying:

because the service itself isn't a tangible thing that people can hold and measure, I think it was necessary to look at methods used in the private sector to see how they benchmark the quality of customers services...it encompasses and provides a benchmark for all those intangibles against which you have to pitch yourself and the competition.
It was agreed that this increasing competition and an increase in accountability had led to an increase in customer expectations. The Quality Management Officer discussed this, saying that the 

recent shift from rates to poll tax to community charge, customer charters, the Citizen's Charter initiative have all raised people awareness of what they can expect from local authorities and what they are actually paying for.

This was supported by Facility Manager Two who described how:

customers used to be prepared to just come along and basically did what we wanted them to. Which was quite wrong, just because you were a manager didn't mean that you knew what people wanted. But it has all changed because we started giving customers more information about the facility and the activities we provided.

As a consequence of consumerism the Principle Officer - East felt that:

the customer expectation is shifting and people expect more and more of services and they are happier to complain. I think customers are more articulate and confident with higher expectations in general.

This was reiterated by the Principle Officer - West who commented that:

in general consumer affairs programmes raise people's awareness of what they are entitled to, their rights....I think a lot of managers have had to overcome their arrogance - there was a general feeling that we are the professionals, we are the experts and we know the best way of providing it.

The second and most important, influence on the commercial approach to management was thought to be CCT as it was felt that public leisure managers have had to respond to increased expectations and competition as a result of the requirements of CCT contracts. The change brought about by CCT was described by the Client Manager as:

a huge increase in commercial awareness, cost became important. Because of CCT, management has focused on methods of management - what was wrong, what can we put right? In that respect it has been a big change.

The Principle Officer - East underlined this by saying that:

CCT gave us the opportunity to reappraise what we were doing. Before CCT if you overspent your budget, the next year you would get more. There wasn't any incentive to adopt a managerial approach to try and meet targets and improve the overall performance. We have shifted away from this and realise how important it is to go out and get customers because if we don't have any customers we don't have any income.

Facility Manager Two felt that CCT had provided him with the "opportunity to manage" and described how:

beforehand you certainly weren't the manager, you were just somebody who was there to open and close the door. I feel as
though I'm now a manager. In my facility if it is going really well then I get the credit. If things go wrong I get my hand slapped...It just makes you feel as though you are doing something worthwhile.

The direct impact of CCT upon quality management in LN came via the inclusion of ISO9002 in the Compulsory Competitive Tendering specification. This was incorporated into the specification to make the DSO bid more competitive, by deterring competition and enabling the DSO to compete successfully with private bids. The new contract included the need to maintain accreditation of ISO9002 and as part of the ongoing commitment to quality, the second round of bids included the assessment of quality in the evaluation of tenders.

There was some concern expressed about the negative effect of CCT upon the quality of opportunity to services. The major worry, however, was the detrimental effect that CCT had on leisure services staff. This was outlined by the Quality Management Officer who said:

I think that the CCT regime is very restricting in terms of the way staff are employed, managed, rewarded and recognised.

This was supported by the Principle Officer - West who felt that:

CCT has in some ways proved to be a bit unfair on the DSO workers. They accept and work in conditions that other council workers wouldn't tolerate.

The need for commercial management was considered to be essential to meet the requirements of the changing public leisure industry, however, the difficulty of doing this within a local authority context was noted by the Principle Officer - East:

It's difficult, we've got to have the managerial approach, customer focused, achieving targets, moving services forward and highly motivated staff. Yet we are still constrained to a certain extent by the empire that we work in. You can't do everything when you want to because it takes longer to convince people.

He went on to say that he thought that public leisure facilities should never become fully commercial in their operation as:

we shouldn't lose sight of why we are providing leisure services within local government. If it was purely for profit we could let someone else do it.

This was emphasised by the Client Manager who felt that the need to be commercially oriented threw up questions about the role of local authority leisure services, questioning:

are we here to provide a high cost, high class leisure service for the public sector or are we here to provide for those most in need?
It was apparent that the commercial objectives of Leisure Newcastle were being challenged by a move towards social objectives that occurred during 1997. This was discussed by the Client Manager who felt that, as a result of a new General Manager:

we've seen a swing from the commercial end to the social objectives end. Now we're in the first year of the contract and if we come to the end of this year and the fees aren't coming in because of this more socially based programme, then we'll see what happens.

This concern was also expressed by Facility Manager One who thought that the changing priorities of the General Manager will lead to poor management of the new contract. He commented that:

giving the service back to the community is great. The only trouble is the parts of the community he is looking to give it to don't really bring in the pennies and you cannot operate a business without the pennies coming in.

It is difficult to assess the impact of the Citizen's Charter upon Leisure Newcastle as half of those interviewed felt that the Citizen's Charter had little effect on service quality, while the other half felt that it had a positive effect. For example Facility Manager Three felt that:

We are already providing things that are required within the Citizen's Charter and some of our procedures have actually been slackened in order that the authority can accommodate them.

Alternatively, the Quality Management Officer thought that:

it has a positive effect. What it has done is force people to move away from the dinosaur approach and actually stick their head above the parapet and actually talk to customers.

It is worth noting that those who felt that the Citizen's Charter had little effect were facility managers, those rating it as positive were leisure officers. This may reflect the fact that managers within LN were already meeting the requirements of the Citizen's Charter prior to its introduction. Alternatively, officers were likely to have seen a positive impact of the Citizen's Charter in the council's other departments, leading to a belief in its value.

Figure 7.8 outlines the influences on the decision to implement quality programmes in Leisure Newcastle. The need for quality management was attributed to two key factors. Firstly, the role of the ex-general manager and the Quality Management Officer indicated that leisure professionals were the main influence on the decision to implement quality programmes. The belief by the facility managers that quality had always been an issue in the service supports this.
Secondly, faced with increasing competition for the leisure pound, managers had formalised their approach to quality to compete for and retain customers. The commitment to quality inherent within the organisation indicates an awareness of the role of quality management in allowing local authority leisure facilities to be competitive.

Figure 7.8: Influences on quality management in Leisure Newcastle

![Diagram showing influences on quality management](image-url)

Key: In direction and size of arrow:
- Direct impact
- Facilitatory impact
7.6 CALDERDALE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Situated in West Yorkshire, Calderdale Borough Council was created by local government reorganisation in 1974. Its largest town is Halifax and the authority has a population of 192,000 which lives in the mixture of countryside and town which characterises the local authority.

Places of historical interest are plentiful within the local authority and consequently the focus of the Borough has been on Heritage and Cultural recreation, resulting in an under-supply of sport and recreation facilities (Calderdale Council Leisure Services Department (CCLSD), 1995). This had recently been addressed by the extension and refurbishment of existing facilities and the proposed development of a new sports centre in conjunction with the Local Education Authority.

When this research was carried out Calderdale had an autonomous Leisure Services Department which was one of eight departments responsible for the management and delivery of services within the local authority. The Sport and Leisure DSO was a contract division of Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council and the structure of the local authority, presented in Figure 7.9 shows that the Leisure Service was responsible for the management of the council's active leisure facilities. The service employed 140 permanent staff, had an annual budget of £5,245,000 and was responsible to the Leisure Services Committee.

There was one sport and leisure centre and 5 swimming pools within the management contract that was initially awarded to the DSO in 1992, on a deficit guarantee basis. The DSO also won the second round which was carried out in 1997. CCT led to a redistribution of staff and saw the removal of managers from facilities. Currently, senior managers were responsible for the strategic management of the facilities, while day to day operations were carried out by on-site duty managers.

Calderdale Council was included in the research as an example of a local authority that was using quality programmes because they were required to. The local authority's leisure service used ISO9002 as a result of a contract requirement. Interviews were carried out with the people outlined in Table 7.22 who were individuals in positions of senior or facility management, identified by the Assistant Director of Sport and Leisure as having an extensive involvement in the decision to implement quality programmes and/or the management of quality.
Figure 7.9: Calderdale Borough Council
CHAPTER SEVEN: CALDERDALE COUNCIL

Table 7.22: Individuals interviewed in Calderdale Council Leisure Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Reason for inclusion in research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Director of Sport and Leisure Contracts Manager</td>
<td>Overall responsibility for leisure facilities and responsible for introduction of customer care policies and iIP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant Contracts Manager</td>
<td>Overall responsibility for CCT contracts and responsible for the inclusion of BS5750 in the first round of contracts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facility Manager One</td>
<td>Overall responsibility for the operation of the leisure centre and the management of ISO9002 as quality manager.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facility Manager Two</td>
<td>Responsible for day to day facility operations and ensuring service quality.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Documents (Table 7.23) were reviewed for information relating to ISO9002, quality management in general, strategic direction and facility performance.

Table 7.23: Documents included in the research carried out in CCLS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Documents</th>
<th>Reason for review</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sport and Leisure Business Plan (1997)</td>
<td>Detailed the DSO's approach to the delivery of quality services, setting objectives for this. Identified operating priorities for the organisation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Sports and Recreation Strategy (1996)</td>
<td>Provided a context for the operations of the DSO and outlined the need for ongoing investment in facilities and quality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department budgets (1995-7)</td>
<td>Provided information on revenue and expenditure for the department and user information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Committee minutes</td>
<td>Contextual background on quality and management within the DSO.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.6.1 THE CONTENT OF QUALITY MANAGEMENT

METHODS OF MANAGING SERVICE QUALITY

The quality of Leisure Services had been recognised by accreditation of ISO9002, which focuses on operational procedures and Investors in People, which recognises good human resource management procedures. The Leisure Service played a leading role in quality management within the local authority being the first service to obtain accreditation to a quality programme which subsequently led other services to seek and obtain accreditation of these programmes.
Table 7.24 outlines the key dates that have influenced quality management within Calderdale Council and from this it is apparent that CCT led to the pursuit of formal quality initiatives in the local authority's leisure service. Accreditation to ISO9002 was obtained for the purpose of standardising operations and liP was obtained to complement ISO9002 by providing a mechanism for staff development and communication. As a result of an increased awareness of the need for quality management, which was felt to have emerged after the accreditation of ISO9002, the DSO extended and formalised its customer care training and developed a customer care programme on the basis of the requirements of the Citizen's Charter. This programme incorporated staff training, customer research and a customer comments procedure.

Table 7.24: The evolution of quality management within CCLS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Decision made to include ISO9002 (BS5750) into CCT specification.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>First round of contracts - awarded to DSO.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Accreditation of ISO9002.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Introduction of customer care policy into remainder of local authority.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>ISO9002 and customer care included in second specifications. Second round of contracts - awarded to DSO.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Council awarded liP.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Following the award of the CCT contracts, Calderdale Leisure DSO had 18 months to obtain accreditation of ISO9002. A dedicated quality assurance officer was appointed to guide the development and implementation process and a series of briefings were run to sell the programme to staff. This programme requires the development of a manual of operations to standardise and control operations, and as a result staff were asked to document their work activities and these then were incorporated into the quality manual. The manual was subsequently put into operation, audited and revised at 3 month intervals.

The quality programme was received with some scepticism which was felt to be due to a general resistance to change. Much of this resistance was thought to have now disappeared and the facility managers noted that the quality manual was invaluable when training new staff or when moving facilities. In addition, this quality programme was felt to have been beneficial in improving quality by developing a corporate approach to quality management through the provision of
clear procedures for facility operation. This was emphasised by Facility Manager One who felt that:

now it's in place everybody appreciates that we have a quality system to work to. Certainly new staff do, as the procedures are all in place to ensure that they get a thorough induction.

Those interviewed felt that the Compulsory Competitive Tendering specification had also led to the management of service quality as the contract required accreditation to ISO9002, conformance to the principles of the Citizen's Charter and a documented customer care policy. The role of the specification in enforcing quality initiatives was outlined by the Contracts Manager who felt that CCT:

made us look at quality because we had to go through its (the specification) development. It made us address the service, where we were going as an organisation, what we thought we needed to provide for the public.

The Assistant Director of Sport and Leisure felt that the success of the quality initiatives used by the DSO was indicated by the ability to have increased the charge per service without a subsequent decrease in usage. In addition, the DSO had made an operating surplus since 1995 brought about primarily because of a decrease in central department charges (CCLSD, 1995). This was attributed to reduced levels of monitoring by the client as this role was taken over by BSI when auditing ISO9002.

**DEFINITIONS OF SERVICE QUALITY**

The ISO9002 quality manual defines quality as “fitness for customers purpose”, (CCLSD, 1997a) and this focus on customers was present in the definitions of quality used by all interviewed. For example, Facility Manager Two defined quality as:

the best possible service we can deliver to customers to provide customer satisfaction.

while the Assistant Director of Sport and Leisure suggested that quality was:

the ability to satisfy our customers needs and meeting expectations.

Consistency of service was felt to be important enough to include in the DSO’s mission statement and was referred to in the definition of quality offered by the Assistant Contracts Manager who defined quality as:

being able to deliver a standard of service which customers want, at the right price, consistently.

Similarly, Facility Manager One felt that quality was:

providing the customer with the same standard of high service every visit.
This emphasis on consistency was in line with the definition offered by the quality manual and the emphasis on fitness for purpose in the quality manual implies quality control and assurance which leads to consistency. The enhancement of the traditional 'fitness' definition and the emphasis on customers suggested an awareness of the need to be customer focused in the delivery of quality services. This was reiterated by the Assistant Contracts Manager who felt that it was important to:

get it right for them (customers) and give them what they want, rather than us determining what we think they want.

Those interviewed were adamant about the need for a customer focused, high quality provision of service and were clear about how this should be defined. The DSO's commitment to quality was expressed in its mission statement which is:

to consistently provide and develop quality services and manage facilities within a pleasant and friendly environment in accordance with the client specification, customer needs and market forces.

(CCLSD, 1997b)

This was supported by the organisation's aims for customer care and quality assurance (CCLSD, 1997b):

• To maintain and develop high quality customer care practices
• To maintain and develop high quality systems in conjunction with a recognised external agency.

The service's approach to the management of quality was considered to be structured and coherent and it was felt that the focus on customers gave a clear direction for the guidance of quality activities. The leading role of the Leisure Service in the use of quality management was discussed as the local authority itself was considered to have no coherent approach to quality management outside of the principles of the Citizen's Charter. The authority's attitude to quality management was, however, described by Facility Manager Two as being positive:

I think they have taken a positive approach to it (quality) and committed themselves. They are not doing it to collect rewards, they are totally committed to it and they are delivering it.

This was supported by the Assistant Director of Sport and Leisure who outlined how the local authority had identified quality as one of the elements of the council's vision for the future. He said:

we have reviewed the process for our capital programme and quality is a main issue in it along with education and industry. Quality is one of the keys.
7.6.2 The Rationale for Quality and Quality Programmes

The Sport and Leisure DSO was required to use quality as a result of the Compulsory Competitive Tendering specification. The decision to include ISO9002 within the CCT specification for the Leisure Management contract was made by the Contracts Manager who included this programme to make the DSO bid competitive and to guarantee quality assurance should a private contractor be appointed. The Assistant Contracts Manager outlined how the DSO:

approached CCT on the basis that if the private sector could get quality assurance, then the council could and this would then help fight off the commercial sector.

The influence of the Contracts Manager on the decision to implement quality programmes was considered to be a reflection of the relationship between officers and leisure councillors within the authority. The influence of politicians on the decision to obtain ISO9002 was described by the Assistant Contracts Manager as ‘rubber stamping’ and he said that:

we ran it past them and they put their hands up at the right time.

This sentiment was supported by the Assistant Director: Sport and Leisure who felt that the leisure committee ‘blessed’ the initiatives that were suggested by the officers. The Contracts Manager felt that the level of support was almost demotivating as ISO9002 ‘whistled through’ with no acknowledgement of the time and effort it had taken to achieve accreditation. Clearly, the leisure professionals had the greatest impact on the decision to implement quality management within Calderdale Leisure Services.

The need to obtain ISO9002, together with the additional quality requirements necessary to meet the CCT specification, suggests that legislation has been primarily responsible for the introduction of quality programmes into the management of Calderdale’s leisure services. This was reinforced by the inclusion of the assessment of quality in the second round of contracts and Facility Manager One outlined how ISO9002 had:

certainly helped us during the second phase of our competitive tendering because we could actually prove we were a quality organisation.

The impact of consumerism on quality management was, however, also noted by interviewees. There was general agreement that customers expect more for their money, having become increasingly discerning when making leisure choices. This
had led to the need to deliver quality services discussed by the Assistant Contracts Manager who felt that customers now expected a lot more:

traditionally customers would have been happy to put up with anything, to be honest. That has changed significantly now because they are prepared to pay; I think they expect a much higher standard of customers service. They will pay, but they expect it right.

In support of this the Assistant Director of Sport and Leisure commented that:

generally speaking the public at large are becoming more worldly-wise and there is a stronger thrust towards quality. It is now an everyday concept, all the time, always quality.

This change in customer expectations was thought to have affected all service providers and was considered to be an indication of a cultural change amongst customers. In the leisure industry this change was thought to have been promoted by an increasingly competitive operating environment and the need to be competitive was felt to have subsequently contributed to the need for quality management within public leisure facilities.

The competitive nature of the industry was discussed by the Assistant Contracts Manager who suggested that increasing competition for leisure customers had facilitated the quality approach, commenting that:

in leisure where people actually have a choice as to whether they come to us means that if we get it wrong people go somewhere else. So it basically means that you have to get what you offering right or you don't have a job. Quality services give the customer what they want.

The main influence on the need to be competitive was thought to have been legislation as policy changes affecting local authority leisure professionals required them to compete in order to meet the challenges of legislation. The Assistant Director of Sport and Leisure commented that:

CCT came in from 1988 so we faced the requirement to put the services out to tender. Councils have also been under more financial scrutiny from the government, by reducing the rate support to councils and at the same time capping local authorities. So that led to a greater focus on service quality.

The Citizen's Charter had provided the basis for the new customer care procedures which were implemented into the authority in 1997, although customer care training had been carried out in the DSO prior to 1991. Nonetheless, it was CCT that was thought to have been the major legislative influence on the need to become competitive and had led to the 'commercialisation' of management. All interviewed were positive about the impact of CCT upon the management of public leisure facilities. The Assistant Contracts Manager felt that CCT had brought about a huge
cultural change in management forcing public leisure managers to become more commercial. Facility Manager Two described the culture of public leisure facilities as:

becoming more commercial and basically it's because funding for local authorities has decreased and they've had to become competitive. We are now managing change all of the time....which makes you use your initiative more and be a bit more dynamic.

The impact of CCT upon the council as a whole was considered by the Assistant Director of Sport and Leisure to have:

introduced some new parameters into the organisation, new cultures and it has introduced a business manner into the organisation at all levels within this council.

The overall result of CCT was thought to be a more 'professional' approach to the management of public leisure facilities, which was noted by the Contracts Manager who stated that:

I think that CCT has made leisure professionals sharpen up their act. This has been because of a fear of losing out, of losing market share. So those who have been prepared to do something about it have looked to sharpen themselves up.

This was also discussed by Facility Manager One who claimed that:

CCT has led people to believe that if you treat people right you will get repeat business. Once you get repeat business you get more money. To be competitive you need customer quality service.

The Contracts Manager, however, went on to make the point that he felt that professionalism had always been a feature of leisure management and commented that:

I think leisure managers have always been professional, they have always been aware of the need for service quality - CCT has just made it more of an issue.

This was supported by Facility Manager One, who felt that,

service quality was an issue prior to 1992, but I don't think we were as aware of it.

The need for 'commercial' management was considered to be essential to meet the requirements of leisure operations and the following techniques, which are traditionally associated with a commercial management culture, provided evidence of new managerialism within Calderdale Borough Council's leisure service. Calderdale Leisure Services had recently implemented a business planning process with strategic objectives, clear financial information and performance indicators. The DSO also had a marketing budget. Managers were required to use work programmes to manage their facilities and to use recovery rates, energy use, profit
and loss and subsidy per user as indicators of their performance. Information on users and income was required by activity, on a daily, weekly and monthly breakdown and was provided by an integrated IT system (CCLSD, 1997b). In addition, a rational approach to planning had been introduced and the service had explicit standards and measures of performance. There had been a 'streamlining' of the staffing quota and the DSO had a Performance-Related Pay scheme.

The difficulty of 'commercial' management within a local authority context was, however, raised by Facility Manager Two who felt that:

being a local authority there are certain procedures we have to follow. For instance if there is a budget saving and I could use this to fill a post, I can't do this without committee approval...which takes time.

It was considered that public leisure facilities would never become fully commercial in their operations because, although the DSO was required to act as a private sector company:

we couldn't because we still had the issue of reporting to elected members and we were not given the freedom to manage as was the intention of the legislation because we were still attached to the council.

(Assistant Contracts Manager)

There were concerns expressed about the negative impact of CCT upon staff. The greatest concern, however, was the influence of CCT upon service choice. This was highlighted by the Assistant Contracts Manager and the Assistant Director of Sport and Leisure who felt that CCT had led to a:

reduction in the cost of the service with some services being taken out completely. We have closed facilities down and we have stopped providing certain services within the department, within this council.

Figure 7.10 shows the influences upon quality management within Calderdale Council and outlines how quality management had become an issue for Calderdale Council Leisure Services as a result of CCT and the need to be competitive. The CCT specification required the use of ISO9002 in the management of the leisure service. The service, however, then went on to expand the use of quality programmes in order to deliver a service that met customer expectations of service quality. This was perceived necessary in order to be competitive to meet the challenge of increasing competition, changes in customer expectations and the demands of legislation.

The need to be competitive was thought to have led to the use of quality programmes for two reasons. Firstly, the DSO were required to use ISO9002 in
order to make it more competitive when bidding for CCT contracts. Secondly, quality programmes were thought to be a tool for managing the impact of consumerism epitomised by increasing customer expectations of service quality, which led to the customer focused approach inherent within the local authority's content of quality. This focus was evident in the definitions of quality offered by those interviewed which had extended a production orientated definition of quality to add a customer focus. It was also apparent in the decision to introduce a formal customer care policy as a result of adopting a quality approach.

Figure 7.10: Influences on quality management in Calderdale Council

The use of quality programmes as a management tool and the presence of other commercial management techniques provided evidence of the presence of new managerialism which was apparent in the approach to the management and implementation of quality initiatives. The research suggested that it was CCT that had brought about new managerialism, as Compulsory Competitive Tendering required the local authority's leisure service to become competitive in the face of decreasing funding and increasing customer expectations and competition. Although the Contracts Manager felt that the public leisure industry had always had an element of professionalism, evidenced by his influence on the decision to implement ISO9002, the promotion of commercial management within the DSO as a result of CCT cannot be denied. As a result of CCT and its specification, CCLS had introduced business planning, performance measurement and Performance related Pay.

Consequently, the leading role of CCT in promoting new managerialism, alongside the requirement to implement quality management initiatives offered substantial
evidence for the argument that legislation had primarily provided the rationale for the introduction of quality programmes within the management of Calderdale’s Leisure Services. This legislation, however, reflects and represents the broader climate of consumerism within which contemporary public leisure facilities are operating and has required public leisure managers to be competitive in their operation. This subsequently led to the ongoing and expanded use of quality programmes within Calderdale Council’s Leisure Service as it sought to respond to increasing competition and increasing customer expectations of public leisure facilities.
7.7 **SRM - NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL**

North Lincolnshire Council is a unitary authority created by local government reorganisation in 1996. Centred on the town of Scunthorpe, it has a population of approximately 153000, most of which lives in urban areas. The new authority unified the councils of Scunthorpe, Brigg and Goole, and Cleethorpes.

Scunthorpe Recreation Management (SRM) was the trading name of the Leisure DSO of Scunthorpe Borough Council, which in 1996 became part of the Commercial Services Department of North Lincolnshire Council (NLC). Figure 7.11 shows the structure of the new authority highlighting the wide remit that Commercial Services had, incorporating activities as diverse as Fleet Management to Markets. The Department operated as a commercial organisation and was responsible for the management of the new authority’s CCT contracts. SRM was the DSO responsible for the management of the authority’s sports centres, playing fields and golf courses and had a budgeted annual expenditure of £2056000. The Leisure DSO employed 110 permanent staff and reported to the Commercial Services sub-committee.

There were four leisure centres all of which were covered by the CCT contract that was awarded to SRM in 1997, by the new authority on a management fee basis. Although the authority was granted an extension to its CCT timetable, the Commercial Services Department decided to proceed with the second round of tendering as it was felt that the CCT process would lead to an integration of procedures across the service. The first round of CCT, in 1992, led to an increased reliance on part time staff; however, the second round had a negligible effect on staff numbers and structures as these had been considered by the process of harmonisation. As a result, the strategic management of the services operated by SRM was divided between three general managers, while the day to day running was carried out by a team of duty officers. This provided SRM with a strategic overview of all of its facilities as the central management team had overall responsibility for operations.

The research was carried out shortly after unification and as a result the case study material refers to both the past activities of SRM and the intended future activities of North Lincs. Council. All of the leisure facilities in the new authority traded under the 'SRM' banner as the managers previously employed by SRM were given management responsibility for the additional sites. Those interviewed were therefore able to comment extensively on what had occurred in the past and what would occur in the future.
Figure 7.11: North Lincolnshire Council

Chief Executives

Social Services
- Cleansing Services
- Grounds Maintenance

Housing, Health and Protection
- Vehicle Maintenance
- Highway Services
- Building Cleaning

Commercial Services
- Leisure & Catering DSO Manager

Education and Personal Development

Development and Environment

- Catering
- Scunthorpe Recreation Management
  - Asst. DSO Managers
    - Sports Grounds
    - Leisure Centres Quality Manager
    - Golf Courses

Support Services
- Markets
- Building Works

Maintenance
- DSO Managers

Grounds
- Management
- Quality Manager
SRM was included in the research as an example of a local authority leisure service that uses quality programmes because they were required to. Interviews were carried out with individuals (Table 7.25) identified by Assistant DSO Manager One as having an extensive involvement in the decision to implement quality programmes and the management of service quality.

Table 7.25: Individuals interviewed in Scunthorpe Recreation Management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Reason for inclusion in research</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DSO Manager</td>
<td>Overall responsibility for CCT contracts. Part of the management team responsible for the selection and implementation of ISO9002.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant DSO Manager One</td>
<td>Part of the management team responsible for selecting and implementing ISO9002. Responsible for the implementation of Investors in People in the DSO and a TQM 'champion' Shared responsibility for the strategic management of leisure facilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistant DSO Manager Two</td>
<td>Part of the management team responsible for selecting and implementing ISO9002. Shared responsibility for the strategic management of leisure facilities. Member of the TQM Steering Committee.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality Manager</td>
<td>Responsible for management of ISO9002 systems.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The documents outlined in Table 7.26 were reviewed for information relating to the quality initiatives used, strategic direction, DSO performance and CCT processes.

Table 7.26: Documents included in the research carried out with SRM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Documents</th>
<th>Reason for review</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality Policy (1997)</td>
<td>Outlined the strategic direction of quality both within Commercial Services and within SRM. It also outlined objectives for quality and measures of success.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SRM Business Plans (1994, 1995, 1996)</td>
<td>Contained detailed plans for guiding the operations of SRM, including quality management strategies. They also provided details on the extent to which new managerialism is present within the service. Provided information on revenue and expenditure for the DSO's leisure service.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCT Evaluation Document (1996)</td>
<td>Provided detail on the procedures used in the evaluation of second round contracts, including details on the service quality evaluation criteria.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7.7.1 THE CONTENT OF QUALITY MANAGEMENT

THE METHODS OF MANAGING SERVICE QUALITY

The quality of the leisure service was initially managed by i) ISO9002 which documents and standardises facility management, ii) Investors in People which was a council initiative, and iii) a customer care programme, introduced by SRM.
managers in response to identified increases in customer expectations. Table 7.27 outlines the progress of quality management within the leisure DSO and from this it is apparent that the use of a formal customer care programme that incorporated staff training and customer research, preceded the introduction of CCT. The CCT legislation did, however, lead to the implementation of ISO9002.

Table 7.27: The evolution of quality management within SRM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Launch of Total Quality Management which is included in the contract specification.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Unification - Scunthorpe becomes part of North Lines Council.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>Scunthorpe Borough Council awarded Investors in People.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1992</td>
<td>First round of contracts - awarded to SRM.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1990</td>
<td>Decision to include ISO9002 in contract.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1987</td>
<td>Strategic planning initiated.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Following the decision to pursue ISO9002, the first step was to hold briefings with staff to introduce the quality programme, which was followed by the appointment of a quality officer responsible for the administration of the programme. A steering team made up of senior staff from Leisure, Grounds Maintenance and Personnel were responsible for the development of the procedures which was done primarily by writing work instructions based on existing operations. Existing standards were then associated with these operations.

The process took two years to complete as SRM took the opportunity to review all operations as the procedures were developed. This opportunity was discussed by the Quality Manager who felt that the development of ISO9002 was used:

as a process of looking at all operations, we took the organisation to pieces and put it back together in what we thought was the best possible way. It could have been done in no time, but we decided to use it as an opportunity.

This quality programme was thought to have been beneficial in improving quality as it had provided clear procedures for facility operation and assisted with improving the standard of suppliers.

The fundamental weakness of ISO9002 is that it lacks a customer service focus when setting standards and BSI have recommended that standards are set high enough to ensure good service quality as opposed to simply ensuring registration. This was the case in Scunthorpe where this weakness was thought to have been
overcome by ensuring that existing pre-CCT standards were met. The DSO Manager explained how the standards were set:

off what we were doing before CCT because we felt that these were higher than what we would have as a result of CCT. We were an authority that spent a lot of money on leisure and recreation and facilities, so we had very high standards.

ISO9002 was received with initial scepticism which was thought to be due to the changing nature of the leisure environment as there was a feeling among those interviewed that ISO9002 had been perceived as just another management initiative which could be management trying to cut jobs'. There was agreement that the implementation process had failed to convince staff completely of the value and the need for ISO9002 and it was felt that additional training and communication would have been valuable. This was stressed by Assistant DSO Manager One who felt that should ISO9002 be reintroduced, it would be done in a different way:

There would be a lot more training focusing on both the reasons for it and how to use it. We didn't focus on the reasons behind it, we did some general awareness sessions, but these would be expanded greatly.

Registration of ISO9002 ceased within the Scunthorpe facilities as a result of unification, although the belief in its strengths meant that the procedures and practices were maintained and were required by the CCT specification. Quality management had, however, become an authority-wide issue for the new council. This led Commercial Services to formally adopt a quality policy which contained the following mission statement:

North Lincolnshire Commercial Services will respond positively and proactively to competitive tendering legislation to the benefit of the community, providing value for money services.

(NLC, 1996)

This commitment to quality management was thought to be demonstrated by the Commercial Services pursuit of TQM which incorporated the principles of Investors in People and ISO9002. The role of quality management in the new authority was outlined by Assistant DSO Manager Two who felt that:

there is a commitment within our mission statement, vision statement and the like within Commercial Services to deliver quality services, and it was felt that Total Quality Management would enable us or assist us in delivering these quality services.

It was felt that the introduction of TQM had taken into account the weaknesses identified in the introduction of ISO9002 and the first stage of consultation and training had been carried out amongst managers. A steering team of 'quality champions' had been established, responsible for generating interest in the
programme within their departments. There was a recognition of the long term nature of the process as indicated by Assistant DSO Manager Two who said:

we know it's not a quick fix and that it's going to take years probably...we need to get some of those who show interest involved from the start and hopefully it will snowball.

Commercial Services also included an assessment of the methods of managing service quality in Compulsory Competitive Tendering bids and promoted its vision through the strap line 'success through quality.' All of this led Assistant DSO Manager Two to claim that:

value for money is what we are trying to give people. So there is a commitment there at senior officer level and at senior councillor level.

A review of the tender evaluation document for the management of sport and leisure facilities (NLC, 1997) showed that the contract required a quality assurance system, conformance to the principles of Investors in People and a documented customer care policy. From this it was apparent that the contract had a significant role to play in the management of the quality of service as the quality initiatives used were required by the CCT specification. In addition, the business plan contained a commitment to have achieved 100% client satisfaction when monitored. (SRM, 1994).

DEFINITIONS OF QUALITY

Scunthorpe Recreation Management had no corporate definition of quality to guide services; however, the research found a common focus on the customer in the definitions of quality used by those interviewed. This was emphasised by Assistant DSO Manager Two who defined quality as:

the quality of service that we hope to be giving our customers. We're aiming to give them the best possible experience when they visit Scunthorpe Leisure Centres,

while Assistant DSO Manager One felt that it was:

providing what the public want in a form that they want it and providing it to a consistent standard.

Customer care was stressed by all and the importance of providing value for money was also accentuated. In support of this, the business plans for SRM emphasised the importance of customers and outlined the need to develop the service in line with their requirements (SRM, 1996). There was also a shared focus on consistency and standards that was likely to be due to the leading role that ISO9002 has played in managing quality.
What was notable, however, was an awareness of the diverse nature of the customer groups that impact on the provision of leisure. This was highlighted by the DSO Manager who commented that:

our customer is the client, the general public, the elected members, schools, anyone who we provide services to. With being a local authority there is always more than one customer - the client who pays the bills, the customer who uses the facilities and the elected members representing the rest of the community.

This recognition of a variety of customer groups was uncommon in the research and may have been due to the emphasis on a mixture of customer groups found in the documentation published by the local authority (SRM, 1994; SRM, 1996). Alternatively, it may be explained by the increased prominence on satisfying council tax payers as taxes have risen since unification. There was agreement from all interviewed, however, that the paying customer was the priority in order to maintain a customer base.

This research indicated that managers of the sport and leisure facilities in NLC felt that the DSO had a proactive approach to quality management. Those interviewed were adamant about the need for a customer focused, high quality provision of service and were clear about how this should be defined. The mission statement of the DSO highlighted this concern with quality as it stated that the mission of the DSO was to:

provide our customers with the highest possible standard of facility management and by doing so ensure that the required rates of return are achieved.

(SRM, 1996)

This support for quality management had remained through unification and was now being expressed by the adoption of Total Quality Management, considered to be the most comprehensive quality initiative available to public leisure managers.

The focus on the paying customer was felt to give direction to the quality activities of the DSO and the DSO had clear objectives for quality, incorporated into business plans which had associated measures. These, alongside the principles of the new TQM programme, were felt to provide the basis for quality management activities within SRM. The TQM approach was thought to allow managers to address all aspects of the criteria for managing quality; prior to unification this had occurred in Scunthorpe through accreditation to ISO9002, IIP and the DSO's customer care programme. The inclusion of objectives and performance indicators of quality within the business plans of SRM were felt to be indicative of the professional approach to quality management within the DSO, which was considered to be
demonstrated by the early identification of a need for the management of service quality that led to the development of the service’s customer care programme. This had been introduced in response to an awareness among SRM’s management, of increasing demands for improved service quality.

7.7.2 THE RATIONALE FOR QUALITY AND QUALITY MANAGEMENT

SRM was required to obtain ISO9002 as a result of the Compulsory Competitive Tendering specification. This quality programme was incorporated into the specification to make the DSO bid more competitive, by deterring competition and enabling the DSO to compete successfully with private bids. This contract specification alongside the additional quality requirements outlined in the CCT specification, suggested that legislation had a significant influence on the introduction of quality programmes into the local authority’s leisure service, managed by SRM.

The influence of the legislative requirements was further evident in the inclusion of the assessment of quality in the second round of contracts, when in an attempt to strike a balance between price and quality, 30% of the tender evaluation process focused on quality. The desire for quality management was underlined by the document that justified the evaluation procedures:

it is the Council’s wish to see the development of a self monitoring culture. The inclusion of an appraisal of technical quality as part of the tender evaluation is intended to facilitate this process.

(NLC, 1997)

The decision to include quality management within the first CCT specification for the Leisure Management contract was made by the Leisure Committee; the choice of ISO9002 was then made by SRM staff after presentations by consultants. The influence of leisure staff on the decision to implement ISO9002 was considered to be a reflection of the relationship between officers and leisure councillors which was described by Assistant DSO Manager Two as being officer-led. He outlined how the Contract Services Board had taken a passing interest in what they were doing, commenting that:

they never really sat down and said ‘I want to get involved, let me see what you are doing, this is what I think you ought to be doing.’

In contrast, the decision to follow a TQM programme in North Lincs. Council was considered to be politically motivated from two aspects. Firstly, quality became a
council-wide initiative in North Lincs. Council in order to combat the costs of unification. This was explained by Assistant DSO Manager Two who outlined how there had been a 25% increase in council tax which he felt had led to the local authority concern with quality. He thought that:

> to hike up the bills by 25% and then deliver a lesser quality of service really isn't going to do them politically any favours. There is a political overtone to all of this in that they want us to give as good a service as we can give because it's not had the greatest of starts as an authority.

Secondly, it was considered that a new quality programme would be more acceptable to those parts of the new service that were not accredited to ISO9002. This was discussed by Assistant DSO Manager Two and the Quality Manager, who said:

> to bring everyone on board it was decided it would be easier to follow another avenue than to stick with ISO9002, because the other sites will think 'hang on, you're imposing this on us.'

The other significant piece of legislation relating to quality management, the Citizen's Charter, was thought to have had a negligible impact on quality management primarily because of a lack of public understanding of what it was, which had led managers to ignore it. Assistant DSO Manager One felt that SRM had not been motivated to go beyond a minimalist approach to the Citizen's Charter because:

> there aren't enough citizens out there that know what it is about. It's a good piece of legislation from a theoretical point of view, however, the punters don't know anything about it.

The impact and influence of customers on management was identified by all concerned as being a major influence on the need for quality. An awareness of the consequences of consumerism was implicit in the council's concern with council tax increases as Assistant DSO Manager Two felt that customers expected value for money in their dealings with all types of organisations:

> people expect more in all walks of life, you want more for your money, you want better value for money. You watch the television and all these programmes that you see like Watchdog - all these sort of things are just pounding away at people, complain, complain, complain....It's the way society is moving now.

There was general agreement that this increased expectation of quality was the result of customers having been exposed to a greater number of different leisure experiences. The Quality Manager felt that this was the working environment that all managers could expect to continue as:

> I think people enter the facilities now expecting what they require. I think that's the same wherever you go, not just this facility. People in general expect to get a good quality of service,
they expect to be greeted pleasantly, they don't expect to be snapped at.

All felt that it was this increase in expectations that had initiated the managerial concern with customer care which led to the subsequent implementation of the DSO's customer care programme. As a result, it was felt that the service offered had improved in line with customer expectations as the focus on customers initiated by the 1990 programme had become integral to the management of SRM's service. In support of this, Assistant DSO Manager One outlined how:

one of the essential planks in our strategy and is mentioned in every document that you will see is customer care. This means meeting as best we can customer's expectations of the service we provide. Every single member of staff goes through customer care training and it's one area where we re-train...because of this ever upwards increase in customer expectations.

Consequently, the need for commercial management was also considered to be essential in order for SRM to be competitive in the delivery of the leisure service. The role of quality programmes in bringing about this was discussed and all agreed that without quality and quality programmes it would have been difficult to compete successfully because of the need to be financially viable and business-like and thus market oriented. Assistant DSO Manager One felt that the concern with quality and quality initiatives had allowed this change in culture saying, that from a local authority point of view:

quality systems were necessary initially to drag them out of the typical local authority way of doing business. It's financial, it's having to meet an ever decreasing financial base and maintain the highest level of service possible,

indicating the role of quality programmes in bringing about a commercial approach to management.

A review of management documentation indicated that SRM was using techniques traditionally associated with the commercial sector. SRM had a thorough planning process with strategic objectives, clear financial information and time constraints. Managers were required to produce market plans for each facility, which acted as a business plan for the current year. There were clear indicators of performance which measured efficiency, economy and effectiveness and financial data showed all revenues and expenditure (SRM, 1994 and SRM, 1996). All of this required the extensive use of commercial management techniques and indicated the presence of new managerialism within the management of SRM.
Further evidence of this commercial approach is provided in Table 7.28 which outlines the financial performance of the Sport and Leisure Management Contract. SRM had made a 'profit' since 1992 with a significant increase in this since obtaining ISO9002. This increase was primarily brought about by decreases in the cost of labour, suppliers and central charges which were attributed to efficiencies brought about by quality assurance. The drop in profit in 1996/7 was attributed to the large increase in central charges and 'other' charges which occurred as a result of unification. Despite this, SRM anticipated the second largest profit in its history.

Table 7.28: Summary of SRM's financial performance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Labour</td>
<td>428921</td>
<td>379939</td>
<td>376303</td>
<td>418300</td>
<td>423400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Premises' costs</td>
<td>388722</td>
<td>378433</td>
<td>364695</td>
<td>358200</td>
<td>366000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supplies/services</td>
<td>223681</td>
<td>174972</td>
<td>229067</td>
<td>228200</td>
<td>168100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport</td>
<td>5894</td>
<td>6570</td>
<td>6136</td>
<td>2800</td>
<td>2000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central charges</td>
<td>37919</td>
<td>28317</td>
<td>28664</td>
<td>26900</td>
<td>35000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>150</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>38700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total expenditure</td>
<td>1085137</td>
<td>968231</td>
<td>1005017</td>
<td>1034550</td>
<td>1033300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charges to council</td>
<td>711039</td>
<td>632732</td>
<td>649239</td>
<td>680300</td>
<td>671700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fees/charges</td>
<td>380722</td>
<td>347625</td>
<td>367905</td>
<td>402300</td>
<td>383200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total income</td>
<td>1091761</td>
<td>980357</td>
<td>1017644</td>
<td>1082600</td>
<td>1054900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Profit</td>
<td>664</td>
<td>12126</td>
<td>12127</td>
<td>38050</td>
<td>21600</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: SRM, 1996)

Although it was documented that this commercial approach was initiated in 1987 with the commencement of strategic planning (SRM, 1996), new managerialism characterised by the factors outlined above, was felt to have gained momentum in response to the legislative changes that had affected the management of public leisure facilities. The diminishing local authority budget brought about by decreases in funding from central government was thought to have initiated this more commercial approach to management. The Quality Manager said that:

> finances are so tight compared to what they used to be. The bottomless pit doesn't exist any more and everything has to be run on a business footing, you have to make a profit, to make a rate of return.

It was agreed, however, that Compulsory Competitive Tendering had provided the main drive for the commercialisation of leisure, and all interviewed were positive about the impact of CCT upon the management of public leisure facilities. Assistant DSO Manager Two approved of what had happened to the leisure industry because of CCT, claiming that:
it's actually concentrated the minds of local government managers, certainly those that I've come across. They are a good deal more disciplined in looking at the way that they manage the business. There isn't this limitless pot of money anymore, when having to make a rate of return you have to consider some real business principles.

This was reiterated by the DSO Manager who also felt that:

CCT has made you accountable, which we should always have been, or more accountable to people anyway. I think CCT in general has worked in line with quality.

The role of CCT in promoting the use of quality programmes was discussed by Assistant DSO Manager Two who felt that the revenue requirements of CCT contracts required managers to ensure that customers kept using the service:

quality programmes have enabled us to improve the quality of service that we are offering and hopefully customers would see that and they would come back.

There were some concerns about the impact of CCT upon social objectives which led Assistant DSO Manager One to suggest that:

if you look at the social objectives of the council, that's where it has hit the most. We are supposed to take highly subsidised sessions into our mainstream business, but because they will not be profitable ...we're not touching them...things that are not financially viable may have been detrimentally affected.

The influences on quality management within SRM are complex (Figure 7.12) and although it was apparent that those interviewed considered CCT to be an important influence on quality management, as accreditation to ISO9002 was required by the CCT contract, this research suggested that it was leisure professionals that had the greatest influence on the decision to implement quality programmes. A structured approach to the management of service quality was identified, by the professionals employed by SRM, as being a necessary response to consumerism leading to the introduction of the customer care programme in 1990.

The influence of leisure professionals was also apparent in the commercial approach to management that was epitomised by the commercial practices outlined earlier, which had led to the continued use and expansion of quality programmes within SRM. In addition, although the decision to include quality management within the CCT contract was made by politicians, the choice of programme to be followed was made by professionals. It therefore seems reasonable to suggest that despite the impact of consumerism and the legislative requirements to implement ISO9002, quality management has been strongly influenced by professionals who
have used it as a tool of new managerialism, in response to the need to be more competitive.

Figure 7.12: Influences on quality management in SRM

The need to be more competitive was brought about by two factors, CCT and consumerism, which led to changes in the operating context of public leisure facilities, identified as requiring the response of quality management. CCT required ISO9002 in order for the DSO bid to be more competitive and consumerism required managers to respond to increasing competition and increasing expectations.

It was evident that the choice of initial quality programme was perceived to have led to the customer focused approach apparent in the management of the leisure service. The focus on customers inherent in the definitions of quality, alongside the awareness of the need to meet increasing customer expectations all indicated a customer focused approach to the management of public leisure facilities.

The impact of consumerism was also apparent in the decision to pursue TQM in the new council, and suggested the use of quality programmes for political purposes. North Lincs Council chose to implement quality management in order to ensure that council tax payers received quality services so that they were less aggrieved about the rises in taxes that accompanied unification. Although the aim of TQM is to increase efficiency and effectiveness, the council's purpose for it is political - to decrease pressure on politicians by justifying increases in taxes. The political nature of quality management within the new council was also evident in the choice of a new quality programme to pursue in an attempt to bring about cohesion in the new services.
The use of quality management as a political tool also indicated an awareness of the value of this in bringing about the change in culture required to be competitive. This was discussed by those interviewed and suggested that not only was quality management a tool of new managerialism, it had been used to promote this culture, as indicated by the use of TQM within the new authority.

7.8 CONCLUSIONS

The detailed analysis undertaken through the case study research indicated that the decision to implement quality programmes was influenced by a range of factors. These influences for change, some present within the local authorities themselves and others within the external environment, had brought about an awareness of the need for the introduction of quality programmes in the management of local authority leisure facilities. Although the impact of these factors differed in each local authority, several common themes emerged and these will be considered in detail in the following chapter.
CHAPTER EIGHT: ISSUES OF INFLUENCE

The results of the individual case studies showed that the local authorities under review were managing their facilities in a commercial manner and that quality management and quality programmes were perceived as integral to their approach to management. By undertaking a cross case analysis a number of key themes can be identified that have emerged from the research. This chapter considers the rationale for the introduction of quality programmes by investigating the relative importance of the common issues which have emerged from the second phase of the research.

8.1 CUSTOMER EXPECTATIONS AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CUSTOMER FOCUS

The first issue to be considered is the impact of consumerism, in the form of customer expectations, upon the local authorities under study. The findings of the research indicate that consumerism had led to the development of the quality movement within local authority leisure facilities. Increasing customer expectations, brought about by the demand for high quality services, were considered to be an important influence on the introduction of quality management within the leisure services under study.

The impact of consumerism within local leisure facilities had been expressed through increasing expectations of the range and quality of the leisure services available to customers of local authority managers. All interviewees identified and discussed this increase in expectations, attributing it to a greater awareness of leisure opportunities and an increasingly discerning and informed public. This was thought to have resulted in a culture change among customers of local authority leisure facilities, manifested in an expectation of high service quality, as described by the Assistant Contracts Manager of Calderdale Council:

all customers are interested in is customer service, therefore we have had to be proactive to what customers want.

Facility Manager Four of Erewash Borough Council and the Principle Officer - East of Leisure Newcastle also discussed how customers have come to expect good service as a matter of course, reiterated by Facility Manager Three of Golden Gates Leisure who noted how:

the public are going to go where they get the best all round leisure experience and it becomes like a rolling stone - the more they get, the more they want.

This was considered to be a marked shift from the historical acceptance of poor service quality, particularly of that offered by local authorities, to a situation where
customers were not only happy to complain about poor service, but expected a rapid resolution of problems. This was noted by the Assistant Contracts Manager of Calderdale Council who felt that:

if they \textit{(customers)} don't get it right then they are prepared to complain. The old British reserve of not complaining about this sort of thing has gone.... If things go wrong they expect action to be taken or there will be claims coming in.

This culture change was thought to be the consequence of consumer affairs programmes and improvements in quality offered by the commercial sector and other competitors. Customer Charters - a manifestation of consumerism - were also felt to have raised people's awareness of what they are entitled to as customers, leading them to expect good quality as a matter of right.

There was agreement that customers were justified in their expectation of good quality services from public leisure facilities. Assistant DSO Manager Two of SRM felt that:

quite rightly people want more for their money. I want better services for my money in the things I do. If you don't sharpen your focus, you're not going to get people through the door.

This was supported by the Operations Manager of Golden Gates Leisure who noted that:

they \textit{(customers)} complain more than they did and quite rightly so. If things are not right then they should be complaining.

It was also agreed that this level of expectation was likely to continue as respondents felt that there was little reason for customers to lower their expectations:

we are never going to go back to the good old Brits who never complain any more. People are going to complain more, they are going to expect more and rightly.

\textit{(Assistant DSO Manager Two, SRM)}

Those interviewed in Calderdale Council felt that quality had become an everyday concept within society, while managers in KLWN felt that these higher expectations were indicative of the general culture of expectations of 'good services' within the country. This was recognised by both Erewash and Warrington Borough Councils who had documented a council-wide commitment to meeting changing customer expectations.

The main response to increasing customer expectations had been the development of a customer focused approach to management and all of the local authorities included in the second phase of the research had customer care programmes which had been introduced in the last decade. These enabled consultation with
customers, the assessment of services and problem identification and resolution. In five of the authorities these initiatives predated the introduction of the local authorities' externally awarded programmes, suggesting that customer care was a precursor to the concern with ongoing quality management. Calderdale Council stands apart from the other five leisure departments in that their formal customer care initiatives followed as a result of the introduction of ISO9002. Those interviewed in this local authority felt, however, that although their concern with customer care was comparatively late, the department was now customer focused and orientated.

The customer focus of these leisure professionals was evidenced by the definitions of quality offered by those interviewed. These were customer oriented rather than quality programme driven. There was an universal emphasis on the customer as the focal point for defining quality and all of those interviewed defined quality in terms of customers, outlining the need to meet customer expectations and provide services that customers want. This emphasis on the customer was reinforced in some of the strategic documentation produced by these local authorities such as the Business Plan of Leisure Newcastle and the mission statement for SRM.

It was therefore apparent that 'the customer' was the starting point for the definition of quality within these local authorities. The authorities differed however, in the aspects of management each emphasised within their concept of quality. Two, Calderdale Council and SRM, put the emphasis on delivering services of high standards, consistently, reflecting the emphasis of ISO9002. This appeared to reflect the influence of ISO9002, which both had been required to implement; this programme was currently the main formal quality programme of Calderdale and had been previously at SRM. The influence of the key characteristics of the programme were to be expected, but had been tempered by a customer focus.

In two other authorities, Erewash Bough Council and King's Lynn and West Norfolk, quality was defined in terms of what was necessary to get customers to make repeat visits, providing further evidence of the commercial nature of local authority leisure facility management discussed previously. This commercialism was also evident in the definitions offered by Facility Manager Two and the Quality Management Officer of Leisure Newcastle who defined quality in terms of what could be achieved within resource constraints. The need for commercial reality was also incorporated into the mission statements of SRM and Warrington Borough Council.
At Golden Gates Leisure the key factor was that service quality needed to exceed customer expectations. The appropriateness of this as a guide for service quality given the current financial situation in which local authorities operate is dubious and indeed difficult to justify; the focus on exceeding expectations may, however, be a semantic difference used to motivate staff to go beyond normal service. User satisfaction with the service was high (Charter Mark Board 1995) and therefore this definition appears to have been effective as a guide for quality operations.

The definitions offered in each case study therefore vary, but all are based on a customer focused approach to service quality and imply a commercial management culture. They highlight the impact of consumerism upon local authority leisure facilities and are an indication of the presence of the public service orientation within these leisure facilities (Table 8.1). More importantly, however, these definitions provide evidence of the overwhelming priority now given to paying customers in many public leisure facilities. It was only in SRM that interviewees discussed a broader range of customer groups for public leisure facilities. Here, the DSO Manager outlined three different groups that could be considered customers of leisure facilities - the client, the paying customer and elected members - and was supported by Assistant DSO Manager Two who felt that:

there is a big issue about who is our customer, is it the client or is it the customer?

Even these interviewees agreed, however, that priority needed to be given to paying customers as revenue generation was paramount within the service. It is therefore apparent that although public leisure facilities operate within a political context traditionally governed in principle by social objectives, for these local authority leisure professionals the need to generate customers and an income base meant that the customer that pays to use the service was the focus of their operations.

The impact of customers upon local authority leisure facilities was summed up by the Contracts Manager of Calderdale Council who felt that consumerism had:

certainly made management realise how important public opinion is in terms of shaping the programme for the future.

This was supported by the Head of Leisure and Tourism of King's Lynn and West Norfolk who noted:

the last couple of years have seen a veritable explosion in the ways in which we focus on our customers. We respond to them and get their views and the number of channels of communication is increasing.

The point was reiterated by managers within SRM, who felt that as a result of increasing customer expectations, customer care had become a strategic priority.
Table 8.1: Authorities' use of the approaches of the public service orientation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Authority</th>
<th>Use of customer surveys</th>
<th>Increase in information</th>
<th>Use of subjective performance indicators</th>
<th>Style influenced by excellence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>King's Lynn and West</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Customer contract with service standards</td>
<td>Sport and Recreation Strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Norfolk Borough Council</strong></td>
<td>2500 customer comments</td>
<td>Publicised performance standards</td>
<td>Measures of effectiveness from customer cards</td>
<td>Performance indicators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>cards per annum</td>
<td>Service leaflets</td>
<td></td>
<td>Appraisal system</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sports Forums</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Facility leaflets</td>
<td>Performance indicators</td>
<td>PRP scheme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>User and non-user surveys</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Customer contract</td>
<td>Quality management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Golden Gates Leisure</strong></td>
<td>1000 customer comments</td>
<td>Publicised performance standards</td>
<td>Customer contract with service standards</td>
<td>Service development plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>cards per annum</td>
<td>Service leaflets</td>
<td>Performance indicators</td>
<td>Performance indicators</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>'Are you being served'</td>
<td>Facility leaflets</td>
<td>Quality management</td>
<td>Quality management</td>
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<td>User surveys</td>
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<td><strong>Erewash Borough Council</strong></td>
<td>Complaints and suggestions scheme</td>
<td>Service leaflets</td>
<td>Agreed service standards</td>
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<td><strong>Leisure Newcastle</strong></td>
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<td>Measurement of customer complaints</td>
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<td>'Compliments, Suggestions and Complaints' Scheme</td>
<td>Publicised performance standards</td>
<td>Quality is a key result area</td>
<td>Quality management</td>
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<td>Focus groups</td>
<td>Service leaflets</td>
<td>Measurement of customer complaints</td>
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<td><strong>Calderdale Council</strong></td>
<td>Customer comments cards</td>
<td>Publicised performance standards</td>
<td>Customer contract with service standards</td>
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<td>Customer contract</td>
<td>Quality management</td>
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<td><strong>SRM</strong></td>
<td>Customer comments scheme</td>
<td>Publicised performance standards</td>
<td>Has measures of effectiveness</td>
<td>Strategic planning</td>
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<td>Service leaflets</td>
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</table>
It was apparent that the case study authorities were proactive in their management of customer satisfaction. Their ongoing communication and consultation with customers was described by Facility Manager Two of Leisure Newcastle as:

one of the best tools [for managing quality] around.

In addition, all 6 local authorities carried out user surveys and ran customer forums. King’s Lynn and West Norfolk was required by the CCT contract to achieve 2500 customer comment cards per year and Golden Gates Leisure, 1000. Facility Manager One of Calderdale Council described their customer care procedures as:

the most useful method of communication as it ensures an answer to customers.

The customer care practices outlined above had been an important tool for responding to increasing customer expectations. Indeed, Golden Gates Leisure attributed their use of quality programmes directly to consumerism and customer expectations. The decision to seek the Charter Mark was indicative of the perceived importance of the increase in customer expectations within this local authority. All of the case study authorities had adopted the principles of the public service orientation which sets ‘service for the public’ as the key value for the local authority. Reflecting the principles of the commercial sector’s ‘excellence’ movement, the local authorities under study were close to their customers and provided services that customer research showed were valued. Non-using members of the public were, however, given little or no priority.

The cross-case analysis indicates that consumerism had been a key influence on the development of a customer focus among those interviewed, promoting a consideration of the quality of the service they delivered. Once commitment to good quality services was established, consideration of the management techniques available to bring this about was required. It would therefore appear that a consciousness of the rise of consumerism had been a major influence in laying the foundations for quality management within the case study local authority leisure services.

8.2 THE IMPACT OF LEGISLATION

The second issue to emerge was the influence of legislation on the introduction of quality management. While it has been seen previously that local government was subject to a wide range of fundamental legislation in the past two decades, the research shows that of all legislation since the early 1980s, it is Compulsory Competitive Tendering that was considered to have had the greatest influence on the decision to implement quality programmes within public leisure facilities. The
changes brought about by the introduction of CCT were considered by those interviewed to be particularly far reaching and diverse. CCT led to a complete review of services in Erewash, King's Lynn and West Norfolk and SRM, and to changes in management practices across all 6 case studies. All respondents felt that they had made financial savings as a result of CCT, which were seen as the result of increased efficiencies in the operation of the service which were evidenced by the good financial performance of the case study authorities. Improvements to marketing and market techniques were also reported, as was a general increase in management accountability. All of these were felt to have come about because of Compulsory Competitive Tendering.

In terms of quality management, Compulsory Competitive Tendering had led directly to the use of quality programmes within all of the local authority leisure facilities in the second phase of the research. The quality process was initiated in Calderdale Council as a result of the CCT requirement to obtain ISO9002 which subsequently led to the development of a formal customer care policy. Erewash Borough Council, Leisure Newcastle and SRM were also required to obtain ISO9002 as a result of CCT, although quality management had already commenced within these authorities prior to this requirement. Quality programmes were also included in the second round of management contracts of King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council.

Quality programmes had been included in CCT contracts for three reasons. Calderdale Council included ISO9002 in its contract to ensure that monitoring and quality assurance were carried out should the contract be won by an outside contractor. In addition, some of the case study authorities included ISO9002 in the contract specification, as a deterrent to private sector competition. This was outlined by one Facility Manager who said:

in all honesty the system was packaged to discourage private business from actually competing because it is so expensive to do it.

It has also been suggested that quality programmes could be used to make in-house bids more competitive and this was the primary reason for the inclusion of quality programmes within CCT specifications in Erewash Borough Council, Leisure Newcastle and SRM. All three included ISO9002 in the contract specification in order to make the DSO bid more competitive. In these cases, the DSO ensured that it was either accredited or near accreditation of ISO9002 before the first round of contracts were put out to tender.
Although King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council did not include a quality programme in its first round of contracts, it did in the second, increasing the importance of quality management within its CCT process. This increase in emphasis on quality management in the second round of tendering also occurred in Calderdale Council, Erewash Borough Council, Leisure Newcastle and SRM, where the second round of tendering required adherence to the principles of a greater number of quality programmes and quality techniques.

The second round of Compulsory Competitive Tendering had had an additional facilitatory effect upon quality management as all of the local authorities, bar Warrington, included a quality management component in the assessment of CCT bids. Warrington had an extension to their CCT programme as a result of unification, but had intended to include a quality assessment component in their second round of tendering. This assessment of quality ranged from an expressed weighting of 50% quality management and 50% price in Erewash, to the inclusion of expressed indicators of quality management to be met in North Lincolnshire Council.

There was an additional means of managing service quality within these local authorities and this was via the CCT specification. The CCT contracts of Calderdale, Erewash and King's Lynn and West Norfolk contained standards of performance which had to be met. In addition, Erewash Borough Council was required to carry out bi-monthly customer audits and operated at 99% compliance rate, Leisure Newcastle at 100%. The role of the CCT contracts in ensuring quality was considered so important by Facility Manager Three of Erewash Borough Council that he wished his dual-use centre to be managed by a contract in order to establish acceptable standards of performance.

It is therefore evident from the research that CCT had a direct and facilitatory impact on the use of quality programmes and quality management. The impact of other legislation was, however, not so obvious and although the requirement to collect customer views and provide information on services became mandatory for local authorities as a result of the Citizen's Charter, those interviewed were not convinced of the role of the Charter in bringing about quality management within public leisure services. Whilst political analysts suggest that local authorities have also been influenced by an extensive programme of further legislation, the experience of local authority leisure professionals was that the other legislative initiatives were almost wholly overshadowed by the immediacy and extent of the impact of CCT legislation.
Interviewees in Calderdale Council, SRM and Leisure Newcastle felt that the Charter had had no impact on the quality of their leisure facilities, even though it had formed the basis of the customer comment scheme introduced in Calderdale Council. Those interviewed in Erewash Borough Council felt that it had had a negligible impact. Interviewees in King's Lynn and West Norfolk and Golden Gates Leisure did feel that the Citizen's Charter had a positive effect upon service quality, unsurprising as both of these authorities had been awarded a Charter Mark. Those interviewed in King's Lynn felt that they had, however, moved beyond the requirements of the Charter Mark, considered to be evidenced by the ease with which they were re-awarded the Charter Mark in 1996.

Given that the Citizen’s Charter was introduced in order to pull together the central government approach to quality, its lack of influence upon quality management within these local authorities was somewhat unexpected. The discussions of those who were managing the facilities of Erewash, Newcastle and North Linca. Councils provided an answer to this as they felt that their facilities were meeting the requirements of the Citizen’s Charter prior to its introduction. This is supported by the fact that the customer care procedures that were in place within these local authorities predated the 1991 Charter. The feeling that quality management in King’s Lynn and West Norfolk had moved beyond the requirements of the Charter and the claims of the ease of obtaining the Charter Mark made by Golden Gates Leisure leads to the conclusion that at least some local authorities were already actively addressing the quality of their services prior to 1991 and had been relatively unaffected by the introduction of the Citizen’s Charter. In this sense the Citizen’s Charter appears to have reflected rather than stimulated a change already taking place.

The presence of the public service orientation within the local authorities under study has already been discussed, and the requirements of the Citizen’s Charter are incorporated into the PSO approach. Consequently, it is understandable that managers within these local authorities had seen little change in their management practices as a result of the Citizen’s Charter. The potential impact of the Charter upon organisations and departments without a customer focus was, however, discussed by the officers employed by Newcastle City Council who felt that the Citizen’s Charter had forced such departments to start to consider their customers. Thus, although the impact of the Citizen’s Charter upon quality management within the case authorities’ leisure facilities had been minimal, it seems reasonable to suggest that this legislation is likely to have an impact on the service quality of those departments and local authorities who were not concerned with quality prior to the introduction of the Charter.
The impact of the Citizen’s Charter upon quality management in the above local authority leisure services had been minimal; CCT, however, had had a prominent impact upon the ongoing use quality programmes in the management of public leisure facilities. This research therefore provides evidence that local authority leisure professionals' decision to use quality programmes had been heavily affected by legislation. The use of quality management was not, however, a requirement of the legislation; rather it was seen as an appropriate response by the local authorities themselves. It had been leisure professionals themselves who had judged quality programmes to be appropriate mechanisms to meet the demands and combat the threats of CCT.

8.3 THE INFLUENCE OF LEISURE PROFESSIONALS UPON QUALITY MANAGEMENT

In all of the authorities, the decision to implement quality management was made by the leisure professionals and appeared to reflect the influence of current discourses within the public sector leisure profession, with key individuals often playing a significant role. In Leisure Newcastle, the influence of the previous General Manager upon quality management led him to be described as a 'quality disciple', while those interviewed in Golden Gates Leisure outlined how the Operations Manager had driven quality management within their organisation; a similar role was attributed to the Leisure Services Manager of Kings Lynn and West Norfolk.

Given the political context within which leisure facilities operate it could have been expected that the decision to implement quality programmes would be more strongly influenced by politicians. With the exception of Erewash Borough Council this was, however, not perceived to be the case. Indeed, the relationship between leisure professionals and councillors in all authorities was described as officer-led, even in Erewash Borough Council where the initial decision to pursue ISO9002 was made by the Chairman of the Leisure Committee. The impact of politicians upon the management of the leisure services was felt to be dependent on firstly, who was on the committee and secondly, the knowledge that the politicians had of the service. Many of those interviewed highlighted the ease with which the decision to pursue quality management had been accepted by the Leisure Committee and in the case of Calderdale Council, it was considered so easy to get approval for adopting ISO9002 that it was 'demotivating'.

In addition, the research suggests that all of the leisure services under study had been the forerunner for quality management within their local authorities. Although it was clear that all of the local authorities included in the second phase of the
research were now considering quality management to be an issue, all of those interviewed noted how leisure services had led the quality approach. The DSO Manager of SRM noted how he thought that quality was one of the things talked about but not done a lot about. I think we are more aware of quality as we are a commercial unit and the client side or Treasurers that don’t come into very much contact with the general public haven’t seen the advantages of it.

This was supported somewhat more emphatically by Assistant DSO Manager One of the same authority who felt:

the global perspective is not very good. It was driven by CCT for us and because it has affected the contracting side they have taken it on board. All of the ‘fat cats’ at central offices feel it isn’t part of their remit and they don’t have a need for it. This will change when they come under CCT and they are forced to become more efficient.

This was also the feeling of professionals in Leisure Newcastle which was summarised by the Quality Management Officer who said:

there has been no corporate approach to it...no commitment and no active leadership.

From this it is apparent that the local authority approach to quality had not been a major influence on the introduction of quality programmes within these public leisure facilities. The research therefore suggested that it was local authority leisure professionals themselves who had been instrumental in introducing quality management to their departments. The introduction of CCT had been a critical stimulus of this action on their part.

8.4 INCREASING MARKET COMPETITION

Increasing competition was thought to be influential on the introduction of quality management within local leisure facilities. Respondents in Erewash Borough Council and Leisure Newcastle identified how competition had increased both within the UK and abroad which had given customers a far greater choice of leisure provider. Managers in all authorities discussed how this greater choice had led to changes in management style and technique as public leisure managers fought to compete for customers. This was supported by the Head of Leisure and Tourism in King’s Lynn and West Norfolk, who discussed the innovative management practices that had become prevalent within local authority leisure facilities as a result of market competition. Facility Manager One of the same authority noted:

the old ways of being able to assume that we were the main provider to our customer is no longer valid. We have to assume that people enjoy their visits or they won’t come to us again.
One way of competing successfully was through the use of quality programmes as discussed by the Assistant Contracts Manager of Calderdale Council, who suggested that increasing competition for leisure customers had facilitated the quality approach to be found in the council. This was supported by those interviewed in Golden Gates Leisure and Erewash Borough Council, who argued that the survival of public leisure facilities depended on their ability to compete successfully. This sentiment was echoed by almost all of the professionals interviewed. The particular role of quality management in competing for customers was summed up by the Principle Officer - East of Leisure Newcastle who said:

we have had to make sure we have kept customers coming through the door. It was vital that we retained customers as well as attracting new ones and quality is the principle focus in retaining customers.

The element of customer choice, that differentiates leisure from many other public services, required managers to compete with other claims for the discretionary income in peoples pockets. Facility Manager One of Golden Gates Leisure highlighted this by saying:

they (customers) have the choice, if they don't like you then they will go down the road to someone else. If we do a publicity campaign and you get somebody new, it isn't somebody new to fitness, it is just somebody who has moved from somewhere else.

In addition, the revenue generating capacity of leisure means that the ability to compete successfully with alternative providers in the commercial, voluntary and public sectors was paramount in order to assist financially constrained local authorities. As a result, public leisure managers had to become competitive in the services they provided. This need to be competitive was considered to have been a major influence on the use of quality programmes. It had also been significant in another way - as a stimulus to the development of new managerialism within the respondent local authorities.

8.5 THE RISE OF NEW MANAGERIALISM

The 'commercial' approach to management that is seen as characteristic of new managerialism was frequently described as the main influence on the ongoing use of quality management. Many of those interviewed felt that quality programmes were an indication of the commercial approach to leisure that was prevalent within local authorities brought about by the need to be competitive in the delivery of their services. The role of quality management within a commercial management approach was indicated by the Head of Leisure and Tourism in King's Lynn and West Norfolk who commented:
If you can point out to me one commercial company that has made a success by reducing the quality of their services I'd be very surprised. We, more than any other local authority service, have had to compete with commercial services, so [quality] will be an ongoing process.

The need to be competitive was thought to have been brought about by the issues discussed above: increasing customer expectations and increasing market competition meant that public leisure managers had to become competitive in their operations in order to satisfy, attract and maintain customers. CCT had required leisure managers to compete, not only for contracts, but also for customers in order to maintain market share to meet the revenue requirements of the contract. In addition, for many of those interviewed competitiveness had been essential in order to ensure the survival of their public leisure facilities, a point stressed by Facility Manager Three of Leisure Newcastle:

we have to be maximising our resources to survive. If we hadn't done this it is unlikely that leisure services would still be provided. It's difficult to justify spending money on something that is losing money.

The techniques of new managerialism were clearly present within the local authorities included as case studies in the research (Table 8.2). This commercial approach is also evident when considering how quality was managed and quality programmes implemented. A coherent approach to the management of service quality had been adopted by all of the case study authorities. This was characterised by the definition of clear objectives for quality, the establishment of formal programmes and procedures for quality management, and the use of a structured implementation process.

The most frequent way of managing quality within these local authority leisure facilities was through the use of a combination of externally accredited quality programmes and in-house initiatives. All of the case study authorities, with the exception of Golden Gates Leisure, were using ISO9002 to assist with the management of the quality of the service offered to customers. The findings from the first phase of the research that indicated that ISO9002 was being used for standardisation and consistency, were confirmed in the case studies. In Erewash Borough Council, ISO9002 had been introduced to:

try and put some procedures into a pattern, into some sort of professional level that we could all understand

(Facility Manager Two)
Table 8.2: The characteristics of New Managerialism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Management techniques</th>
<th>Standards and measures of performance</th>
<th>Emphasis on output controls</th>
<th>Open to competition</th>
<th>Stress on disciplined resource use</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Calderdale Council</td>
<td>Planning and Marketing</td>
<td>Customer contract with user information</td>
<td>ISO9002 to assure quality</td>
<td>Won CCT contracts</td>
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<td>Quality management PRP scheme</td>
<td>Financial PI's</td>
<td>Monthly income and expenditure analysis</td>
<td>Staff training</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Financial management Well qualified staff</td>
<td>Standards associated with quality programme</td>
<td>Investors in People</td>
<td>Staff training</td>
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<tr>
<td>SRM</td>
<td>Planning and Marketing</td>
<td>Measures of effectiveness Financial PI's Standards associated with quality programme</td>
<td>ISO9002 to assure quality Monthly income and expenditure analysis Investors in People Staff training</td>
<td>Won CCT contracts</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Quality management Staff review scheme Well qualified staff</td>
<td>Customer contract with service standards</td>
<td>ISO9002 to assure quality Monthly income and expenditure analysis</td>
<td>Staff training</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Planning Quality management Appraisal Scheme PRP scheme Well qualified staff</td>
<td>Measures of effectiveness Financial PI's Standards associated with quality programme</td>
<td>ISO9002 to assure quality Monthly income and expenditure analysis</td>
<td>Staff training</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Development plans Quality management Well qualified staff</td>
<td>Customer contract with service standards Financial PI's</td>
<td>ISO9002 to assure quality Monthly income and expenditure analysis</td>
<td>Staff training</td>
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<tr>
<td>King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council</td>
<td>Planning Quality management PRP scheme Well qualified staff</td>
<td>Measures of effectiveness Financial PI's Standards associated with quality programme</td>
<td>ISO9002 to assure quality Monthly income and expenditure analysis</td>
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<td>Development plans Quality management Well qualified staff</td>
<td>Customer contract with service standards Financial PI's</td>
<td>ISO9002 to assure quality Monthly income and expenditure analysis</td>
<td>Staff training</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Planning Employee reviews PRP scheme Quality management Well qualified staff</td>
<td>Financial PI's Standards associated with quality programme</td>
<td>ISO9002 to assure quality Monthly income and expenditure analysis</td>
<td>Staff training</td>
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<tr>
<td>Golden Gates Leisure Co-operative</td>
<td>Planning Quality management Well qualified staff</td>
<td>Financial PI's Standards associated with quality programme</td>
<td>ISO9002 to assure quality Monthly income and expenditure analysis</td>
<td>Staff training</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Planning Employee reviews PRP scheme Quality management Well qualified staff</td>
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<td>Erewash Borough Council</td>
<td>Planning Performance indicators Staff surveys Quality management Well qualified staff</td>
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<td>ISO9002 to assure quality Monthly income and expenditure analysis</td>
<td>Staff training</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leisure Newcastle</td>
<td>Planning Performance indicators Staff surveys Quality management Well qualified staff</td>
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<td>ISO9002 to assure quality Monthly income and expenditure analysis</td>
<td>Staff training</td>
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and in SRM to:

get everyone thinking along the same lines, people have clear guidelines as to what is expected. Things that people have assumed in the past have now been written down.

(Quality Manager)

ISO9002 was particularly valued as a quality programme for its strength in identifying operations, specifying the service and managing the service quality characteristics of reliability, competence, accessibility, security and tangibles. Those in Erewash Borough Council felt it brought about a corporate approach to management, while Leisure Newcastle used ISO9002 as part of a TQM approach. Calderdale Council felt that it was invaluable as an induction and training tool, ensuring that new staff were effective rapidly.

The case studies showed that interviewees were not uncritical of ISO9002, but also that they felt they had addressed the inherent weakness of this programme. This had been done by setting standards in consultation with customers, or at a level that was known to be acceptable, as outlined by Assistant DSO Manager Two of SRM:

we felt that what we were doing in terms of running the business before accreditation was the right way of doing things and was best practice. So we used the existing standards.

Secondly, ISO9002 had not been used in isolation, as the case study authorities who were using ISO9002 ensured that they also had customer care procedures in place. This meant that the bureaucratic nature of ISO9002 was reduced by the requirements of other quality programmes. King's Lynn and West Norfolk had taken this one step further and incorporated the principles of the Charter Mark into ISO9002 in order to incorporate the customer perspective which it was felt to be lacking. The research also showed that liP was considered to be a complement to ISO9002 with Calderdale Council, Erewash, King's Lynn and West Norfolk and SRM having obtained liP to assist with the staff aspects of service quality; Leisure Newcastle was in the process of obtaining accreditation of liP.

Golden Gates Leisure was somewhat different in its approach to the management of service quality. It had been determined that a customer focus would give strategic direction to the operations of the leisure service and as a consequence this local authority had chosen to use the requirements of the Charter Mark to manage the quality of their leisure facilities. Although this quality programme does not contain the procedural approach to operation required by ISO9002, the award of the Charter Mark indicated that the operations of the leisure service were being managed in an effective manner, a point reinforced by the report from the Charter
Mark Panel (CMP, 1995). This suggests that this leisure service had ensured effective procedures without using the guidance of a quality programme specifically designed to do so.

Those local authorities included in the second phase of the research were clearly committed to the holistic management of the characteristics of service quality as indicated by the complementary nature of the programmes used. At the time of the research, Leisure Newcastle were using ISO9002 and customer care initiatives as a form of TQM, to which they were in the process of adding Investors in People. Calderdale Council and Erewash Council were accredited to iIP and ISO9002 and were using customer care initiatives to ensure the management of all aspects of the quality evaluation criteria. Golden Gates Leisure had managed quality by the use of appropriate operational procedures certified by the award of the Charter Mark and the customer focus of this leisure service was evident. SRM had recently embarked upon a TQM programme, the principles of which indicated a holistic approach to management. The holistic approach was, however, particularly evident in King’s Lynn and West Norfolk which had achieved accreditation of a number of quality programmes which had been sought to ensure all aspects of quality management were addressed.

The pursuit of multiple forms of formal quality accreditations did not go uncriticised. The plethora of programmes used in King’s Lynn and West Norfolk was termed ‘initiativitis’ by the Leisure Services Manager who considered it a further dimension of the competitive nature of contemporary local authority leisure facilities management, particularly within his authority. Facility Manager Two felt that the department approach to quality was competitive and ‘badge seeking’, a sentiment also echoed by the Leisure Services Manager who discussed how the department had recently committed to the principles of the British Quality Foundation, thus doing away with the need for external accreditation. Facility Manager One of Calderdale Council also questioned some of the reasons for the perceived need for externally accredited quality programmes, saying that it:

had become fashionable for an organisation to achieve a trophy for quality.

The ‘badge hunting’ associated with externally assessed quality programmes was also considered by Facility Manager One of King’s Lynn and West Norfolk who justified this competitive approach to quality management by saying that quality programmes allowed public leisure managers to demonstrate that they were as effective in the management of their facilities as commercial managers. In contrast, others interviewed felt that the ‘badge hunting culture’ that accompanied quality
programmes within public leisure services was short-lived. The Operations Manager of Golden Gates Leisure felt that the badge collecting philosophy would go, while Assistant DSO Manager One of SRM commented that:

the badges syndrome that we've been through, the ticks in the boxes will go.

All felt that this approach would be replaced by a long term, organisational commitment to quality management which was perceived to be necessary in order to compete for customers.

As suggested earlier, the process of implementing quality programmes that was followed in the local authorities also indicated a structured approach to management, typical of commercial organisations. There was a careful consideration of the choice of quality initiative in King's Lynn and West Norfolk, Leisure Newcastle, Golden Gates Leisure and SRM. The programmes were developed in consultation with staff and associated training was carried out by all of the local authorities. Managers within SRM felt that their initial communication of the benefits of ISO9002 had not been adequate, however, through ongoing consultation the value of the programme had been realised by staff. This was also the case in Calderdale Council and the lessons learned from the implementation of their first accredited quality programme were utilised in the introduction of their second quality programmes within both local authorities. Finally, all authorities carried out ongoing monitoring and evaluation of their programmes which led to changes in focus in King's Lynn and West Norfolk, SRM and Calderdale Council.

From this it was clear that the public leisure professionals within the local authorities under study had adopted an approach to quality management that required the use of the techniques commonly associated with new managerialism and that this management culture was prevalent within these public leisure services. Interviewees were very conscious that this was the current character of local government leisure managers and suggested three possible explanations for the changes in historical management style that the presence of new managerialism suggested.

Firstly, there was strong support for the argument that new managerialism was a result of the increasing professionalism of the industry. This professionalism was thought to have been promoted by two factors. The first of these was the aforementioned need to be competitive which was felt by those interviewed to have required a more professional approach, lending weight to the argument presented above which suggested that the need to be competitive led to an increase in commercial or professional management practice. As outlined in the previous
chapter the word commercial and professional were used interchangeably by nearly all interviewed in the second phase of the research, indicating a perception among public leisure senior managers, that 'commercialism' was a necessary orientation for the competent professional. The influence of the commercial sector was highlighted by the comments of the Quality Management Officer of Leisure Newcastle who outlined how:

it was necessary to look at the methods used in the private sector to see how they benchmarked the quality of customer service areas.

The second factor thought to have promoted professionalism within the industry was the people employed in the industry and there was agreement that the individuals employed within the industry had become adaptable, flexible and appropriately trained in commercial management techniques. The Business Support Manager of Erewash Borough Council felt that the industry had become more professional as those employed within the industry were becoming more highly qualified. This was also highlighted by Facility Manager Three of Golden Gates Leisure who felt:

It's definitely more professional...it's more professional because leisure managers now have qualifications. I think this is essential because of the environment that we work in and the competition. You can't just poodle along any more, you've got to fight for your business. The more skills you've got, the better equipped you are really.

In an industry as small as public leisure this was felt to have led to a self-perpetuating culture of commercial management. The size of the public leisure industry is an important factor when considering the spread of new managerialism and commercial management techniques within the industry. As a small industry there is a relatively rapid spread of information on operating techniques via the network of public leisure management; an example of this had occurred in the case studies with Golden Gates Leisure using the techniques originally implemented in King's Lynn and West Norfolk in order to win their Charter Mark. This sharing of techniques was considered by the Leisure Services Manager of King's Lynn and West Norfolk who discussed how:

all you need is one or two authorities to start off on the quality circle and come up with one or two good ideas. It's only a small industry so other people pick them up and think 'that's a good idea and we'll do it' and the quality of service becomes self generating.

The professional bodies had facilitated this by disseminating information on best practice to their members, the majority of which are employed in the public sector. Thus, the spread of professionalism and commercial management techniques within the industry had been fluid.
Secondly, CCT was perceived to have been an important influence on the introduction and expansion of the culture and techniques of new managerialism and it is pertinent to note that CCT was considered to have led to the employment of individuals with the characteristics necessary for management within the current leisure context. Local authority employees who were resistant to the changes in culture needed to meet successfully the requirements of CCT were said to have moved on, leaving a workforce that was described by many of those interviewed as more motivated and adaptable. The Business Support Manager of Erewash Borough Council noted that managers had become more flexible and innovative in order to survive as a result of CCT, while the Leisure Services Manager of King's Lynn and West Norfolk Borough Council said:

another result of CCT is that a lot of the older people in leisure went so you've got a fairly young work force now....who don't have any particularly pre-conceived ideas.

This was supported by the Principle Officer - East of Leisure Newcastle who felt that some people had found CCT uncomfortable and that:

some people have moved out of it, taken early retirement. Those who didn't fit with the change in culture and the shift in emphasis to providing more of a service.

The Principle Officer - West of Leisure Newcastle commented that he thought:

public sector leisure management is probably the most dedicated and committed area that you will find in local authorities. I think they take a very professional and committed approach to their work and those that don't are found out....I think the old myth of the council worker has been laid to rest well and truly within leisure services.

This was also discussed by Facility Manager One of Golden Gates Leisure who felt that:

everything has changed, everything has changed from attitudes to the way the system is run. We are now a business, we are not just a service, we are far more publicly accountable than we ever were. With the onset of competitive tendering, you had to prove not just that you could exist, you had to prove you could do the job properly.

Interviewees in all six authorities were very clear that CCT had had an impact on new managerialism within leisure facilities by promoting the expansion of professionalism. The role of CCT in providing managers with the opportunity to manage along commercial lines was discussed by all interviewed and Facility Manager Two of Leisure Newcastle felt that CCT had:

led to leisure services becoming more business oriented. We now have to make the best use of our resources and meet performance targets
while the Business Support Manager of Erewash Borough Council added that public leisure managers:

> have always wanted an incentive to manage and this (CCT) gave them the opportunity to be able to demonstrate their skill.

It was felt, without exception, that on the whole CCT had been a good thing for local authority leisure facilities, because it had led to a commercial and competitive approach to leisure provision. CCT had been influential on the development of commercial management in a number of ways. Firstly, in order to meet the contract requirements of increased income and decreased expenditure local authority leisure managers had been forced to become more competitive in order to gain and retain market share. This had led to the adoption and refinement of marketing techniques as discussed by managers of Golden Gates Leisure and to the ‘explosion’ of innovative management practices highlighted by the Head of Leisure and Tourism of King’s Lynn and West Norfolk. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, CCT was thought to have furthered the professionalism of the industry identified and discussed on the previous page and this professionalism led public leisure managers to become aware of the value of commercial management techniques including the ongoing use of quality programmes.

It is clear that CCT was considered to have been a significant and primarily positive influence on the public leisure facilities included in the second phase of the research. Indeed its impact on the commercialisation of the management of these facilities had been so profound for some interviewees that it had led them to consider social objectives to have become unimportant or of secondary importance. This feeling was epitomised in the comments of Facility Manager Three of Leisure Newcastle, the Contracts Manager of Calderdale Council and Facility Manager Three of Golden Gates Leisure. Facility Manager Four of Erewash Borough Council also outlined how social objectives could be a burden to public leisure managers who were operating along commercial lines, a sentiment implied in the concerns expressed by managers within Leisure Newcastle when discussing the impact of the change in DSO focus towards social priorities.

It was obvious from the discussions of many of those interviewed that these public leisure facilities were considered to be operating along similar lines to commercial organisations. It was, however, felt by some that despite the requirements of CCT, local authority leisure facilities would never be able to become completely commercial in their operations as a result of the nature of local authorities themselves. Managers in Calderdale Council discussed how elected members had prevented leisure professionals from managing as freely as was the ‘intention of the
legislation'. The Business Support Manager of Erewash Borough Council and the Principle Officer - East of Leisure Newcastle also felt that although public leisure facilities were clearly being managed along more commercial lines, this commercial management had been constrained by the structure and objectives of the local authority as a whole.

The final explanation for the changes in historical management style inferred by the presence of new managerialism was that this has been a result of the use of quality management itself. There is no doubt that the culture of new managerialism within the local authorities under study was initiated by the senior professionals employed within these leisure services and that this had been responsible for the initial use of quality management within these authorities. There was, however, also evidence to suggest that quality management itself had furthered the use of the techniques of new managerialism which had led to the spread of this management culture throughout the leisure services under review. From the earlier discussions of the ways of managing quality within these local authorities it is evident that quality management required the use of clear objectives, communication and well managed operations. As a result, the significance of quality management as a key element underpinning the expansion of the culture of new managerialism within these authorities was apparent. In the current study, quality initiatives had been present in all of these local authorities, bar Calderdale Council, prior to the introduction of CCT, suggesting that quality management provided a basis for the expansion of new managerialism and that CCT gave further impetus to its development.

8.6 Conclusions

This study suggests that consumerism, competition and legislation led to the need for public leisure managers to be competitive in the management of their leisure facilities, which required the use of the techniques of new managerialism. It also suggests that the culture of new managerialism came about primarily because of the senior leisure professionals employed within these local authorities. The need to be competitive was identified by these managers who chose to implement quality programmes as a response. This led to the further development of new managerialism within these authorities, facilitated by the requirements of CCT and quality management itself.

It is apparent that the relationships between the influences for change are complex and that the decision to implement quality management within local authority leisure facilities has not been made on the basis of a single factor for change. Rather it has come about because of the actions and interactions of
professionalism, consumerism, Compulsory Competitive Tendering and market competition. The relative impacts of these and their interrelationships will be discussed in the following chapter.
CHAPTER NINE: THE ANALYSIS OF CHANGE IN LOCAL AUTHORITY LEISURE FACILITIES

This study set out to examine the introduction of quality management into local authority leisure facilities. The study aimed to establish why senior managers in local authority leisure services departments had chosen to use quality programmes in the management of their leisure facilities. The research used Pettigrew's (1987) Model of Strategic Change in organisations as a framework for investigating the study's three objectives which sought to establish:

- the context of change: what senior leisure professionals consider to be the rationale the use of quality and quality programmes in local authority leisure facilities;
- the content of change: how senior leisure professionals conceptualise quality and quality management;
- the process of change: what role these professionals played in the adoption of quality programmes within local authority leisure facilities.

On the basis of a review of the literature on the background to this change in local government leisure service delivery, a two-phase empirical study was conducted to investigate the introduction of quality management, epitomised by the presence of quality programmes. This chapter considers the outcomes of the study and evaluates the effectiveness of the research process adopted in meeting the objectives set.

9.1 FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The study was designed as a two-phase project which both established the extent of use of quality programmes in local authority leisure services and investigated how their introduction had come about. The postal survey implemented as the first phase of the research was designed to identify the scale of usage of quality programmes in UK public leisure facilities and the type of programmes that had been adopted, and to provide initial indications of the reasons for their introduction. The findings of the survey indicated that by 1995, quality programmes had become a feature of local authority leisure facility management in at least a sizeable minority of authorities. Of the 240 respondents (49% response rate), nearly two thirds (65%) were using quality programmes and many (45%) were using more than one. This is equivalent to almost one third (32%) of all authorities.

Five main quality programmes were being used by respondents, with two being particularly dominant. Most of the authorities which were operating a quality programme had obtained registration of Investors in People (60%), while 41% had...
done so for ISO9002. The dominance of these two programmes, together with the Charter Mark (19%), meant that most local authorities who were using quality programmes were using those that were externally accredited. This is supported further by the use of Investors in People and ISO9002 being the most common combination of quality programmes, with 17% of local authorities using this combination to manage service quality.

Internally developed programmes were nonetheless in evidence and 19% of respondents had implemented an internally developed Total Quality Management programme, while 16% of local authorities who had implemented quality programmes were using an in-house programme that focused on customers. TQM was also popular in combination with Investors in People and 13% of local authorities who had implemented Investors in People were also using TQM.

Quality programmes were implemented to improve service quality for customers (63% of respondents using programmes) suggesting that quality programmes had become popular because customer care was important in public leisure facilities. Most respondents, however, gave more than one reason for their use of quality programmes - an early indication of the multiple influences on this decision. Quality programmes were being used not only to improve service quality, but also to increase efficiency (21%), to increase accountability and to improve competitiveness - both reasons given by 10% of local authorities using quality programmes. This suggested that it was the ‘commercial’ characteristics of quality programmes that made them appropriate strategies for local authority leisure managers at this time. The influence of CCT, itself introduced to create a more commercialised culture within local authority leisure facilities, was also cited as a stimulus for introducing programmes, by 22% of respondents who were using quality programmes.

The research showed that characteristics like political control, local authority population, number of facilities and the presence of an independent leisure department had no significant impact on the decision to implement quality programmes within the local authority’s leisure facilities. As a result, the decision to implement quality programmes could not be attributed to any obvious characteristic which meant that the decision to do so had to be investigated in more detail - the function of the second phase of the research.

This phase of the research therefore concluded that at least a large minority of local authority leisure services were using quality management and that the decision to do so had been influenced by consumerism, legislation and a commercial approach to local authority leisure facilities management. The first phase postal survey thus
provided a useful foundation for the more detailed investigative approach to be used in the case study research. It both established the minimum extent of the usage of quality management and provided initial indications of the factors that had influenced their adoption.

In the second phase, six local authorities were selected as in-depth case studies on the basis of their full commitment to quality demonstrated by the use of quality programmes in the majority of their facilities and the registration of accredited quality programmes. The main reasons for introducing quality programmes established in the first phase of the research were investigated in more detail and a high degree of commonality was found across the six selected authorities, with four dominant themes emerging.

Firstly, it was apparent from the research that an awareness of rising consumerism, identified by increasing customer expectations of public leisure facilities had laid the foundations for the emergence of formal quality approaches. Secondly, the impact of consumerism was exacerbated by an increasingly competitive leisure market which resulted in leisure professionals implementing the techniques of new managerialism. This was considered to indicate the increasing professionalism of the industry, identified as a third influence in this phase of the research. Finally, it was apparent that CCT had not only often directly required the use of quality programmes through contract specification, but had accelerated the development of new managerialism within the public leisure industry.

9.2 CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY

In his development of the Model of Strategic Change, Pettigrew (1987) argued that strategic change is shaped by the actions and interactions of context and content factors within the process of implementing change. It was suggested in Chapter one that it was precisely because the model allowed the multitude of factors that had produced the stimulus for the introduction of quality management to be considered, that it was an appropriate conceptual framework for investigating how the quality approach apparent in public leisure management had occurred. The framework was valuable to the current study because it facilitated a consideration of the interactive and iterative nature of the decision to implement change in the form of quality management within public leisure facilities.

This research supported the integrative approach of the Model of Strategic Change. It was clear that the process of introducing quality programmes within public leisure facilities had not been a response to a specific and tightly defined problem,
but had come about as a consequence of a myriad of factors within the public leisure context that had shaped and been shaped by the content and process of introducing quality management. In this respect, the interactive nature of the influences for change incorporated in the model were demonstrated in several ways within this research.

Firstly, the influences within the context of change had worked together to bring about the need for the culture of new managerialism which in turn impacted on the process of introducing quality management as the need for a commercial solution to the context of change made the impact of leisure professionals significant in introducing change. Secondly, it was established that the content of quality - the conceptualisation of quality and quality management was informed and influenced by the operating context. The definitions of quality and the reasons for managing quality were both customer-focused and commercially orientated. In addition, the implementation of quality programmes had encouraged a broader adoption of the techniques of new managerialism. Finally and more importantly, it was apparent that the public leisure managers considered themselves to be professional in their operations and that the content of quality management was perceived to be both an indication and a means of promoting this professionalism.

9.2.1 RESEARCH OBJECTIVE ONE: THE INFLUENCES ON THE USE OF QUALITY AND QUALITY PROGRAMMES IN LOCAL AUTHORITY LEISURE FACILITIES

One of the premises of Pettigrew's (1987) model is that the context of change fundamentally affects the production of change. In Chapter two, influential factors within the operating context of public leisure facilities were identified which, it was suggested, were likely to have affected the decision to use quality programmes in local authority leisure facilities. It was argued that the emergence of a customer focus, legislation and the culture of new managerialism had all led to changes in the management and operation of local authority leisure facilities, resulting in the need for quality management techniques. Both phases of the research provided evidence to support these arguments, although the impact of legislation was only seen as a consequence of CCT. In addition, the second phase of the research identified that market competition had done more than simply promote a customer focus; as suggested in Chapter two, it had directly affected the decision to use quality programmes in the management of local authority leisure facilities.
CHAPTER NINE: THE ANALYSIS OF CHANGE IN LOCAL AUTHORITY LEISURE FACILITIES

CONTEXTUAL INFLUENCES ON THE ADOPTION OF QUALITY PROGRAMMES (1): THE RISE OF A CUSTOMER FOCUS

A number of writers on public services in the 1990s (e.g. Farnham and Horton, 1996; Sanderson, 1992) have argued that the growth of consumerism led to the emergence of a customer orientation within the public sector. This research has provided a range of evidence of this phenomenon in local authority leisure management, supporting these arguments. The evidence emerged in both phases of the study, with the first phase of data collection identifying 62 local authorities that reported to have adopted quality programmes for customer care purposes. In the second phase, the more exhaustive analysis of the case studies showed that they were characterised by the principles of the public service orientation developed by Clarke and Stewart (1987) and the Local Government Training Board (1987), having adopted the techniques of this management style as outlined by Farnham and Horton (1996), Pfeffer and Coote (1991) and Fenwick (1989). There was therefore considerable evidence of the shift in orientation within these facilities that had been deemed necessary by Sanderson (1992) and the LGTB (1987). Thus, consumerism laid the foundations for quality activities in these local authorities by providing a focus for the expansion of early customer care initiatives to programmes of quality management.

As a result, it is apparent that these local authority leisure facilities can be considered to be customer oriented; what needs further attention is why this focus had come about and herein lies the value of the Pettigrew (1987) framework. It was clear that the variables within the context in which quality management was being used had, in combination, brought about the identification of a need for the delivery of quality services.

CONTEXTUAL INFLUENCES ON THE ADOPTION OF QUALITY PROGRAMMES (2): THE RISE OF NEW MANAGERIALISM

The second significant factor identified in the study was the rise of new managerialism. Like increasing consumerism, this too has been featured in the writings of analysts of the 1990s (Farnham and Horton, 1996; Gaster, 1995; Hender, 1993; Lawton and Rose, 1994) as an influence for change within public services. This research suggested that the culture of new managerialism was one of the factors that had had a significant impact on the decision to implement quality programmes within public leisure facilities. The management culture within the leisure services under review clearly incorporated the principles of new managerialism outlined by Pollitt (1993):

- social progress requires continuing increases in economic productivity;
• productivity increases come from applying sophisticated technologies;
• the application of these technologies can only be achieved through a disciplined workforce;
• business success depends on the professionalism of skilled managers;
• to perform their crucial role, managers must have the right to manage.

and was unanimously described by managers within these organisations as being commercial.

The results of the postal survey showed that significant numbers of respondents were using quality programmes for commercial purposes (60%), while the local authorities included in the second phase of the research were using the techniques and language traditionally associated with new managerialism. The symmetry between the features of the public service orientation (Clarke and Stewart, 1987; LGTB, 1987) and new managerialism was apparent and provided evidence of how the content of quality management can influence its context, again highlighting the particular appropriateness of the interactive nature of the Model of Strategic Change (Pettigrew, 1987). It was clear that the techniques of new managerialism were an expansion of those advocated by the PSO, suggesting that consumerism had influenced the development of the new management culture. This expansion was necessary in order to consider organisational efficiency as well as effectiveness and as a result, organisations that had adopted the principles of the PSO appeared likely to develop new managerialism as this customer orientation initiates the use of commercial management techniques (Farnham and Horton, 1996; Pfeffer and Coote, 1991; Fenwick, 1989).

There was no doubt that the case study local authority leisure managers in the research regarded themselves as having become more commercial in their management and saw their use of quality management as an element in this. This is a shift from the traditional perception of local government management, historically considered bureaucratic in nature (Handy 1985). The evidence of new managerialism supported the findings of Lawton and Rose (1994) who suggested that where a public sector organisation had been exposed to CCT, a market culture was likely to develop in response to the need to be competitive. The research, however, suggested that there were two factors that had promoted this management culture and that the main one of these was an internal factor, supporting Schein’s (1985) understanding of organisational culture change.
Firstly and most importantly, interviewees felt that the use of quality programmes and other techniques of new managerialism were the result of the increasing professionalism of local authority leisure sector. Evidence for increasing professionalism came from a variety of factors; however, the most important of these was that those interviewed felt that this was indicated by the fact that leisure professionals had been responsible for the decision to implement quality programmes and other commercial management techniques. Professionals looking for ways of managing in the prevailing climate of consumerism, market competition and resource constraint were drawn to quality management as it was considered that it provided a means of managing both the need to be efficient and to be effective. The increasing professionalism of the public leisure industry is explored in more detail in section 9.3.2. Secondly, although CCT was not felt to have initiated new managerialism, it was felt to have accelerated the subsequent development of this culture throughout the industry.

**CONTEXTUAL INFLUENCES ON THE ADOPTION OF QUALITY PROGRAMMES (3): THE IMPACT OF CCT**

The way in which senior managers regarded CCT as a stimulus for change in organisational operations was a further clear example of the significance of context in the introduction of quality management. The research provided evidence to suggest that legislation in the form of CCT had had a significant influence upon the decision to implement quality programmes, supporting the discussions of Stewart and Stoker (1989) who felt that the policies of successive Conservative governments were focused on efficiency, customer orientation and responsiveness.

More than one third of the respondents to the postal survey who were using quality programmes claimed to be doing so in order to meet a CCT requirement. This suggested some success of the policy direction intended by Compulsory Competitive Tendering which had been introduced into leisure facilities in order to make the management of these facilities more effective and efficient (Carnaghan and Bracewell-Milnes, 1993). The case study interviews indicated that the use of quality management in order to improve competitiveness had been influenced by CCT in two ways. Firstly, the revenue requirements of CCT contracts meant that the market competitiveness initiated by consumerism and competition became imperative and quality programmes were used to compete for customer revenue. Secondly, and much more importantly, quality programmes were seen as a strategy for winning CCT bids. The Audit Commission (1993) and Curry and Monaghan (1994) have suggested that the role of quality programmes in CCT contracts was to ensure that monitoring was carried out. This research, however, indicated that this was a secondary reason for the use of programmes; rather they were required
predominantly for DSO competitiveness, supporting the arguments of Holmes (1993).

The inclusion of ISO9002 within the specifications of four of the case studies demonstrated how context not only affected the content of change, but also affected choices that were made within that content. The CCT process required local authorities to provide identical information on facilities, bidding procedures and contract specifications to all potential contractors, in principle eliminating any advantage that an in-house bid would have. It was, however, legitimate to require quality assurance procedures within the contract and this, alongside monitoring of performance once the contract had been awarded, meant that ISO9002 could justifiably be a contract requirement.

The attraction of ISO9002 for purposes of monitoring and quality assurance is apparent given its perceived strengths identified in the first phase of the research. It was repeatedly explained, however, that the main reason for the inclusion of this quality programme in the first round of CCT specifications was the time consuming and lengthy process involved in obtaining accreditation. As this made it hard for competing bids to get rapid accreditation, the inclusion of ISO9002 in the contract specification was considered by the senior managers to have been advantageous to the in-house bid with early access to information. This suggested that the content of ISO9002 made its adoption a useful tactical ploy by local authorities keen to win their CCT contracts. Not only did the use of ISO9002 make the DSO bid look more favourable when compared to other bids, those interviewed felt that the requirements of this programme and the costs of maintaining accreditation were a deterrent to possible commercial competitors. The extension of this to include other quality programmes in the second round of CCT again worked in favour of the DSO as external contractors were unlikely to have had the specified combination of quality programmes required by the contract. Thus, within the context of CCT the use of quality programmes was perceived by these local authority managers to be an important strategy for minimising the threat posed by this legislation. Although this process appears anti-competitive, not only was it legitimised by the Secretary of State’s decision (1994) to allow quality to be considered in the evaluation of CCT bids, it appears to have brought about the managerial changes which formed the Audit Commission’s (1989) justification for the introduction of CCT.

The research raised questions about the arguments of Carnaghan and Bracewell-Milnes (1993), Colling (1995) and Craig (1993) who felt that CCT had failed in its objective to improve service quality. The case study authorities themselves believed that they were delivering services of a high quality and supported their views with
evidence of the presence of accredited quality programmes, customer feedback and financial performance. Although CCT did not initiate the use of quality management within most of the local authorities, it had clearly extended the concern with quality management and thus, CCT was believed to have had a positive influence on the local authority leisure facilities included in the second phase of the research.

**CONTEXTUAL INFLUENCES ON THE ADOPTION OF QUALITY PROGRAMMES (4): THE RISE OF MARKET COMPETITION**

One of the key findings of the research was that those interviewed felt that the increase in customer expectations of public leisure facilities occurred in tandem with an increasingly competitive market environment. Although it was suggested in Chapter two that increasing market competition had acted alongside consumerism to encourage a customer focus, this research suggested that market competition was important in its own right. A growing consciousness of consumer choice, offered by alternative leisure providers, both in the UK and abroad, that was highlighted by Sheppard and Studd (1994), required not only the customer oriented management responses identified by Pfeffer and Coote (1991) and Sanderson (1992), but necessitated the development of all of the characteristics of new managerialism. This enabled managers of local authority leisure facilities to become competitive in order to retain customers.

Although this need to be competitive was primarily the result of increasing market competition, it was also significantly influenced by consumerism and the demands of CCT. It was this need to be competitive that was considered to have facilitated the use of the techniques of new managerialism and promoted the use of quality management within local authority leisure facilities. The apparent disadvantage of this need to be competitive is the focus on customers rather than citizen identified by Pollitt (1994), leading to the aforementioned challenge to the continued subsidy of public leisure facilities. Overall, it is apparent that quality programmes were perceived to be a tool for competitiveness which was required by the contextual factors outlined above.

**9.2.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVE TWO: THE CONCEPTUALISATION OF QUALITY AND QUALITY MANAGEMENT BY THE SENIOR PROFESSIONALS**

The definitions of quality offered by those interviewed were similar in theme, although varied in wording between individuals and authorities. Senior local authority leisure professional were very clear about what quality meant to them and without exception, quality was defined in terms of customer requirements and customer expectations, demonstrating how the context of quality management had
impinged on its content i.e. consumerism had led to the identification of customers as a focus for quality management at the expense of other stakeholders.

The definitions offered by those interviewed reflected in part those considered by Davidson and Bailey (1995). The definitions of Golden Gates Leisure were in line with Deming’s (1986) concept of exceeding customer expectations and those of Calderdale Council added a customer focus to the definition proposed by Juran (1988). The most common way of defining quality, however, reflected Clark (1992) as the definitions offered by the majority of managers incorporated the management of all aspects of service quality as well as customer satisfaction. The holistic nature of this way of defining quality indicated an awareness among those interviewed of the need to manage efficiency as well as effectiveness and provided initial evidence of the emergence of new managerialism, showing once more how the context of change had impacted upon its content.

The way in which quality management was conceptualised by senior leisure professionals had implications for its operationalisation and this in turn had a bearing on the broader direction of change in local authority leisure management. From the research it was apparent that the methods of managing quality - the content of quality management - and the implementation of quality programmes had facilitated the use of the management techniques associated with new managerialism, such as objective setting and performance monitoring. Thus, it was apparent that the introduction of quality management not only provided a direct response to the influences of consumerism, market competition and CCT, but it furthered the approach to management considered necessary in contemporary local authority leisure facilities. Although the culture of new managerialism had begun to emerge in the local authorities under study prior to their adoption of formal quality initiatives, the research suggested that the management of service quality promoted the use of the techniques of new managerialism and assisted local authority leisure providers to become more commercial in their management.

Evidence for this came from considering the content of quality as it was apparent that the successful management of the characteristics of quality identified by Curry and Monaghan (1994), Parasuraman et al (1985) and Skelcher (1992) required the techniques characteristic of commercial management, as did the successful implementation of quality programmes. The commercial management practices required by the management of service quality were also evident in the way that the local authorities under study had implemented their quality programmes. The principles of successful quality management outlined by Deming (1986), Armistead (1990), Patmore and Tomes (1994), Porter and Parker (1993) and Wille (1990) were
present in all of the authorities. In addition, the process for implementation suggested by Mosscrop and Stores (1990) was adapted or followed by all six local authority leisure services.

As a result, the conceptualisation of quality and quality management established by the research suggests why the use of quality programmes was considered a suitable response for dealing with the changing leisure context which required the emergence of a commercial approach to facility management.

9.2.3 RESEARCH OBJECTIVE THREE: THE ROLE OF LEISURE PROFESSIONALS IN THE DECISION TO INTRODUCE QUALITY PROGRAMMES

Pettigrew et al (1992) have argued that the most critical factor in understanding the introduction of change is an awareness of how the people involved in the change process use issues in the operating context to legitimise change. In support of this, the research concluded that leisure professionals within each local authority included in the second phase of the research had identified the factors in the operating context that required competitiveness, using these as a justification for the introduction of quality programmes and other techniques of new managerialism. This supports Spurgeon and Barwell’s (1991) understanding of the origins of organisational change.

In all of the local authorities included in the second phase of the research, the decision to pursue quality management was made by leisure professionals. This influence of professionals on the direction of leisure services supported the research carried out by Nichols (1996) which showed that the role of politicians within local authority leisure services was not as great as the traditional power relationships would indicate given the nature of the organisation. Indeed, when considering the evidence of political influence on the introduction of quality management it was clear that leisure professionals considered that political impact on the decision to implement quality programmes was minimal, supporting Butcher et al’s (1990) comments on the radically reduced role of politician within contemporary local authorities. One explanation for this is that councillors viewed the decision to use quality programmes as tactical, rather than strategic, and therefore the responsibility of professional leisure managers, especially given the low salience of leisure identified by Neve (1977) and Henry (1993). A more likely explanation, however, is to be found in the work of Bacharach and Lawler (1980), Lawton and Rose (1994) and Pfeffer (1981) all of whom suggested that power over decision making is reliant on control over what is to be discussed, as Nichols (1996) outlined in showing how leisure professionals can control the information made available to
leisure councillors. The current research supported these arguments, showing evidence of leisure professionals presenting quality management as a *fait accompli*, or having sold the benefits of the programmes in politically acceptable terms. In addition, those interviewed in Leisure Newcastle further supported Nichols (1996) as they felt that the power of professionals over the leisure committee was a result of the amount of knowledge required of local government politicians. Interviewees also felt that the growing professionalism of the industry would continue to increase the power of professionals over the decision making process as the industry became more expert in the management its facilities, suggesting that Lawton and Rose's (1994) concept of professionalism as power is relevant within the local authorities included in this research.

More importantly, however, it was apparent that those interviewed felt that the process of managing service quality led to a culture that was considered to be desirable in order to address the changing public leisure context. This commitment to the culture of quality by senior leisure professionals supports the arguments of Schein (1985) who suggested that change would only be accepted if senior managers supported it. This awareness of the role of quality management in bringing about culture change was particularly evident in the local authorities whose accredited quality programmes were a requirement of CCT, as all went on to obtain more accredited quality programmes. This internalisation of the quality requirement appeared to be due to two factors. Firstly, Erewash Borough Council, Leisure Newcastle and SRM were already committed to quality management and had implemented customer care procedures prior to the introduction of ISO9002. As a result, for these managers ISO9002 was considered an extension of the content of quality already present within their facilities. Secondly, all of these local authority leisure services had seen management benefits as a result of implementing ISO9002 which had led them to implement additional quality programmes within their leisure services, thus furthering the commitment to quality programmes and quality management. The commitment to the culture of quality was clearly evident in the terminology and values of those interviewed.

It is apparent that the professionals in the case study authorities had a prominent influence on the introduction of quality programmes within their local authority leisure facilities. This was evidenced by their influence on both the decision to implement quality programmes and the integration of quality management into the culture of these local authorities, thus legitimising the change. The role of the managers on the decision to change supports the arguments of Johnson (1993), Pettigrew (1987) and Pettigrew et al (1992) who discussed how key actors in the
organisation had to identify the need for change, for it to occur. This provided further evidence of the professionalism of local authority leisure management.

9.2.4 THE ANALYSIS OF CHANGE: THE INTRODUCTION OF QUALITY PROGRAMMES IN PUBLIC LEISURE FACILITIES

The current study concluded that the introduction of quality programmes within local authority leisure facilities had come about because the actions and interactions of a variety of factors (Figure 9.1). At all phases of the research it was impossible to identify any single factor that had been more or less significant in promoting the introduction of quality programmes into public leisure facilities. In the first phase of the research, a vast majority of respondents provided multiple reasons for their use of quality programmes. This was even more evident in the second phase of the research where the multiplicity of influences upon the management of local authority leisure facilities had led to multiple programmes being used to achieve a range of solutions.

Senior managers felt that the biggest change required of the management of public leisure facilities, in recent times, was the need to be competitive within the leisure market. This transformation was initiated by increasing pressure from consumers and market competition which, facilitated by the increasing professionalism of the industry, led to the emergence of the culture of new managerialism within the leisure services under review, resulting in the adoption of techniques of new managerialism. The introduction of CCT was perceived to have accelerated the emergence of the new management culture as it required even greater competitiveness and thus increased use of new managerialist techniques. Quality management was one of these techniques, although the managers felt that this was much more than simply a tool of new managerialism as it provided a basis for its continuing development.

The first research question to be considered was how the factors within the operating context of public leisure facilities led to the use of quality management and it was the need to be competitive that had brought about the implementation of quality programmes. Public leisure managers were required to become more competitive in the management of their facilities as a result of increasing consumerism and competition, but most importantly, because of Compulsory Competitive Tendering. CCT meant that local authority leisure managers had to firstly, win CCT contracts and secondly, meet the revenue requirements of CCT specifications.
Figure 9.1: The rationale for quality management within public leisure facilities

- Consumerism
- Market Competition
- Professionalism

The Emergence of New Managerialism

Compulsory Competitive Tendering

- Contract Competitiveness required to win bid
- Market Competitiveness required to win revenue

New Managerialism Management Practices

Quality Programmes selected by leisure professionals for CCT success

Late 1980s

1989

1990s
Leisure professionals, having identified the need to become competitive determined that quality management and quality programmes were the vehicles for improving organisational competitiveness, resulting in the introduction of quality management as a consequence of the professional nature of the industry.

The second question to be considered is why quality management was considered to be an appropriate response to the need to be competitive. This required a new managerialist approach to management, in order to manage the efficiency and the effectiveness of the service. The role of quality management in bringing about this approach was demonstrated by the objective setting and performance measurement inherent within the content of quality management. In addition, the focus on customers in the definitions of service quality demonstrated a market oriented approach, characteristic of new managerialism. More importantly, the culture of quality was perceived to be appropriate for the organisational context.

The content of quality management, alongside the structured approach to implementation, indicated why quality programmes were considered to be appropriate tools for managing the changing leisure context. Not only did quality management facilitate a customer oriented approach to meet the demands of consumerism, it also furthered the development of the culture of new managerialism.

Quality management, however, was not the only vehicle available for promoting culture change within local authority leisure facilities and the research identified the role that CCT played in furthering the use of the techniques of new managerialism. As a result, the final question to be considered is why local authority leisure professionals chose quality management over other management practices as the tool for addressing the changing leisure context. The findings of the research suggested that this was because quality management was believed to meet the demands of all of the key factors influencing the leisure context. The customer focus allowed the demands of consumerism to be addressed and the need to be competitive was managed by the holistic and integrative nature of quality management which had the capacity to address all aspects of operations. It was, however, the unique role of quality programmes in dealing with the demands of CCT that made it an obvious choice for public leisure professionals. The use of quality management not only enabled local authority leisure managers to compete with other leisure providers, but accredited quality programmes were an acceptable tool for ensuring that the DSO maintained control of CCT contracts. Leisure professionals having identified this opportunity, used quality programmes in the management of their leisure facilities.
9.3 THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE RESEARCH TO THE UNDERSTANDING OF CONTEMPORARY LOCAL AUTHORITY LEISURE SERVICES

Concern with quality management has developed in a period of multi-faceted change brought about by the impact of the factors discussed above. This research set out to establish why local authority leisure facility managers were using quality programmes - a distinctive feature of local authorities at the time. Inevitably, the study of this offered insights into the broader and much debated changing nature of public sector management and in particular, this study has thrown light on two areas which contribute to the general understanding of contemporary local authority leisure services. The first of these relates to the subject of quality management itself, while the second is concerned with the broader operating context of local authority leisure services.

9.3.1 THE CONTRIBUTION TO THE UNDERSTANDING OF QUALITY MANAGEMENT WITHIN LOCAL AUTHORITY LEISURE SERVICES

The review of literature outlined in the Chapters two, three and four revealed the scarcity of research investigating the phenomenon of quality management within local authority leisure facilities. At the time of embarking on the study there were virtually no analyses of the use of quality management within local authority leisure facilities. While there was the beginning of a prescriptive literature on how to manage quality, no research had analysed the significance of the adoption of quality management within local government leisure provision.

Since the start of the research, the academic study of quality has progressed. Howat, Criiley and Milne (1996) and Williams (1998) have considered the appropriateness of the SERVQUAL model to the leisure industry; Stabler (1996) has addressed the need to define quality in order to measure it; and the English Sports Council has recently commissioned an evaluation of Quest. Useful in that they look at the content of quality, they have not, however, sought explanations for why this approach to management has been adopted. It is this question with which this research has been concerned.

The current research has therefore extended the level of knowledge on quality management in local authority leisure services. Its distinctive contribution covers three areas. Firstly, it attempted to consider quality management from an industry-wide perspective through the postal questionnaire sent to all UK local authority leisure services and provided quantitative evidence of the use of quality programmes within a large minority of local authority leisure facilities. Secondly, it identified what quality meant to local authority leisure professionals and how this
was being managed. Finally, it established why these programmes were used in the management of public leisure facilities, providing evidence of the role of quality management in responding to the local authority leisure services context. This differentiates it from the studies mentioned previously which have tended to concentrate on customer satisfaction and evaluation of service quality and have been much less concerned with either the reasons why this phenomena has emerged within local government leisure facilities, or the significance of it doing so.

Specifically, the research provided evidence to evaluate the discussion of the content of quality management outlined in Chapter three and firstly, it was apparent from the research that a generic definition of quality for public services is not necessary. The cross-case analysis indicated that although the definitions of the senior managers were similar in their focus, they varied, across and within, local authorities, supporting Davidson and Bailey (1995) and Gaster's (1995) arguments that a development of a single definition of quality for public services is inappropriate.

The case study authorities had identified paying customers as their key interest group representing the shift in public services espoused by Clarke and Stewart (1987) and the LGTB (1987) in their development of the PSO. This also reflected the views of Holmes (1993), Melhuish (1991), Mosscrop and Stores (1990) and the industry bodies, ISRM (1995) and ILAM (1996), all of whom promoted a focus on paying customers in order to deliver a quality service. Although this does not consider the full range of stakeholders applicable to public leisure facilities, it suggested that the prioritising of customers outlined by Robinson (1997) has enabled local authority leisure managers to direct their provision of service quality. The desirability of this will be discussed in a later section.

The case study authorities had identified the need to manage the characteristics of service quality (reliability, responsiveness, competence, access, courtesy, communication and voice, credibility, security, customer oriented and tangibles) developed and adapted by Curry and Monaghan (1994), Parasuraman et al (1985) and Skelcher (1992). This was apparent in the first phase of the research as local authorities were using quality programmes to manage these characteristics, supporting Gaster (1992) and Skelcher's (1992) arguments that quality programmes can assist with the management of the parts of the leisure service that can be specified and standardised. This was supported by the findings of the second phase of the research where it was clear that the use of quality programmes had grown, with evidence from customer surveys and financial performance indicating their
success in managing quality. This suggested that Sanderson's (1992) description of quality programmes as working practices to be built into organisations was valid.

The case study authorities considered themselves to be successful in their management of the customer satisfaction gap and this was being carried out primarily through the communication process advocated by Patmore and Tomes (1994) and focused on the attitudes and expectations of customer identified by Gaster (1992) as being integral to customer satisfaction. Consequently, it is apparent that the study has confirmed the benefits of a structured approach to the management of service quality which supported the validity of the framework for quality management proposed in Chapter three.

9.3.2 THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY TO THE BROADER ANALYSIS OF CONTEMPORARY LOCAL AUTHORITY LEISURE SERVICES

The primary intention of the current study was to contribute knowledge on the specific matter of quality management in local authority leisure facilities. It was likely that in doing so, the research would provide insights into other aspects of the development of local authority leisure provision during the period under consideration. The potential for the study to generate understanding of broader application was accentuated by the use of the Model of Strategic Change (Pettigrew, 1987) as the framework for the investigation. This particular model emphasised the contingent nature of strategic change and required an extensive range of contextual factors to be addressed. In consequence, there are a number of ways in which the findings of the research can contribute to a general understanding of the significant shifts that have taken place in local authority leisure services in the last 15 years.

One of the areas to which this applies is the 'changing leisure context', discussed in Chapter two. Here it was proposed that local authorities during the 1980s and 1990s were subject to multiple change in the social, political and economic environment. A wide range of writers were seen to have identified the key areas of change as consumerism (Clarke and Stewart, 1987; Courteen, 1995; Craig, 1995; Farnham and Horton, 1996; Fenwick, 1989; Local Government Training Board, 1987; Pfeffer and Coote 1991; Sanderson 1992); the impact of legislation (Audit Commission, 1994; Curry and Monaghan, 1994; Farnham and Horton, 1996; Kirkpatrick and Martinez Lucio, 1995; Lovell, 1992; Pollitt, 1994) and the changing nature of public sector management (Bovaird, 1992; Coalter et al, 1986; Common, et al, 1992; Craig, 1995; Farnham and Horton, 1993, 1996; Henry, 1993; Hood, 1991; Murphy, 1986; Nichols, 1996; Nichols and Taylor, 1995). Some of these
discussions were related to the broader public sector context, while some focused specifically on local leisure services.

Firstly, consumerism clearly had had an impact upon the public leisure facilities included in the research and is identified primarily by the factors outlined by Fenwick (1989), Craig (1995) and Courteen (1995). More importantly, however, it is apparent that criticism of the Citizen's Charter made by Pollitt (1994) and the potential weakness of the PSO were evident within this research. The local authority leisure services included in the second phase of the research focused on paying customers to the exclusion of other stakeholder groups. Although it is possible to argue that this focus was necessary given the particular circumstances that have affected public leisure services as opposed to other public services - CCT, increasing market competition and the need to generate income - it does challenge the rationale for the continued subsidy of these services. The rationale for public leisure provision, established on the basis of market failure and Sport for All, appears to be undermined by this focus on the paying customer and the 'commercial' orientation present within the case study authorities.

Furthermore, one of the main findings of this research was the extent to which managers within the case studies had embraced the tenets of commercial management practice. This commitment to new managerialism was associated with the rejection or playing down of social objectives, apparent among almost all of those interviewed. The need to provide services to meet social objectives was not a priority and the case study leisure providers considered themselves to be managing along commercial lines, with a focus on commercial indicators of success. This was evidenced by the concern expressed at how other local authority departments were approaching the need to deliver high quality services. If these facilities can be run along commercial lines, as identified by interviewees in all 6 authorities, the justification for the support of public leisure facilities from the public purse is undermined.

It is possible to argue that this erosion of the ethos of the rationale for public leisure has been brought about, in part, by central government itself. Farnham and Horton (1993, 1996) discussed how the Conservative government's programmes of legislation were based on the premise that commercial management and competitiveness was the desired state, which led Common et al (1992) to suggest that public sector managers would need to adopt the methods and language of the commercial sector in order to respond to legislation. This research provided evidence to suggest the partial success of this policy direction, mainly through the impact of CCT. Although the research suggested that leisure professionals primarily
initiated the use of new managerialist techniques, the necessity to have done so suggests that the Conservative government's drive for the enterprise culture within public services was successful.

The two significant pieces of legislation of this period had contrasting effects on the local authority leisure facilities in the second phase of the research. Although Lovell (1992) had suggested that the introduction of the Citizen's Charter would bring about changes in management culture and style, there was little evidence of the success of this legislation in bringing about change within the local authorities under review. The research, however, provided an abundance of evidence to suggest that the introduction of CCT had required specific, far-reaching responses and that the objectives of the legislation had been partially met. Introduced with the intentions of removing the public sector monopoly on service provision (Carnaghan and Bracewell-Milnes, 1993) and to improve organisational efficiency and thus value for money in local authority services, this research suggested that CCT had been unsuccessful in meeting the first objective, but successful in the second.

This research provided further evidence to support Carnaghan and Bracewell-Milnes (1993) and the Audit Commission (1993) who found that CCT had not opened public leisure facilities up to market competition on any great scale. More importantly, however, it suggested why this had occurred, showing how the local authority leisure services in the second phase of the research had used quality programmes to deter and prevent the success of commercial operator bids. In terms of the second objective, CCT has apparently been successful. The integral nature of the approach to quality adopted by the case study leisure services suggested the delivery of services which were considered to be value for money, evidenced by demonstrated improvements in financial performance and customer satisfaction. This is in line with the central government use of the rhetoric of quality to bring about change (Kirkpatrick and Martinez Lucio (1995).

From this it appears that the underlying rationale for this policy direction was also supported by the research. Elcock (1996) discussed how the Conservative government of 1979 was hostile to local authorities, requiring them to make improvements in efficiency and effectiveness, a belief evident in reports issued by the Audit Commission (1988, 1989). The Audit Commission argued that local authorities needed to evaluate the effectiveness of their services, consider outcomes as well as inputs and monitor and review performance against targets and this research provided evidence of these attributes within the local authorities under review.
The Conservative government premise that commercial management styles were the desired state for public services can be debated; however, the legislation has arguably met its objectives as outlined above and resulted in the customer focused, commercial approach to management present within the case study authorities. What needs further consideration is why this policy direction appears to have been so successful in the leisure services under review. The first explanation for this comes from the nature of leisure services themselves. Public leisure services are not 'essential' services in that people do not have to use leisure facilities in order to live their lives. In addition, there are several alternatives to public leisure facilities for those who wish to follow leisure pursuits. As a consequence, the element of choice identified by Sheppard and Studd (1994) means that public leisure providers have to be competitive in the management of their facilities if they wish to maintain or increase revenue. Thus, the characteristics of public leisure facilities made them ideal for the intended direction of central government policy.

The second and more important explanation for the success of legislation comes from the evidence that this was primarily due to the changes in legislation outlined above occurring in tandem with the increasing professionalism of the industry. There is no doubt that CCT had furthered the 'commercialisation' of public leisure facilities, supporting the arguments of Lawrence et al (1994) and Nichols and Taylor (1996); the research suggested, however, that it was leisure professionals who had initiated the techniques of new managerialism as a response to factors within the operating context of local authority leisure services. This, alongside the increased employment of multi-skilled, professionally qualified managers identified by those interviewed indicated that the management of local authority leisure services could be characterised as an industrial semi-profession, which suggests why the culture of new managerialism has become so prevalent.

Further evidence of the professionalism of the public leisure industry came from the significant role that leisure professionals played in both the general introduction of the techniques of new managerialism and the specific choice of quality programmes as a solution to the changing leisure context. The research suggests that leisure professionals within the local authorities under study have actively 'managed' their services, providing evidence of the essential role of managers within contemporary public services identified by Farnham and Horton (1993, 1996), Hood (1991) and Pollitt (1993). As a result, the debate over the value of liberal welfare and industrial semi-professions identified by Henry (1993) appears partially resolved, certainly within the case study authorities included in this research. The research did not suggest that leisure management was any closer to becoming a true 'profession',
however, it did suggest that concern over the accessibility of leisure management, identified by Coalter et al (1986) has lost significance.

9.3.3 **THE MODEL OF STRATEGIC CHANGE**

Quality management, epitomised by the use of quality programmes, has become a feature of the management of local authority leisure facilities as these services have been delivered during a period of multiple environmental changes. By following the framework of Pettigrew's (1988) Model of Strategic Change this research has investigated the context, content and process of introducing quality management within local leisure facilities and concluded that quality management has come to be present within local authority leisure facilities as a consequence of the need to be competitive that has been identified by leisure professionals. This conclusion arises from a consideration of the actions and interactions of significant variables within the operating context of local authority leisure facilities, the content of quality management and the process of changing. Developed in response to alternative frameworks more concerned with 'changes', rather than 'changing' (Pettigrew et al, 1992), the ability of the Model of Strategic Change to allow these interactions to firstly, be identified and secondly, be investigated, was fundamental to this research as it was apparent that the decision to implement quality programmes was not 'rational' - rather it had been shaped not only by factors within the operating context, but also by the change process itself.

The explanatory nature of this research required a framework flexible enough to deal with the possibility of a multitude of influencing factors and this was the strength of the Model of Strategic Change. This distinguishes it from other models of change which do less to facilitate the identification and discussion of the *interactions* of influencing factors. The predictive weakness of the Model identified by Spurgeon and Barwell (1991) did not impact on the research for the reason outlined in Chapter one. The value of this model to the current study was therefore substantial as it provided a structure for the research which enabled the research questions to be addressed effectively.

9.4 **IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

Research of this type inevitably throws up issues which go beyond the objectives of the immediate study and identifies areas for further investigation. This study has provided evidence of the presence of new managerialism within the local authority leisure services under review and the use of quality programmes is considered to be an important element in the commercial approach to management. It is the extent
of the presence of this style of management which is the first area for further investigation.

The evidence of new managerialism within these local authorities suggests the partial success of the Conservative legislation of the 1980s and 90s. Although there was evidence of this style of management from a variety of sources within these local authorities, it is possible that new managerialism may be confined to a few authorities, of which these were a sample. As a result, research investigating the extent of new managerialism within UK local authority leisure services is advisable before concluding that the legislative programme had been successful.

Secondly, this research aimed to establish an explanation for the use of quality programmes within local authority leisure facilities and did not investigate the effects of these. In order for the full impact of quality management to be assessed within local authority leisure services, its impact needs to be evaluated at facility and local authority level.

Thirdly and perhaps outside of the evidence from this research, is the role of quality management and quality programmes within the 'Best Value' policy framework. Given the apparent success of 'quality' as the basis for Conservative government change, its role in local government change under Labour will require future research.

The most fundamental area for future research is, however, to investigate the extent and implications of the embracing of new managerialism within public leisure services. The basic assumption underlying the Conservative governments' legislative programmes was that management of public services should reflect that of commercial services. This was also clearly the belief of the senior managers interviewed in the second phase of the research and although it is possible that the case studies included in the research are the most extreme examples of how local authorities have moved away from social objectives, the impact of this needs to be evaluated. Within public leisure provision, there has been a long tradition of targeting a wide range of non-participant groups. This has often been led at national level by initiatives such as the Action Sport Scheme initiated by the Sports Council in 1981, the 'Recreation and Deprivation in inner urban areas' approach initiated by the Department of Environment in 1977, central government support of GP referral schemes and the recent concern with the fitness of school children. There has therefore been a high profile commitment and stimulus for local authority leisure providers to consider the needs of these groups of low-participants and non-users and develop ways of getting these groups into these facilities. The
current focus on paying customers is a complete contrast and although apparently promoted and legitimised by central government, the impact of new managerialism upon all stakeholders needs to be evaluated in order to determine what this approach to management means in terms of what is delivered to the community. This must be a core issue for local authority leisure services as they move into the twenty first century.
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APPENDIX ONE

THE CLAUSES OF THE ISO9002 STANDARD

The following clauses contain the detailed requirements to which accredited organisations should conform, wherever relevant.

4.1 MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITY: Includes:

4.1.1 Quality policy: a prerequisite, part of corporate policy and authorised by top management. It defines and documents the supplier's policy and objectives for and commitment to quality, to be understood, implemented and maintained by all levels in the organisation, including part-time and sub-contract staff.

4.1.2 Organisation: Made up of three parts.

(4.1.2.1) The responsibility, authority and interrelation of everyone whose work affects quality shall be defined.

(4.1.2.2) Specific resources and trained personnel should be assigned to verify (inspect, test and monitor) all aspects of the service including design and delivery. The quality system, processes and products should be audited by people independent of those doing the work.

(4.1.2.3) The supplier shall appoint a management representative who, irrespective of other responsibilities, shall have defined authority and responsibility for ensuring that the requirements of this International Standard are implemented and maintained.

4.1.3 Management review: Top management should regularly review the whole quality system to ensure its continuing suitability and effectiveness. Records of this review must be maintained.

4.2 QUALITY SYSTEMS: shall be established and maintained to ensure that the product conforms to specified requirements.

4.3 CONTRACT REVIEW: covers written, verbal, actual or implied contracts. The supplier has to ensure that the contractual requirements are adequately defined and documented and can be met.

4.4 DESIGN CONTROL: not applicable to ISO9002

4.5 DOCUMENT AND DATA CONTROL: stresses the importance of procedures to control the issue, storage and withdrawal of documents and data.

4.6 PURCHASING: the supplier shall ensure that purchased product conforms to specified requirements, from assessed sources. Subcontractors must be continuously monitored.

4.7 CONTROL OF CUSTOMER SUPPLIED PRODUCT: the supplier shall establish and maintain procedures for the verification, storage and maintenance of purchaser supplied product provided for incorporation into the supplies.

4.8 PRODUCT OR SERVICE IDENTIFICATION AND TRACEABILITY: where appropriate, the supplier shall establish and maintain procedures for
identifying the product from applicable drawings, specifications or other documents, during all stages of production, delivery and installation.

4.9 PROCESS CONTROL: care has to be taken with routine and special processes. Processes should take place under 'controlled conditions', documented, approved, monitored and to stipulated standards.

4.10 INSPECTION AND TESTING: the aim of this process is to ensure that all materials, products and services which are used and contribute to the performance of the service consistently perform to the specified agreements.

4.11 INSPECTION, MEASURING AND TEST EQUIPMENT: the accuracy of testing equipment used for inspection, measuring and testing activities must be procured, issued, maintained and calibrated to ensure that their accuracy is consistent with requirements.

4.12 INSPECTION AND TEST STATUS: inspection status is identified from a variety of documented records produced in the normal operating periods of the facility which ensures that equipment and services are available for use.

4.13 CONTROL OF NON-CONFORMING PRODUCT OR SERVICE: For each sort of product or service there must be documented procedures for identifying problems.

4.14 CORRECTIVE AND PREVENTATIVE ACTION: assuming non-conforming product can be identified, the Standard requires documented and well-maintained procedures for: investigating the causes of the non-conformance and the means to prevent recurrence; eliminating potential causes of non-conforming product; applying controls to ensure that corrective actions are taken effectively; recording any changes to procedures brought about by corrective action.

4.15 HANDLING, STORAGE, PACKAGING AND DELIVERY: the supplier shall establish, document and maintain procedures for handling, storage, packaging and delivery of the product.

4.16 CONTROL OF QUALITY RECORDS: required to be maintained (legibly, securely and for agreed periods) to demonstrate achievement of the required quality and the effective operation of the quality system.

4.17 INTERNAL QUALITY AUDITS: a systematic way of verifying the compliance of quality activities with planned arrangements and the effectiveness of the quality system. Auditors should be trained and should be independent of the function being audited. The audit results should be brought to the attention of the personnel concerned and managers should take 'timely corrective action' on deficiencies.

4.18 TRAINING: the training needs of personnel should be regularly assessed and met, if products or services are to be supplied to meet quality requirements.

4.19 SERVICING: where servicing is specified in the contract, the supplier shall establish and maintain procedures for performing and verifying that servicing meets the specified requirements.

4.20 STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES: for verifying the acceptability of process capability and product or service characteristics.
APPENDIX TWO

RESEARCH PROTOCOL

A) OVERVIEW OF THE CASE STUDY

There can be little debate that there is an increasing focus on quality and quality management within the public leisure industry which has resulted in a corresponding increase in the introduction of quality programmes to facilitate leisure management (Patmore and Tomes, 1994). The practical implications of the quality approach have generated much discussion and the advantages and disadvantages have been debated in both academic and professional circles (Mills, 1992; Pollit, 1994). What has not been debated is why public leisure providers have chosen to adopt the quality approach in the management of facilities.

As a result the objectives of this research are as follows:

• to establish what senior leisure professionals consider to be the influences on the use of quality and quality programmes in local authority leisure facilities;
• to establish how senior leisure professionals conceptualise quality and quality management;
• to establish what role these professionals played in the adoption of quality programmes within their local authority leisure facilities.

The key focus of this research is on the first objective which aims to get beyond the 'rhetoric' surrounding the use of quality programmes and to establish exactly why local authority leisure officers are using quality management in public leisure services. There are three theoretical explanations for this and the key readings from which these were developed are listed over the page:

1. Public leisure professionals implemented quality programmes because customer care became a priority in public leisure facilities;
2. Public leisure professionals were required to use quality programmes as a response to legislation;
3. Public leisure professionals have adopted a more 'commercial' approach to the management of their facilities.

After consideration of the theoretical explanations and the first phase of the research the following three reasons were identified as the main reasons for the use of quality programmes in public leisure facilities:

1. Public leisure professionals have implemented quality programmes because customer care became a priority in public leisure facilities and public leisure professionals have adopted a more 'commercial' approach to the management of their facilities;
2. Public leisure professionals have adopted a more 'commercial' approach to the management of their facilities;
3. Public leisure professionals were required to use quality programmes and as a result the criteria for selecting the case studies are:
To establish eligibility for inclusion within the research:

- The presence of a quality programme in the majority of public leisure facilities
- Registration of externally accredited programmes.

For inclusion within the sample:
- The reason for implementing quality programmes.

Key readings for this research:

Local Government Management Board (1994) Guidance on the assessment of Quality in the application of CCT to white collar and professional services, Luton: LGMB.

B) FIELD PROCEDURES

Research Methods

Semi-structured interviews with facility managers and officers.
Documentary analysis

Timetable for research

Week one: - write to Chief Leisure Officer (CLO) or relevant individual and ask for permission to use the local authority as a case study.
Week two: - contact CLO or relevant individual to establish permission. If affirmative, set date for an initial meeting to consider documentary sources and commence interviewing. The interviews need to be carried out after the documentary analysis in case clarification of documented information is necessary.
Weeks two and three: complete interviews.
Week four - six: transcribe interviews and write up initial case report.
Week seven: - send initial report and interviews to the local authority for verification.
Week eight: write final report.

Note: Week five is also week one of the next case study.

Letters

Write introductory letter to CLO.
Write to individual managers introducing the research.
Thank and ask for validation of interviews.
Send report.
C) CASE STUDY QUESTIONS - LEVEL TWO QUESTIONS

What does quality management mean to public leisure providers?

a) Interviews
What does service quality mean to you?
Why do you think that this has become an issue in the public leisure industry?
When did you first become aware of service quality as an issue?
Do you think that quality will be a short or long term issue in the leisure industry and why?

b) Documents
Unlikely at managerial level, unless given access to managerial reports. May be documentation available at department level, e.g. quality reports or an explicit minute from a meeting, however, this is all likely to be generic rather than individual.

Why are quality programmes used?

a) Interviews
What initiatives do you use to manage service quality within your facility?
Why these initiatives?
What do you hope to achieve with these?
What management initiative has assisted you the most with managing quality and why?

b) Documents
Confirmation of programmes used likely to be found in leisure committee minutes. There may be reports or memos available on the use of quality management and some reference to these in strategic documentation.

How were they implemented and developed?

a) Interviews
Whose idea was it to introduce the quality initiative(s)?
How was the idea of the quality initiative(s) first received?
How was this initiative(s) developed and introduced?
What are the perceived disadvantages of this initiative(s)?
How have you overcome these?

b) Documentation
Supporting information most likely to be found in leisure committee/DSO minutes and in strategic documentation. Of use would be memos or reports outlining the process of implementation. It is quite likely that the development of these initiatives will be subsumed into the description of implementation.

How are customers affecting quality management?

a) Interviews
What change have you noticed in customer expectations of service quality in the past few years?
Why do you think this has come about?
What effect has this had on the management of your facility?
How do customers contribute to the management of quality within your facility?

b) Documentation
Numbers and types of complaints to be found in minutes and charter documents. Increases in revenue from fees and charges Increases in user numbers.

What is the culture of management in current public leisure services and does ‘new managerialism’ exist?

a) Interviews
What management information do you get from your quality initiatives?
How do you use this in the forward planning of your facility?
What has happened to staff numbers and structures in leisure management in the last 10 years?
Why has this happened?
What change, if any, has there been to staff employment contracts?
Is there any form of PRP in use in leisure services?
Why was this introduced?
Is there a union presence within leisure services?
How has this changed in the last 10 years?
How would you describe the management culture in local authority's leisure service?
Why do you think it is like this?
Do you think the management of public leisure services is becoming more 'commercial' and why?

b) Documentation
Policy statements, strategic documents and planning documents will all support the presence or absence of 'new managerialism' or a 'commercial' culture.

How much of this concern with quality can be attributed to government legislation?

a) Interviews
Has CCT had any effect on quality within your facility?
How much competition is there for this round of CCT contracts?
In what way is this different from the first round?
Why do you think this change has happened?
Has the Citizen's Charter had any effect on quality within your facility?
Has other government legislation had any effect on quality within your facility?

b) Documentation
Unlikely to be comparative information but may be possible access tender strategies regarding quality. Could also may some evaluation of the timing of implementation - but this will be subjective.

What affect do political influences have on quality management

a) Interviews
How would you describe your local authority's approach to the delivery of quality services?
What role did members of the leisure committee play in the introduction of quality initiatives?

b) Documentation
Committee minutes - but unlikely to be established through documentary sources.

D) CASE STUDY REPORT

- Report to be sent to CLO
Needs to outline key findings in a generic manner incorporating the documentary evidence. If valuable it should include quotes from managers and officers.
Findings should be linked back to existing research, however should not attempt to be evaluative of the local authorities practices.
Should be a maximum of 10 pages including an executive summary.

- Report to be used for research
Based on above but needs to include quotations and evaluation against existing research and best practice. This will form the basis of data analysis for the research project.
APPENDIX THREE

QUESTIONNAIRE: QUALITY PROGRAMMES IN LOCAL AUTHORITY LEISURE FACILITIES

Quality management and quality programmes have become an important part of the management of local authority leisure centres. What this questionnaire aims to do is produce a coherent picture of the type of quality programmes in use in public leisure, their prevalence and the advantages and disadvantages of these programmes. The questionnaire is divided into several sections, of which only those relevant to your local authority need to be completed. The results of this survey will be of use to all public leisure practitioners. The average time to complete the questionnaire is 20 minutes.

Part One of the questionnaire addresses quality in general and seeks information about your local authority and is relevant to ALL local authorities. Part Two is divided into sections addressing a variety of quality programmes. Only those sections that are relevant to a programme that your local authority has implemented should be completed.

Please fill in the relevant spaces or enter ticks (✓) in the appropriate boxes and return the questionnaire in the enclosed stamped, addressed envelope.

Many thanks for your help.

Section One

1. Please indicate which of the following quality programmes you have in place, are implementing or intend to implement in all or some of your local authority leisure facilities. Please include the date of implementation or the expected date of implementation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>In ALL/SOME of facilities, (please indicate which is applicable)</th>
<th>Implemented (Date - m/y)</th>
<th>Implementing (Date - m/y)</th>
<th>Intend to implement (Date - m/y)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BS EN ISO 9000</td>
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<td>Please go to question 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Investors in People</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Please go to question 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charter Mark</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Please go to question 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Quality Management (TQM)</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Please go to question 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Please go to question 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Please go to question 2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. If applicable please outline why you have chosen not to implement a quality programme in your local authority.
3. Please indicate any quality programmes you have CONSIDERED and REJECTED and your reasons for rejection.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programme</th>
<th>Considered</th>
<th>Reasons for rejection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BS EN ISO9000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Investors in People</td>
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<tr>
<td>Charter Mark</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Quality Management (TQM)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. If applicable, please outline why you have chosen to use quality programmes in the management of the leisure centres in your local authority. (If not applicable, please move on to question 5)

5. Please use the space below to comment on any other issues regarding quality programmes that you feel are important.
Section Two

1. What is the population of your local authority?

2. Who is the dominant political party in the local authority?

3a. Does your local authority have an autonomous leisure services department?

3b. If not, where does leisure services fit in the structure of your local authority?

4. How many leisure centres are there in the local authority?

5. How many leisure centres are operated under a CCT contract:

6. Who was the current management contract won by

7. What type of CCT contract does the contractor operate under?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deficit guarantee/income share</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Management fee</td>
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<td>Deficit guarantee/profit share</td>
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<td>Management fee/income share</td>
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<td>Franchise/income share</td>
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<td>Other (please specify)</td>
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</table>

8. It is hoped that there will be the opportunity to follow-up this survey with more detailed discussions about the use of Quality Programmes, with selected local authorities. If you are willing to take part in this phase, please provide a contact name and address in the space below.

Thank you for answering this part of the questionnaire. If applicable, please answer the relevant following sections.

IX
BS EN ISO9000

1. Please outline the main reasons for pursuing BS EN ISO9000:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

2. What do you see as the main advantages of BS EN ISO9000?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

3. What do you see as the main disadvantages of BS EN ISO9000?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

4. Do you intend on maintaining registration of BS EN ISO9000? If not, please outline your reasons for not maintaining registration.

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

5. Do you believe that BS EN ISO9000 has:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don't know</th>
<th>Too soon to tell</th>
<th>Only in these areas</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>increased the numbers using your facility(ies)</td>
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<td>improved the management of the facility(ies)</td>
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6. Please use the space below to make any additional comments regarding BS EN ISO9000

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X
Investors in People

1. Please outline the main reasons for pursuing Investors in People.

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2. What do you see as the main advantages of Investors in People

__________________________________________________________________________________________

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3. What do you see as the main disadvantages of Investors in People

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4. Do you intend on maintaining accreditation of Investors in People? If not please outline your reasons for not maintaining accreditation.

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5. Do you believe that Investors in People has:

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<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
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6. Please use the space below to make any additional comments regarding Investors in People

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Charter Mark

1. Please outline the main reasons for pursuing the Charter Mark.

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2. What do you see as the main advantages of the Charter Mark?

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3. What do you see as the main disadvantages of the Charter Mark?

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4. Do you intend on re-applying for the Charter Mark? If not please outline your reasons for not maintaining accreditation.

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5. Do you believe that the Charter Mark has:

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6. Please use the space below to make any additional comments you wish regarding the Charter Mark

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XII
Total Quality Management Programme (TQM)

1. Please describe this programme.

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2. Please outline the main reasons for pursuing this Total Quality Management programme:

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3. What do you see as the main advantages of a TQM programme?

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4. What do you see as the main disadvantages of a TQM programme?

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5. Do you believe that your TQM programme has:

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6. Please use the space below to make any additional comments you wish regarding TQM.

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XIII
Other quality programme

1. Please describe this quality programme

2. Please outline the main reasons for pursuing this quality programme:

3. What do you see as the main advantages of this quality programme

4. What do you see as the main disadvantages of this quality programme

5. Do you believe that this quality programme has:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>Only in these areas</th>
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<td>increased the numbers using your facility(ies)</td>
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</table>

6. Please use the space below to make any additional comments regarding this quality programme.
### APPENDIX FOUR

#### INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. **The meaning of quality management to public leisure professionals.**
   - What does service quality mean to you?
   - Why do you think that this has become an issue in the public leisure industry?
   - When did you first become aware of service quality as an issue?
   - Do you think that quality will be a short or long term issue in the leisure industry and why?

2. **Initiatives used.**
   - What initiatives do you use to manage service quality with the contract/leisure facilities?
   - Why these initiatives?
   - What do you hope to achieve with these?

3. **Culture change within public leisure facilities**
   - What changes have you seen in the management of public leisure facilities in the past few years?
   - Why do you think these have occurred?
   - Do you think the management of public leisure facilities is becoming more ‘commercial’ and why?

4. **Management culture - questions for officers**
   - How would you describe the management culture in the local authority’s leisure service?
   - Why do you think it is like this?
   - How long has the Dpt been producing strategic plans?
   - What initiated the planning process?
   - Does the Dpt have performance indicators that assess management?
   - What do these cover?
   - How long have these been in place?
   - Why were these introduced?
   - Has there been a change in the financial planning and management of leisure in the past decade?
   - Why has this occurred?

5. **Management culture - questions for managers**
   - How would you describe the management culture in the local authority’s leisure facilities?
   - Why do you think it is like this?
   - What management information do you get from your quality initiatives?
   - How do you use this in the forward planning of your facility?
   - What has happened to staff numbers and structures in leisure management in the last 10 years?
   - Why has this happened?
   - What change, if any, has there been to staff employment contracts?
   - Is there any form of PRP in use in your leisure facilities?
   - Why was this introduced?
   - Is there a union presence within your leisure facilities?
   - How this changed in the last 10 years?

6. **Customer impact on quality management**
   - What change have you noticed in customer expectations of service quality in the past few years?
   - Why do you think this has come about?
   - What effect has this had on the management of public leisure facilities?
   - How do customers contribute to the management of quality within the facilities?

7. **The affect of government legislation on quality management**
   - Has CCT had any affect on quality?
   - How much competition is there for this round of CCT contracts?
   - In what way is this different from the first round?
   - Why do you think this change has happened?
   - Has the Citizen’s Charter had any effect on quality?
   - Has other government legislation had any effect on quality?

8. **Political influences on quality management.**
   - How would you describe your local authority’s approach to the delivery of quality services?
   - What role did members of the leisure committee play in the introduction of quality initiatives?

9. **Implementation**
   - Whose idea was it to introduce the quality initiatives?
   - How was the idea of quality initiatives first received?
   - How were these initiatives developed and introduced?


APPENDIX FIVE

CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

POLITICAL CONTROL

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<th>% in sample</th>
<th>% in population</th>
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<td>41</td>
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<tr>
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TYPE OF LOCAL AUTHORITY

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NUMBER OF FACILITIES

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XVI
### POPULATION SIZE

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### INDEPENDENT LEISURE DEPARTMENT

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### CONTRACT AWARDED TO:

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DSO</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management buy-out</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixture</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX SIX:

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS
DIFFERENCES IN CHARACTERISTICS BETWEEN POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The Chi Square test was used to establish whether there is any significant difference between the characteristics of the sample and the population as a whole.

TYPE OF LOCAL AUTHORITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Council</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Metropolitan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London Boroughs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borough/District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County/Regional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Local Authority</th>
<th>Sample (%)</th>
<th>Population (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Metropolitan</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Metropolitan</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London Boroughs</td>
<td>72</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borough/District</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County/Regional</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[
\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O-E)^2}{E}
\]

\[
\chi^2 = \frac{(7-8)^2 + (5-7)^2 + (83-72)^2 + (5-13)^2}{8 \cdot 7 \cdot 72 \cdot 13}
\]

\[
\chi^2 = 0.125 + 0.571 + 1.7 + 4.9
\]

\[
\chi^2 = 7.3 \quad (3df)
\]

Significance at 95% confidence: 7.81
Significance at 99% confidence: 11.34

No significant difference between the population of UK local authorities and the responding sample.

POLITICAL CONTROL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Political Control</th>
<th>Sample (%)</th>
<th>Population (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Labour</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservatives</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liberal Democrats</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[
\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O-E)^2}{E}
\]

\[
\chi^2 = \frac{(40-41)^2 + (21-27)^2 + (14-13)^2 + (7-9)^2 + (18-10)^2}{41 \cdot 27 \cdot 13 \cdot 9 \cdot 10}
\]

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\[
\chi^2 = 0.024 + 1.3 + 0.08 + 0.44 + 6.4
= 8.24 \quad (4df)
\]

Significance at 95% confidence 9.49
Significance at 99% confidence 13.28

No significant difference between the population of UK local authorities and the responding sample.

**PEARSON'S CORRELATION**

The Pearson's correlation was used to establish whether there was any significant correlation between local authority characteristics and the decision to implement quality programmes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Pearson's r</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of facilities</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>Very low correlation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political dominance</td>
<td>-0.9</td>
<td>High correlation although not significant at 95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size of population</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>Very low correlation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management of contract</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>Very low correlation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independent leisure</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>Very low correlation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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