Can less sometimes be more? Integrating land use and transport planning on Merseyside (1965–2008)

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The integration of land use planning with other spatially significant policy sectors has been a longstanding aspiration and subject of debate in the planning profession and academia. The strategic planning of the 1960s and 1970s, for example, frequently aimed to promote a more ‘spatialised’ management of public policies and programmes. More recently, in the 1990s and 2000s the notion of ‘spatial planning’, popularised by international debates and new forms of governance and public management, has similarly placed an emphasis on the coherent management and coordination of policies and activities with a spatial impact. Achieving greater coordination between land use and transport policy has been a recurring theme in discussions on the integration of land use planning and other sectors. Informed by the context outlined above, this paper considers integration between land use and transport policies, plans, programmes and projects from both a conceptual and empirical perspective. It postulates the existence of a continuum model of integration between policy sectors ranging from ‘light’ to ‘deep’ integration and identifies barriers to and enablers of the achievement of effective integration. These elements are then used to frame and interpret evidence on the integration of land use and transport policies in Merseyside (UK) between 1965 and 2008. The findings indicate that effective integration is more likely to happen at the centre of a continuum between light and deep integration, with the implication being that deeper integration between policy sectors does not necessarily result in more effective integration overall.

Keywords: spatial planning; transport planning; policy integration theory and practice

Introduction

The integration of land use planning with other spatially significant policy sectors is an issue of longstanding interest to the planning profession and academia. The strategic planning of the 1960s and 1970s, or the ‘spatial planning’ of the 1990s and 2000s, for example, both aspired to coherently manage and coordinate policies and activities with a spatial impact. In England, for example, the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 sought to transform English planning from a predominantly land use focused activity into a more expansive form of spatial planning. This was held to imply the adoption of an approach that went beyond the British ‘land use management’ tradition (CEC, 1997) to incorporate a consideration and coordination of different public (and private)
activities with an emphasis on the functioning of space and making of places (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2005, p. 13). A corollary of this was the aspiration to foster a process of integration between the activities of different policy sectors and disciplines, resulting in policies, plans, programmes and projects that better supported each other (Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions [DTLR], 2001). This was deemed to be necessary to overcome a perceived fragmentation of the policy and plan making undertaken by different professions and institutions (Nadin, 2006; Vigar, Healey, Hull, & Davoudi, 2000).

The spatial planning approach, it was argued, therefore required integration between different disciplines (or ‘policy areas’ – Royal Town Planning Institute [RTPI], 2001). Yet, despite policy and academic promotion of integration as a key normative goal of planning processes, questions remained about how integration could be ‘made to work’ within existing institutional and organisational environments, and the extent to which success might be contingent on affecting changes in practice and organisational, and/or professional ‘cultures’ (Shaw & Lord, 2009). In the UK such questions are given renewed urgency by recent political changes. Since 2010 a coalition government has promoted a decentralised approach to local governance under the localism and ‘Big Society’ agendas (Communities and Local Government, 2010). This has modified the context in which policy integration in England is discussed and practised. The rhetoric of the government promotes localism and planning at levels such as the neighbourhood which are below that of the local planning authority and its legislative programme has abolished planning at the regional level. Some have argued that this is resulting in further fragmentation of decision-making structures which will increase the need for integration between increasingly isolated policies, plans, programmes and projects (Smith, 2013).

Within the wider debate on policy integration, the relationship between land use and transport planning (RTPI, 2001) has long been seen as a key inter-sectoral relationship in determining the organisation of places (Kidd, 2007). In both policy and academic studies, effective integration of these sectors has been perceived to be important in ensuring the accessibility of new development and provision of adequate infrastructure and services. In contrast, the consequences of poor integration, or non-integration, might be the development of inaccessible areas or increases in congestion (Banister, 2005).

Informed by the context and themes outlined above, this paper presents the findings of an investigation into the integration between the land use and transport sectors and professions in the Merseyside area of England. Specifically, it reports on the findings of an Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) funded PhD, which examined levels of integration between land use and transport policies and plans (and some programmes and projects), over four time periods, starting in 1965 and ending in 2008 (Smith, 2009). The research sought to identify ‘barriers’ to, and ‘enablers’ of, the effective joining up of land use and transport policies, plans, programmes and projects (Counsell Allmendinger, Haughton, & Vigar, 2006; Stead & Meijers, 2009; Vigar, 2000). Although the political and governance landscapes have changed since 2008, the findings of this longitudinal study remain relevant and have, we feel, important implications for how policy integration is conceptualised and practised in the context of the ‘localism’ and ‘Big Society’ agendas cited above. We also believe that the findings, though specifically related to integration between land use and transport policy areas, will be of interest to those working in other fields where integration is often viewed as an aspiration or a requirement, such as impact assessment research (Fischer, 2003; 2005).

The paper first considers the notion of ‘integration’ from a theoretical and definitional perspective. Secondly, attention is given to some of the barriers to, and enablers
of, effective integration identified in the literature. Thirdly, the methodology employed in studying the levels of integration between the land use and transport sectors in Greater Merseyside between 1965 and 2008 is introduced. Fourthly, the results of the investigation into the barriers to, and enablers of, integration in the area during this period are presented and discussed. Finally, the conclusion summarises the findings in relation to the study area and reflects more widely on what these say about the challenges, opportunities and limitations of pursuing greater integration between policy sectors.

**Integration: underlying theory and contributing components**

There are various planning and organisational theories that can frame a conceptualisation and investigation of the notion of integration. Theories which address the interaction of actors and partners\(^1\) in decision-making processes and episodes are of particular relevance (Noland, 2007). Smith (2013) identifies significant examples of these in the literature as including theories of (1) communicative action and communicative/collaborative planning; (2) organisations and management; (3) implementation; and (4) institutions.

Communicative rationality and communicative action theory (Habermas, 1984) explore the different forms of rationality that underpin the generation of objective knowledge in society and consider how consensus on societal matters can be reached drawing on a form of objectivity ‘based on agreement between individuals reached through free and open discourse’ (Allmendinger, 2009). Applied to the field of planning it has been seen to imply the inclusion of a wide range of stakeholders in ‘collaborative’ decision-making processes characterised by open and free debates (Healey, 1997). Such approaches are relevant to the pursuit of integration as they can be related to the effective interaction between different disciplines/sectors (Banister, 2005) successful integration is said to require. Likewise, organisational and management theories involve creating synergies by designing supportive organisational structures. Within planning, this is represented by holistic approaches to governance which rely on policy packaging (Givoni, Macmillen, Banister, & Feitelson, 2013) or networked governance based on collective decision making (Stoker, 2006). Implementation theories are connected with bridging the gap between strategy and delivery by including those responsible for the delivery of policies and plans (i.e. those responsible for subsequent programmes and projects) in the policy and plan-making processes (Hull, 2008). Achieving consistent aims and objectives has been said to be of particular importance in this context (Pressman & Wildavsky, 1973; Taylor, 1998). Institutional theory for its part looks at how institutions change and adapt over time in order to remain relevant (March & Olsen, 1989). In this context, increased engagement with other institutions to meet new objectives appears to be of particular importance (Stead, 2008) as is the institutionalisation of ideas (Smith, 2013; Vigar et al., 2000). However, institutions may also display a tendency to resist changes in order to protect their values and beliefs, in particular if contacts with another institution are felt to threaten their existence (Harris & Hooper, 2004). This provides one explanation as to why integration is sometimes difficult to achieve.

Regarding the main focus of this paper, whilst the four theories introduced above are of contextual relevance, they do not in their generic form explain what exactly effective integration is, nor how it might be achieved. Here, the hierarchal pyramid of integration proposed by Stead, Geerlings, and Meijers (2003) is helpful. This portrays integration as the pinnacle in an integration typology which identifies three degrees of integration, with coordination and cooperation being the two other layers (Figure 1).
The implication is that each degree of integration may result in different outcomes. Being at the top of the hierarchy, integration is supposed to result in joined new policies and plans. However, policies and plans are not always developed from a specific integration perspective, but may rather be based on coordination or cooperation. Joined-up policies and plans may thus be achieved in different ways.

This paper reflects on integration attempts in the Greater Merseyside area, a large metropolitan area in the North West of England, for four time periods since 1965. In this context, an important question to be addressed is whether integration attempts have been effective. Here, the following working definition of effective integration (adapted from Hull, 2005; May, Kelly, & Shepherd, 2006) is used: *Effectiveness of integration can be expressed in terms of the extent to which different policies and plans, as well as subsequent programmes and projects support each other. This involves a process of bringing actors and partners together in order to make their outputs consistent.*

Integration has been approached through various angles and consists of a range of aspects. These have been described by a number of authors, for example, Stead and Meijers (2009), Kidd (2007), May et al. (2006), Hull (2005), Healey (1998) and Eggenberger and Partidario (2000). The most comprehensive list to date has been prepared by Kidd and Fischer (2007), based on which the following four components were derived which we are using in the remainder of the paper for evaluating integration effectiveness: substantive integration; procedural and methodological integration; administrative integration; and sectoral integration.

**Substantive integration**

Substantive integration implies that policies and plans from different sectors follow the same ideas and principles, and that these are made explicit through consistent aims and objectives. Policies and plans, as well as subsequent programmes and projects can therefore support each other in substantive terms.

**Procedural and methodological integration**

Having policies and plans produced in parallel means information and resources can be shared. In this context, robust processes are needed, which may join at various points (Banister, 2001) or which may be fully integrated. Furthermore, methods applied and techniques used need to lead to results that are comparable. For example, simple summaries, such as comparable balance sheets and matrices could be produced for different sectors (Ravetz, 2000).
Administrative integration

Policy and plan making increasingly transcends established administrative sector boundaries (Noland, 2007; Stead, 2008). Administrative integration thus becomes a key feature. Administrations in this context may include neighbouring local authorities or different tiers/levels of administration (Barker & Fischer, 2003).

Sectoral integration

Understanding how partners from different sectors work together is a key consideration for integration. This involves considering similarities and differences of professional and working approaches of actors and partners with different professional backgrounds (Harris & Hooper, 2004; March & Olsen, 2005).

Continuum model

With regard to distinguishing between different attempts at integration, we introduce a continuum model which is supported by Stead et al.’s (2003) hierarchical view introduced above (Figure 1). The underlying idea is that there are light and deep forms of (both attempted and achieved) integration. This is related to the ideas brought forward by Beder (1991) regarding a green environmental spectrum. ‘Light’ integration here represents one end of a continuum where little is attempted or achieved in terms of integration and where policies and plans are produced in isolation, even if some cooperation may be intended. In contrast, ‘deep’ integration represents the opposite end of the continuum, where joint working is intentional in order to produce integrated policies and plans, as well as subsequent programmes and projects.

‘Cooperation’ here represents the light form of integration and ‘coordination’ is allocated between light and deep (attempted) full integration (Figure 2). An important question arising is where on the continuum integration may be considered to be most effective, i.e. leading to mutually supporting policies and plans, as well as subsequent programmes and projects.

Barriers to, and enablers of, effective integration

In the literature, factors that generate difficulties when attempting to integrate have been termed inhibitors or barriers (Counsell et al., 2006; Vigar, 2000). Those factors that are conducive to working towards integration have been termed facilitators or enablers (Stead & Meijers, 2009). To date, both barriers and enablers have often remained somewhat abstract, with elements which hamper and promote integration being portrayed separately. Here, we seek to overcome this duality and argue that for each integration barrier there might be an enabler, and for each enabler there might be a countervailing barrier. Identifying corresponding barriers and enablers in this way is also an analytical step towards identifying actions needed to overcome barriers and support enablers. Here,

Figure 2. An integration continuum.
drawing on the literature, barriers to and enablers of integration have been identified for each of the four integration types introduced earlier (Table 1).

**Substantive integration barriers and enablers**

Substantive integration barriers and enablers concern the aims and objectives of policies and plans, as well as subsequent programmes and projects. These will contradict each other if their core priorities are inconsistent. If they share common aims and objectives, however, they can lead to the development of consistent proposals. This still leaves open the possibility though that partners may interpret objectives differently, if details are insufficiently defined (Cabinet Office, 2000). Alternatively, if objectives are too prescriptive and detailed, it may be difficult to support them by policies and plans. As a consequence, contradictions may arise (Knox, 2003). Therefore, effectively integrated policies and plans are likely to require sufficiently defined, but not overly prescriptive aims and objectives (Cabinet Office, 2000).

**Procedural and methodological integration barriers and enablers**

Procedural and methodological integration barriers and enablers concern the running of decision-making processes, as well as the methods and techniques used in producing policies and plans. It has been noted, for example, that if policy and plan preparation processes are too drawn out they may struggle to achieve the timely resolution of problems, as these may change over time (Alter & Hage, 1993; Huxham, 1996). Insufficient skills and financial resources will hamper the integration of processes and methodologies (Kickert, Klijn, & Koppenjan, 1997), whereas

| 1 Integration type | 2 Barrier | 3 Enabler |
|--------------------|----------|-----------|
| Substantive | Inconsistent aims and objectives<br>Aims and objectives too broad<br>Aims and objectives get into too much detail | Consistent aims and objectives<br>Aims and objectives of sufficient detail |
| Procedural and methodological | Reaching and implementing an agreement takes very long<br>Agreements informal and non-binding<br>One partner/actor takes lead and monopolises<br>Insufficient resources available<br>Over-abundance of resources available<br>Course of action already decided<br>Ulterior political objectives/motives | Agreements are reached and implemented quickly<br>Agreements enforceable<br>One partner/actor facilitates processes<br>Appropriate resources available<br>Open and free debate<br>Political support |
| Administrative | Wider issues ignored<br>Wider issues covered in too much detail | Balanced recognition of wider issues |
| Sectoral | Poor relations between partners<br>Poor appreciation of certain issues<br>Lack of contact between partners | Good relations between partners<br>Good appreciation of all issues<br>Close contact between partners |

Table 1. Typology of integration and barriers and enablers to its achievement.

Source: Adapted from Smith (2009, 2013).
adequate skills and sufficient resources will support it (Alter & Hage, 1993). The presence of an abundance of resources, however, may generate considerable time delays due to too many partners formulating too many demands (Alter & Hage, 1993). Issues concerning weak processes, partner manipulation, and poor resourcing are also associated with ineffective integration. Integration may also be ineffective if a partner decides to act without taking into account the support of others (Alter & Hage, 1993; Healey, 1997). Generally speaking, integration will benefit from partners that keep to the agreements reached (Innes, 2004). Finally, the presence of a partner/actor who acts as a facilitator and who keeps the process on track would be an enabler of integration (Alter & Hage, 1993).

**Administrative integration barriers and enablers**

Administrative integration barriers and enablers relate to the consideration of policies and plans across different administrations. If these are not consistent, policies and plans may reflect a blinkered view and may fail to consider wider ramifications (Cabinet Office, 2000). On the other hand, there is also a possibility that policies and plans may concentrate too much on wider issues (i.e. context) and ignore locally specific issues (Kickert et al., 1997).

**Sectoral integration barriers and enablers**

Sectoral integration barriers and enablers concern actors’ and partners’ different sectoral norms and values. For instance, actors may fail to consider each other’s problems and dilemmas (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development [OECD], 1996). However, for integration to be effective, it has been argued that actors and partners need to listen to each other and accommodate important issues (Alter & Hage, 1993). Where partners have difficulty in communicating with each other (Cabinet Office, 2000) there may be a need for more regular communication (Huxham, 1996). In order for effective integration to occur, partners need to be content to work together (Halpert, 1982). Where partners are unhappy to work together (for whatever reason) this may lead to argument and disagreement (Alter & Hage, 1993). Conversely, appreciation of other partners’ problems and trusting relationships between partners will provide sounder foundations for effective integration processes.

**Investigating integration in Greater Merseyside since 1965: methodology**

As noted above the period from the 1990s into the 2000s witnessed much interest in joined-up policy and plan making. Yet as Banister (2001) observes, integration had been actively attempted before, particularly between the land use and transport sectors in the 1960s and 1970s. Recognising this, the remainder of this paper takes a ‘long view’ of integration between the latter policy sectors and considers episodes and instances of land use and transport integration since the 1960s, through an exploration of a series of examples from the Greater Merseyside area (Map 1). Since 1974, this area has comprised the City of Liverpool, and the surrounding districts of Knowsley, Sefton, St Helens and Wirral. While the district and city local authorities are responsible for land use policies and plans, transport policy and plan making (as well as associated programmes and projects) are the responsibility of a conurbation-wide Passenger Transport Authority (PTA) covering all five districts (Byrne, 2000). Between 1972 and 1985, Merseyside County Council
was responsible for strategic land use and transport planning in the area, but it was later abolished along with the other English metropolitan counties by central government with its functions being divided up amongst the district and city local authorities and the PTA which was titled ‘Merseytravel’. Since 1998, ‘Greater Merseyside’ has also included the district of Halton, which, unlike the other district authorities (Halton Borough Council, 2006), is a unitary authority with responsibility for both land use and transport policies and plans. For much of the latter twentieth century, many parts of Greater Merseyside
suffered from long-term high unemployment, industrial decline, environmental degradation and social deprivation (Liverpool City Council, 2000; Merseytravel, 2006; Sykes, Brown, Cocks, Shaw, & Couch, 2013). These issues are constant themes in the land use and transport policies, plans, programmes and projects that were examined for the period since the 1960s (Fischer, 2004).

A review of the academic literature on the development of integration between land use and transport policies and plans (e.g. Banister & Botham, 1985; Fischer, 2002, 2004, 2007; Hull, 2005; Kidd & Kumar, 1991; May et al., 2006), and an initial survey of transport and land use programmes and projects in Greater Merseyside led to a stratification of the 1965 to 2008 period into four sub-periods based on the underlying policy context of the time: the 1960s; the 1970s and 1980s; the 1990s; and the post-1998 era. This was necessary to understand the context in which integration was pursued, which changes over time (Morphet, 2009). For instance, integration was initially pursued for strategic purposes (through innovative new approaches in the 1960s and later formal structures in the 1970s) in an era marked by aspirations to technocratic ‘managerialism’ in local government (Harvey, 1989), but was then considered a solution in the 1990s period to the fragmentation which occurred in the 1980s following the abolition of the metropolitan county councils. Efforts at integration in the post-1998 era through spatial planning were made in an attempt to secure efficient joined-up decision making rather than for purely strategic purposes (Table 2). For each of the first three time periods land use and transport policies and plans, and some programmes and projects were analysed. For the ‘post-1998’ era analysis of the overarching plans and programmes was complemented by more detailed consideration of three case studies of plans/projects (see Table 2).

Data were collected, using qualitative research methods, including (1) documentary analysis of the documents listed in Table 2; (2) semi-structured interviews with key actors; (3) secondary data analysis on land use and transport planning in Greater Merseyside (i.e. the wider literature); and (4) participant observations by the second author of this paper during a secondment to Merseytravel, the PTA for Greater Merseyside. Data gathering focused on collecting evidence relating to the barriers and enablers introduced in Table 1 and on the perceived effectiveness of integration. Thus analysis of key Merseyside land use and transport documents was performed for each time period to assess the consistency of their aims and objectives, i.e. investigating what has been characterised as substantive and administrative aspects of integration (Kidd & Fischer, 2007). In the case studies conducted for the post-1998 period the review of area-wide plans and programmes was complemented by analysis of more specific case study documentation. To triangulate the findings and verify the conclusions reached on the basis of the documentary work, 10 semi-structured interviews were held with key actors in

**Box 1. Key stakeholders interviewed.**

Halton BC: (1) Head of Policy Integration; & (2) Senior Planning Officer
Liverpool City Council:(3) Policy and Strategy Manager
Knowsley BC: (4) Strategic Planning Manager
St Helens BC: (5) Principal Transport Officer
Merseytravel: (6) Senior Forward Planning Officer; (7) Corporate Relations Director;
(8) Chief Policy Officer
Merseyside Policy Unit: (9) Transport Policy and Programmes Officer
Merseyside Info Service: (10) Project Manager
Table 2. National policy orientations and Merseyside plans and projects in the transport and land use sectors from the 1960s until the 2000s.

| English land use and transport policy orientations and instruments | Merseyside plans and projects |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1960s Attempts at integration following the Buchanan and PAG (Planning Advisory Group) reports’ recommendations on integration between new land use and transport policies, plans, programmes and projects, and the emergence of professional cultures. |
| • Liverpool City Centre Plan (City Centre Planning Group, 1965) |
| • Liverpool Interim Planning Policy Statement (Liverpool City Council, 1965) |
| • Merseyside Area Land Use/Transportation Study (Traffic Research Corporation, 1969) |
| 1970s/1980s Attempts at integration under the auspices of the metropolitan county councils. The latter were created in 1972 but abolished in 1985. |
| • The Merseyside Structure Plan (Merseyside Metropolitan County Council, 1979) |
| • Merseyside Transport Plan (Merseyside Passenger Transport Executive, 1984) |
| 1990s Attempts at integration following the introduction of Unitary Development Plans and Package Bids which required integration between policy areas. |
| • The City of Liverpool Unitary Development Plan (UDP) (Liverpool City Council, 2000) |
| • Merseyside Integrated Transport Study: Steering Transport in the Right Direction, (Merseytravel, 1994) |
| • Sefton UDP: A Plan for Sefton (Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council, 1995) |
| Post 1997 Attempts at integration following the introduction of the New Labour government’s modernisation agenda which sought to join up governance and improve delivery through integrated plans, policies and programmes (PPPs). In the transport field this agenda was reflected in the 1998 Transport White Paper on an integrated approach to transport planning. Land use planning was also modernised notably by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 which promoted a ‘spatial planning approach’ ostensibly designed to promote more coordination of different public (and private) activities with an emphasis on the functioning and making of places. |
| **Merseytram**: A proposal for a light rail link between Liverpool City Centre–Kirkby |
| • Merseytram Line 1 SPG (Liverpool City Council, 2004) |
| • Merseytram Design Guide Line 1 – Liverpool to Kirkby (Merseytravel, 2003) |
| • Merseyside Local Transport Plan 2001/2–2005/6: Opportunities for all (Merseytravel, 2000) |

(Continued)
| English land use and transport policy orientations and instruments | Merseyside plans and projects |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| **Transport and Access SPD**: Proposal to harmonise land use and transport PPPs across all the Merseyside authorities | **Transport and Access SPD**: Proposal to harmonise land use and transport PPPs across all the Merseyside authorities |
| • Draft Transport and Access supplementary planning document (SPD) (Local Transport Plan Support Unit, 2007) | • Draft Transport and Access supplementary planning document (SPD) (Local Transport Plan Support Unit, 2007) |
| • Merseyside Local Transport Plan 2006/7–2010/11 (Merseytravel, 2006) | • Merseyside Local Transport Plan 2006/7–2010/11 (Merseytravel, 2006) |
| **The new Mersey Crossing**: Proposal for a new bridge across the River Mersey in Halton which will relieve congestion and open up new development opportunities | **The new Mersey Crossing**: Proposal for a new bridge across the River Mersey in Halton which will relieve congestion and open up new development opportunities |
| • Final Local Transport Plan 2006/07 to 2010/11 (Halton Borough Council, 2006) | • Final Local Transport Plan 2006/07 to 2010/11 (Halton Borough Council, 2006) |
| • Halton UDP (Halton Borough Council, 2005) | • Halton UDP (Halton Borough Council, 2005) |

Source: Adapted from Smith (2009).
Merseyside during 2007 (see Box 1). These covered the 1990s and post-1998 time periods and involved questioning officers about actions and processes. Further data were generated through secondary sources from previous research on land use and transport integration in Greater Merseyside, including in particular Banister and Botham (1985), and Kidd and Kumar (1991). These helped to investigate the 1960s and 1970/1980s time periods. Finally, additional information was collected through the participant observations of the second author, gained during a secondment to Merseytravel during 2006. This involved advising on the Sustainability Appraisal for a ‘Transport and Access Supplementary Planning Document’. Observations were made during meetings and through working with officers from each of the five Greater Merseyside local authorities responsible for spatial planning. The approach adopted was informed by readings on research design (Denscombe, 2007) and allowed for some systematic reflections on various interactions. The document analysis, interviews, secondary data analysis and participant observations helped investigate procedural and methodological, as well as sectoral aspects of integration. Furthermore, they informed understanding of substantive and administrative aspects.

Barriers to and enablers of integration of land use and transport: the experience of Greater Merseyside (1965–2008)

Informed by the characterisation of barriers to and enablers of integration outlined in Table 1 above, the Merseyside experience of pursuing integration between the land use and transport sectors in the 1965 to 2008 period was evaluated. Each of the four sub-periods was considered, with the fourth period being explored in more depth through the inclusion of findings from three case studies of plans and projects. Table 3 below shows the overall results which are now discussed in detail.

The 1960s

Three examples from the 1960s were considered: the Liverpool City Centre Plan from 1965 (the ‘Shankland Plan’) (City Centre Planning Group [CCPG], 1965), the Liverpool Interim Planning Policy Statement from 1965 (Liverpool City Council [LCC], 1965) and the Merseyside Area Land use/Transportation study (MALTS) from 1969 (Traffic Research Corporation [TRC], 1969). These documents were produced through creative innovation in that the people involved looked to interpret the earlier recommendations of the Buchanan report on traffic in towns (Buchanan, 1963) and the Planning Advisory Group report (Ministry of Housing and Local Government, Ministry of Transport, & Scottish Development Department, 1965) rather than follow prescribed processes. All of these were found to be examples of consciously attempted (deep) integration.

A number of barriers to integration were identified for this period. In relation to over-detailed aims and objectives, both the Shankland Plan for the city centre and the more strategic Bor Plan developed detailed schemes which were seen as vital to the functioning of the city (such as the outer rail loop (LCC, 1965) and an elevated inner-city motorway network (CCPG, 1965)), but which were subsequently dismissed by MALTS (TRC, 1969). Yet the influence of pre-decided courses of action could be determining, thus although MALTS identified what it evaluated as a better alternative to the Liverpool city centre loop and link rail scheme, it in fact recommended the scheme put forward by the earlier plans as considerable progress had already been made in taking it forward (TRC, 1969). Some issues were poorly apprehended and/or handled, for certain
Table 3. Summary of barriers to and enablers of integration in Greater Merseyside, 1965–2008.

| Integration type       | Barriers to integration                                                                                          | 1960s | 1970/1980s | 1990s | Merseytram | SPD | Crossing |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|------------|-------|------------|-----|----------|
| Substantive            | Inconsistent aims and objectives                                                                             |       |            |       |            |     |          |
|                        | Objectives are too broad                                                                                    |       |            |       |            |     |          |
|                        | Objectives are too detailed                                                                                |       |            |       |            |     |          |
| Procedural and         | Takes too long to reach and implement an agreement                                                          |       |            |       |            |     |          |
| methodological         | Agreement is informal and non-binding                                                                       |       |            |       |            |     |          |
|                        | One partner/actor takes lead and monopolises                                                                |       |            |       |            |     |          |
|                        | Not enough resources involved                                                                              |       |            |       |            |     |          |
|                        | Abundance of resources involved                                                                             |       |            |       |            |     |          |
|                        | Course of action already decided                                                                           |       |            |       |            |     |          |
|                        | Ulterior political objectives/motives                                                                       |       |            |       |            |     |          |
| Administrative          | Too little focus on wider issues                                                                            |       |            |       |            |     |          |
|                        | Too much focus on a wider issue                                                                             |       |            |       |            |     |          |
| Sectoral               | Poor relations between partners                                                                             |       |            |       |            |     |          |
|                        | Poor appreciation of the issues                                                                             |       |            |       |            |     |          |
|                        | Lack of contact between partners                                                                           |       |            |       |            |     |          |

Enablers of integration

| Substantive            | Consistent aim and objectives in PPPs                                                                       |       |            |       |            |     |          |
|                        | Aims and objectives of sufficient detail                                                                    |       |            |       |            |     |          |
| Procedural and         | Agreements quick to reach and implement                                                                      |       |            |       |            |     |          |
| methodological         | Agreements enforceable                                                                                       |       |            |       |            |     |          |
|                        | One partner/actor takes the lead and helps process along                                                    |       |            |       |            |     |          |
|                        | Appropriate resources involved                                                                             |       |            |       |            |     |          |
|                        | Open and free debate                                                                                        |       |            |       |            |     |          |
|                        | Political support                                                                                            |       |            |       |            |     |          |
| Administrative          | Recognition of the wider issues in balance                                                                   |       |            |       |            |     |          |
| Sectoral               | Good relations between partners                                                                             |       |            |       |            |     |          |
|                        | Good appreciation of the issues                                                                             |       |            |       |            |     |          |
|                        | Close contact between partners                                                                             |       |            |       |            |     |          |

Key: Did the barrier/enabler contribute to or hinder the achievement of effective integration in the period?

| Yes, clearly           | Possibly                                                                                                                                 |       |            |       |            |     |          |
schemes and policies encouraged the movement of housing and employment away from the city centre, whilst transport policies were promoting city centre accessibility (LCC, 1965; TRC, 1969). Political and financial opportunity structures may sometimes have driven policy making rather than evidence and analysis. Local politicians, for example, may at times have encouraged partners and actors to ignore evidence of socioeconomic decline, as they wanted to secure central government investment which was only available for growth (Banister, 2001).

Enablers of integration were also identified. In terms of the balanced recognition of wider issues, the Bor and Shankland Plans for Liverpool considered a range of policy areas including housing, employment, retail, advertising, leisure, conservation, environment and education (CCPG, 1965; LCC, 1965). The MALTS supported these earlier plans (TRC, 1969). Appropriately scaled resources were devoted to the land use planning processes (e.g. Bor, 1966) whilst MALTS cost £420,000 to produce (Hudson, 1973). Plans were produced and agreed quickly, for example, the Bor Plan was completed within 18 months (Bor, 1966), and MALTS in three years (TRC, 1969). It appears that there was a close working relationship between public and private sector actors at the time, for example, in developing the Bor and Shankland Plans (Bor & Shankland, 1965).

The 1970s into the 1980s

Two examples of land use and transport plans from the 1970s and 1980s time period were examined: the Merseyside Structure Plan (Merseyside Metropolitan County Council [MMCC], 1979) and the Merseyside Transport Plan (Merseyside Passenger Transport Executive [MPTE], 1984). These were produced by following prescribed approaches to plan making which were determined by central government following the Town and Country Planning Act 1968 (which introduced strategic structure plans as part of a two-tier planning system) and later the Local Government Act 1972 (which introduced transport policies and programmes). Overall, these were assessed to be examples of consciously attempted (deep) integration.

A number of barriers to integration were identified for this period. The timescales of plan preparation were expanding, with the Merseyside Structure Plan taking six years to produce and the Public Transport Plan taking a further four years to further develop its orientations on transport (MMCC, 1979; MPTE, 1984). Very detailed policies on matters such as bus fares were included in the Merseyside Structure Plan (MMCC, 1979). Again as in the earlier period, some predetermined courses of action and the political calculations of certain partners played a role in influencing the agenda. The planning processes were seen, for example, by some partners as an opportunity to promote the long-mooted inner motorway for Liverpool (Banister & Botham, 1985; Botham & Herson, 1980), despite the proposal conflicting with other policies concerning urban renewal and environmental improvement (MMCC, 1979). The wider context of the time in Merseyside, with challenges of economic restructuring and resultant social and environmental impacts, also played a role, notably in pushing the need to pursue economic regeneration to the top of the policy agenda. The priority given to (economic) ‘regeneration’ to an extent led to a less integrated and balanced consideration of other issues and an almost desperate desire to complete certain projects. An insight into the attitude of some at the time is given by a contemporary comment from Merseyside County Council suggesting that the inner ring road was: ‘an “act of faith” in Merseyside to assist a failing economy where virtually anything is worth attempting … to reduce unemployment’ (cited in Banister & Botham, 1985, p. 99). Wider contextual issues and urgent priorities...
(notably surrounding economic decline) were dominating policy agendas sometimes to the detriment of the kind of integrated and comprehensive apprehension of issues which had been to the fore in the previous period.

Enablers of integration were also present in this period. These include a balanced recognition of wider issues. The Merseyside Structure Plan was comprehensive in including a range of policy sectors which the Public Transport Plan also considered (MMCC, 1979; MPTE, 1984). At the time, plan making was supported by the availability of sufficient resources. As one interviewee professionally active during the period remarked, ‘at that time there was a large and well-resourced strategic planning department’ (Merseytravel Officer B, interview with co-author). The aims and objectives in the different plans were consistent; both recognised improvements were needed to road and public transportation systems, and that improved access to employment, learning and leisure opportunities was important to encourage regeneration (MMCC, 1979; MPTE, 1984). Agreements between partners at the time appeared to be enforceable, and generally speaking, relationships between partners were thought to be good with potential for a cross-cutting appreciation of different issues. As the interviewee professionally active at the time remarked:

everyone worked for the same organisation, in the same building, and if there was a problem, conflict to resolve, or decision made, then everyone was controlled by the same democratically elected members, and could present their views to these members to decide. (Merseytravel Officer B, interview with co-author)

Overall, as indicated above, there are some indications that policies and plans prepared during this time period were less effectively integrated than the examples from the previous period. For example, the broad, strategic structure plan contained detailed policy on how bus fares were set (based on the premise that they should be reasonable to government), which contradicted the later public transport plan (which promote the view that fares should be reasonable to passengers) and this allowed central government to force the abandonment of the popular and effective fares fair policy (Banister & Botham, 1985).

The 1990s

Three examples from the 1990s were examined. These include the Merseyside Integrated Transport Study from 1994 (Merseytravel, 1994), the Sefton Unitary Development Plan (UDP) from 1995 (Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council, 1995) and the City of Liverpool UDP from 2000 (LCC, 2000). All of these were found to be examples of coordination rather than consciously attempted integration.

Barriers to integration in this period included the inclusion of rather non-specific objectives in documents and the use of non-binding agreements between partners. As in the previous periods attachment to already decided courses of action sometimes hindered a more thorough reconsideration and alignment of land use and transport objectives and actions. For instance, the Sefton UDP promoted a legacy of various road schemes which seemingly did not support the Merseyside Integrated Transport Study (MerITS) as they did not improve access to regeneration areas or encourage a modal shift. Significantly, a public inquiry rejected the proposed Merseyside Rapid Transit System (MRT) trolley bus network and park and ride facility because of a lack of integration with land use policy (Local Transport Today [LTT], 1999). The very limited
availability of resources to support planning and project development processes was also cited as a cause of some delays in reaching agreements and launching implementation. As a transport officer active at the time noted, ‘if things went wrong, or there was a series of objections at any stage, it put the process back as there simply wasn’t [sic] the resources there to deal with that kind of issue’ (Merseytravel Officer B, interview with co-author). The same officer also alluded to the lack of contact between partners and a poorly coordinated appreciation of some specific issues, noting that ‘[we] were hived off into separate authorities … into different departments with separate responsibilities which were not coordinated’ (Merseytravel Officer B, interview with co-author).

Enablers of integration were also present in this period. Partners in the area had good relationships and there was recognition of the need for a balanced recognition of wider issues. This was underpinned at the time by a political recognition of the need to think strategically about land use and transport issues in the Merseyside area. As one senior councillor from a Merseyside local authority noted at the time, ‘the need for a strategy arose from a void in planning on a regional scale since the abolition of the former Merseyside County Council’ (cited in LTT, 1993, p. 7). There were also consistent aims and objectives between different plans and programmes. Thus Liverpool’s UDP and MerITs both attempted to invest in the transport network, reduce car parking spaces, and promote a range of transport modes to encourage a modal shift away from car usage (LCC, 2000; Merseytravel, 1994).

**Post 1998**

The post-1998 period was approached by conducting three case studies of plans/projects – the ‘Merseytram’ scheme, the ‘Transport and Access – Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)’ (Local Transport Plan Support Unit, 2007), and the new ‘Mersey Crossing’ bridge project.

**Merseytram**

In examining the Merseytram project (Map 2), three documents were examined and interviews were conducted with selected actors involved in developing the project. The documents reviewed included the Merseyside Local Transport Plan 2001/2–2005/6 from 2000 (Merseytravel, 2000), The Merseytram Design Guide Line 1 – Liverpool to Kirkby from 2003 (Merseytravel, 2003) and the Merseytram Line 1 Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) from 2004 (LCC, 2004). Overall, the Merseytram project can be seen as an example of attempted coordination of activities rather than conscious integration.

There were a number of barriers to integration experienced during the development of the project. As in previous periods, predetermined courses of action sometimes affected the pursuit of integration and partners had difficulty debating detailed issues once strategic elements were completed (Hernon & Coligan, 2005). Conversely, the non-binding and flexible nature of elements of the land use planning framework also posed some challenges. For example, in Liverpool ‘the City Council said they would not do a Section 106 with developers [as set out in the SPGs]’ (Merseytravel Officer D, interview with co-author). In other words, Liverpool City Council would not use its statutory land use powers to secure contributions from developers to support the tram project despite this being set out as policy in relevant SPG documents. This placed Merseytravel in a difficult position in responding to Department for Transport enquiries regarding how much had been secured in developer contributions to support the...
Merseytram scheme. From the land use planning perspective, however, there was a sense that other partners may sometimes have had a poor appreciation of the issues involved in operating the statutory land use planning system. Thus one land use planning actor noted that ‘we were always pulling Merseytravel back to government guidance on reasonability and the extent of s106 agreements’ (Merseyside Planning Officer A, interview with co-author).

Wider political considerations and inter-partner relations also acted as barriers to integration. One actor involved at the time commented that ‘some in the City Council were actively trying to undermine Merseytram’ (Merseytravel Officer D, interview with co-author). The present paper is not the place to consider in detail the controversies surrounding the failure of the project, notably the widely reported allegations that the Chief Executive of Liverpool City Council and a small group of ‘rogue’ council officers actively undermined the project in briefings to the Department for Transport (DfT) (Bartlett, 2008). For our purposes, it is the evidence of how the inconsistent positions adopted by different partners acted as a barrier to successful integration which is of interest. The significance of this is underlined by the fact that the evidence also suggested that the overall objectives of documents relating to the project were generally consistent if rather non-specific and that it was at the level of detailed issues that inconsistencies occurred. As noted by one respondent however, this was to be expected with a large, detailed and complex scheme (Merseyside Planning Officer A, interview with co-author).

Despite the presence of numerous barriers to integration and the final failure of the Merseytram scheme, our investigation identified a range of enablers of integration. A key enabler was the role of one partner taking the lead in a positive way. Merseytravel went to great lengths to support Merseytram and through proactive engagement, negotiation and information campaigns achieved successes such as a reduction in the number of objections to the scheme at the Line 1 Public Inquiry (Merseytravel Officer D, interview with co-author). The availability of sufficient resources to support the development of the scheme was also perceived to be an enabler of effective integration. Merseytravel completed survey work which reduced the risks associated with Line 1’s development and overall spent £70 million of its own funds in developing Merseytram (Audit Commission, 2008). An ability to reach agreements quickly was also a feature of the scheme. The Public Inquiry into Line 1 was held 18 months after in principle approval and was highlighted in the Eddington Transport Study (Eddington, 2006) as a best practice example. Furthermore it seems that, despite the issues discussed above in relation to barriers, inter-partner relationships were good overall. Indeed at the level of individual actors one interviewee noted that ‘City Council officers involved on a day to day basis were always very helpful, and [would] go that extra mile … local politicians were also very supportive’ (Merseytravel Officer D, interview with co-author). It was reported too that there were good contacts between actors and that integration benefited from a number of inter-partner working groups which focused on different elements of the scheme (e.g. land use planning, highways, urban design) and met frequently (up to once a week) (Merseyside Planning Officer D, interview with co-author).

Overall, the Merseytram project can be seen as an example of attempted coordination of activities rather than of conscious integration.

Merseyside Transport and Access Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

With regard to the Transport and Access Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), two documents were examined, namely the Draft Merseyside Local Transport Plan
Overall, the SPD was found to be an example of attempted coordination of activities rather than consciously attempted integration.

A number of barriers to integration were identified. These included the presence of non-binding agreements which introduced uncertainty into processes. For example, one local authority refused to honour the agreed limit of one to one-and-a-half car parking spaces in new dwellings and set its own limit of two spaces (participant observation by co-author). As one transport officer noted, ‘in most cases agreements are followed up, but … you don’t know what is going to happen’ (Merseytravel Officer A, interview with co-author). Ironically, an apparent abundance of resources available to support the preparation of the SPD might have contributed to a slow process overall. As one interviewee noted, ‘more staff time and expertise with different views is [being] put into this SPD, so you end up with a better document, but you pay for it with the time it takes’ (Merseyside Planning Officer C, interview with co-author). Delays may also have been the result of a lack of contact between partners with local authority partners not always attending the SPD working group’s meetings (participant observation by co-author). There may at times have been too little focus on wider issues, and other policy sectors were not explicitly considered during SPD production (participant observation by co-author). There also seemed to be some ambiguities arising from the objectives of plans, being unspecific or interpreted differently. Thus one planning officer expressed a view that ‘the LTP says this SPD is about getting development in the right place, and it’s not.
Instead, it’s about securing measures from development’ (Merseyside Planning Officer C, interview with co-author).

The research also indicated that there were a number of enablers of integration during the preparation of the SPD. Good relationships between partners were cited, with one interviewee noting how ‘there has always been strong partnership work within Merseyside’ (Merseytravel Officer C, interview with co-author). The value of partnership working in fostering open and free debate was also noted, with one interviewee commenting that ‘there is more debate and questioning than if we had done it ourselves’ (Merseyside Planning Officer C, interview with co-author).

Overall, the SPD was categorised as an example of an attempted coordination of activities rather than consciously attempted integration.

**New Mersey Crossing**

Regarding the new Mersey Crossing bridge project in the Halton area of Greater Merseyside (Figure 3), two policies/plans were examined, namely the Halton Local Transport Plan 2006/7 to 2010/11 from 2006 (Halton Borough Council, 2006) and the Halton UDP from 2005 (Halton Borough Council, 2005). Overall, the project was identified as the most effectively integrated case of all those examined.

The effective integration achieved in the case of the new Mersey Crossing was connected with the existence of a range of important enablers that were of greater significance than any barriers. These included good relations and close contacts between actors. As noted by a Halton Borough Council (BC) Planning Officer in relation to a key transport officer:

![Figure 3. New Mersey Crossing. Source: http://www.merseygateway.co.uk/gallery/#!prettyPhoto[group1]/11/](http://www.merseygateway.co.uk/gallery/#!prettyPhoto[group1]/11/)
it is very useful that x is only in the office above us, so it is literally just pop upstairs to speak to him … its a lot nicer when you speak face to face, and can get out the documents, maps and photos and see ideas actually on paper, and this has been quite useful. (Halton BC Planning Officer, interview with co-author)

Another powerful enabler of integration is that one partner is taking the lead on the project. The Mersey Gateway Team is embedded within the lead partner developing the scheme, Halton BC, and consists of a small team of transport officers (Halton BC Transport Officer, interview with co-author). The project also benefited from coherent and sustained political support with one interviewee noting that ‘[the Mersey Crossing Group] is a close stakeholders group, comprised of nearby local authorities and business interests, which tries to promote the new bridge collectively’ (Halton BC Transport Officer, interview with co-author). Multi-partner support for the project seemed to be federated by a common perception of its economic benefits. This was encapsulated by an interviewee’s observation that ‘the new Mersey Crossing’s logo has the strap line “a bridge to prosperity”, so is about the economics’ (Halton BC Transport Officer, interview with co-author). Another factor was that sufficient resources were available to help build the case for the project with £14 million being spent to this end on consultancy services (Halton BC Transport Officer, interview with co-author). Finally, policies and plans were prepared expeditiously in part due to clear external (national) deadlines ‘the DfT has set the programme, and we are supposed to have all approvals in place within a period of 4 years (2010)’ (Halton BC Transport Officer, interview with co-author).

Overall, the project was identified as the most effectively integrated case of all those examined. This was connected with the existence of a range of important enablers that were of greater significance than any barriers.

Summary of experiences of integration over the 1965 to 2008 period

From the account above and Table 3, it is clear that the presence and types of enablers and barriers vary over time but that there are also strong continuities. For example, some enablers of integration which were present in the 1960s cases can also be identified as being particularly important in the 1990s examples. In general terms, barriers to integration seemed to be more significant in the 1960s, 1970/1980s and 1990s, but were less prominent in the recent cases. This is apparent, for example, in relation to substantive aspects of integration (Table 3). It seems too that the importance of relations between partners, a balanced appreciation of wider issues (and overcoming professional silos), the impact of preconceived ideas and already decided courses of action, and the time taken to produce plans, policies and programmes are longstanding issues relevant to achieving effective integration.

Leading on from these broad observations and informed by detailed discussions above, each period/example has been plotted below on a matrix consisting of an ‘integration continuum’ x-axis and a ‘perceived integration effectiveness’ y-axis. Connecting the plots, a bell shaped graph can be seen to emerge which reaches its highest point somewhere near the centre of the continuum (see Figure 4).

The 1960s and 1970/1980s examples were found to be located more towards the deeper end and the 1990s and post-1998 examples more towards the lighter end of the integration continuum. Each case considered from the post-1998 time period was found to be slightly more effectively integrated than the previous time periods, and so each of the cases moved closer to the continuum’s centre. This is because in the more recent
period enablers dominated and barriers appeared to have become less significant (see also Table 3). In the most recent example (the new Mersey Crossing bridge) more effective integration seemed largely due to Halton Council having a unitary institutional structure in which land use and transport policies and plans were produced by the same local authority. This differed from the institutional context within which the other post-1998 Merseyside examples were situated.

Figure 4 suggests that, overall, integration has become more effective over the study period in terms of how policies and plans, as well as programmes and projects support each other. Although integration effectiveness declined immediately after the 1960s, it appears to have since improved. Furthermore, recent attempts at integration in the post-1998 time period were found to be more effective than in the 1960s and 1970/1980s time periods. The analysis here suggests that this is because in the earlier periods policies and plans were overly detailed, resulting in inconsistencies. These problems do not seem to have been experienced to the same extent in the post-1998 time period. As the Merseytram example illustrated, however, broad consistency in the generally stated objectives of policies and plans is not always sufficient to ensure effective integration (or guarantee productive partnership working), at the level of complex and costly individual projects. It is also interesting to speculate what impact the post-2010 changes are making to the conceptualisation and practices of integration. If the decentralisation of the localism and Big Society agendas results in further fragmentation, we could see a return to lighter forms of integration and a potential reversal of the progress being made.

**Conclusions**

This paper has focused on integration between land use and transport plans, policies, programmes and projects. A review of the literature established that, whilst effective integration remains ill-defined and incompletely understood, there is a commonly held view that it can be considered to relate to the extent to which policies, plans, programmes and projects support each other (Hull, 2005; May et al., 2006). Building on this and the work of Smith (2009), the paper identified a list of barriers to and enablers of effective integration – i.e. factors that either aid or hinder the extent to which land use and transport plans, policies, programmes and projects support one another (Table 1).
Previous work has also considered how different degrees of integration might be differentiated and described; for example, Stead et al.’s (2003) pyramid of integration which distinguishes hierarchically between cooperation, coordination and integration (Figure 1). Informed by such work, an integration continuum was proposed, ranging from light to deep forms of integration (both attempted and achieved) (Figure 2).

The identified barriers to and enablers of integration and the integration continuum were then used to frame and interpret the findings of an empirical study of integration between land use and transport plans, policies, programmes and projects in Greater Merseyside in four time periods between 1965 and 2008. The results of this suggested that the degree of integration between land use and transport planning in the area had varied over the study period and that this could be related to the presence, absence and relative influence of integration barriers and enablers (see Table 3 and Figure 4).

The empirical findings from the four time periods also suggested integration was most effectively achieved around those planning processes and projects characterised as being at the centre of the integration continuum. Based on this observation, it is suggested that effective integration may be best supported when actors and partners work together up to a point and subsequently develop their own mutually supportive policies and plans. Policies and plans may thus be produced in the necessary sectoral and technical detail while not attempting to cover too many wider aspects. In fact it seemed from the findings that less integration was sometimes ‘more’ in terms of the pursuit of policies, plans, programmes and projects that effectively supported one another. This echoes recent findings in impact assessment research. For example, Tajima and Fischer (2013, p. 29) note how, though integration of different impact assessment (IA) instruments in England has ‘enhanced effectiveness to some extent, too much integration, especially of the procedural element, appears to diminish the overall effectiveness of each IA’.

In taking forward research on integration, if the normative aim of contributing to knowledge which might guide practice towards more effective integration is accepted, then important issues for further investigation are how barriers to integration can be overcome and how enablers of integration might be promoted. Here it seems important to pay attention to the ability of organisations to engage in change and adaptation through mature debate and processes. Organisational evolution and maturity can help in achieving more effective integration by overcoming some of the barriers and by promoting enablers. This is because organisational maturity involves changing and adapting pre-existing cultures through learning and knowledge exchange processes (Gazzola, Jha-Thakur, Kidd, Peel, & Fischer, 2011; Fischer, Gazzola, Jha-Thakur, Kidd, & Peel, 2009 MacGillivray & Pollard, 2008). For instance, cultural constraints can be overcome by actors using their experiences and knowledge to question their norms and values (Common, 2004; Kim, 1993). This is consistent with the continuum idea because actors are exchanging information while retaining distinctive roles within the development process. Subsequently, actors may be sharing information and have sufficient competence to integrate effectively and to work together for developing their policies and plans, as well as subsequent programmes and projects. This is associated with communication and a joined appreciation of issues. Furthermore, it can help partners recognise wider spatial aspects in policy-making processes, encourage an open and free debate and also help create consistent aims and objectives. However, while organisational maturity can help effective integration, it may be difficult to adjust the institutional architecture. For instance, barriers concerning enforceable agreements, time taken to reach agreements, lack of resources and ulterior political motives may not be effectively addressed through organisational maturity (Common, 2004; Vigar et al., 2000). This is because associated
changes can only be made through a democratic or legislative process and cannot be adjusted per se through organisational learning.

A reoccurring theme in the work on Greater Merseyside was found to be problems posed by the institutional architecture. The case studies repeatedly demonstrated how local government fragmentation and reorganisation have created many barriers to effective integration. As a consequence, it can be said to be questionable as to whether current local authorities are suitably equipped for delivering spatial planning; at least in the expansive ‘inter-sectoral’ way in which it was conceived in England in the 2000s. This is because individually they often lack the scale, remit and expertise needed for integration processes, and activities such as integrated metropolitan land use and transport planning require the involvement of several local authorities in order to generate a suitable spatial scale, thus creating further barriers to integration (Nadin, 2006; Stead & Meijers, 2009). It is of particular importance that there is evidence that it was the actors involved in integration processes in many of the post-1998 time period examples who made them work. This finding echoes Rogers’ (2003) conclusions on the diffusion of innovations within organisations in that individuals are required to challenge and work around pre-existing structures before new approaches are accepted and successful change is able to occur. This can also be observed in the 1960s attempts at integration which were developed by local actors using their initiative in interpreting review and advisory group findings to creatively produce new policies and plans which challenged previous approaches. However, relying on a few key determined individuals to deliver joined-up policy might appear somewhat risky. This is because actors do not tend to stay in the same positions forever, and when they move, integration can lose critical capacity and momentum (Smith, 2013). Likewise, actors may be unable to effect their plans as underlying and/or enveloping structures may prove to be simply too unsupportive. This can be seen in the Merseytram case where a central government decision prevented a locally devised solution from being implemented. While some of these issues can be resolved through sharing of knowledge and greater understanding by the actors involved (so to increase the number of key individuals), this will not correct fundamental institutional flaws (Kim, 1993). There thus seems to be a need for improved organisational infrastructure for supporting change and innovation if policy integration processes are to deliver a joined-up approach to policy making in practice.

Another key finding of the research was the importance of contexts and scales beyond those at which the studied policy integration processes operated, in impacting on the effectiveness of integration. In the English political system the heavy reliance of local authorities on central government (state) grant aid to support services and projects means that the national level can play a determining role in the outcomes of integration attempts at lower spatial scales. With this in mind, it is apposite to briefly note again the changes introduced by national government since the election of a new Conservative–Liberal administration in 2010. The language of ‘spatial planning’ and notions of inter-sectoral integration, or joined-up policy making, are now much less prominent. The emphasis is rather on greater decentralisation of decision making in planning to the local and neighbourhood levels and on greater engagement of non-state and civil society actors (the ‘Big Society’) across a range for spheres of public policy. At the same time as changes to policy scales and the planning system there have been extensive cuts to the budgets of local authorities who increasingly need to explore new approaches to policy making and delivery in order to improve efficiencies and reduce costs. Arguably, integration might be one strategy that local authorities adopt to meet such challenges. Cuts to public services might provide an opportunity to create the institutions and
processes needed to facilitate integration processes under the guise of public sector reform. However, there is a danger that integration can be perceived as a quick fix for local authorities’ problems, and as such the opportunities to make real substantive differences will be missed. The findings of this paper suggest that regardless of national pronouncements which promote or neglect policy integration, in practice, time, resources and supportive institutional and political cultures are the keys to creating the processes and institutional architecture necessary to making effective integration a reality.

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**Notes**

1. In the literature various terms are used to refer to those involved in policy and integration processes; for example, ‘partners’, ‘actors’, ‘stakeholders’, ‘communities’, ‘interest groups’, ‘sectors’, and ‘professions’. Here we refer to ‘actors’ (defined as individuals involved in integration processes), and ‘partners’ (defined as the organisations which employ such actors).

2. Since the mid-2000s increasing attention has been paid in England to the concept of city regions. In this context the Greater Merseyside area has increasingly been referred to as the ‘Liverpool City Region’ in policy debates and documents (Sykes et al., 2013).

3. For a fuller account of the method by which this segmentation of the time period was arrived at, see Smith (2009).

4. Despite repeated attempts, it was not possible to identify key stakeholders for the 1960s and 1970s/1980s time periods.

5. Criticisms of the length of time being taken to adopt structure plans, the level of detail they contained, and of metropolitan scale government in general were being voiced in a number of quarters at this time, notably in circles with influence on the then government. These contributed to the abolition of metropolitan structure planning and metropolitan councils in the mid-1980s.

6. A Section 106 Agreement is a provision of English planning law which enables developers to make in kind or monetary contributions in connection with a planned development. An ‘SPG’ is a Supplementary Planning Guidance note which forms part of the land use planning framework for a local planning authority’s area. They are a material consideration (i.e. carry legal weight) for development control purposes.

7. It should be noted that the examples considered for the post-1998 period were in two cases specific projects and in one case a specifically focused statutory planning document rather than a broader plan or framework such as the Structure Plan of the 1970s.

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