

# The Merton Rule

*A story of vision, chance, determination  
.....and a cat called Randolph*

## A Learning History Issue VWS - Workshop

*Nr. 1 in a series of learning histories on the  
subject of “Innovation for Carbon Reduction”  
in or connected with Local Authorities.*

**Oct, 2006**

**Margaret Gearty (University of Bath)**

*A jointly told tale*

**Based on the perspectives and recollections of  
Adrian Hewitt (Local Authority Borough of Merton)**

**with added perspectives from: John Malone, Josef Davies-Coates  
and comments from several participants**

### Document History

A learning history is never complete. Some however are more complete than others. Those conducted early in the series have been read more often, commented upon and in some cases have had perspectives added.

Those later in the series are freshly completed in time for the workshop and have only just finished the first checking stage.

The document history below gives an idea of where in the process this history lies. Though the workshop draws the line under this particular learning history, that should not be mistaken for the ‘history’ being complete. Much more could be added to each one.

Version	Date	Comments
Draft_v3	Nov 2006	Sent to Adrian for comment
Draft_v5	May 2007	Introduction added. Updated version (quotes checked)
Draft V2.0	July 2007	Sent to active reader 1
Draft V4.1	Oct 2007	Sent to Merton actors for comment
Issue V1.0	Dec 2007	Anonymised version Invitation to comment sent to 5 further actors
Issue V1.0	Jan 2008	Sent to active reader 2
Issue V2.2	Feb 2008	Input from participating readers More on Croydon’s role Picture of GLA visit Some amendments on early history Some real names Researcher comment on sharing this history
Issue VWS	Feb 2008	Final Workshop Version Includes further participant input

## **Note on Learning History**

### **What is a Learning History?**

This document is written in the style of a Learning History, an action research approach to learning that seeks to bring analysis and story together in a way that has value for those originally involved in the case as well as those seeking to learn from it. The approach was originally developed by researchers, Roth and Kleiner from MIT's Society for Organizational Learning and was further developed by Hilary Bradbury in her doctoral work (Roth and Kleiner 1998; Bradbury 2001). Roth and Kleiner coined the term 'learning history' describing it as a way to get past listing best practice and more into the '*thinking, experimentation and arguments of those who have encountered the situation*' (Roth and Kleiner 1998). The learning history has been used to good effect in many settings in the industrial sector (e.g. at a large US auto manufacturer) and the social sector (e.g. at The Natural Step).

A learning history has, to-date, mostly been applied within one organisation and in the private and NGO sector. By contrast, in this research, learning history is being applied across 5 different organisational settings within Local Government in the UK. The examples being charted are where innovative carbon reduction has taken place. They involve low-carbon technologies in some way. This Learning History then is just one of in a series. The individual histories may be partial – sometimes not fully describing all aspects of the innovation in question. However the totality of the series aims to paint a picture of how innovation for carbon reduction comes about across different contexts. It seeks to present this picture in a way that increases the potential for learning and action.

### **Differences from a Case Study**

A learning history is different to a case study in a number of ways. Firstly, as an account it really tries to get into the individual human story of what happened. It aims to present perspectives on a case rather than synthesizing several accounts into one dominant researched 'truth'. So the ups and downs of individual experience are charted starting with perspectives from just one or two people close to the case. Their accounts are not presented as definitive or authoritative. Naturally there will be gaps on detail; certain events will be emphasised - others maybe not. Over time I hope to balance and enrich that by inviting, comments and stories from other people who were involved in the case (see "Participating Readers" below). This multiple perspective approach is taken in the belief that human stories add accessibility to and demystify the happenings in a way that can be more empowering for the reader.

Secondly it is a multi-levelled account. Alongside the story that is presented chronologically, quotes are included from those involved, together with researcher reflections and thematic analysis. The purpose here is to create a lively account but also to derive a history that works at different levels. The thematic analysis that is

run alongside the story provides the potential for more conventional theory building to play its part in the research. Sometimes theory links are made.

Finally, by using an action research approach, particular attention is paid to there being value for the various stakeholders in the research. These stakeholders range from those directly involved in the original learning history, to those with a different set of similar challenges elsewhere who seek to learn from it, through to other interested parties including academic audiences or those working in entirely different settings who might also find insights in the history here presented. In short this is not extractive research and the learning history is not an 'output' but a point around which the research hopes to gather interested parties. With this in mind, workshops, online support and other forms of engagement are being considered.

### **How is a learning history produced?**

A learning history is described as a 'jointly told tale' (Van Maanen 1998) between outsider (researcher) and insider(s) (protagonists). Starting with a tangible happening or outcome, in this case, the Merton Rule, an interview is carried out with one or two people close to the happening. This is taped and transcribed. The tape transcripts are read through systematically twice and themes are annotated on the second read through. The researcher adds too any thoughts or reflections as they occur. Drawing on this annotated transcript and on other web-research and supporting materials, the researcher then develops a storyline that emphasizes a set of key chronological moments or phases. This account is then textured by presenting it alongside some of the key themes and reflections that have been identified together with some of the key quotes from the interview. This is a play with the form of presentational knowing<sup>1</sup> but also borrows from ideas of presenting a learning history (Bradbury and Mainemelis 2001; Roth and Bradbury 2008 (in preparation)) as well as some aspects of narrative inquiry (Connelly and Clandinin 1999). The history of the learning is presented in a way that hopefully allows further learning on behalf of the reader and *on the reader's terms*. The reader, be he or she the original protagonist (Adrian), an academic at Bath University or an environment officer seeking innovation in his or her own locale will have different learning agendas after all. We cannot encapsulate learning in a one-size fits all step-wise account.

### **Links to Theory**

Links to theory are made in places where it is deemed relevant. These are very provisional and relate to the theoretical territory that the researcher has been covering. They are mainly offered as an aid to reflection on the piece. A reader may wish to skip them if they break up the narrative. In the next stage of the research

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<sup>1</sup> Action research (AR) places a value on different ways of knowing other than the usual conceptual-theoretical knowledge associated with academia. Different ways of presenting knowledge via story, drama art and other forms of representation is a key element of AR.

some of these links will be developed more fully. Themes that arise directly from analysis of the transcript are tabulated at the end of the learning history. Some links to other learning histories might be mentioned. These will be more fully worked at the next stage of the research where common themes across the learning histories will be developed.

### **How to read this account.**

The intention of this account is to ‘invite’ readers into this learning history and to participate with what has happened. In the research, two particular kinds of readers have been identified to aid this process and some guidelines are offered below if you have been invited to read the learning history in this way.

The **active reader** is someone exploring the value and relevance of the History for their own learning. They are particularly invited to find meanings pertinent to their own context and experience. Read the account through being watchful of your own responses to the Learning History: Note any events, themes or reflections that seem to resonate or be familiar to your own setting. Note too anything that triggers your interest in some way. Preferably mark these up in some way on the learning history. Then, periodically revisit the learning history (weekly, fortnightly or monthly) and your mark-ups and ask yourself how the learning history came to mind or influenced your actions in any way in the intervening time and if so in what way.

The **participating reader** is someone who was been directly or indirectly involved in the history that is presented here and has been invited to comment.

A **direct participating reader** will have been directly involved in some of the events described in the learning history and, with their consent, may be named. You will likely have been invited by the researcher to add your perspective to the account presented here. Such readers might have many responses to the Learning History, ranging from thorough enjoyment through to outright dismay at how events are represented. Whatever it is your response is invited. There is no onus on these readers to check this account though factual corrections are very welcome. If you can add a story that fills in a gap, that adds to the drama, or that casts a different light on things described here then this is of particular interest. The emphasis is on adding perspectives rather than removing parts of the story. The learning history as it stands will not be reworked – however a multi-perspective version will be prepared which will include inputs from participating readers (in “more about” boxes for example). This will hopefully help to create a richer, more filled-out account. Those not mentioned directly, but nonetheless impacted in some way by what is described in the learning history are termed **indirect participating readers**. Such readers may well know of the innovation described, but will likely be less familiar with the more human story that lies behind it or have seen it presented in this way. They can offer an interesting perspective on what this innovation has

meant for them – or in the light of the learning history what they have found interesting or how it might have shifted the view they held.

In general the invitation extended to participating readers is more in the spirit of a group gathered sociably around a pub table recalling an event of which they were a part, rather than, say, a University debating team trying to determine the exact chronology of events or the importance of such events’ impact.

## Key

**Theme:** This is a theme occurring at this point in the history – may refer to themes in other learning histories.



These are 'Researcher Reflections' that are included through the learning history to draw out themes or point to interesting areas for discussion

### PRESS RELEASE

18 July 2006

These sections include third party information about the case that is in the public domain. The include press releases, website information and general public commentary.

This is a quote from elsewhere: either from the public domain or from another interview regarding the case.

A. N. Other 28.11.06\*

R: These are inputs from the researcher taken directly from taped transcripts.

These are quotes taken directly from interview transcripts. Where initialled they refer to whomever gave the perspective. Where not initialled they are from the original interviewee.

**More about:** .....Something in the history

**Related Section(s):** whichever section in particular it pertains to

**Time Period:** 2006-2007

**Added by:** a participating reader

This is an **extra perspective** on the story added by someone who has read it and is filling in a missing gap in the story or sharing their memories of a particular event of which they were a part.

## Important Disclaimer

This document was written by a researcher and is based predominantly on just one or two interviews with people close to the event/happening together with information available in the public domain. Its purpose is to stimulate discussion and learning about low carbon initiatives in or close to local authorities rather than be a definitive record. It does not set out to be an exhaustive case study that highlights all the contextual factors or ramifications connected with the example. Rather it intends to present to the reader an account that is accessible and understandable and hopefully resonant in a way that enables them to learn whatever it is that might be relevant to their own circumstances.

The author is aware that there may be different versions of the story given here as well as different perspectives on the overall example of innovation discussed. Such alternate or further perspectives are invited.

Finally there are actors mentioned in this paper who, in the story told by the interviewee, have played a significant part. Their actions are in places described and these descriptions are important to the learning history. As a default, 3<sup>rd</sup> party names are made anonymous. However where it is judged appropriate by researcher and interviewee(s), and this is often the case, consent is sought from some actors to use their real name. This is done in the interests of giving the learning history a reality as well as to acknowledge the part other people have played in what has happened. In all cases efforts have been made to ensure that those included in the story are handled with due care, respect and sensitivity. However readers should remain aware that descriptions pertaining to third parties are developed through the lens of the interviewee rather than via the third party themselves.

**For further information/comment or otherwise please contact  
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# The Case of the Merton Rule

## Introduction

In October 2003, the London Borough of Merton won approval to include in its Unitary Development Plan<sup>2</sup> a groundbreaking piece of policy stipulating that all major new housing and commercial developments<sup>3</sup> must have provision to generate at least 10% of their projected CO<sub>2</sub><sup>4</sup> emissions from on-site renewable energy sources. The policy, which subsequently became known as “The Merton Rule”, immediately started to make itself felt not only in Merton, but also in Local Authorities up and down the country, many of whom started to look at adopting Merton-type rules of their own. In 2005 Oldham is believed to be the second Local Authority to adopt the rule and was part of a wave of some 20 further authorities who made the Merton rule their own –some stipulating that not just 10% but up to 20% of the overall projected carbon footprint should be met by on-site renewable energy. This gathering momentum received a further boost when, in June 2006, a ministerial statement was issued stating that local authorities would now be *expected* to include such a statement in their UDP. At the time of writing (late 2006), approximately 130 of the country’s 420 local authorities are actively progressing such a rule.

## **PRESS RELEASE – Town & Country Planning Association**

[Full Press Release and Ministerial Statement Here.](#)

**FRIDAY 9 JUNE 2006**

## **WELCOME STEP FORWARD FOR PLANNING AND SMALL SCALE POWER GENERATION**

Yvette Cooper MP, Minister for Housing and Planning, announced a welcome and major step forward in reducing the contribution of new communities to climate change at yesterday’s TCPA/REA conference

The Government will now “expect all authorities” to put in place on-site renewable energy policies and is writing to all chief planning officers urging them to do so.

The announcement, which was followed by a formal Parliamentary Statement, referred specifically to the pioneering efforts of Merton and Croydon councils and emphasised that “It is essential that all planning authorities follow this example.”

TCPA Sustainable Development Policy Officer, Robert Shaw, said today:

*“Target-led on-site renewable energy policies hold the key to creating a market of more than a billion pounds a year while ensuring that desperately needed new homes make an important contribution to reducing carbon emissions.”*

The Parliamentary Statement can be used as a material consideration should local authorities receive challenges to developing Merton style policies.

Extrapolating from developments that are now triggering the policy in Merton, the projected impact of the policy when all Boroughs have adopted it, is in the region of £1.5bn/annum worth of renewable equipment such as photovoltaics/solar panels, wind turbines, biomass and so on.

The full impact of the Merton Rule is still unfolding in ways that could not have originally been foreseen. A relatively protected niche is coming into being in which emerging renewable technologies and the associated services and practices can evolve. The field is getting to grips with this, flexing and adapting and learning what best to do.

As a case, Merton immediately raises two interesting questions. What led to that innovative piece of policy getting into the UDP in the first place? And secondly, when it did, what led to it spreading and gathering momentum in the way that it did? The Merton case is now poised on the brink of folklore: what led it to this point?

This case study doesn’t so much try to answer these questions as to shed some light on them. It is based chiefly on an interview with Adrian Hewitt, principle environment officer for Merton, but also draws on desk research and phone conversations with Josef Davies-Coates who runs theMertonRule.org website and John Malone a project manager at ESD who works on projects with developers advising them on renewable energy. Some developers working with ESD are now directly impacted by the 10% rule.

<sup>2</sup> The unitary development plan, known as the UDP sets out the land use plan for a local authority. Updated every 10 years, it goes through a 2 year cycle of consultation before being approved by the Ministry of Planning. Once approved, the Local Authority gets its planning delivery grant.

<sup>3</sup> Major for housing developments is more than 10 buildings or exceeding 0.5 HA. For exact definition see <http://www.themertonrule.org/what-is-the-merton-rule>

<sup>4</sup> The original wording stated that 10% of projected ‘energy’. This however has now been changed to Carbon as this recognizes the additional carbon costs of grid versus local generation.

## Methodology for this Write-up: Researcher Comment.

I went to Merton in September 2006 to meet with Adrian Hewitt from the London Borough of Merton. My research was in its early stages and the main purpose of my visit was to scope out examples of innovation for carbon reduction and to research further into happenings at nearby Woking where the Local Authority there was well known for its innovative approach to reducing carbon. Quite soon into our conversation it became apparent that the Merton Rule was a clear example of innovation in its own right. It linked closely to a number of theories I was pursuing at the time (see next section).

The 3-hour interview with Adrian gave a rich and colourful account of how the Merton Rule came into being. Adrian is a storyteller and it was entertaining and enlivening to hear him describe what had happened in this way. This may be of more central significance than the mere fact that I had an enjoyable few hours as interviewer. The way he related his story was intertwined with the way in which he acted and thought about the world. As I listened I started to notice just how much the key elements of story (coincidence, drama and character) actually informed Adrian's actions and way of championing change....Did the man make the story or was the story making the man?



Figure 1: Adrian Hewitt standing outside the first development to comply with the Merton Rule: Willow Lane in Mitcham [photo: Adrian Hewitt]

This Learning History is presented in two acts: the first addresses how the policy came into being and sticks closely to the story told by Adrian. The second act is more speculative and draws on some theory to look at the processes that led to its uptake in other Local Authorities.

## Links to theory

I was immediately struck by how some of the themes coming out of the interview resonated with the theory I had been exploring in the previous months. The eruption of dramatic moments against a backdrop of hidden yet tectonic happenings in Adrian's lucid account seemed to be a perfect exposition of the Punctuated Equilibrium theory of change (Gersick 1991)<sup>5</sup>.

The processes influencing the adoption of the Merton Rule invite comparisons with Rogers' (1962) diffusion theory that looks at the diffusion of an innovation through early adopters through to the late majority. There appear to be strong links too with neo-institutional theory that contends that in any organizational field<sup>6</sup>, isomorphic processes will tend to make organizations all look the same as argued by Di Maggio and Powell (DiMaggio and Powell 1983). "*Once a field becomes well established*", they write, *there is an inexorable push towards homogenization*". Whilst the motivations of early actors in the field may be performance and innovation, at a certain point the motivations become driven by a desire for legitimacy. These normative and mimetic processes can lead all things to start looking the same. These processes can work to our advantage when seeking change for lower carbon emissions.

Finally it could be interesting to frame the Merton Rule, together with the resultant market that it is creating for renewables, as a Strategic Niche (Geels 2002; Smith 2004). Analysing it in that way may add to the understanding of how Strategic Niche's can be managed. These then were the theories that were informing my analysis at the time of interview and of writing the learning history.

<sup>5</sup> This is an evolutionary model of change originating in the field of evolutionary biology as a theory put forward by Gould & Eldredge. Far from being a slow ongoing process of improvement, they say, the evolution of a species actually takes place in rapid episodes of speciation from time to time which 'punctuate' longer periods of 'equilibrium'. Gersick then applied this idea to human systems at all levels. She introduces the notion of 'deep structure' which will act to retain a system's behaviour. However once that deep structure has been pulled out of kilter enough a radical, quick episode of change can result. Tampering with a system's deep structure may not seem dramatic, however it can result in dramatic change.

<sup>6</sup> By organizational field they mean "those organizations that, in the aggregate constitute a recognized area of institutional life".



## The Story: Act 1 – How did the policy get in the UDP in the first place?

### Scene 1: Let's just try this?

**When:** Early 2000

**Where:** Borough of Merton

**What:** Draft UDP is being prepared.

**Who: Eddy Taylor –**

Environment officer for Merton

**Steve Cardis –** Co-ordinator of Merton UDP

**Nick Smart –** Economic planner for Merton

As far back as 1998 there was a mindset to do something about low carbon in Merton. Not only was there a good awareness of the outcomes of the '92 Rio Earth summit, there were influences closer the home. The great strides that had been made in the neighbouring borough of Woking to reduce Carbon emissions were well known. The UDP co-ordinator Steve lived in Woking. He along with Nick - Merton's economic planner - and Eddy who was environment officer at the time were aware of climate change as an issue and keen to bring it to the table at Merton Borough Council.

An opportunity presented itself in early 2000 when the UDP came up to be re-drafted. Nick had the idea of putting something into the planning framework that would make the use of renewable energy compulsory on new

developments. Eddy supported this idea and drawing on his background in renewable energy worked with Nick to refine the wording of a new piece of policy. What resulted was a first prototype of what would later become the Merton Rule. It was an ambitious statement requiring that 10% of energy needs for new developments would need to be generated by on-site renewables. Steve supported this and together they took it to their management in Merton who, though wary, let it go forward. After all, the subsequent 2-year consultation process would surely weed it out.

RR

*This early history is sketchy. Adrian was not at Merton at this time. This description is his received history of events back then. Readers pointed out there were more stories to tell here – an additional perspective from Nick is now added at the end of this history.*

*Eddy and our economic planner kind of cobbled it together and they took it to Steve and Steve kind of went "ok it could look like this". Took it to our bosses and they went 'well, look hey we've got nothing to lose, we'll put it in...we know the government will tell us to take it out so whatever....' So [ ] we printed it up in the second deposit draft in 2000 and it went out for consultation for 2 years*

RR

*It's interesting how there was scope for experiment here. It was risk-free at this point. And there was precedent set by Woking. A healthy environment for innovation. There was also an unfettered network – a core group and supportive bosses – resonates with Woking.*

## Phase 2: Consultation – and Serendipity

**When:** 2000-2002

**Context:** Merton's draft UDP went into consultation. Various government agencies and planning consultants on behalf of prospective developers combed through looking for '*Elephant traps*'.

During the consultation period two parties raised objections to policy PE13 buried deep in Merton's UDP draft that had the fateful words "**require**...10%...on-site...renewables" in its phrasing. The first objection was from the Chartered Institute of Professional development (CIPD). They were planning to build in the borough and predictably enough they complained that the policy would be an undue burden. The second complaint was from the government office in London who argued that this was not a matter of planning and land-use; it was a matter for Building Regs. In other words it was out of scope.

At the end of consultation, as is normal procedure, these comments and objections were gathered together with the UDP and sent to an independent planning inspector who is selected from a pool of government inspectors.

As luck would have it the inspector for Merton's draft UDP was a forward thinking young New Zealander who not only dismissed the objections but positively endorsed the policy saying that if the UK wished to meet their carbon targets<sup>7</sup> the argument for the policy was unequivocal.

*And the chaos theory, we didn't get an old white bloke, we got a young New Zealand woman and she looked at this and she went about the CIPD (in a NZ accent) 'Ah tough, y'know, looked at the government office for London and said 'mmm forget it', and she sent it back!*

**THEME: Chance / No Grand Plan**  
Adrian mentioned 'the chaos theory' several times to indicate key moments when happenstance played a key role in the Merton Rule coming into being.

<sup>7</sup> This refers to the target to reduce carbon by 60% by 2050 as set out by the government in 2000

### **Moment 3: UDP Returns to Merton**

**When:** 2002

**Who:** **Adrian Hewitt** – now Environment Officer for Merton;

**Nick, Steve** and other people from Merton L.A.

**Eddy** has now moved to Croydon.

**Context:** The draft UDP has gone through consultation and been returned to Merton with comments from the independent inspector. Adrian, Nick and others from Merton are crowded around the large document seeing what policies have made it through.

*And Nick went 'what happened to that renewable energy one?' ---- She said 'if the UK is going to meet their Carbon targets then the argument for keeping this policy are unequivocal!' So I speed dialled Eddy and said you're never going to believe it – that policy which you and Nick and Steve cobbled together, the inspector said it's ok!*



*A victory moment but with no hero. Is this what post-heroic leadership looks like? Is the awareness of luck and the willingness to work with it a key condition for innovation?*

Though the inspector had told the team at Merton to “cool it down” a bit by changing the word “require” to “expect”, essentially she had given their proposed policy strong support. A new version of the UDP was redrafted and sent out for a final consultation.

This year long consultation would culminate in October 2003 when the document would go to the ODPM's<sup>8</sup> central planning office for final approval.

**More about: .....** Croydon starting to extend the rule to housing

**Related Section(s):** **Scene 3**, UDP returns to Merton

**Time Period:** 2002

**Added by:** Eddy (via the researcher, Feb 2008)

Croydon Council was the first local authority to produce and implement the policy on housing developments. A Croydon planner and I wrote the Croydon version of the policy as soon as Nick told me that the Merton Policy had been approved by the inspector.

### **Phase 4: Second Consultation & Active championing**

**When:** October 2002 – October 2003

**Who:**

**Adrian** – Environmental officer for Merton;

**Eddy** – Environmental officer at Croydon

**SB** – solarcentury; **Joanna Collins** – Green Alliance.

Excited by the success with the draft UDP, Adrian now started an active campaign to broaden the scope of this piece of policy. In the local pub he met with Eddy and discussed a draft wording that could be used more widely in other UDPs. With Merton's cycle 2 years ahead of most other Authorities, the timing was just right. They contacted their opposite numbers in boroughs around London and got '*this buzz going*'. The extent of support for the idea was a surprise. Many Local Authorities were keen to sign up and, in addition to the support at Merton, a key alliance formed between Adrian and SB from solarcentury (a business specializing in Solar energy) and Joanna Collins from the NGO - Green Alliance. They started to speak at conferences around the country, proselytizing this policy and reassuring other Local Authorities that they too could do this.

**THEME: Chance – Merton 2 years ahead**  
**THEME: Healthy core informal network – they are friends, transcend formal roles.**  
**THEME: Freedom to challenge at relatively low Risk**  
**THEME: Spreading of an idea.**

*So all these people did exactly what we did. They went in and said 'do it!', and I was amazed ... there were boroughs all over the country started, it was...it was...the tipping point it was starting to connect up and it started to spread out!*

This campaigning was done in the shadow of machinations from central office that the Merton's UDP would not be approved. At these same conferences key civil servants from the Central Planning Ministry were stressing that such a policy was illegal. It was a matter for building regulations. The debate was out in the open and until Merton's UDP got final approval from these self-same civil servants it would remain so.



*Though no grand plan, there was a keen awareness of the need to get some weight behind this policy. The confidence to do this came from the first success and the growing support network?*

<sup>8</sup> Office of the deputy prime minister.



### Phase 5: Synchronicity



Figure 2: Randolph (photo courtesy of Adrian Hewitt)

**When:** October 2003

**Who:** Eddy, Adrian

**Mr A. Plan** – Planning officer, Central Planning Office

**M.P.** - Minister for Housing & Planning

**Randolph** – Adrian's cat

**Dave SJ** – Councillor for Lambeth, erstwhile Labour Party colleague of Adrian

In October 2003 the UDP went to the ministry of housing and planning for final approval. The deadline for approval was the end of the month. If they heard nothing by then, then it would have been approved. However there was a growing sense that it would not be approved by the key civil servant there: Mr. A. Plan. With all the debate and argument that had gone on in the previous year, Adrian could envisage them gleefully putting the line through their policy. And yet, politically this did not ring true with the Labour party's current line on environmental building. Adrian needed to speak to the minister for planning directly to put the case to him. However he did not have a link to him that might give him such an opportunity.



*This passage was a lovely example of how Adrian was working with chance, intention and his informal networks. There was a sense of his knowing the capacity of his network – a bit like testing frozen ice.*

*"Now- the chaos theory again - this is where it gets spooky" .....*

In mid-October, Adrian's cat got in a fight and needed to be taken to the vet. There he ran into an old colleague and friend of his from Lambeth council – Dave SJ. When he asked Dave how he might get a message to the MP for Planning, Dave replied "why I'm having dinner with M.P. and the wife on Saturday night – I'll pass him your message".

**Synchronicity: "A meaningful coincidence of two or more events, where something other than the probability of chance is involved" – Karl**

On Monday the 20<sup>th</sup> of October, there was an e-mail from Dave. The minister would speak to Adrian on Friday afternoon at 5:30pm.

### Key Moment 6: A key phonecall

**When:** 24<sup>th</sup> October 2003

**Who:** Adrian,

**M.P.** - Minister for Planning

**THEME:** A key moment of agency for Adrian. He recognized this. Yet at the same time there's a letting go of intention in the face of action that seems to keep him steady..

In the phonecall with Adrian, M.P. laid his cards on the table regarding the issue. He had already spoken with John Prescott and Gordon Brown about it and whilst there was a concern for how it might effect development, he had a sense that the Carbon reduction issue was going to win through. However he needed a month or so to sort this out. When Adrian pointed out that they didn't have a month, they had 5 days, the conversation took on a more urgent tone.

In unpicking his account it seems that Adrian managed to speak very frankly to M.P.. There is a strong sense too in his account of them working *together* with this issue whilst keeping the formal power balance in tact. Adrian seemed to speak to M.P.'s own tacit knowledge of the political consequences of the policy not going through, whilst somehow maintaining M.P.'s own sense of power and position. Indeed at one point he seems to have invited M.P. to re-instate his authority, by alluding gently to the civil-servant-minister relationship. In a key exchange described as follows by Adrian, M.P. rose to this challenge by re-asserting his position of authority as follows:

*And I said to M.P. "If your senior civil servants pull our emergency cord and we come to a juddering halt you got a trainwreck on your hands and this is going to be embarrassing, - lots of these boroughs are radical LibDem boroughs who are going to scream that you talk big about Environmental building but you don't walk the walk"*

And M.P. says: 'Look - I'm the minister of State for Planning Agent - what do I do?'

So I say '*We get up from your metaphorical desk, go down the corridor, kick open this guy's door and instruct him to allow us have our policy*'

And then M.P. said: '*consider it done*'

RR

*Over and again there is a levelling of power in the way Adrian and his colleagues work. Whilst they acknowledge formal positions they work in a robust egalitarian kind of way that appears to have been quite central in getting things to happen.*

### Key Moment 7: Legal Precedent is Set.

**When:** Friday 31<sup>st</sup> October 2003

In the week of the 24<sup>th</sup> to the 31<sup>st</sup> of October the group at Merton LA waited on tenterhooks for news from the Ministry of Planning. Tension mounted as each day

passed. They were all too aware that the Ministry normally responds early in the week when the UDP goes through smoothly. Finally on Friday at 3:30pm their nerve cracked and Steve phoned the planning office. But there was still no news. At 5:30pm the deadline had passed. No news was good news. The plan was, by default, approved.

*....5:30pm we went 'Fuck it - we made it - set a legal precedent'. And that just kind of kicked open the door*

### **End of Act 1.**

*"Adrian deserves a lot of credit" for being frank and open and for following the common good"* Says

**Josef Davies-Coates** of United Diversity, a company contracted by solarcentury to run the MertonRule website. He goes on to say that though solarcentury do indeed stand to gain from the rule, it's really good to see how, at their regular meetings of the key players, the common goal transcends the business boundaries.

### Intermission: Reflection on Act1 & Moments of Agency:

It seemed that without a grand plan but nevertheless *with* a strong sense of purpose this group of people made something happen. I was very much struck in Adrian's account by how he and his colleagues worked with intentions and associated actions in a chaotic world of chance. I wanted to explore this with him a little more in the interview (see opposite).

It seemed to connect to our notions of 'moments of agency' on the project with ideas I was exploring at the time about intentional change. The conversation confirmed that they were keenly aware of what they were doing.

I reflected too that though there were key moments of agency (such as the phonecall or perhaps even the meeting with Dave at the vets) these moments were only made possible by the momentum that had been built up in the previous year. In their campaigning Adrian and Eddy had built a strong network of support from which they drew strength and leverage. It was no longer just about Merton's policy but about a dramatic change in planning and development across the country.

Their actions chime with the more complex, evolutionary models of change mentioned on page 12. In such a framework, their campaigning could perhaps be likened to the 'cumulative tampering' (Gersick, 1991) with the deeper structures of how government (local and central) works. Such tampering was sufficient so that when the key moment came along (the phonecall), Adrian could leverage it and so assist in creating an event that punctuated the equilibrium. Indeed the resistance of the central planning office is a classic example of system forces trying to retain a status quo.

*(mg) The belief is that certain moments are crucial. But I'm saying do you recognise when those moments are crucial?*

*(ah) Dyah! – Yes! Exactly*

*(mg) And with experience do you get to recognise them more.*

*(ah) Yes! Oh God yea. And from my point of view and from Eddy's point of view, it becomes our – we can monitor it – we've learnt to monitor it – we understood what we did.*

*(mg) yes! That's the impression I get that only with your experience.....*

*(ah) can you start to then think about it in the future. So I think kind of from, in my head, the tipping point was when I got a call from a reporter in the guardian who said I want to do a feature on this...ok, ooohhkay the Guardian, it's not the local paper ....*

*(mg) it becomes the story....*

*(ah) yes – suddenly everyone wants to do it, everyone wants to know you – Eddy and I – the two of us together and SB from Solar Century now we look like we have this group, we go to the football together, we go to the pub together, y'know, we talk about it and we keep ourselves level about it*

Finally there is something fascinating in the power dynamic between Adrian and M.P. in the phonecall. Throughout Adrian has got on-side with M.P., has carefully reinvoked his authority as minister, has danced some kind of testing dance — until M.P. trusts him enough to ask him straight out what to do. At that moment it is Adrian who is calling the shots, not the minister. This levelling of power is familiar: such moments do arise where a ‘boss’ will listen to one of his/her team. The quality of Adrian’s frankness together with his clear grasp of the issues seems to have facilitated the collaborative nature of the call. It is also as though M.P. asked not only for advice but that he needed to draw strength and support from Adrian to take on his own civil servants. Again the way this has been relayed by Adrian suggests he knew what he was doing.

### **Bridging Comments.**

" The introduction of novelty has been studied in great detail.

However, the adoption of novelty is decisive for society, not its introduction. Adoption is an active process, and has elements of innovation itself. Individual behaviour, organisations, and society have to rearrange themselves to adopt, and adapt to, innovation. In this sense, the introduction of a new technology is an unstructured social experiment" (Rip and Kemp 1998)

If Act 1 addresses the question of how such an innovative piece of policy should occur in the first place, then act 2 addresses the second piece of innovation – how it came to be so widely adopted. As early as 1992 (check), the successes of Woking started to become more widely known and people started to ask if they could emulate such success in their own area. As yet however no other Borough is considered to have successfully ‘done-a-Woking’....The comparison between Woking and Merton merit a separate essay, however I mention this here to highlight that though much effort is often spent trying to understand how something innovative happens, the spreading of learning from that innovation or good practice to other areas is often ignored or simply presumed.

And yet this is the measure of the reach or indeed the lifetime of that innovation and could be considered to be as difficult as the creation of that good practice in the first place. As Adrian said in our interview “*It’s the second date that counts*”. Rip & Kemp makes the point more dryly in the quote above when they describe the adoption of new technologies as an active process that is an innovation in itself.

Act 2 looks a little at the spreading of the Merton Rule – a process that is still ongoing. This section is necessarily more speculative as I have made more inferences from the data than I did with Act1. It is less a sequence of events and more a set of various characteristics and this is how it is presented.

## Act 2: Spreading – Fame and Folklore.

### Eager early adopters lined up behind the first innovation

It should be clear from Act 1, that the act of spreading learning from Merton and of building networks of support had been started well in advance of the first innovation occurring (i.e. Merton's UDP being approved). Indeed Adrian's image of several other Boroughs piling down the pipeline was key in enabling that first case to get through. This momentum that was created behind the policy together with the inflexible and time-critical deadline created a moment that was critical enough to force a decision.

But it was by no means over. Would the policy actually work?

In August 2004 a 4.5 Ha development in Mitcham Surrey was the first to be impacted by Merton's new rule. As Merton went on to now deal in earnest with the implications of the policy, which were by no means straightforward<sup>9</sup>, a wave of other Boroughs were looking at bolting Merton-type policies into their UDPs.

### Overlapping Phases with good communication between them<sup>10</sup>

From the account, it seems that Adrian and the coalition that developed adopted a 'championing' rather than a 'heroic' stance in relation to the Merton 10% rule. Clued up on the tipping point notion (Gladwell 2000), Adrian actively sought to work toward it, carefully choosing which conferences at which to speak, maximising their influence.

Their approach seems to have been very grounded and transparent. They must have presented their experiences in a very practical accessible way to other Boroughs. Despite their

#### From the interview:

**AH:** *It can make you heady, it can make you slightly heady and giddy with fame and glory and power and influence but in truth they're just copying what we've done. Because we're saying 'well it worked'. No developer has gone to a planning appeal. No-one has moaned – well they've moaned griped and complained, but we've made it work.*

**MG:** *Well sounds like there were 2 factors – you were willing to go around and proselytise about it but also it's honed in on a tangible piece of policy ...*

**AH:** *Yea – it's small and bitesized and not involving scary infrastructure. That's the elegant thing about it.*

<sup>9</sup> The policy was now getting exercised in practice – 'could off-site windfarms be used? (no), what exactly was the energy baseline on which the 10% would be calculated? All this needed to be addressed and worked through.

<sup>10</sup> Very reminiscent of points made by Garud & Karnoe in their account of Danish Wind

acknowledgement of luck – Adrian has a picture of Randolph at the bottom of all his slides – the success of Merton seemed attainable to other Boroughs on their own terms. No doubt this was partly because a piece of policy *is* so tangible, but also the practical and active campaign that supported it, seems to have played a key role too in convincing boroughs not so much to *copy* Merton but that they could make elements of its success their own.<sup>11</sup>

It seems to have been some combination of how it was presented, together with its simplicity that made it tangible and accessible to other Boroughs. As Merton worked through the issues thrown up by developers trying to work with the policy they could draw on a killer argument – it seemed to work.

### A support network

The support network moved on too. With backing from Merton, Croydon and in conjunction with Sharp, solarcentury set up a website ([www.theMertonRule.org](http://www.theMertonRule.org)) with information about the Merton Rule and set up workshops leading practitioners through the path from 'policy to practice'. Regular meetings continue take place between the key players who also readily provide information for any queries coming in about the rule. The desire to disseminate learning about the Rule is most definitely not a bolt-on feature – it is a central purpose of the group.

### Financial Innovation

I am not entirely clear on the funding structure for these workshops and so-on. Some does come from solarcentury whose partnership with Merton seems to have been vital. A quality of this case is that, in order to create the policy, no financial innovation was required. Honouring the policy will however indeed require financial innovation and models of ESCOs<sup>12</sup> as pioneered in Woking are now being reconsidered as a means of enforcing the rule at no cost to the developer or end-user. So in a curious way, the MertonRule which arguably was inspired by Woking, is in its turn inspiring further learning from Woking.

With the Merton 10% ruling we [renewable energy consultants] are trying to find a structure that works. The 10% rule has really brought the ESCO model right up the agenda again. People are looking again now at Woking.

**John Malone, ESD (Projects Engineer) 2007**

<sup>11</sup> **Themes:** Story, Ownership, Credit, Participation, Practicality, Pragmatism, burning intention to get a 'tip', continued networks of wealth, knowledge sharing, opensource model

<sup>12</sup> energy service companies

As Merton and other boroughs address again the challenge of “doing a Woking” and installing some kind of District Heat and Power (DHP), there is no doubt that financial innovation is a key element and there is some evidence that a traditionally wary sector is now more prepared to come on board with funding such schemes.

## Whose Myth is it anyway?

As the Merton’s 10% policy became more known in the wider public domain it was accompanied with an ambiguity over ownership of it. After all the mainstream policy being used by other boroughs was Croydon’s. These ambiguities may never have been resolved had not the Greater London (GLA), a larger body of which Merton and Croydon are a part, sought to claim credit. This perhaps propelled a further step toward folklore which was the coining of the term “The Merton Rule” to be used on the solarcentury funded website.

*The interesting thing about the 10% policy is, is, y’know, is it would have probably just drifted into history and it is quite intriguing but for the fact that greater London authority tried to steal credit for it! And this caused kindof like fairly amiable scrap... And they got really upset when solarcentury set up the website and started referring to it as the Merton Rule.*

Authority

Not only was the website called “theMertonRule”, the administrator of that Website entered “The Merton Rule” under Wikipedia where a debate broke out over the term and indeed solarcentury’s interests in promoting it. Only when an objective planner endorsed the usage of the term as common practice was the entry approved and “The Merton Rule” was officially acknowledged as part of a UK planner’s vernacular.

There will always be debate over who is learning from whom in this kind of frontier territory.

## Folk Heroes?

With a proven and, at least to some degree, acknowledged record with the Merton Rule, Adrian’s sphere of influence started to expand quite rapidly. He was invited onto various government and scientific advisory boards and was invited to start lecturing on an MSc at Begbroke in Oxford

*What Eddy and I have done over the last three years is.. begin...to negotiate our way through this to the heart of the establishment. So next thing you know they’re going to write planning policy guidance for climate change Okay – people come straight to us, the DEFRA people the DTI people*

in 2007.

Adrian seems aware of the distractions such broadening influence can impose. He refers a few times to the fact that this ‘can make you heady’. It seems he relies on his core group of friends to keep him level and there is a sense that this core group keep each other grounded in what their purpose is.



## First the Worst, Second the Best?

There cannot be another Woking. Nor can there be another Merton. There will necessarily be unique characteristics to these cases which come from the fact that they were setting precedent. It is a fallacy to try to exactly replicate something that was implicitly unique through being first.

The qualities of the second case are just as interesting as those of the first. Environmental champions in Boroughs could light on Merton's success and use that as that much needed backing and support to soothe their risk averse colleagues and managers.

The process of adoption of the MertonRule fits well to the characteristics typical of technological innovation diffusion (Rogers 1962). Rogers described an 'S-curve' of technological adoption from innovators (venturesome risktakers) to early adopters (social leaders) to early majority (socially connected), late majority (sceptical and traditional) and finally laggards (disconnected, fearsome). The 'S-curve' suggests percentages of each constituency, though it has been argued that far from being a smooth transition chasms can open up between early adopters (a mere 13.5%) and the start of the majority (Moore 1998).

Though it is not a technology, we can see how uptake of the innovative Merton Rule has followed a similar trajectory. Innovators (Merton, Croydon) have been followed by Early adopters (Oldham, North Devon,...etc.). No chasm appears to be opening between these early adopters and the early majority however. Support for the idea in Local Authorities seems to have been high. Figures from TheMertonRule website<sup>13</sup> suggest 38% of Boroughs are actively looking at the rule. When matched against Rogers' diffusion curve this suggests we are well into the Early Majority phase. On the other hand we should note that the Rogers' diffusion theory is limited in its view of an idea or technology 'diffusing' unchanged through the system. At each stage the Merton policy has not just 'diffused', it has actively been moulded and shaped. This was particularly illustrated by Croydon's early extension of the rule to housing developments but also applied to later adaptations of the rule that used slightly different wordings and set different levels.

**More about: .....** The idea changing not just 'diffusing' - Croydon

**Related Section(s):** Moment 7, Legal Precedent is set

**Time Period:** 2003

**Added by:** Eddy (via the researcher), Feb 2008

When first adopted, in Merton, the policy applied only to commercial developments (as Nick's remit was for economic development). Croydon started applying the extended policy in October 2003 (when it was at 2nd deposit draft UDP status), the first to do so in housing developments, even though the policy was not formally adopted in Croydon until 2006.

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<sup>13</sup> at the time of writing.

### **A key moment: Ministerial Statement.**

**When:** June 9th

**Where:** London

**What:** A public meeting

**Who:** Yvette Cooper – MP

Adrian and

Other members of a panel

It seems unlikely now that a chasm will open between the early majority and the late majority and laggards. This is because the momentum behind the Merton rule led to a ministerial statement being issued in 2006 that all Boroughs would be expected to include a Merton-style statement in their planning policies.

*Well I was sitting there on the panel drifting off. When there's a minister there everyone just wants to talk to the minister. And suddenly PW turns to me and says "What do you think Adrian?". And I say "I think it's what Yvette just said.. every planning policy should be expected to have a Merton style statement" ....and I added... "that is what you said isn't it Yvette", and she turned and said ... "yes"!*

increasing

### **End of Act 2**

### **Adrian's Reflection:**

Very close to the end of the interview, I said, I'm going to stop now, but I left the tape running and there was a real shift in the space – a long pause – and then Adrian slowed down and said very reflectively and haltingly.....

*It's interesting (mg: yea?)... because it's slightly unnerving when you think actually this is such an important issue and it's turning on ramshackle cottage industry, sort of semi-chaos theory sort of structure at the moment. ... (yes, mmmm) ... I mean..... how can it be, (yea) that, that y'know..... a handful of people like me and Eddy and SB and a couple of others – how can that have such an inordinate amount of influence on something which is that important. How can Allen Jones<sup>14</sup> have so much influence on, on this issue.....it's weird...y'know*

### **Researcher Comment: January 2008, Afterword on the story.**

This learning history focuses particularly on events between 2000 and September 2006. As the first in the series, it is perhaps the most 'naïve' in style – yet its narrative is one of the strongest. Since writing this and in the course of the subsequent research I have gathered a lot of comment from people in the field about the Merton Rule. These comments are varied: mostly supportive, sometimes admiring, other times wary or irritated but all unanimous as to its significance as a driver toward the increased use of renewable energy. The story of the Merton Rule continues too. In Autumn 2007, it was reported that, under pressure from the Housebuilders federation, the Merton rule was about to be scrapped or significantly reduced in scope in a forthcoming government statement (PPS). In a letter dated 10.Oct.2007<sup>15</sup>, the MP for Housing and Planning, Yvette Cooper said this was not the case though she did say that “*Merton Rules must be well-founded*”. In the letter she emphasized the government commitment to hit the new target for all new homes to be Carbon Neutral by 2016.

<sup>14</sup> widely acknowledged as having been central to the success of Woking and now has been recruited as CEO of the London Climate Change Agency (LCCA) .

<sup>15</sup> In reply to a letter of complaint from Prof. Peter Reason (my supervisor) to his local MP on the issue.

### Researcher Reflection: January 2008, Thoughts after a round of ‘telling the story’

In late 2007 this Learning History was sent to those who had been involved and named in it. The response was patchy. Some agreed quickly to be named; others had little time to respond; perspectives did come in - the tone however was less story and more explanation. One participating reader, Eddy, enjoyed it but felt the description of his role as co-champion in an earlier version didn't properly recall his more supportive role as expert and early pioneer in implementing the rule (see his comments below). Another participating reader, Nick, denounced it at first saying the early history was inaccurate; later he provided a crucial insight into that explained his misgivings (also included). I started to conclude and reflect on the fact that ‘inviting people in’ later to the story didn't work in the way I expected.

At the same time as a researcher I started sharing the history with people less connected with the case. ‘Active readers’ read it and were engaged by the story, One reported being ‘emboldened’ by it to take more action; another, a change agent in an entirely different sector was prompted by the text to comment thoughtfully on the challenges he faced. Another, a senior civil servant commented that though his interest was in health “it had lots and lots of resonances”. He went on to say ‘*You read the textbooks about how policy gets made – it'll never tell you about chance conversations down the vets*’. I presented the story to wider audiences including attendees at a sustainability conference and part-time MSc students studying responsibility in business. The response here was also very positive. At the conference it was a mixed audience that ranged from policy experts through to community workers. When I finished the presentation a little lady in her 70s, who had led community work on making a patchwork quilt out of recycled material, pushed back her chair and sighed: “*Ah Love – that was a wonderful story – I loved the bit about the cat*”.

Presenting to an academic audience the response was more searching as they questioned me on the instrumental nature of the research. If on account of this intervention, something is more successful, how then do I assure the integrity of the research – i.e. how do I ensure it's not being co-opted to a hidden agenda at the expense of someone or something else? This is a question I continue to grapple with. And it is one that applies to the representation here of one story and not another. How do I reconcile the fact that this story undoubtedly has value despite the fact that it is through one person's lens and that others close to it remember different details, and would emphasise different points?

For now I address this by seeking and welcoming additional perspectives even if at first they appear contradictory to the original story. I do correct factual errors and change the emphasis of the text sometimes but only if this leaves the original story in tact. The key point is that, tempting though it may be, I avoid playing a mediating

role over the ‘truth’ of the history. Rather I aim to place the perspectives side by side and exhort the reader to see the value in a multiplicity of stories rather than simply one where I, the researcher have quietly made decisions that are not transparent to you. The additional perspectives are sprinkled through the text and added below.

### Additional Perspectives

#### More about... Early ambitions and challenges pushing the policy within Merton

**Related Section(s):** Scene 1, Let's just try this

**Time Period:** 2000 - 2002

**Added by:** Nick (Researcher summary with quotes from an E-mail, Feb 2008)

In an e-mail shortly before completion of the Learning History, Nick explained some of his misgivings - particularly about the sketchy early history. To imply the policy was ‘cobbled together’ was, in his view, ‘*an appalling misrepresentation of the work and argument as well as the formal processes that I went through to get the policy accepted*’. Nick clarified some of the challenges he had faced in the very early stages of getting the policy into Merton's UDP in 2001. It had not been as supportive an environment as suggested: ‘*The "support" I had from colleagues in the planning policy section was limited*’. Originally he had tried to push this new policy through not just for commercial developments but also for housing. However he had little support and so he forged on with introducing the policy in relation solely to new industrial and business developments as ‘*this was a policy field in which I had some independent influence without first having to win the support of those officers*’.

He described the major barriers to him internally was getting other officers to understand:

*'a) that it was reasonable for planning authorities to demand things from developers even if they don't make economic sense to the developer*

*b) that unless you require a developer to do something which is not in itself economic he/she is unlikely to do it voluntarily'*

He went on to explain how this attitude started to change in 2002 when the UDP got through the first inspection. Its scope was broadened then to include all new commercial developments. However by then it was too late to get housing into the original statement:

*'When other policy officers at Merton started to recognise the potential of this policy instrument and began to climb on board it was too late to extend the policy to housing development. So we will have*

*to wait for the introduction of new policy in the Local Development Framework which has already been 4 years in the preparation. It is ironic that 10 years after I raised the possibility, the Borough will still not have a Merton Rule for housing to match the policy on business developments which was formally adopted 5 years ago. Such is the pace of land use policy review at Merton !'*

This highlights the significance of Croydon as the first Local Authority to apply the policy to housing planning applications. Nick went on to describe how he moved onto new projects in 2002 at which point Adrian formally took over from him. He confirms Adrian's active championing role in raising the profile and associated diffusion of the innovation that was to become known as the Merton Rule.

*With his enthusiasm and talent for promotion, and the focus on energy in his job description he has been able to devote a great deal of time and effort to "The Merton Rule" (his coinage by the way) and he is largely responsible for the current profile of the policy and the rate at which it has spread.'*

### **More about: My role in Championing**

**Related Section(s):** Phase 4, Second Consultation & Active Championing

**Time Period:** 2002 onwards

**Added by:** Eddy (via Researcher, Feb 2008)

My job in Croydon involved, among other things, implementing the policy on more than 100 approved planning applications (of these 20-30 have now been built). It was as a result of being first to apply the policy on domestic development and the attention this attracted, the greater experience Croydon had of applying the policy, and Adrian's publicity work, that I got involved in wider activity, speaking at conferences and contributing to lobbying efforts. Adrian was definitely much more of a publicity-lead than I was. If my and Croydon's contributions are to be represented positively but accurately, it would be around (i) personally providing more knowledge about renewable energy and its relevance to some of the other players in the story (ii) extending the policy to the domestic sector and gaining the most experience in its application at a very early stage (iii) based on this experience, speaking at conferences and contributing to lobbying efforts organised by others when time allowed.

**More about: Early Campaigning to go wider with the rule.**

**Related Section(s):** Phase 2, Consultation

**Time Period:** 2001

**Added by:** Adrian (via Researcher, Jan 2008)

This picture is of Sam Heath (then Greater London Authority Member), meeting some Merton schoolchildren at the Mitcham Ecology Centre on 22nd October 2001. When she came to Merton in 2001 Adrian was already seeking the opportunity to create the conditions for Merton-type rules to be adopted in other boroughs. He recalls saying to Sam, "*I want you to sit down with me and let me explain about this 10% policy of ours and why I need you to persuade Ken and the GLA to adopt something similar in order to give some psychological security to the individual boroughs beginning to think about emulating us...*"



(photo: Adrian Hewitt)

### More about: Campaigning & Coalition building by the Green Alliance

**Related Section(s):** Phase 4, Second Consultation & Active Championing

**Time Period:** 2002 on

**Added by:** Joanna Collins (via Researcher, Jan 2008)

As Head of Policy at Green Alliance, I was approached by Solarcentury's SB about the resistance Merton was facing from officials at the then ODPM (*office of the Deputy Prime Minister*) over their proposed 10% rule, questioning its legality.

I decided that Green Alliance was well placed to convene a multi-sector alliance of professionals in support of the Merton rule, and the Energy Entrepreneurs Network was born.

This network included professionals from local authorities and progressive building engineering firms such as Whitby Bird and Faber Maunsell, alongside renewable energy associations and NGOs.

On behalf of this network I raised questions at events attended by then Secretary of State for Trade and Industry Patricia Hewitt, and the Planning Minister M.P, coordinated joint letters to Ministers that were in turn raised by MPs in the House of Commons, and convened meetings with special advisers and senior officials at No10, the DTI and ODPM. The strategy was to persuade DTI to bring pressure to bear on ODPM to support local authorities in doing their bit towards the Energy White Paper commitments on renewables.


Finally, JK, the responsible official at ODPM, was asked to present to a Green Alliance seminar I chaired on the issue, alongside Adrian Hewitt of Merton and SB of the Renewable Power Association and Solarcentury. JK was persuaded to use this opportunity to announce that the ODPM would include text in the new PPS22 on renewable energy to encourage local authorities to apply the Merton rule in their Local Plans.

## APPENDIX A: Theory, Themes & Lines of Further Inquiry.

Though not proposed as part of the learning history style account given above I include this as a checkpoint of the current working themes that seem interesting. Included too are comments from Adrian on these themes.

Theme/Further Line of Inquiry	Description
<b>Comparison between Merton and Woking</b>	There is a sense that the MertonRule has replicated well whereas perhaps Woking hasn't. Is there more to this than the obvious fact that policy is easier to replicate and does not have the technological and infrastructural challenges of Woking? <i>AH: It's about LA day-to-day operational psychology</i>
<b>Learning, Stories and the mindsets of Protagonists</b>	There was a strong sense during the interview that how Woking was presented to some degree may have impeded how it is being replicated. <i>AH: Also how some of the key technical questions are answered – or not answered at all.</i> This line of inquiry brings in questions around the role of story, real and official in learning. This seems to bring us to question how modes of thought (like Bruner's) inform our actions and the learning from those actions
<b>Networks of Wealth</b>	There is a lot of talk about network. Yet what about the quality of connection. Adrian's network appeared very healthy and capable. What qualities lead to it being that way? Other networks I know, even when they're explicitly set up to work that way, don't seem to work like that. <i>AH: Partly because it's based on personal acquaintanceship and friendship – not purely professional networks.</i>
<b>Networks and Knowing what to do....</b>	There is a strong theme in Woking and in the MertonRule case of a person or people pretty much having a sense of knowing what they need to do and playing with tactics to do it. I can see quite a visual image of a network imposed on socio-technological regimes. With technology there is a 'head-scratching' uncertainty – very few people really understand the technology – i.e. connectors into <i>technology</i> lets call them technology mavens (e.g. Adrian mentioned one particular person he calls on for technological advice. Connected to them are a sparse population of those who can comfortably



	<p>interpret the technology - <i>technology adapters</i> (e.g. Allen Jones). And beyond them really are a whole bunch of people who don't understand the technology. It's not just technology it's how regimes fit together, it's how financial packages get put together – these are also skills of '<i>knowing what to do</i>' without which step changes cannot happen. I have a sense that not many really know do those that '<i>know what to do</i>' and the few that do rarely connect with those who have the '<i>power of what to do</i>'.</p> <p><i>AH: It's a collective mindset...</i></p>
<p><b>Simultaneous causal and system's thinking. The 'lady &amp; the hag' optical illusion.</b></p> 	<p>Adrian interview surfaced tensions between 'causal' and 'systems' thinking &amp; acting – tensions he seemed to experience himself looking at certain sections of transcript. These are to do with recognition, ownership and ego. What is the relationship between these two ways of being? Is he being pulled by different discourses? What does this mean? How does this impact on protagonists for change? Is this indicative of a broader mindset shift?</p>
<p><b>Post-Heroic Leadership – the narrative of success.</b></p>	<p>This relates to the previous point really. Was Merton a case of post-heroic leadership (Fletcher 2004). Is there a paradox of 'distortion' when a champion of success in one place is expected to tell how he did it? On the one hand he cannot say (in our culture), '<i>look I'm unusual – part of it is down to me</i>', and on the other he often cannot say '<i>hey – look a lot of it was down to chance</i>'. Merton and Woking had these qualities yet such insights will often be 'disappeared' from the narrative of success. (This links to needing a third party to find a 'narrative of success')</p> <p><i>AH: This is a battle between not being a monstrous egotist while on the other hand desperately trying to convey that key message that achieving things is invariably down to individuals – and in some ways "heroics".</i></p>
<p><b>Map diffusion theory and</b></p>	<p>Look at how neo-institutional theory and the theories</p>

<b>institutional theory</b>	of diffusion of technological innovation map the diffusion of other innovations (e.g. policy) in bringing about step changes in carbon emissions. What is the same/what is different? Link it to learning and earlier themes of healthy networks?
<b>My own role as inquirer</b>	What is the role of the interviewer in an interview such as this? What role does co-inquiry play? What does Adrian or others 'get' from the participation. How does my rendering of the data have integrity? How do I represent and not distort or 'disappear' my own role in the inquiry.
<b>Academy of Learning</b>	In the interview and other conversations (e.g. John Malone) there is a recurrent theme of how difficult it is to take learnings from one place elsewhere. Speaking to Adrian there was a lively piece of conversation around what an 'academy of learning' might look like. It's a fascinating line of inquiry to think how we could not so much seek new ideas as really accelerate change and confluence of agendas around existing ones. We surely need to learn new processes for recognizing where things have happened and how to describe them and perhaps make such a scheme self-funding. Methodologically – telling stories, and learning histories. In a way it is this line of inquiry that is what my PhD is all about.
<b>Step changes – punctuated Equilibrium</b>	With Merton and other examples of step changes it'd be interesting to fit them to the Punq-Eq theory of change to see how it matches.....
<b>Socio-technological Regime – Financial Innovation</b>	The perspective I get on Woking is it is much more about 'financial innovation' rather than 'technological innovation'. Both Merton and Woking could be mapped for regimes and then that could be developed to enable others to map their own regimes and find leverage points. This connects to many of the earlier points on learning and comparative case study....

**Figure 3 Wary list of further lines of inquiry (Including feedback from Adrian)**

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