

Abstract: Why did the Norwegian experiment with “sustainable towns” fail?

This paper addresses the question: Why did the Norwegian experiment with “sustainable towns” fail? Both the Government and the five appointed “sustainable towns” (ST) made a strong effort to succeed and the best planning expertise were available as advisers? The Government evaluation reports, the town reports and an earlier study by the author “*Kristiansand 1945-1995. An analysis of planning, implementation and results.*” are the main data sources for this article.

5 major towns in Norway were in 1993 appointed “sustainable towns” (ST) by the Government. The main goal of the ST-programme was “to develop models on how sustainable towns could be developed.” The full-scale experiment was closed in September 2000 with meagre results. The Department of the Environment (DE) has evaluated the ST-programme. “The most important result of the ST-programme was to exemplify how difficult it is to obtain a more sustainable development in a town”, was one comment in the evaluation report.

In this paper one of the five towns, Kristiansand, is explored in depth. The town with about 110 000 inhabitants has a fifty-year-old reputation of being a “front-runner” in town planning. Both politicians and planners in Kristiansand were very positive to become a “sustainable town.” Also the DE was keen to get Kristiansand as part of the programme, due to its reputation and record. Hence, the outlook towards success was soon established. Indeed, the DE appointed Kristiansand *the best of environment planning in Norway* already in 1996.

What were the objectives and results of the ST-programme in Kristiansand? A model on how to develop sustainable towns should be created, but after the experiment there is no model from which other towns could learn. The garbage mountain increases, although the households successfully sort waste. The car usage has increased both in terms of average trip length and number of trips. Public transport should be increased, but declined. The urban area continues to spread and the numbers of commuters are rapidly increasing. The city centre has been very attractively renewed, but the share of the commerce is sinking. On the positive side the evaluation mentions increased awareness, better insight, good plans, and so on. Of course, we do not know at this stage, what effects the plans and work done will have on the long-term development of Kristiansand?

Both central and local government were eager to make the ST-programme a success. Why did it go wrong? Of the many causes behind success and failure, the following dimensions are discussed: Firstly, the market versus planning, both at the national level and local level. Secondly, the different interests between the ministries involved at the government level, and effects of this at the local level. Thirdly, the different interests within the town political and administrative system, and lastly the different types of rationality held by politicians and planners.

Finally, a discussion on the need for government reforms is performed. Appropriate questions are: What tasks, finance and decisions are to be taken at what level? Can Top Down and Bottom Up approaches be combined in other ways to make better results?

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1 Introduction

This paper looks at land use and transport planning in Kristiansand the last 10-15 years. Kristiansand was by the Norwegian government appointed Sustainable Town (ST) in 1992. When the ST experiment closed in autumn 2000 the newspapers reported: "The sustainable towns are less sustainable". In this paper the ST experiment is looked into in two ways, firstly through the national evaluation and secondly through a case study of how the main actors in Kristiansand looked upon planning in the period.

A town's history is the very basis for the present discourse. It is crucial to have an intimate knowledge of the history to be able to understand the planning and the non-planning, and indeed the decisions and the non-decisions at later stages. The view from the capital Oslo is quite different than the local view, which may be transferred to the Top Down thinking. Is it this thinking and a lack of knowledge about local government, one of the reasons that the sustainable town experiment failed?

In chapter 2 the sustainable town experiment and some of the basic indicators on urban change like traffic levels, urban expansion and modal share for public transport, are presented.

Chapter 3 deals with the official evaluation of the sustainable town experiment. What were the goals, the instruments used and the results?

Officially the results were good, but the press claimed that the ST experiment failed. In chapter 4 we presents a case study done to answer the question: What did really happen?

The four research questions to understand planning in a real life context, which Bent Flyvbjerg (Flyvbjerg 2001) proposes, are in chapter 5 answered on the basis of the knowledge produced on the planning in Kristiansand.

Lastly, some tentative thoughts on more power to the towns are discussed. This is seen as necessary if sustainable towns shall be developed within the present system of local democracy.

2 Background for the Sustainable Town experiment 1993-2000

In this chapter we give some of the background and setting for the sustainable town experiment in Kristiansand. It is most important to know the present history to be able to understand how towns change. We have therefore listed some of the most important plans and issues in the later years, which form the basis for the conclusions drawn. In this paper we only look at one of the five appointed sustainable towns: Kristiansand, and at priority area one: Land use and transport planning.

Traffic and transport data is lacking in Kristiansand. Most of the data which exists is data derived from traffic models. In the following figure the traffic change in four of the Sustainable Towns and Stavanger are compared¹. The national travel surveys have a low confidence level when broken down on individual towns, but are the best data there is.

2.1 Transport in the Sustainable Town Kristiansand

The five Sustainable Towns set different goals. However, for the priority area - Land use and transport planning – all five including Kristiansand, should reduce car usage and CO² emissions by increasing the use of Public Transport (PT). This PT effort did not succeed.

The Sustainable Town is less environment friendly.

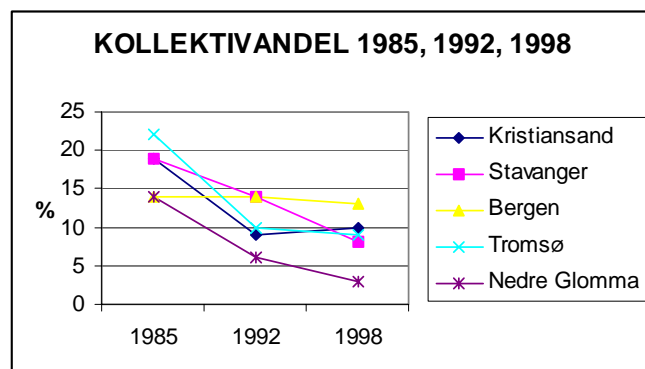
Good wishes and 100 million kroner was used – but the car usage has not decreased in the five Sustainable Towns Tromsø, Bergen, Fredrikstad, Kristiansand and Gamle Oslo.

”It is of no use to promote public transport when the roads in the towns are expanded and improved,” says project leader Kjell Spigseth. Plan 1/2000

The Sustainable Town project was started without a laid out scheme for evaluation, hence there is no *Before* study! The traffic data from the Sustainable Towns is poor. A mid term evaluation was presented to the Parliament in 1997, and the whole programme was evaluated in autumn 2000.

2.2 Public transport share 1985, 1992 and 1998

In all the five towns the PT share fell from 1985 to 1998. In Kristiansand there was already in 1993 a 30% increase in PT usage due to another experiment ”Kristiansandspakke 1” (see chapter 3.3). The figure shows a PT share of 10% in 1998 for the Kristiansand region.



¹ Data is a collection made by Civitas from the national travel surveys, and supplemented with data from Stavanger.

2.2.1 The mobility increases in Kristiansand

The national travel surveys show that mobility in Kristiansand increases. In 1985 every person Kristiansand undertook 2,63 journeys/day. In 1998 the number of journeys per day had increased to 3,34 journeys/day.

For the municipality this is 230 000 journeys per day and 85 million journeys per year, quite a growth from 1985.

Some main points are:

- *Traffic to/from Kvadraturen (CBD) stagnate*
- *Traffic bypassing Kvadraturen grow, 60% increase on Oddernesbrua 1980-1999*
- *Traffic east of and west of Kvadraturen increased with a third 1985-1999*
- *Traffic on the municipal borders doubled in the period 1980-1999*

2.2.2 The urban area is spreading.

The urban area continues to spread and the numbers of commuters are rapidly increasing.

*In 1999: 28,9 km² built up area²
population on same area 60.350
2088 inhabitants per km²*

*In 1990: 25,9 km² built up area
population on same area 53.414
2063 inhabitants per km²*

Change: Population 113, built area 112, inhabitants per km² 101.

There are two forces playing, one is the car driven expansion of the urban area and even more an expanding commuter area. The other is the market lead increase in density caused by high rise building and building former industrial sites and on brown fields.

Commuting one may note is a two way process: If one change job from own municipality and starts commuting to the town centre, one also starts another process. Someone fills the old job, and this new employee may commute from another municipality. Thus changing job or changing house may start complex processes of changes.

Further expansion of the motorway will increase the job market and the housing market significantly in the years to come. One must expect the Kristiansand commuting region to become a 120-km long and fairly narrow, only a few kilometres wide, urbanised stretch along the E18, popularly called "Agderbyen".

² SSB. Dagens statistikk 18.12.2000

2.2.3 History and earlier planning

The past plays an important role for the understanding of the present environment and the planning discourse. Major road investments have to a large extent formed the urban structure in Kristiansand. Some of the most important plans and projects which are fundamental to understand planning in Kristiansand, are listed below.

- Varoddbrua 1956
- Regionplan 1955/63
- The second crossing of the river Otra
- Generalplan 1969
- Sentrumsplanen 1978
- Varoddbrua 1992
- TP 10
- Jubilee 1991 - Kristiansand 350 years old

3 What were the real issues and the “realpolitikk” in Kristiansand?

The author has earlier studied the planning in Kristiansand³ up to 1995. It was therefore of interest to follow up and see the effects of the Sustainable Town appointment. This chapter is dealing with the official evaluation report from the Sustainable Towns experiment.

3.1 Introduction

Kristiansand was in the autumn 1992 appointed by the Ministry of the Environment in Norway to *Sustainable Town* together with Fredrikstad, Bergen, Tromsø and Gamle Oslo.

“The aim for the Sustainable Town experiment is to direct the development in a more environment friendly direction where the long-term perspective is to produce models for a sustainable town development.”

It was six priority areas for Sustainable Town:

1. Land use and transport planning
2. City centre development
3. Town dwellings and densification
4. Green structure, nature and recreation
5. Waste and recycling
6. Urban design and cultural heritage

³ Anders Langeland *Kristiansand 1945-1995. En analyse av planlegging, handling og resultat*. Agderforskning 1999

The Department of the Environment (MOE) which also was the project maker, has evaluated the ST-programme. *“The most important result of the ST-programme was to exemplify how difficult it is to obtain a more sustainable development in a town”*, was one comment in a report (Strand 2000). The full-scale experiment was closed in September 2000 with meagre results.

In this paper one of the five towns, Kristiansand, is explored in depth. The town with about 110 000 inhabitants has a fifty-year-old reputation of being a “front-runner” in town planning. Both politicians and planners in Kristiansand were very positive to become a “sustainable town.” Also the DE was keen to get Kristiansand as part of the programme, due to its reputation and record. Hence, the outlook towards success was soon established. Indeed, the MOE appointed Kristiansand *The best of environment planning in Norway* already in 1996.

3.2 The goals of the Sustainable Town experiment

The idea behind Sustainable Town Kristiansand (and the 4 four other towns) was both to develop a comprehensive approach for planning and administration, and models on how sustainable towns could be developed. The government clearly aimed at initiating comprehensive planning for sustainability in the towns, and indeed as an experience from this work, models to be used as examples for other towns should result. The government also gave the towns full responsibility for a successful result: *“the municipalities are to be the driving force and integrating the work towards sustainability in their own planning and administration.”*

3.3 Means to develop Public Transport

The transport committee in the Parliament initiated in 1990 a broad government exercise in improving PT (Forsøksordningen for bedre kollektivtransport). The counties applied for grants to the Ministry of Transport to run PT projects. For Kristiansand a series of projects were designed and put together in a comprehensive package to improve PT, “Kristiansand pakke I”. This was very successful and the number of PT passengers increased with 30% from 1990 to 1993.

Hence, when Kristiansand became a Sustainable Town, one wanted to follow up this success with a new comprehensive package “Kristiansand pakke II”. Locally both the town and the county financed their share. However, the Ministry of the Environment rejected to finance a part of “Kristiansand pakke II” and the same was the case with MoT. Locally, there were not possible to get influential persons like the local Member of Parliament, to lobby the government for a grant for “Kristiansand pakke II” (see chapter 5.1.1 for a discussion on this theme).

In sum the county and the ST Kristiansand put together the plans for an improved PT system, but were unable to implement the comprehensive plan or package, because central government did not support the plan financially.

3.4 The main MOE evaluation report

3.4.1 Background and organisation

The MOE evaluated the Sustainable Town experiment in several reports. In the main report it is stated: *“The main challenge is to change the course away from the car driven expansion of the urban areas.”* With this as the basic perspective, six tasks were defined. For each task a professional task force was set up to guide and advice the towns in their planning and implementation of projects.

The MOE sent out a letter in the autumn of 1992 inviting towns to apply to one of the sustainable towns in the programme.

The process was very much a Top Down exercise with the task force as the obvious authority. In one of the evaluation reports⁴ the process has been said to be Bottom Up. The planning process and the organisation of the work was designed to get close co-operation between the central and local government, meetings were held regularly and series of national conferences yearly. The design of the experiment seems rather Top Down.

3.4.2 Results?

From the MOE main evaluation report the results were:

- It will take a long time to change the course towards more sustainability.
- Key projects make the future vision more clear.
- ST is in the towns more ingrained both politically and administratively.
- A new policy for local community development was tried out.
- City Centre development was improved

Specifically for Kristiansand is mentioned:

- Co-operation between central government, the roads authority, the county and Kristiansand was formalised (Kristiansand pakke II, Areal og Buss)
- Town expansion was curbed and densification promoted.
- The market place⁵ has been changed from parking place to “the town living room”.

3.4.3 The MOE questionnaire

All five towns in the experiment were sent a questionnaire asking about the ST project. The questions were:

1. The most positive results?
2. Changes in the towns' way of organising the work?
3. Has the ST changed economic priorities?
4. What was difficult to implement and why?
5. Future ST work?
6. Demands to county and central authorities?

⁴ The Ministry of the Environment, 2000 Areal- og transportplanning. Erfaringer og anbefalinger fra Miljøbyprogrammet. Oslo

⁵ This was finished for the town jubilee in 1991, before the ST experiment started!

7. The most important experiences?

One may guess the answers! Of course the ST experiment were a grand success in all the five towns, even with similar results as Sustainable Town Kristiansand. In this paper we only look at the land use and transport planning and the towns answers may reflect successes on the other tasks, however it may be that the towns in their answers also had other and hidden intentions.

The town council executive in the Sustainable Town Kristiansand had the following answer:

1. *Greater insights and willingness.*
2. *The Environment committee was removed, and formal co-operation to improve PT established.*
3. *More funds to ST projects.*
4. *No reduction in car usage. Lack of funds to PT has hampered the work. Land use management difficult.*
5. *Develop a sustainable land use policy in the long term.*
6. *Consistent and adequate PT funding.*
7. *A very good example of co-operation between local and central government.*

The answer, which passed through the town political executive, is very positive. How can that be explained, with such poor results? Some possible explanations are:

The town wants to be polite towards the people who took part in the seven year project, and signal that the town is interested to take part in future experiments hopefully with some extra money.

The politicians and administration tend to present the positive side of things, and forget about the failures. It may also be the case that the picture the politicians had of the Sustainable Town Kristiansand basically was very positive.

Neither the politicians and nor the administration want to be associated with failure under any circumstances. That may influence the electorate and also questioning the competence of running the town affairs.

The politicians and the administration do have a common interest in always being successful. The same goes for the Department of the Environment. Does this influence the questioning, the answers and the presentation of the answers?

Lastly, representative democracy has a strong preference for avoiding conflicts and maintaining consensus positions⁶. A sustainable town development will threaten the existing consensus and may therefore be marginalized, as it became in Kristiansand.

⁶ Rydin Yvonne 1995 *Sustainable development and the role of Land Use Planning Area* 369-377

4 A study of land use and transport planning in Kristiansand

A qualitative study was done to look into the question: *How did the main actors at the town level look upon land use and transport planning and the Sustainable Town experience.* The key actors in Kristiansand were interviewed and their stories were quite different from the impression one gets from the government reports.

4.1 The study method

The study was a qualitative study based upon interviews with carefully selected actors, combined with document analysis of data from archives and the local newspaper Fædrelandsvennen.

Selection of persons to interview was done to get the key actors involved locally. In all 6 persons were interviewed. The mayor, the conservatives leader, the technical director, and the planning and environment chief from the municipality, and also the county planning director and the county roads director.

All interviews were open starting with a general question asking the interviewee to name the three most important land use and transport plans in Kristiansand after 1987 and the publishing of the Brundtland report. The interviews were taped and transcripts are made. Each interview took place at the person's place of work and lasted about one hour and a half.

To interview leaders and experts poses problems! Fivesdal sums up his experiences thus: "*one risks prepared lectures giving the organisations official view, and probing questions may irritate* " sited from Repstad 1994, page 68. Torodd Strand (1967) who interviewed the specialist planners and experts, when he studied the Oslo Traffic Analysis, gives similar points of warnings. Clever, eloquent and successful politicians and planners are able to rewrite history, and "facts" may be presented in many ways!

Thus this very limited study based on interviews, observation, news and documents only give a partial insight.

4.2 A different story

Interpretation of the results from the local study shows a completely different story than the official MOE evaluation. The main planning problem in Kristiansand the last 15 years was to solve the capacity problem on the main road, the E18. How should E18 be built and when? With the present state road programmes, E18 would not be built until 20-30 years had passed by, and meanwhile the traffic growth continued. This was overruling all other planning problems.

The planning process started early 1992 with talks between the mayor and the county road director, both new in their positions. The county roads director then designed the planning process, from start to the finish, and the E18 road implemented.

The roads directors story goes like this:

“When I started as road director I came from another place with clean sheets. People came to me and gave me advice and I went around and talked to people to get an understanding of the situation. It soon became clear that there was a lot of frustration of not being able to get the main road system solved. To me the problem had to separate parts:

- a) I had to get understanding and support in Vegdirektoratet⁷ both for the seriousness of the situation and the need for Road Tolls, and*
- b) Road Tolls had to be accepted by the town council and the necessary plans had to be accepted ending up with a Reguleringsplan for E18, so that we could build the road.”*

The road director then designed the whole process, where ample time was put in for talks and getting support from people both locally and centrally. *“We took the key actors in Vegdirektoratet down here so that they could inform on the latest road building techniques and experiences from other places. This was a very good learning process which went both ways!”* said the road director.

The start was a period of deliberations and a seminar at a Refsnes hotel at Byglandsfiord, with all the important stakeholders taking part. In this seminar agreement on the end or goal was reached, and support for the timing and the means to be used. Then the process went smoothly, apart from more than a years delay, when an alternative junction was forced into the process. *“That was the biggest problem in another wise very effective planning process”* as the county road director put it. Throughout the process the road director kept in close contact with the mayor and a small group of politicians advising on the process.

None mentioned in the interviews the Sustainable Town directly as one of the most important plans. Indirectly several took up the ST through land use policy, densification, PT, etc, but all interviewed had E18 as one of the major tasks!

To understand the lack of importance the ST had, the old saying “Follow the money” can be used. E18 costs 700 million kroner to build, while the ST used 10-15 million. *“Garnish”* the road director called rebuilding Dronningens gate *“we used some millions to make the street nice, it gave us a lot of good will.”*

“Lommerusk” the term for petty cash was used by the conservative group leader to describe the ST project in Kristiansand *“The MOE gives us lommerusk, and at the same time the Ministry of Transport cuts severely in the PT grant! We, the town and the county, have to put up a lot of money to follow up their ideas. That is not interesting!”* Thus the ST never caught on as the vision for the future among the actors or players with power, who were dealing with the big issues in Kristiansand.

⁷ Vegdirektoratet is State Roads Agency

4.3 Flaws in the Sustainable Town design

The government on the one hand wants a model for sustainable towns, and on the other hand the responsibility was laid on the towns. Thus the design of this experiment has major flaws. Firstly, the government must be speaking with one voice, which it did not. Secondly the government means must be co-ordinated and not contingent which they were. Thirdly, the government means must at the town level be relevant, appropriate and effective, which they were not.

One may ask if MOE who designed the experiment, lack an adequate knowledge about planning at the town level? After the experience with TP10 where many planners at the town level felt cheated, the confidence in the planning system was reduced. TP10 was an attempt to change from roads planning towards transport and environment goals. “*I really believed in TP10, but it became only words*” was the way one planner put it⁸. If several planners do feel the same about TP10, and this feeling is becoming more abundant after the Sustainable Town experiment, the legitimacy of public planning suffers.

The MOE fought a losing battle against other ministries when it was established⁹ and this losing battle seems to continue. The ST experiment may be costly in terms of reputation. If the Sustainable Town experiment gets a reputation and legacy of an “also run”, the quest for sustainable towns in Norway may have had a serious set back. The MOE should therefore reflect upon its own role and the effects of government experiments like TP10 and Sustainable Towns.

Festival Planning?

Our explanation of why ST failed may hide the real reason or hidden motive for the ST experiment. If the MOE has in most cases lost when up against the MoT or the Ministry of Finance, what can it do? Resort to Festival Planning is one option. The aim with Festival Planning is often to win the agenda in the media. By creating “noise” “happenings” etc, can the headlines be won? With a lot of media attention, it may be the most effective way to inform the public, influence their values and possibly change their attitude to become more positive towards Sustainable Towns? Was this a hidden motive for the MOE to launch the ST experiment?

Another effect of media attention is of course that environmental questions get more political attention, and with the political attention the MOE also gains!

5 The Sustainable Town is far away!

All indicators on how towns change show that we are moving further and further away from the goal of sustainable towns. The required turn round is getting harder for each day. Why is that, and is there nothing we can do?

Bent Flyvbjerg (Flyvbjerg 2001) poses four research questions as the way to understand planning in a real life context:

⁸ Intervju med plan- og miljøsjef Ø Holvik

⁹ Se Jansen

- *Where are we going with planning and democracy?*
- *Who gains and who loses, by which mechanism of power?*
- *Is this development desirable as I see it?*
- *What should be done?*

In this chapter we try to answer these questions. We look in the end at the central and local government and suggest some necessary reforms.

5.1 Where are we going with planning and democracy?

5.1.1 Power relations within the national state.

One often talks of the big and the small regional policy. In the big regional policy a fundamental cause for territorial change, is the economy at large and the division between sectors. The economic policy has tremendous territorial impact over time. Examples are the restructuring of the national defence, postal services, road sector administration, police and the judiciary, etc. The impact from this policy is, for example the closing of a small office with 5 employees in a small place and the negative multiplier effects of 5 families out of job and hence on the move or on the dole. A Member of Parliament who are elected on a county basis, has to vote on the big question like 20% cut in defence spending, regardless of his county being particular hard hit. In questions of changing localisation of employees and cutting down on activity, the Member of Parliament has little power to safeguard his county. If he is clever, he may build strong alliances for the next run, when the individual cuts and down closings are coming.

The elected representatives in the Parliament are individually more or less without any power when it comes to the big issues of the budget and long range plans. Hence, they concentrate the effort on getting new state investment and jobs localised to the county. Secondly, they try to diminish the effects of say big defence cuts in their constituency. (In addition they of course do their main job as lawmakers.) Alliances and co-operation are the main tools for the MP in securing his constituency the best deal. Horse trading, as this business often is nicknamed, one can find lots of examples.

Regarding E18, which we have looked upon, the importance of getting E18 into the roads programme for a secure grant, was overruling all other matters. As the county planning director said¹⁰: *“We have tried and tried to use the local MP to push for money from the Ministry of Transport to the public transport scheme in the Sustainable Town, but in vain. The only thing which mattered was E18, and nothing – nothing – should interfere with that.”*

¹⁰ Interview with Kjell Abildsnes March 2001.

5.1.2 A strong road sector

The Ministry of Transport and the Road sector agency do have a large number of employees, get substantial amounts of money and thereby do get power. The MOE, which only has a small budget, should have had second thoughts when the Ministry of Transport did not fully support the Sustainable Town experiment. Without the Ministry of Transport in an active role, there was no chance of trend break, which many¹¹ claim to be necessary. The TP10 experience, which was fresh at the time, clearly showed the importance of the Ministry of Transport.

More important perhaps than the organisation of central government is the legislation, organisation and financing of both PT and road tolls. The vast sums collected in road tolls, do fix the planning and investments in transport infrastructure for many years in all the major towns in Norway. PT if successful, reduces the car expansion and thus reduces income from the Road Tolls, and may therefore jeopardise big road projects.

5.1.3 The power play between the levels and across the sectors

The power play between the levels and across the sectors is well known in the literature. The term “overkommune” which means that the county should not be in a position above or higher up in the hierarchy in planning matters, has followed Norwegian planning debate the last twenty-five years, and is still a strong feeling. The town Kristiansand “resents” having to go through the county in PT questions, they rather go directly to the Ministry.

To understand what is going on one needs good knowledge about the power play on the town level and between the different actors. A municipality will talk with many voices. In ST the town was very active, put some of the best planners on the case and co-operated very well with the MOE, the task force and other central agencies. It may then be difficult for people in Oslo to see that the ST experiment only was one of many projects going on in Kristiansand.

5.1.4 The relationship between sectors at county level

Road building or Public Transport support? The road sector is directly financed by vote in the Parliament, which in effect divides up the total road sector programme between the counties. The tolls collected are highest in the big towns where the traffic is greatest, and therefore the road building in Norway, which earlier mainly concentrated on the trunk roads between the towns, in the nineties also happens in all the big urban areas. As we have seen above, Kristiansand was successful in getting E18 built. This was an extraordinary effort locally in getting everybody work towards this common goal, and centrally to get enough support in the Parliament.

Public Transport on the other hand is financed¹² by money transferred from the government to each county by allocation in the Parliament. This allocation shall cover all expenses the county has got in running the hospitals, the secondary schools and culture, transport and

¹¹ Se fx Emin Tengström

¹² Interview with mayor Bjørg Wallevik February 2001.

business development. Thus on the county budget public transport is only small part. The county decides the fares and uses the Public Transport budget to cover the difference between the income and the costs for the bus services. Thus it is neither the optimal fare structure in a county, nor the optimal bus service (route, frequency, etc.) (Johansen and Norheim 2000).

The ST aimed at transferring travel from cars to Public Transport and walking/cycling. With the present system of financing PT, it is virtually impossible to get the overall system working towards the same goal. In a future sustainable town the Public Transport services must be substantially improved to offer competition to the car on journeys to the city centre and at the same time the other transport policy (petrol tax, parking policy, road investment) must deter car trips to the centre. With the present system “a carrot and stick policy” is difficult to achieve.

5.2 What is rational political behaviour?

5.2.1 Land use planning on the municipal level

Land use planning is decided on the municipal level, and many claim an important tool in ST planning (PP13, Rikspolitiske retningslinjer, etc). How will a town council look at land use planning as tool for ST in addition and possibly in competition to other goals? One important premise is that the town council is an elected body with a contract to the voters. As seen in Kristiansand, the land use planning system was used to realise the major goal of getting E18 built. Even if this meant substantial growth in car usage and pushing the ST further out in the future, any other solution would be undemocratic since that was what the voters wanted. The other side of the issue is that the local politicians

- first managed to get public support for the toll road system,
- secondly they managed to get agreement on one alternative and
- thirdly and possibly most important, they got substantial amount of state money invested in the municipality.

Any government investment in the town will give future growth, and in most cases the planning system will be used to improve the towns chances in getting such an investment. This will be the case if it is national investment in a new hospital, a road, an airport, a university, an army camp, and so on. The use of land use planning as a tool for getting new activity to the municipality is often underestimated, but is very important in a town like Kristiansand who as the mayor said: “We have always been good at getting pilots ”. In practise it means that the town is competing with other municipalities about the same investment, and if the location is not attractive enough, the investment goes elsewhere. Thus one often will find a particular land use will be in conflict between the ST goals and the goals of creating growth. The short-term aim of getting an investment localised to the municipality will most often push the longer-term ST goals aside.

5.2.2 Rational political behaviour

Rational political behaviour is taken to imply behaviour where the politician secures a good public position, a good relationship with his voters and obtaining his aims as far as possible.

Politics can be said often to have to be choosing between two bad choices. Alliances, co-operation and trade off are a daily routine. The incentive structure awards certain behaviour and punishes another.

An MP secures state money for investment in the county, and may at the same time reduce tax on petrol. Certainly the investment in the home county will benefit the MP the most.

County politicians sits in a squeeze between health care, schools and PT, which means higher fares or less services or both.

The local politicians wants to achieve their goals, and among these goals there is something special with big projects like a new bridge, a new school, etc. It is also an extra token of ability if it is the government money being invested.

Looking at the planning and policy making in Kristiansand, the main impression is that all politicians do indeed behave rational, but play with the short and the long term. There is apparently no contradiction in supporting the long term sustainable goals, and at the same time increasing the road network and cutting down on PT.

5.2.3 Vested interests are well established.

We have seen that in central government one ministry (MoT) refuses to co-operate and in effect works against another (MOE) about the ST. In effect the power game between the ministries (Jansen) is still going on 25 years after MOE was established. The power game within a ministry, between different departments or individuals, may also be strong and lead to irrational actions (Brunson). One way to reduce such dysfunctional working, is to rely on the principle of subsidiarity to a greater extent.

5.3 Who gains and who loses, by which mechanism of power?

5.3.1 Few substantial results!

The planners and politicians got new insights into environment questions. *“the administration met new people and made valuable contacts”*. The politicians got *“a stronger will to implement environment tasks”* and the administration’s competence has increased and it has got *“more environmentally friendly values”*¹³.

One hardly can call these results very substantial? The short-term gain from the Sustainable Town experiment was *“good experiences from the 7-year process”*. What about the longer term? One result is the BusMetro proposal, which will be followed up by the planners in the years to come.

Another long-term result may be the policy on densification. This policy must be looked at as part of the larger policy. Kristiansand has had a reputation of being in the forefront of Norwegian housing policy. While some claim the densification policy as a success, like

¹³ Side 56, Hovedrapport 2000 *Utvikling av Sustainable Towns* Miljøverndepartementet Oslo

technical director “we did reach some 52-54%, that is not bad when the aim was 60% of new houses built in already built up areas!”¹⁴ There is no documentation that the planning and policy on of densification has achieved any results at all, since the densification in Kristiansand has followed the same market trends as in other towns. The other side of the planning is that hardly any new housing sites were laid out in this period.

Sustainable Town Kristiansand may indirectly had great influence in both concealing that the biggest ever road investment scheme was planned and partly implemented in the period, and also in getting support for the project in the Roads Directorate. It may have been argued that: Sustainable Town Kristiansand needs 700 million kroner investment, before the environment benefits may accrue! Also in town marketing, which is becoming increasingly popular, it sounds good to have been “A national sustainable town.”

5.3.2 Who were the gainers and losers in Kristiansand?

The car society and mobility were the winners of the planning game through the nineties. The main losers from the planning processes in Kristiansand were the environment, democracy and future generations. The opportunity to change the course into a more sustainable direction was lost, and Kristiansand is in the long term heading towards a more and more car dependent society. All the negative effects of the car use like accidents, noise and emissions, will continue to increase in Kristiansand.

It is very difficult to point out gainers and losers. The leader of the ruling Conservative Party in the town council was very critical to the densification policy because the price of houses went up when the supply of land went down. This meant that the young and people without any capital became the losers on the housing market.

Another group of losers was the disabled and captive users of Public Transport, who steadily are getting a poorer bus service. A more and more spread location of shops and services will further reduce the travel opportunities for this group.

6 What should be done?

The quest for sustainability will remain an impossible dream as long as central and local government is organised the way it is. We are thinking about both the three-layer structure and the territorial division of the national state.

6.1 A functional town

The town council and the town authority or a regional planning council must cover most of the territory or the functional area of the town. This is particularly important for a town or regional council to be able to implement an integrated land use and transport policy. There are

¹⁴ Intervju med teknisk direktør Asbjørn Grøvan

lots of examples where co-operation between authorities has failed, and ineffective transport system results.

The other way to solve this problem is for the state to give central guidance or rules on how to deal with this type of problem generally or in each case. However, for a country like Norway both of these solutions will be difficult to implement, even though changes in the governing structure are strongly needed.

6.2 A central role for the planner

Falkemark in his study of Swedish traffic planning shows that it is a far distance between the ideals and the reality (Falkemark 1999). He suggests improvements following two themes:

- **Improve the basis for decision making**
- **Deeper democracy**

The planner has a central role in improving the basis decision making, and Falkemark claims that the role of a planner must be made more responsible for the advice given.

A sustainable town must be sovereign regarding:

- Land use planning
- Public transport finance
- Parking regulations
- Car taxation, toll roads and road pricing

In effect the first premise is for the town to be able to decide on a comprehensive or holistic approach towards sustainability, ie. more Local Agenda 21 and less central government.

6.3 The principle of subsidiarity and local self-government.

The principle of subsidiarity says that the decisions shall be taken at the lowest level possible and as close to those concerned as possible. The two guiding principles for changing the system are:

- ***A more rational and better functioning public planning***
- ***Increase democracy***

The complexity of the modern state has made the present system necessary, and it is utopian to rethink the state organisation. However, one could imagine that the principle of subsidiarity was followed. For each of the conditions mentioned above this could entail:

Land use planning – pbl or the planning act gives the municipality a major say. By removing central government bindings and give real autonomy and responsibility to the municipality, a more democratic process should come. In terms of sustainability the town may increase it's effort or the goal may become further away, depending upon what the local democracy produces of policy!

Public transport finance is at present mainly placed at the county level, where it is squeezed between health care and secondary schools. The need for reform is widely accepted, but difficult to implement. With the idea of making the towns in charge of PT financing it will be possible to co-ordinate transport policy at the town level and also give the electorate a chance on voting for the people responsible. PT put at the municipal level, will however not solve all problems (Johansen and Norheim, 2000). The German system with or the French system of a local tax to finance PT may be one way to go. The system in Norway must be changed so that only direct tax on the national level is collected, and the other indirect taxes like on business cars, etc are removed and left to the towns to collect after their one discretion.

Parking regulations are the responsibility of the municipality, however most towns have used the planning policy guidelines from central government. This cannot be changed over night; 10 years may be required to change the parking policy and it requires a majority in the town council. Parking policy can only deal with parking under public ownership. More than 40% of the parking provision in Norwegian town centres is private and this of course limits the scope of the parking policy.

Car taxation, toll roads and road pricing are a complex theme. Basically the taxation of the car is of crucial importance to the national budget, and will likely remain such for a long time. However there are lots of other items in the taxation system, which could be changed. Ex taxation of free parking at work, business car taxation, etc. The town is usually the biggest employer in the municipality. At present it is "impossible" for the town to remove staff parking at a school, unless the same policy goes for the private employer next door, and vice versa. The use of more environment friendly modes, like propane gas or electrical cars, and bicycles are seriously hampered by the present taxation system.

The toll road legislation and road pricing legislation are strictly incompatible in Norway. This means that only one of these systems can be used at a time. In reality this will mean that the toll road systems which are operating in the 6 largest towns, will be prolonged as long as the demand for road capacity continue to be a major political issue. Besides, there are also at present several political parties who strongly oppose any further reductions on the freedom of car usage. Road pricing in Kristiansand, Stavanger, Tromsø and other such towns, will therefore remain as an idea in planning circles. Both toll roads and road-pricing schemes have to be sanctioned by the Parliament, after a majority vote in the town council. Why are these decided in the Parliament, when the vast majority of users come from the local town and thus generates 90% of the income? We shall not answer that question here, but argue that the town council should be free to use both toll roads or road pricing. Only in cases where the national interest is seriously hampered, should the Parliament be able to intervene with the local decision.

There is a fair agreement that a change towards more sustainability requires both the carrot and the stick. PT must be substantially improved, which costs money and the walk/cycling system likewise. Both of these systems must be improved before there is any chance of putting restrictions on car usage.

A comprehensive policy like this may have a chance of being realised depending upon the town council decisions. Hence, the public must be positive towards a more sustainable development and vote for those parties. This very fundamental prerequisite is not dealt with in this paper. But one condition for such a policy to become true is that the town council can be

held responsible for its policy and have the means necessary to reach the ends. This is not the situation at present as we have seen.

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