Appendix 1

A DRAFT REGIONAL POLICY FOR SUBURBAN RENEWAL

Regional Planning Guidance for the South East (RPG9) is currently under review. A Regional Spatial Strategy (the South East Plan) will be published in draft form in early 2005. In testing the draft suburban policy set out below it is essential that the consultants place it within the context of extant RPG9 (March 2001), specifically Chapter 5 'Quality of Life in Town and Country' which provides the existing regional policy framework for urban and suburban renaissance. For example, the consultants may wish to consider whether the suburban renewal objectives may be better achieved by amendments to existing policies.

Draft Policy Q2b
The quality of life in suburban areas, should be raised through significant improvement to the suburban environment, making suburban areas more sustainable places in which to live, work, shop, spend leisure time and invest, thus helping to counter trends to more homogenous residential areas and the increasing frequency of private travel for work, shopping and leisure.

A   Local Development Frameworks should identify suburban areas which would benefit from renewal and set out strategies which:
- i) Address the need for diversity in housing type, tenure and affordability.
- ii) Encourage higher density and mixed-use development, including retail and office based small-medium enterprises where there is evidence of unmet demand.
- iii) Make appropriate provision, for location and design of good quality infrastructure, e.g. schools, open space, leisure facilities etc...
- iv) Set out proposals to enhance accessibility enabling residents access to local facilities and to provide a real choice in mode of transport, e.g. walking, cycling and public and private transport
- v) Promote high quality urban form and public realm which respects local character and distinctiveness.

B   In developing suburban renewal strategies local authorities should:
- i) Characterise the variety of suburban types that exist in their area and assess their different development needs, potentials and capacities;
- ii) Work in partnership with key stakeholders to develop community involvement and ownership of proposals.

<div align="right">**Appendix B**</div>

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS FROM THE PLANNING OFFICERS' SURVEY

1. INTRODUCTION

Aims of the survey

As part of URBED's research on Sustainable Suburbs for the South East Regional Assembly, this survey aims to find out about:

- the experience of each authority with regard to suburbs and any specific policies already in place
- the respondent's response to the draft policy
- their interpretation of key issues for suburban improvement and renewal
- whether they are willing to hold a workshop, and to become a case study

Method

The survey was sent out by email on Monday 17th May to over 75 Heads of Planning in all district and county planning authorities in the South East. By the 11th of June, URBED had received 43 replies – a 57% response rate.

Responses

A response rate of over 50% would be regarded as excellent for a national survey, but for a targeted audience it is perhaps average. One County Council noted that Districts and Boroughs are currently under pressure to produce their Local Development Frameworks (LDFs), and several noted that they could not offer to host workshops because of a current lack of staff capacity. There was one complaint that the Regional Assembly is seen to be overloading Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) with data requests. It is debateable whether the reason for non-response was a pressure on capacity or a feeling that this research is locally irrelevant.

2. RESULTS

The results from each question are set out below; analysis follows in the Section 3. Note that not all LPAs answered each question.

1. Experience of authorities

1a. What proportion of people in your authority could be described as living in a suburban area?
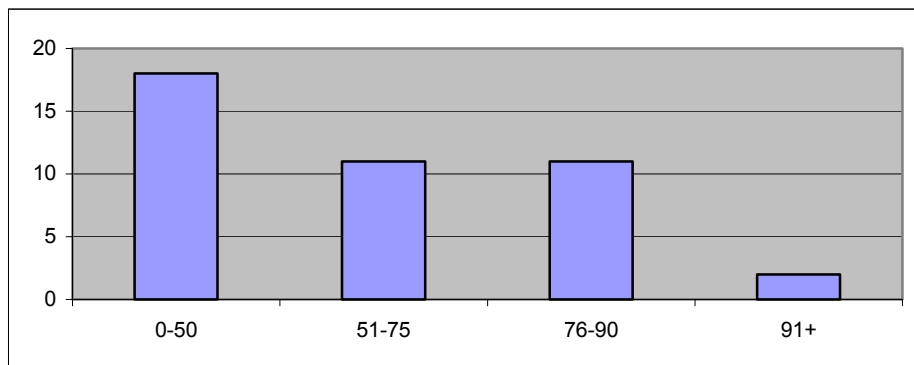
0-50%	Thanet, Basingstoke, Horsham, East Sussex, Tandridge, Lewes, Vale of White Horse, Medway, East Hants, West Oxfordshire, Test Valley, Shepway, Reading, Oxfordshire County C, Oxford City, Chichester, Aylesbury Vale, Hastings
51-75%	New Forest, Worthing, Mid Sussex, South Bucks, Swale, Gosport, Tunbridge Wells, Mole Valley, RBWM, Wycombe, Brighton and Hove
76-90%	Hants, Epsom and Ewell, Runnymede, Milton Keynes, Wokingham, Arun, West Berks, Tonbridge and Malling, Fareham, Surrey CC, Rushmoor
91+%	Bracknell Forest, Woking

1b. Roughly what proportion of your local authority area could be described as suburban in character?
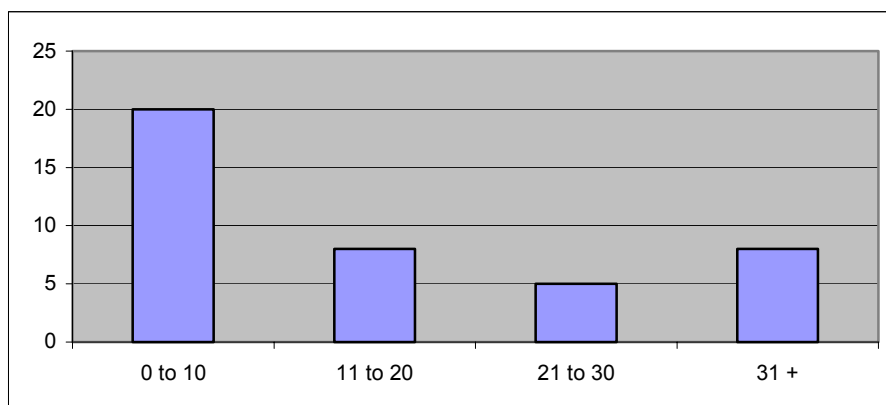
0-10%	Aylesbury Vale, Hampshire County, New Forest, Horsham, Wokingham, East Sussex, Swale, Chichester, Mole Valley, Oxfordshire County, Shepway, Test Valley, West Oxon, East Hants, Vale White Horse, West Berks, Lewes, Tandridge

11-20%	Thanet, South Bucks, Basingstoke, RBWM, Tonbridge and Malling, Tunbridge Wells, Medway
21-30%	Mid Sussex, Runnymede, Oxford City, Reading, Bracknell Forest
31+%	Epsom and Ewell, Milton Keynes, Worthing, Fareham, Arun, Gosport, Woking, Brighton and Hove

(of which over 50% = Woking 95%, Arun, 80%, Worthing 65%, Gosport 60%, Brighton and Hove 60%)

2. Does your authority have a planning policy/policies that deal specifically with suburban areas?

Three answered yes:

Lewes   Policy for areas of established character
RBWM   (Also added a new category - protection of areas of local character and distinctiveness)
South Bucks 'Residential Areas of Exceptional Character'

If no, is this because:

	Yes	No
Almost everyone in your area lives in a suburb?	6	5
Their needs are covered by existing policies?	32	
Other priorities?	5	5
Other reasons (please specify)…	2	

(Will be established in principle in LDF but based on density issues (Runnymede)

3. Has your authority carried out any research relating to suburbs/suburban improvement and renewal issues?

Of the seven respondees who answered yes to this question, only five cited research that specified suburban as opposed to urban areas. These were:

|	
Rushmoor BC	"Civic Society (sic?) work on North Camp in 2001"
Wycombe DC	Cressex Suburb study
Gosport BC	Civic Trust study
Basingstoke and Deane	North Basingstoke
Hampshire CC	Civic Trust, In Suburbia, etc

(Four of these are in Hampshire.)

4. In your view should the South East Plan include specific policies on suburban improvement and renewal?
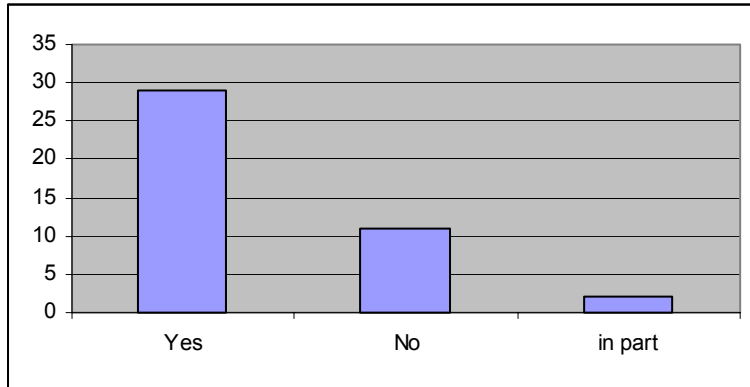
No   Aylesbury Vale, Horsham, Runnymede, Epsom and Ewell, Reading, West Berks,
               Bracknell Forest, Vale White Horse, Medway, Hastings, West Sussex CC
In part   Mole Valley, Wycombe

4a. If yes, does the attached draft Q2b provide a good starting point for such a Regional Policy? If no what needs to be changed/added?
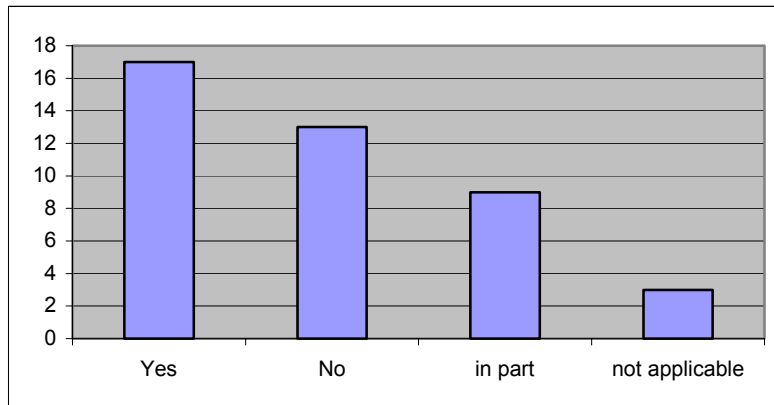
No   Aylesbury Vale, Runnymede, Epsom and Ewell, Reading, Swale, Tunbridge Wells,
               Tonbridge and Malling, test Valley, West Berks, Bracknell Forest, Vale White
               Horse, Medway, Thanet
In part   New Forest, Basingstoke & Deane, Mole Valley, Fareham, Worthing, East Hants,
               West Oxon, Gosport, Wycombe
Not applicable Horsham, West Sussex CC, Hastings

The accompanying comments made in this section are included under Analysis, below:

5. What do you consider to be the three key issues for suburban improvement and renewal?
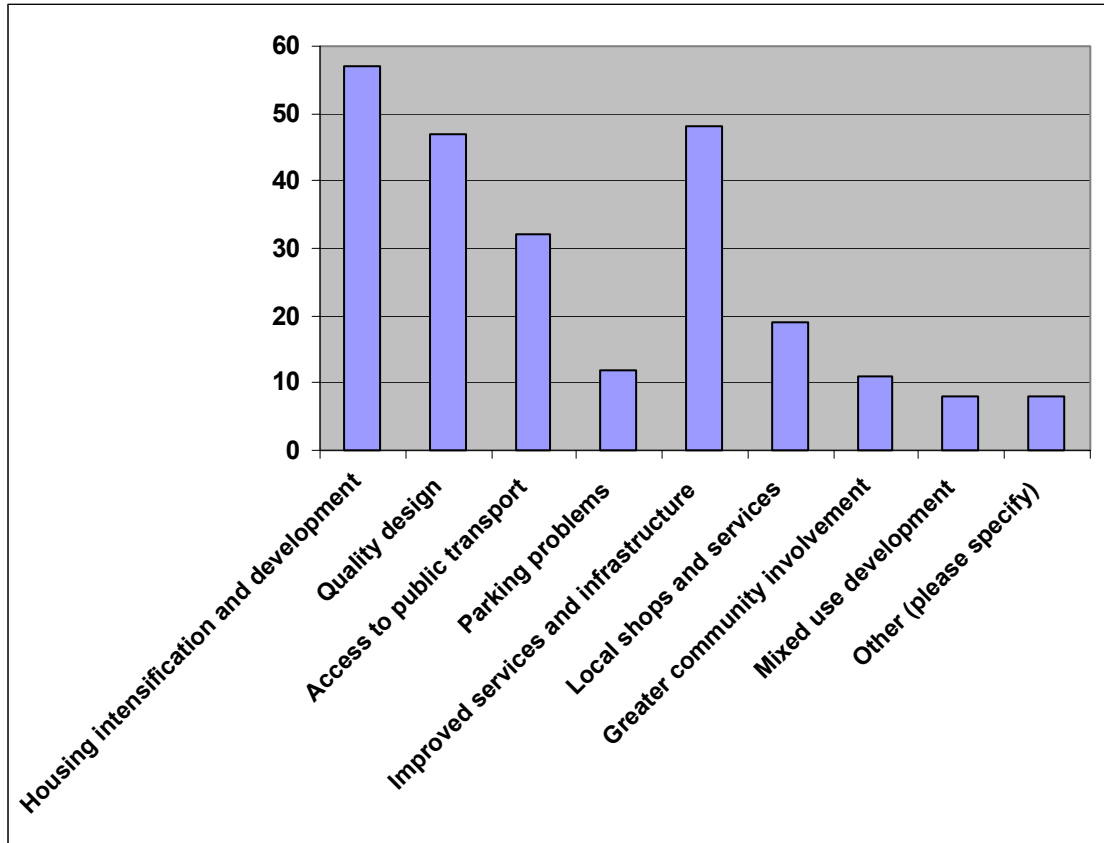
Other issues mentioned: protection of areas of local character and distinctiveness
(RBWM, Wokingham, Mole Valley)

6. Are you willing to hold a workshop?

Yes   Horsham, Medway, RBWM, Wycombe (Cressex)
Perhaps   Basingstoke, Bracknell Forest, West Berks, Wokingham, and Woking

3. ANALYSIS

The responses allow us further to understand the extent and experience of sub-urbanisation of approximately half of the LPAs in the South East.

New questions raised

The responses received should help us to think about, if not yet to answer, the question: 'do LPAs in the South East see a need for specific policy/ies in the South East Plan on suburban improvement and, if so, is the draft policy a good start?' The two parts of Q4 show that although a majority agree that the Regional Spatial Strategy should include such a policy/ies, the number of those disagreeing with the suggested policy is higher than the number of those who agree with it. The range of reasons for which they disagree is central to understanding more about their experience and expectations.

These comments also raise some additional questions, which had not been envisaged when the survey was designed.

The first of these is the basic question of **what is meant by a suburb?** No definition was given in the survey, and the issue was raised by several respondees.

> *"There are definition difficulties – what is a suburb? The emerging Berkshire Structure Plan usefully combines the terms urban and suburban into a single policy dealing with quality environments. This avoids definition difficulties and ensures appropriate policies are widely applicable."* (West Berks)

> *"There is a danger that a policy dealing with suburbia raises the difficult issue of how to define a suburban area and what should happen on those areas not so defined."* (Surrey CC)

> *"The phrase "thus helping to counter trends to more homogenous residential areas" is rather clumsy – what does it actually mean? The term 'suburban area' needs to be defined – is it a function of distance from the town centre, or is it a consequence of a certain set of characteristics or spatial layout? There is an issue about comprehensiveness here – to make this work a critical mass in terms of size will be required. Identification of a few plots will not work. What about delivery: Is there scope for an enabling policy or criteria? Policy (or supporting text) needs to be more specific about supporting infrastructure requirements."* (Basingstoke & Deane)

> *"A policy on suburban improvement is complicated by any definition of defining what a suburb is. However, a sustainability 'toolkit' or 'good practice guide' type note for identifying areas in need of improvement and developing a suitable strategy could be useful."* (Wycombe)

Related to this is the question of whether it is necessary to separate out suburbs for specific policy treatment. The answer to Q2 showed an overwhelming agreement that the reason

the needs of suburban areas are not dealt with in specific policies is that their needs are dealt with by existing policies.

> *"We have no proof or demonstration that suburban areas require a different policy framework from broader urban areas." (West Sussex)*

> *"Why identify the quality of life in 'suburbs' as requiring particular attention? Is there a particular problem in the 'suburbs' in the South East? Surely the content of policy is just 'good planning', which should be applicable to all areas?"* (Bracknell Forest)

> *"The issues identified in the draft policy could apply to varying extents across all residential areas. Is it intended that there should be another policy for villages and yet another policy for large villages/small market towns who would certainly not regard themselves as suburbs? I believe the policy has a danger that it tries to put (undefined) labels on different areas and wrongly suggests there are some different approaches to be followed. These should turn on the difficult question of how to balance local distinctiveness and environmental quality with the pressures on getting more development in these areas so that we do not have to release as much greenfield land to meet the needs of sustainable communities. It needs to be remembered that large tracts of the South East are rural in character".* (Aylesbury Vale)

> *"Policies on urban areas should apply equally to suburban and inner urban areas. Access to facilities and transport are issues that can apply to areas across the entire urban area. In draft policy 2Qb most of the issues apply to all urban areas, but I would suggest the reference to 'retail' in A (ii) should be 'neighbourhood retail centres' to help clarify the intention and avoid potential conflict with the aims of PPG/PPS 6."* (Medway)

> *"A good starting point but should be set in a wider context of looking at the role and potential for positive change in all urban areas."* (Surrey CC)

> *"Suburban areas ought to relate to urban/city centre in terms of communication/transport/identity etc"* (Thanet)

> *"Uncertain as to whether specific policies are required for suburban improvement over and above a policy such as the current policy Q2 in RPG9 which focuses on urban areas in general. This policy already has some reference to suburban areas."* (Wycombe)

Thirdly, the question was raised as to whether the RSS, rather than an LDF, is the **appropriate vehicle for such a policy**.

> *"Policy Q2b is simply a repetition of higher order planning policy, cf para 1.20 of PPS1."* (Bracknell Forest)

> *"In the lack of definitions and research into the issues and experiences of suburban areas, there is no proof or demonstration that specific policies on suburban areas are required in the South East Plan, or if such policies are required at all. Should research show such a need, there is a possibility*

that issues associated with suburban areas vary across the Region, thereby putting the onus on local authorities to provide an appropriate policy response including through Local Development Frameworks." (West Sussex)

"Regional Guidance is not appropriate for such guidance: a matter for LDF's." (Reading)

"The policies for the region's urban areas should recognise their diversity and allow for an appropriate suite of measures to ensure improvement and renewal throughout." (West Berks)

"I am not sure that it is entirely the role of the LDF to define the suburban areas which would benefit from renewal. As I understand it, the LDF should be the vehicle for expressing and delivering the land use implications of the Community Plan drawn up by the LSP. While the guidance is still pretty thin on how this is to be achieved, I think the regional policies must recognise these essential linkages." (Test Valley)

"It's way too detailed and one of those situations where one size does not fit all. I suspect policy of this type may only be relevant to very large urban areas and or ones which were focus of large scale development post WWII?? Many of the ideas in draft are already subsumed within other policies in our local plan and tailored to local circs. Requirements for community involvement are already done to overkill in new legislation and proposals for a particular area should be wrapped up with relevant LDD." (Tunbridge Wells)

"This should be part of general urban renewal policies." (Hastings)

"Perhaps the emphasis of the policy should be reduced so that local authorities can develop suburban renewal policies 'where appropriate' instead of that they 'should' identify areas, which would benefit from renewal." (Wycombe)

Grouping

It would seem to be useful to group the respondees to see if further lessons can be learned: one way would be to use Q 1 a & b to look at the 'degree' of sub-urbanisation. However, (as noted above), several respondents noted that they survey would have benefited from a definition of suburbs and sustainable suburbs, and that the answers to Q1 a & b are very often only estimates.

> *"Without a definition of "suburban", and research into the factors associated with such a definition and how they affect and are reflected in West Sussex, it is impossible to make an informed estimate of what proportion of people could be described as living in a suburban area."*

Despite this sometimes approximate response, however, an 'index of perceived suburban character' can be drawn up by combining the scores from Q1a and b:
Thus:

Low	Medium	High
Aylesbury Vale	Hampshire County	Arun
Basingstoke & D	Mid Sussex	Bracknell Forest
Chichester	Oxford City	Brighton and Hove
East Hants	RBWM	Epsom and Ewell
East Sussex CC	Reading BC	Fareham BC
Hastings	South Bucks DC	Gosport
Horsham DC	Surrey	Milton Keynes
Lewes	Tonbridge and Malling	Runnymede
Medway	Tunbridge Wells	Rushmoor
Mole Valley	West Berks	Woking
New Forest DC	Wokingham	Worthing BC
Oxfordshire CC		
Shepway		
Swale BC		
Tandridge		
Test Valley		
Thanet		
Vale White Horse		
West Oxfordshire		
Wycombe		

However, there does not appear to be an obvious correlation between the level of sub-urbanisation and other responses. For example of those not answering yes to Q4a (i.e., those disagreeing with the need for a specific policy on renewal in SEP - Aylesbury Vale, Horsham, Runnymede, Epsom and Ewell, Reading, West Berks, Bracknell Forest, Vale White Horse, Medway, Hastings, West Sussex CC, Mole Valley and Wycombe) there is a spread across the low, medium and high groups.

There is a far higher disagreement to Q4b (i.e. that policy Q2b is a 'good start'), with more disagreeing than agree (Aylesbury Vale, Runnymede, Epsom and Ewell, Reading, Swale, Tunbridge Wells, Tonbridge and Malling, Test Valley, West Berks, Bracknell Forest, Vale White Horse, Medway, Thanet (no); New Forest, Basingstoke & Deane, Mole Valley, Fareham, Worthing, East Hants, West Oxon, Gosport (in part). But again, there is a spread across the three groups.

Equally, of those local authorities that do have specific policies for suburban areas (Q2) two of the three authorities that cited policies fall into the 'medium' category and the third in 'low' It should be noted that all three aim to protect suburban character. Many respondees stress that their LPA comprised mostly rural and/or urban areas and that therefore they are adequately covered by existing policy.

This would suggest that it is not necessarily the degree of sub-urbanisation that is as important as, perhaps, the type, location or 'condition' of the suburb.

Key Issues

Several respondees commented further on the key issues:

> *"We do not recognise many of these issues in Swale as our suburban areas are close to the main town centres on the whole. Some of the initiatives could have a detrimental impact on investment in the town centres. We would suggest its use for the larger suburban areas that are more distant from the urban centres. Perhaps suggest a population threshold."* (Swale)

> *"Local shopping areas are particularly important in improving the sustainability of suburban areas"* (Rushmoor)

> *"The focus should not just be on renewal. Regeneration is important as is enlivening suburban areas."*

> *"A balanced strategic approach needs to be adopted. Consideration needs to be given to the impact of suburban renewal on central areas. It is important that suburban renewal is not achieved at the expense of inner-urban regeneration."*

> *"Mixed-use develop should also address the need to make suburban areas vital places in the evening as well as during the day."*

> *"The policy should stress the importance of quality open space to the quality of life in suburban areas. Mixed-use development should not result in town cramming."*

> *"Greater emphasis should be placed on the need to provide community facilities – creating opportunities for social interaction is important to enlivening suburban areas."*

> *"Safety is an important issue that needs to be promoted and addressed through high quality urban design. This should include safety of residents, pedestrians, cyclists and other road users."* (Tonbridge and Malling)

However, the fact that Housing Intensification was seen as one of the most important issues should be seen in the light of several comments made by respondees in relation to renewal, the character of suburbs and a need for further guidance on achieving increased densities:

> *"The policy is unduly negative in suggesting that all suburbs need improvement. In some cases there is a need to protect the quality of suburbs also."* (Wycombe)

> *"Need to recognise that there are extensive areas within suburbs the character of which residents wish to retain – and that includes revisiting intensification and renewal".* (Epsom and Ewell)

"A clear definition of 'suburban renaissance' would be essential given the differences in the character of urban areas across the South East region. The areas to which such a policy would apply need to be specified, e.g. relevance to small market towns, where residents would question whether there is any need to raise the quality of life and whether housing intensification and higher density developments would do so" (Vale of the White Horse)

"Note: however, anecdotal evidence from people living in such areas would suggest that existing densities are what attracted them to live in the area, and that raising densities will erode quality of life rather than be seen as a critical part of 'renewal'. This issue requires careful consideration." (Fareham)

"Few residents of suburban areas would agree that their quality of life would be improved by redevelopment at higher densities with mixed-use development. There should be greater emphasis on quality of the urban form and particularly accessibility and general infrastructure. If they are accepted as laudable aims, then higher densities become easier to achieve as being the delivery mechanism. "Suburban" needs to be accurately defined." (Runnymede)

"In terms of increased densities in high quality residential areas, need to reflect on policies that allow redevelopment that looks similar to surrounding (e.g. substantial detached dwellings with third floor that may be in roof space or that uses dormers), but the new building might contain a number of flats. Key issue here is to ensure that parking is not a problem either logistically or visually". (South Bucks)

"The suburbs in the District are generally not in need of improvement and I would say that it is not an issue in Mole Valley. However, what is an issue is the pressure to accommodate development in these areas and the consequent impact on their character and infrastructure. This was debated extensively at the recent Surrey Structure Plan EIP. The Panel accepted that infilling and replacement with more closely spaced or taller buildings has to be carefully designed and laid out. They concluded that failure to do so could result in town cramming, a poorer quality of life and loss of identity. (Mole Valley)

Thus the comments (particularly from those who disagree with the need or suggestions for a draft policy on renewal) can be grouped into four areas:
- What is a suburb?
- Why do we need to differentiate from urban areas?
- Is the RSS the correct vehicle for this guidance?
- Will areas of character/distinctiveness be served by this?

Perhaps these issues can be summed up in the comment from the *Berks Joint Structure Planning Unit:*

"Approximately 10% of Berks is suburban compared with 4% urban and 0.5% in town centre – consequently significant suburban land will be expected to contribute towards Berks's housing

requirement through the maximization of previously developed land. Intensification is already happening in the suburbs, but without regard to the cumulative impact of the development. A more holistic approach is required to help us persuade existing residents that development can bring benefits to area in terms of facilities, service provision and the quality of the environment. Your draft policy appears to provide the framework for further action but further action is needed on what is suburbia and what factors contribute to the quality of life."

One final note is the correlation between those willing to hold a workshop and those most concerned with issues of protecting character and distinctiveness.

June/October 2004

<div align="right">**Appendix C**</div>

CRAWLEY: AN EXAMPLE OF A MORE SUSTAINABLE SUBURB

Time pressures did not allow for a workshop to be run in Crawley, the sixth case study area. However a tour of the area and a discussion with some senior Borough officers provided the following information, which has been grouped around the most relevant categories for the suburbs in Crawley. Crawley, a planned New Town that dates from the 1950s, offers some good examples of both what a sustainable suburb should be like, and also what policies to use. Its success can be judged by a growing population (up 10000 over the last ten years), rising house prices, with a high proportion of former public housing now owner occupied, high satisfaction ratings in surveys, and a buoyant economy, with most people getting jobs locally (the airport accounts for 25% of jobs, and the same proportion of its employees live in Crawley).

Connectivity Crawley is moving towards a modal split of 60% cars and 40% other, as opposed to the general average of split of 80/20. The key has been to develop the town around a series of walkable **neighbourhoods** of around 6-7,000 population, each with its own shops, pub, and community facilities. The tree lined streets are very walkable, and the oldest suburb Tilgate is attractive. Action has been taken to cope with growing car ownership by narrowing carriageways to create parking bays and additional planting alongside. Phase 1 of the **Fastway** bus service was opened a year ago, which will eventually link Gatwick Airport from Crawley through to Horley. It offers a dedicated route, a ten minute peak time service, using modern buses, with some 'guided' sections, and good waiting facilities, and running through the night.

Choice There are fourteen distinct neighbourhoods, all of which have their own identity, in part created by their physical structure – grouping of houses separated from main roads, reinforced by coloured street signs. Three incorporate existing settlements, and the others are new in origin. The range of housing choice is being extended through new developments, in particular for small one and two bed units to meeting increasing needs. The sports centre near the railway at Three Bridges is being redeveloped for 800 new homes at a relatively high density, and replaced elsewhere accessible by Fastway. Neighbourhood centres are the focus of a mix of facilities including community services such as health centres, social facilities including pubs and commercial uses such as shops and small workshop premises. The Council seeks to maintain a diversity of shops when leases come up for renewal.

Character Though most of the houses are simple two storey terraces, painted facades, porch additions, and the creation of colourful gardens have given them individual character. Existing trees were maintained, and many others have been planted. The centre has been brightened up through extensive greenery, and Crawley won South East in Bloom in 2003. The open spaces and landscaping are integral features of the new town neighbourhoods. Overall this contributes significantly to their identity and character.

Policy features

While Crawley may have benefited from its excellent location, its success has also been
due to a combination of proactive planning and neighbourhood management:

- **positive planning** All new development proposals have to be in accord with the
  neighbourhood principle of locating new housing near to facilities such as schools,
  shop and health centre. This also meets sustainable development needs by reducing the
  need to travel by car to such facilities. Crawley has produced design principles and
  robust design policies which have to be adhered to, and development briefs that set out
  planning requirements are developed for all new sites.

- **partnerships** Projects like Fastway, or the development of the Leisure Centre have
  been undertaken through partnerships with the private sector, but with public
  leadership.

- **programmes** An annual Neighourhood Improvement Programme of £150-200,000
  and a further £200,000 for improving local centres, has enabled the Council to respond
  to local concerns

- **funding** Contributions from developers supplement Council funding for a range of
  improvement and maintenance schemes.

Example of a Sustainable Suburb

- **well sited and designed recycling**

        in the town centre   **next to Tilgate shopping parade**

- **attractive housing**

painted facades provide variety,
together with mature trees

stepped terraces and hedges
create walkable streets

- **neighbourhood identity**

- **a community hub**

coloured signposting creates
a visible identity

a council owned parade of shops
with a pub provides a varied offer

in close proximity to a church and health centre

- **local employment**

and an imaginative use for a nursery of a unit on a nearby industrial estate