GREATER**LONDON**AUTHORITY

A City of Villages: Promoting a sustainable future for London's suburbs

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A city of villages

Promoting a sustainable future for London's suburbs

Report by URBED with the TCPA for the Greater London Authority

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London's suburbs cover almost two thirds of its area and provide homes for more than half its population. They are vital to its economic, social and environmental sustainability and contribute much to London's unique character as a city made up of a series of villages.

This report was commissioned to assess the current state of London's suburbs and to develop policies to secure their long-term future. In particular it asks:

- Are there London suburbs that are at risk of decline and if so why?
- Which suburban areas are thriving and why?
- How can suburban London become more sustainable?

The research has been carried out for the GLA by URBED with the TCPA, and is based upon a literature review, seven case studies, a survey of suburban London Authorities and two seminars.

London's suburbs

Chapter 2 defines what we mean by London's suburbs with reference to their character and historical growth. Unlike other UK cities, London does not entirely conform to the pattern of deprived inner city and affluent suburban ring. Desirable inner London neighbourhoods and deprived outer London estates muddy the picture. The structure of London as a conglomeration of villages further adds to the complexity.

We conclude that the term suburb is well understood and implies a type of development as well as a location. We have based our study on the needs of areas not covered by the other parts of 'Towards a London Plan'. Our definition therefore excludes deprived estates and areas of inner London that are

dealt with elsewhere in 'Towards the London Plan'. Our focus is the ring of suburbs that date from the latter quarter of the 19th century to the present day. These suburbs cover most of outer London but also parts of some inner Boroughs. They include a variety of development types, uses and social classes. However the predominant character is of low-rise, relatively low-density housing and industrial areas, laced with local centres.

The challenges facing suburbia

For many years London's suburbs were regarded as a stable backdrop to the life of the city. However boroughs are concerned that the suburbs are increasingly facing challenges that need to be addressed. In Chapter 3 we explore the strengths of the suburbs and the challenges that they face.

The continuing appeal of suburbs

Most of London's suburbs remain stable and successful and provide a desirable place to live for a large proportion of London's population. This is because the traditional attractions of peace, quiet and space are as strong as they have always been, especially for families. The suburbs remain an aspirational environment, which can lead to exclusivity, but for many people this is also part of their appeal. The character and greenery of London's suburbs are an important part of their attraction as well as the combination of freedom and community that they offer. With the suburbanisation of some jobs and the growth of public services, suburbs are also now major employment locations.

Suburbs at-risk

Our hypothesis was that the renaissance of inner urban areas could create the conditions for the decline of some suburbs. This has not been entirely

borne out. However we have identified a series of pressures facing suburbia:

Population cascade: Suburbs could be at risk if the outward movement of population from the centre were to slow. The data shows that London's suburbs, in fact, lost population in the 1970s and 80s since when there has been a small recovery. Growth however has lagged behind inner London and while some suburbs have grown rapidly others have remained static.

Exported inner-city problems: There is a perception that suburbs are being invaded by inner city ills such as drugs and crime. However this perception is not, on the whole, borne out by crime figures that show crime to be predominantly an inner London issue.

Suburban council estates: The marginalisation of social housing in the 1980s and 90s led to stigmatisation and to the decline of some suburban 'cottages estates' in London. This situation has however improved markedly.

Private renting: The latter issue has pushed problems into the private sector leading to pockets of depriva- tion in the private renting sector. However the private rented sector as a whole has seen significant growth.

Obsolescence: Interwar suburban housing is around 70 years old and if it is not well maintained is in danger of falling into obsolescence especially where population is transitory, values are weaker and private landlords predominate.

Retail change: London's suburbs contain more than 60% of its town centres. Larger town centres have not suffered greatly by out-of-town development however smaller centres in poorer suburbs are experiencing problems.

Economic trends: Despite the suburbanisation of employment in the 1980s, suburban jobs growth has lagged behind both the centre and the Home Coun- ties. Some suburbs have seen rapid jobs growth while the former 'blue collar' suburbs have lost significant employment.

Cultural diversity: Ethnic minorities are as likely to be found in the suburbs as the inner city. They represent a significant strength for many suburbs although the ongoing discrimination that remains in some suburbs needs to be addressed.

Transport difficulties: There is a correlation between accessibility and the popularity of suburbs. At risk suburbs are likely to be those with poor connections to the centre and to employment growth areas.

Environmental Sustainability

Suburbs have an important role to play if London is to achieve the 'fundamental improvements in environ- mental management and use of resources' envis- aged by the SDS. We therefore need to consider the environmental as well as the social and economic sustainability of suburbs.

There is however a huge gap between current policy initiatives and what needs to be achieved to secure a sustainable future. The latter includes a 15 fold increase in resource efficiency and CO_2 reduc- tions of at least 60% by 2050. This wil be challeng- ing, especially while accommodating the population and economic growth projected by the SDS. Cur- rently 56% of London's energy use and 54% of its waste is attributable to the suburbs.

The population of London is concerned about environmental issues such as air pollution, transport, housing conditions and litter and a recent survey of world cities placed London 102nd out of 215 for environmental quality. The question is whether links can be made between Londoners' concerns, the challenges the city faces and the radical policies needed.

These policies go beyond the policy tools available to the GLA and indeed the public sector as a whole. What is needed is a combination of cultural change in attitudes towards environmental issues, institutional and technological innovation, and market transformation. This is easier to achieve at the local level - such as the Beddington ZED scheme - than across a city the size of London.

The key environmental issues

Energy: The suburbs will need to significantly in- crease energy efficiency and develop more efficient and renewable energy supplies. The interwar subur- ban housing stock is amongst the least thermally energy efficient. Low densities could frustrate systems such as large-scale CHP although there could be significant potential photovoltaics and thermal

collectors. London's suburbs are lagging far behind continental cities with household energy efficiency savings of just 6.3% between 1996 and 2001.

Mobility: Suburbs depend on the mobility of their residents for their very survival. The majority of London's suburbs are based on public transport. However car-based development patterns have made many suburbs reliant on car travel. This makes them vulnerable to restrictions on car use such as road charging.

Waste: Waste is on the increase and Londoners will need to reduce, re-use and recycle significantly more than the current suburban household recycling rates of 9.7%. This will require efficient segregation and collection systems, the redesign of production and distribution and the stimulation of the market for recyclables. The lead by suburban boroughs such as Bexley and Sutton needs to be expanded to other areas.

Food: The suburbs have a potential advantage in food production due to gardens and allotments. Composting could also substantially reduce the environmental impact of food production. Links with farmers are gradually being re-established through farmers markets which are supporting market gardening and independent organic food retailers.

Water: The suburbs are probably the least efficient water users at present but they are well suited to efficiency measures such as rainwater collection. The rising water table creates opportunities to use groundwater for low grade uses such as toilet flushing and irrigation.

Conclusions from literature review

London's suburbs are not experiencing the problems seen either in the EU or in the USA. However there is a danger is that the Urban Renaissance will reduce the outflow of people to the suburbs while the attractions of the Home Counties continue to exert a pull on suburban populations.

Urban renaissance and suburban growth need not be incompatible. However while population, employment and values are all growing in the suburbs, growth rates are lagging behind the London average. This reflects the overall expansion of London's population and economy. The problems for suburbs will arise if London's growth falters.

While some suburbs lag behind, others are growing rapidly and for these the preoccupation is with the problems of success rather than decline. However in both successful and less successful suburbs environmental sustainability is likely to be an increasingly important factor in the future.

Research findings

In chapter 4 we describe the findings of our research which has included interviews with borough planning officers, analysis of datasets for London's suburbs, seven case studies, two workshops and a questionnaire of planning officers in all suburban boroughs.

Selecting the case studies

In order to select a representative set of case studies we synthesised previous work on typologies with our assessment of the age of suburbs, their history and social groupings to suggest a typology for suburban London from which case studies were selected:

- Garden city: case study - Temple Fortune.
- Victorian Railway Suburb: case study - Colliers Wood
- Blue Collar Suburbs: case studlies – Wealdstone and Hayes
- Commuter suburbs: case study - Welling
- Public sector estates: case study - Becontree
- Affluent car based suburbs: Case study - Surbiton

Findings from the Case Studies

The issues facing suburbs varied however a number of factors were common to all of the case studies:

- Concerns about traffic and congestion
- The difficulty and clutter of parking
- Poor management of the public realm
- Concerns about young people and insecurity
- The opportunity for 'Ped Shed' type mixed-use development

There were major differences between suburbs. While there were no case studies that could be said to be in decline, there were signs of strain in parts of Becontree, Wealdstone, Hayes and Welling.

These areas shared problems of lack of identity, poor

transport links and eroded social capital as a result of the decline of local facilities and deterioration of parts of the housing stock. The smaller shopping centres were also often in decline and some had become a focus for anti-social behaviour.

In contrast most of the other case studies were doing well and differed in a number of respects to the at-risk suburbs. While concern about deteriorating environments were universal in successful areas the quality of the public realm is noticeably better and community groups more active. Shops are doing well and even smaller parades are fully occupied. There is a tendency towards exclusivity leading to concerns about affordability as well as worries about intensification. We have drawn the following conclusions from the case studies:

Accessibility is key: There is a correlation between the accessibility of a suburb and its desirability.

Local links: District centres can decline if they are difficult to access compared to competing town centres.

Positive image: A poor image, low aspirations and low values can override the advantages of accessibility.

The importance of the centre: A strong retail centre is essential to economic and social confidence.

The importance of public realm management: There are not the resources to provide the level of public realm management required in at-risk areas

Tenure mix: Affluent suburbs are keen to increase the mix of tenures, poorer areas are less interested.

Environmental Sustainability: Other than car dependency and public transport, sustainability issues were not a major concern raised in the case studies.

A policy framework for London

In Chapter 5 we set out a spatial policy framework for suburban London. This is based on the emerging draft SDS that seeks to accommodate the growth of London so that it retains its place as one of the three pre-eminent global cities. This creates pressures on space, transport systems as well as raising issues of affordability, sustainability and equity. One response of the draft SDS is to encourage the mixed-use intensification of development at locations that have good public transport accessibility. It also includes proposals for neighbourhood regeneration.

In order to fit a spatial suburban policy framework into this context we propose a four level approach:

- *Local centres:* The district and local centres that should be the focus for retail and commercial develop as well as transport improvements.

- *Ped Sheds:* A walk-in area around each local centre where there are opportunities for intensification and mixed-use development.

- *Suburban heartlands:* The areas outside Ped Sheds subject to policies to address management, access, public realm and distinctiveness.

- *Suburban employment zones:* Areas that need to be protected.

The boundaries of these areas should be left to the boroughs to define in their local plans. The population of a Ped Shed should be able to meet most of their daily needs on foot and by public transport. These criteria are likely to be met by the 122 metropolitan, major and district centres that serve suburban London as well as some of the 1,500 local centres. Many of the 300 underground or train stations are also likely to meet this criteria suggesting that there is scope for perhaps 200 Ped Sheds in suburban London.

The next task is to draw the boundaries of the local centre and Ped Shed. The former is already defined in local plans. The Ped Shed should be based on 400 to 800m walk-in zones around local centres. The size of the zone will depend upon the importance of the local centre.

By these criteria Ped sheds could cover up to two thirds of suburban London. However even then there are areas that are would be distant from Ped Sheds. In these circumstances there may be value in creating new Ped Sheds with the aim of ensuring that all Londoners are within 1,600m of a Local Centre.

Detailed policies for the suburbs

In Chapter 6 we develop this framework into a more detailed set of policies for London's suburbs. This is based on the four-level framework set out in the previous chapter so that a tailored response can be developed for each type of suburb. The detailed policies are developed under 7 headings:

Reinforcing the role of local centres: Policies to concentrate new retailing and leisure within local centres and to promote the vitality and viability of these centres. This should include town centre management and diversification, especially in declining local parades.

Promoting sustainable development patterns: The concentration of development in Ped Sheds. This should include a structured approach to housing capacity work linked to policy to permit the subdivision of property into flats, to increase housing densities, to encourage mixed-use infill development and redevelopment and to promote diversity of housetypes and tenure. Outside Ped Sheds employment sites should be protected but policy should focus on large vacant sites and areas of low density where masterplanning exercises should look for opportunities for intensification over time, perhaps to create new Local Centres and Ped Sheds.

Improving the existing housing stock: A package of measures to improve the condition and energy efficiency of suburban housing. This would include stock condition surveys as well as demonstration projects to illustrate how suburban housetypes can be made more energy efficient. Where levers exist performance standards should be set and the GLA should monitor progress towards meeting HECA targets. This should be promoted through local energy agencies and linked to fuel poverty strategies, grants and energy labelling.

Reducing car-dependency: A range of measures should be introduced to reduce car dependency including improvements to public transport both into and between Ped Sheds. Parking standards should not put local centres at a disadvantage compared to out-of-town uses but parking controls should be used to prioritise roadspace for pedestrians. Reduced residential parking should be encouraged along with car clubs particularly around stations and home zones along with Green Travel Plans for employers and other major traffic generators such as schools and retail parks.

Improving environmental sustainability: The suburbs should make a contribution towards environmentally sustainability through a network of 'green community' initiatives. Combined Heat and Power systems and Renewable energy should be considered for all major development as part of energy strategies and environmental assessments. The GLA's recycling targets should be monitored and technical guidance provided for boroughs. The economic potential of sustainable technologies should be developed and business should be encouraged to adopt more sustainable practices including food retailers.

Protecting and promoting suburban employment: New service, leisure and office uses should be concentrated in local centres and Ped Sheds as part of mixed-use development. This should include home-working, live-work accommodation and community workstations. Manufacturing and distribution uses should be encouraged in suburban employment sites. The reallocation of these sites to housing should be resisted unless they have been vacant for at least five years

Improving the quality of design and the public realm: Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) should include guidance for suburban centres, Ped Sheds and heartlands although this should not override conservation area guidance. Areas of significant change should be the subject of briefs or neighbourhood plans and open space, habitats and biodiversity should be enhanced. Civic pride initiatives with local stakeholders should be used to promoted public realm improvements including Neighbourhood management of Ped Sheds.

These policies make up a comprehensive package to address the social, economic and environmental issues faced by London's suburbs. However not all of the items fall within the remit of the GLA and many have resource implications that are beyond the scope of existing budgets. The policies are therefore broken down into SDS Policies, Other Mayoral responsibilities affecting Transport for London and the London

Development Agency, Local UDP policies that might be influenced by GLA Supplementary Planning Guidance and Local Actions that fall outside the remit of the planning system.

Implementation and Resources

A series of implementation mechanisms for the Local Actions are set out in the final chapter. Four area-based and collaborative mechanisms are proposed:

◻ Neighbourhood management – local stakeholders working together with the support of Boroughs to strengthen and diversify local centres and their Ped Sheds and to address the liveability of local neighbourhoods

◻ Green Communities – a network of community-led organisations dedicated to improving the quality of the local environment and to raising environmental awareness

◻ Energy Agencies – the expansion of the network of local energy agencies to cover all of London. The main focus of these partnerships would be to deliver HECA targets by improving household energy efficiency, to work with business, and to develop opportunities for new and renewable energy technologies.

◻ Neighbourhood Transport Partnerships – the development and implementation of 'micro' measures which can support a modal shift at the local level, and which integrate with and complement public transport investment by Transport for London.

Conclusion

For much of the 20th century the great mass of suburbia was taken for granted and quietly continued to provide homes, space, peace and quiet for generations of Londoners. Urban areas however are always evolving and changing as districts fall in and out of fashion and the key to success is the ability to adapt and accommodate these changes. The suburbs are not immune to these trends and yet are less able to adapt.

One such trend is the urban renaissance. This is likely to mean that successful suburbs will develop into 'urban villages'. However the inaccessible, less fashionable suburbs run the risk of decline. This is a risk that is still largely unrealised but it is a risk that policy must address. This report sets out policies that both accommodate success and head-off decline. They amount to what might be called a 'smart growth' campaign led by the Mayor to promote the benefits to London's population and business of locating in suburban Ped Sheds. This taps into London's unique character as a great city of small villages.

1. Introduction

In which we describe the background to the research and the need for policies targeted at London's suburbs. We describe the scope of the research and our focus on both suburbs at risk of decline as well as those suffering the pressures of success.

'London became a greater and still greater accumulation of towns, an immense colony of dwellings where people still live in their own home in small communities with local government just as they had done in the Middle Ages.' (Rasmussen 1934)[1]

1.1 The London suburb has been derided and praised in equal measure for almost as long as it has existed. Described by Cyril Connolly as an 'incubator of apathy and delirium' and yet by Harold Clunn as 'a victory for civilisation', London's suburbs (as we define them in Chapter 2) cover almost two thirds of its land area and provide homes to more than half its population. Seen by many Londoners as the ideal place to live and to bring up children, London's suburbs are an integral part of the city's character. As Rasmussen points out they give London a character that is quite unlike any other world city - a great metropolis made up of villages.

1.2 After a brief period in the 1980s when they found favour, the suburbs are once more being questioned. The urban renaissance, heralded in the *Urban Task Force Report*[2] and the *Urban White Paper*[3], is promoting development that is urban in both its location and its character. The Task Force were careful to make clear that the urban renaissance they advocated applied to the 90% of the population that lived within urban areas – thus applying equally to the suburbs. However it has been widely interpreted as the promotion of high-density housing in inner urban areas to reverse the exodus of population from cities. Suburbs, having been largely created by this exodus, might therefore be expected to be adversely affected by a successful urban renaissance.

1.3 Since the start of the millennium the Mayor and the GLA have been developing a Spatial Development Strategy (SDS) for the capital. This puts into practice an urban renaissance agenda by reversing the assumptions about the planned dispersal of population that have dominated planning thinking in London since Abercrombie. The population of London is growing rapidly and the draft Spatial Development Strategy will seek to accommodate rather than inhibit this growth. To do this it will identify areas where major change is expected to occur, particularly to the east, as well as policies to consolidate and expand the centre.

The policy direction set out in the draft SDS, *Towards the London Plan*[4] had less to say about the suburbs, something picked up in the comments of the suburban London boroughs. Yet if the SDS is to achieve its aim of securing London's role as an exemplary sustainable world city the suburbs must play their part.

1.4   In September 2001 the GLA commissioned URBED (the Urban and Economic Development group) and the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA) to undertake research into London's suburbs. This report sets out the results of this research and suggests a set of policies for London's suburbs to be incorporated into the SDS.

1.5   The research has been undertaken in two main stages. The first stage involved a literature review to assess the issues facing the suburbs. This was used to develop a typology to describe London's suburbs and to assess whether such a typology could be used as the basis for SDS policies. The issues raised were then explored through a set of seven case studies, a survey of suburban London Boroughs, and a review of relevant literature and best practices.

1.6   The issues were also discussed at two seminars organised by the TCPA and involving representatives from suburban boroughs as well as experts and academics. The notes from the workshops and write-ups of the case studies are included as Appendix 1 and 2 to this report. A review of progress and best practice in environmental sustainability is included as Appendix 3, and proposed policies for the SDS are included as Appendix 4.

Scope of the research

1.7   The aim of the research is to provide a set of policies to improve the sustainability of London's suburban areas as part of the city's urban fabric. The word sustainability is used in its widest sense meaning the ability of an area and its population to sustain itself over time. The research has therefore been interested in social and economic as well as environmental sustainability.

1.8   The research has not been concerned with the relative merits of the suburban areas or the development of new suburbs. We have however been concerned with successful suburbs as well as those that are at risk of decline. We therefore set ourselves the following research questions at the outset:

1.   Which, if any, of London's suburban areas are at risk of decline, why is this and what can be done to reverse or prevent their decline?

2.   Which suburban areas are thriving, why is this, what problems is this creating and what can be done to build on their success?

3.   How can suburban London generally be shaped through the SDS towards a more sustainable settlement model?

1.9   The report has been written by David Rudlin, Dr Nicholas Falk, Nicholas Dodd and Sarah Jarvis of URBED. The research was undertaken in partnership with Gideon Amos and Robert Shaw of the TCPA. For the GLA the project was managed by Debbie McMullen, Hannah Crook, Jane Carlsen and from the LDA Anne Crane.

1.10   We are grateful for all of the participants who have contributed to the work by either attending the workshops or commenting on drafts of the report. Particular thanks are due to Professor Sir Peter Hall of the Bartlett School of Planning at UCL, Caroline Bourne of the Civic Trust, Janet Rangeley from LB Hillingden, Paul Clark from LB Redbridge, Peter Wright LB Barking and Dagenham, Ros Ward LB Barnet, Ian Bailey and Ben Thomas Bexley Council, Claire Codling LB Harrow, Liz Motherwell formerly RB Kingston upon Thames and Steve Cardis LB Merton.

Introduction References

[1]   **Rasmussen S.E.**– London the Unique City, Jonathan Cape, 1934

[2]   **The Urban Task Force** – Towards an Urban Renaissance , E&FN Spon, 1999

[3]   **DTLR** – Our Towns and Cities: the future - Delivering the Urban Renaissance, The Stationary Office, Nov. 2000

[4]   **Greater London Authority** - Towards a London Plan, May 2001

2. London's suburbs

In which we describe the definition of the suburbs that we have used in the research. We set out a broad definition based on the areas built up from the mid 19th Century to the present. We then describe the historical development of these areas by looking at four periods of development; before 1840, 1840-1914, 1914-1940 and 1940 to the present.

Defining the suburbs

2.1   In 1933 The Congress International de Architecture Moderne (CIAM) described the suburbs as the 'squalid antechamber of the city'. However in developing policies for London's suburbs we need a more practical definition. The term suburb has always referred to development on the periphery of an urban area that is dependent upon the urban area for its existence – for jobs, commerce and administration. However by this definition virtually the whole of London outside the square mile is a suburb. Even Westminster, after all, was developed as a royal suburb outside the gates of the mercantile city. Subsequently areas like Covent Garden and Bloomsbury were developed by estate owners as suburbs to accommodate the expanding population dependent upon the city.

2.2   In different cultures and in different times the term suburban has had other connotations. In the medieval city, suburbs like Southwark were the wild unregulated areas on the city's edge and were populated by the poor. As URBED has described[1], to an extent this is still the case in continental Europe where the poorest areas are often the most peripheral. However in the Anglo-American world the suburb has become, what Fishman[2] describes as, a 'Bourgeoisie Utopia' where the middle-classes can escape the city. In the post-industrial city the poor tend to live in the inner city and incomes gradually rise as one travels away from the centre through the suburbs.

2.3   Of course no city is ever this simple. Affluent inner city enclaves and peripheral council estates muddy the picture. Nowhere is this truer than in London which, as a conglomeration of villages or townships (as Ramussen[3] pointed out), combines elements of the pre-industrial city – where the affluent vie to live in the centre – with the post-industrial trend of middle-class dispersal. In URBED's research on urban attitudes for the Urban Task Force[4] Londoners aspired to live in the suburbs whilst deriding them as 'the sticks'.

2.4   London's suburbs are not, of course uniform in character. Suburban areas include a huge range of development types, from the tightly packed

terraces of the early railway suburbs to the high-rise estates such as Roehampton. However the term 'suburban' implies a form of development as well as a location. It conjures an image of semi-detached and detached houses with gardens, front and back, on leafy streets in an environment designed around the needs of the nuclear family.

2.5   The definition of suburbia can therefore get confused. It is middle-class but includes council estates, it is semi-detached but includes peripheral high-rise estates, and it is on the periphery but laps right up to the walls of the old city. We have therefore developed a working definition of suburbs for this study based on the concern of the GLA to address the needs of suburban areas not otherwise covered by the SDS. We have not looked at high-rise estates which have already been subject to extensive work or at areas of inner London that are dealt with elsewhere in the SDS.

2.6   Our focus is therefore on the ring of suburbs that surround inner London and those that date from the latter quarter of the 19th Century to the present day. These areas are indicated on Figure 1. They cover the two
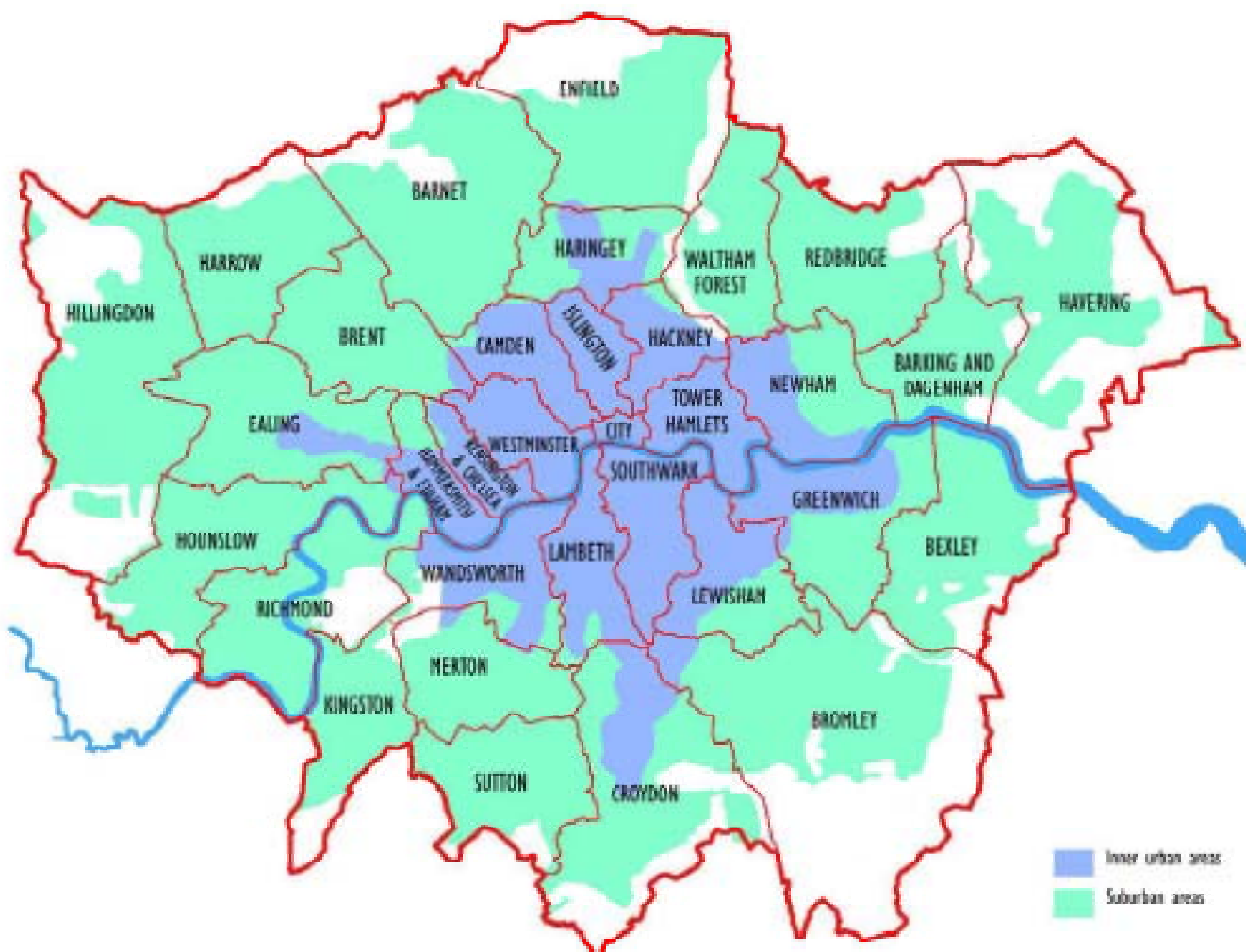

FIGURE 1: London's Suburbs

thirds of London's land area and accommodate over half of its population. These suburbs cover most of outer London but also parts of some inner London Boroughs. They include a wide variety of development types and uses. However the predominant residential character is of low-rise, relatively low-density housing and industrial areas laced with local centres. We have not confined ourselves to any particular socio-economic grouping. These suburbs will include a cross section of Londoners from the 'cottage' council estate to the stockbroker belt. There is, of course, a huge variety within these areas that we seek to reflect in the typology that we develop in Chapter 4. However the predominant character of these areas would be recognisable to most Londoners as suburban.

The development of London's suburbs

2.7   In order to understand the character of London's suburbs and the issues that they face we must understand a little about their history. This has been well documented by authors such as Michael Hebbert in *London- Neither fortune nor design*[5] and Peter Ackroyd's recent *London: The Biography*[6] . For our purpose the best way to relate the history of suburbs to their character is perhaps to look at the four periods that Andrew Saint uses in his book *London suburbs*[7]:

Pre-1840:

2.8   This takes in the earliest 'true' suburbs such as Clapham and Regents Park. These largely predate public transport and so were only accessible to people with the means to run private carriages. They were therefore confined to the very affluent and, while they can be seen as the birthplace of modern suburbia, they account for a small part of London's area. The 1813 Plan (Figure 2 on page 8) shows that the London of the time when these early suburbs were being developed was a very compact city surrounded by a constellation of small villages.

1840-1914:

2.9   This period covers the first public transport suburbs. These expanded rapidly following the opening of the Metropolitan and District Lines in the 1860s, the Cheap Trains Act of the 1883 and the coming of the trams. Many of these suburbs are built of terraced housing tightly packed around stations. Such areas include Peckham, Tooting, Walthamstow, Battersea and Kilburn. As such they correspond more to our image of the inner city than suburbia in both their form and their location and are not covered by this study. However the period also includes the emergence of the first garden city estates like Bedford Park and Hampstead Garden Suburb. These were very influential in creating a new form of suburb, based on semi-detached houses and short terraces with front and rear gardens and a more naturalistic, leafy environment. Examples such as Muswell Hill and Ealing from this period cover significant areas and represent the start of the type of development that we recognise as suburban today. Figure 3 shows the extent of London in 1897. While
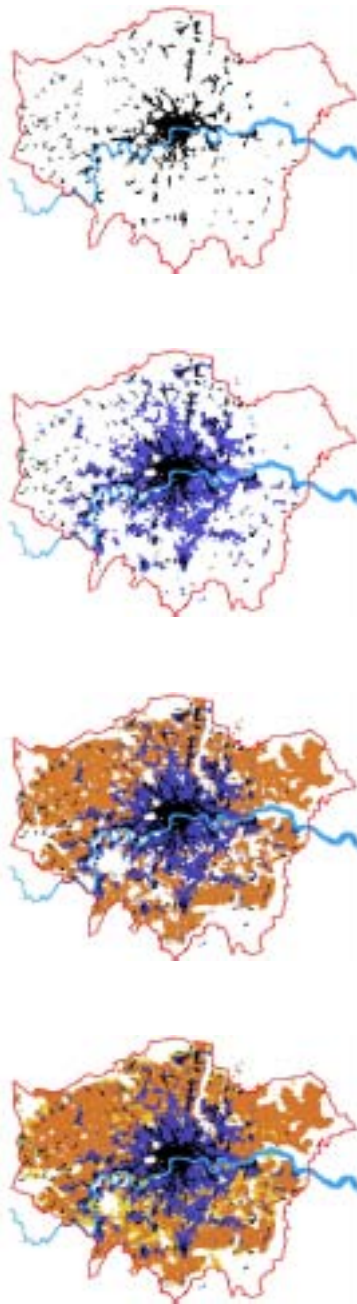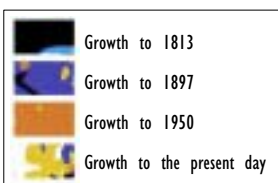
this does not quite cover the whole of this period it gives an indication of the extent of suburban growth over the latter part of the century.

1914-1940:

2.11 The extension of the underground led to the enormous interwar expansion of 'Metroland' through which London swamped surrounding counties such as Middlesex. The development of inter-war arterial roads also opened up cheap building land. This is the period when the popular (and particularly the intellectual and professional) perception of the suburb changed. Prior to 1914 suburbs were largely seen as welcome alternatives to unhealthy cities. Between the wars this changed as they came to be seen as a cancerous growth despoiling the countryside, fuelling rampant speculation, and creating dull, monotonous environments. More than two thirds of the suburbs that we identify above fall into this category. Suburbs from this period contain huge variation, from the large London County Council (LCC) developments such as the Bellingham Estate in Lewisham or Becontree in Dagenham to the blue collar private suburbs around suburban industry along the North Circular or in Colliers Wood, to the leafy affluence of Ealing, Finchley, or Hayes Bromley, and multi-cultural areas like Kenton. Given the age and scale of the interwar suburbs and the fact that much of the housing was not built or planned particularly well[8], this is likely to be the category most likely to be vulnerable to potential decline. Figure 4 gives some indication of the scale of development in this period.

1940 to the present:

2.12 After the Second World War the outward expansion of London was checked by the introduction of the Green Belt. This largely prevented the further outward expansion of suburbs within, what is now, the Greater London boundary (as opposed to the expansion of suburbs into the Home Counties). The land-area colonised by new suburbs in London since the war is therefore relatively small compared to the interwar expansion. The immediate post-war housing output was overwhelmingly public sector. In the London context this fell into three types: 31,000 properties built by the LCC Valuer's department in 'out county' estates such as Borehamwood, the Mark 1 New Towns and the LCC Architect's Departments' modernist estates, the first of which was Lansbury after the Festival of Britain. The modernist estates, even those in suburban areas, fall outside the scope of this study. Most of the 'out-county' estates and all of the New Towns are outside Greater London and so are also not of concern.

2.13 By the late 1950s the LCC Architects Department had gained prominence and the emphasis turned to high-rise and deck access development. However in the late 1960s the Greater London Council (GLC) did start two large suburbs at Thamesmead in Bexley and Grahame Park in Barnet since completed by the private sector. Indeed from this point onwards it was private housing that would once again make the

FIGURES 2-5: The growth of suburban London - from the top 1813, 1897, 1950 and today

■	Growth to 1813
■	Growth to 1897
■	Growth to 1950
■	Growth to the present day

greatest contribution to London suburbs. With the exception of Docklands, this new private housing has concentrated on filling in the gaps left within the interwar suburbs rather that expanding the boundaries of suburbia. Figure 5 therefore shows the relatively small degree to which suburban London has expanded since 1950.

2.14   In this chapter we have described the character and variety of London's suburbs, something that has been examined much more comprehensively elsewhere. However our main concern is with the challenges facing suburban London today. This brief historical review shows how London's suburbs grew up to engulf the constellation of villages that once surrounded the city. It is these villages that give London's suburbs a unique sense of focus and character not found, for example, in American cities. However London's suburban growth has been very uneven. Two great periods of outwards expansion – the first with the advent of public transport towards the end of the 19th century and the latter between the wars – were followed by periods of consolidation. The interwar growth was, by far, the most significant. It is the building styles and planning principles of this period that create much of suburban London's character. It is a character based on the semi-detached home with gardens front and back that responds to a desire for privacy, safety, quiet, family life and greenery. The essential elements of this character can be found from the most affluent to the most humble of suburbs.

2.15   The formula has been remarkably successful. These suburban characteristics have had an enduring appeal. Despite the scorn that accompanied their development, interwar suburbs have succeeded to a far greater degree than most of the developments preferred by their critics. Because of this success suburbia has not been a policy issue in London. There is however a growing recognition that suburbs cannot be taken for granted and that they face pressures, both of growth and of decline. In the next chapter we explore these pressures.

Left: An advert from Wates showing a typical image of interwar suburbia.

Bottom: An illustration by Harry Bush of suburbia under construction probably in Merton

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3. The challenges facing suburbia

In which we describe the issues facing London's suburbs. We look first at the continuing appeal of suburbs before looking at the factors that may lead to the decline of some suburbs. We then look specifically at the issue of environmental sustainability and the suburbs, particularly the need to reduce car use and energy consumption and recycle more.

3.1.   For many years London's suburbs have been regarded as a stable backdrop to the life of the city. In local plans residential suburbs are most easily defined as the space between all of the special policy areas. Outside industrial areas, town centres and the occasional Conservation Area there are rarely specific policies for these suburban areas, despite them covering most of the plan area and housing the majority of the population. The reason is that, in the past, these suburban areas have been seen as largely without problems. It is clear, however, both from the workshops that we held as part of the study (see Appendix 1) and from the survey that we have undertaken, that many local authorities are worried that suburbs are not receiving enough attention. While it is true that most of London's suburbs retain a strong appeal as we describe in the first part of this chapter this can lead to problems of congestion and potential over development. Elsewhere there are the early signs of another phenomenon as some suburbs start to show signs of stress and are at risk of decline.

3.2.   In this chapter we therefore explore the issues that have been raised in our consultations and that have arisen from our literature review. These are broadly split into the reasons for suburban success, the concerns about possible decline and the environmental sustainability of suburbs.

The continuing appeal of suburbs

3.3.   Most of London's suburban areas are stable and successful and provide a desirable place to live for a large proportion of its population. It is important to understand why this is, partly so that we can learn from and improve these successful suburbs but also so that public policy can address the pressures and problems that success creates, such as congestion.

3.4.   While much of the literature on suburbs is critical[1] there is an alternative body of work that celebrates their success. This sees suburbs as the saviour of the city, a place where people can escape urban 'evils' and live healthy, 'happy' lives. This is described by Thorns[2] and forms the basis for much of the writings of the garden city movement culmi-

nating in Unwin's *Nothing Gained by Overcrowding*[3]. Between the wars, as the backlash against suburbs grew, there remained a literature in praise of the suburb. In the 1930s even the Bauhaus recognised the huge influence of English garden cities and praised the semi-detached home as the ideal combination of villa and proletarian housing[4]. In 1932, Harold Clunn's guidebook *The Face of London* claimed that 'London is undoubtedly the most magnificent city in the world and a victory for civilisation for the larger it grows the more attractive it seems to become'[5]. After the war supporters of suburbs such as J.M. Richards' 1946 *Castles on the Ground*[6] tended to see them as a bulwark against modernism.

3.5.   In this literature the suburb is not exciting, well-designed or academically interesting. It is however popular, unlike most of the alternatives created by its critics and indeed unlike the inner city. The much derided semi-detached suburb has been enduringly popular with a wide section of society that has shunned the environments created for them by public authorities and quietly moved of their own accord to suburbs where they can find peace and quiet, greenery, good schools, space, freedom and like-minded people. These are some of the reasons why suburbs continue to prosper as we describe below:

Peace, quiet and space

3.6.   The traditional attractions of suburbia are as strong today as they have always been. URBED's attitudinal work for the Urban Task Force[7] found that most people have a combination of 'urban' and 'suburban' aspirations. Their 'urban side' desires life, diversity, convenience and excitement while their suburban alter-egos crave peace and quiet, greenery, safety, and privacy. The research found that most people harboured urban and suburban aspirations but that the balance has been tipped in favour of the suburbs for many years. For a growing proportion of mainly young people, the balance is tipping towards Inner London. However for the majority, the scales are still weighted firmly in favour of the suburbs.

A family environment

3.7.   This is particularly related to the stages of life. The young tend to favour urban areas while families overwhelmingly favour the suburbs. This relates to space, gardens, facilities and safety. It may also be that those

with childcare responsibilities are less able (and probably less inclined) to take full advantage of the life and diversity offered by cities. The image of suburbia therefore remains as a good place to bring up children.

An aspirational environment

3.8.   At the heart of the suburbs' appeal is also the idea of self-advancement and status. Historically people have aspired to move to suburbs because of what it says about their status and success. As they improve their standard of living they will tend to move further out, partly in search of more space and other suburban benefits and partly as a measure of their status. This lies behind the suburban ladder and Champion's population cascade.

Much of suburban London retains its village character

Education

3.9.   Most important of all public services to the success of suburbs is education. The perceived quality of local schools and the results that they achieve is a very important factor in the residential choices of families. In URBED's work for the Urban Task Force[8] people were moving to suburban areas almost reluctantly in order to ensure a good education for their children.

Character

3.10.   As Saint points out[9], suburban London was not built on virgin territory. It spread over a landscape that was a patchwork of villages, institutions, large houses and managed parkland. These were incorporated into the suburban environment creating local character and identity that is not found in American or Australian suburbs. This has created a pattern of local centres throughout suburban London many of which retain a village feel giving a character and rootedness to counterbalance what can sometimes be a monotonous residential environment.

Greenery

3.11.   Research in Chicago[10] suggests that street trees add up to 18% to the value of homes compared to comparable streets without trees. London is a very green city and the most successful suburbs, like Surbiton, tend to be those with street trees, mature parks and generous gardens.

Freedom

3.12.   One of the enduring attractions of the suburb is a sense of freedom. As Peter Ackroyd suggests[11] the motive for moving to the suburbs was *'to escape the sheer proximity of other people and other voices'*. Paul Baker in his paper *Non-plan revisited: the real way that cities grow[12]* argues that suburbs succeed because they were not planned but grew anarchically in response to demand. The result is houses which may not be smart but remain 'amazingly adaptable containers' and which give people the freedom to express their individuality.

Community

3.13. While many commentators have disparaged the isolation and lack of community in the suburbs, the reality is that suburbs just have a different type of community. This has traditionally been a community of extended networks based around schools, voluntary work, social activities and churches rather than the tight-knit urban communities studied by Young and Wilmott[13]. To many people the suburban community is a more attractive proposition, since it allows them a choice of when to engage with others while retaining the ability to retreat to the privacy of their own home. However as Robert Putnam[14] has charted in America the social capital that has sustained suburban communities is breaking down which, in his analysis, threatens the cohesion of suburban areas.

Exclusivity

3.14. One of the characteristics of suburbs is a tendency to polarise populations. A combination of house prices, employment patterns and tenure tend to separate the rich from the poor. Many commentators see this as a weakness yet to some of the middle classes it can be an advantage. One of the great attractions of suburbia – as Fishman describes in his book *Bourgeois Utopia[15]* – is that it is a place where people can feel comfortable with people who share their outlook on life. In the earliest suburbs this exclusivity was based on the cost of transport. The Clapham Saints, for example, could be sure of the exclusivity of their suburb because of the cost of travel back into the city. The opposite tends to be true today since some of the most accessible suburbs are the most exclusive. However while the cost of transport may no longer be an issue, exclusivity is maintained through tenure and houseprices.

Employment

3.15. As Breheny[16] has demonstrated, jobs have been suburbanising as quickly as people. Jane Jacob's argues[17] that economic activity tends to originate in urban markets. However as companies mature, they tend to suburbanise in search of a better environment, car-based transport accessibility and cheaper land. This was certainly a trend in London in the 1980s and 1990s with large suburban developments like Stockley Park. Some of the American literature[18] suggests that this commercial

development will lead to the urbanisation of suburbia. Breheny has also argued that the dispersal of employment will reinforce suburban trends – why live in the centre when you work on the edge?

3.16. As we describe below, the suburbs have not always benefited from these economic trends. In fact the suburbs have tended to be squeezed between the attractions of the centre and the lure of employment locations outside the M25. This may however change with the growth of 'just in time' supply chain management required for e-retailing which is likely to increase the demand for distribution uses in the suburbs. There are also trends for large employers to encourage home and 'tele-working' in order to reduce office overheads. Research has suggested that this could form the basis for new community workspace in the suburbs and in the process help to ease congestion[19] . There are also early signs of the development of 'green' collar manufacturing as demonstrated by the suburban locations being considered for London ReMade's proposed recycling-based eco-industrial parks[20] .

Public Services

3.17. Public services continue to represent a significant source of employment in suburban areas, with health, education and public administration providing over 20% of employment across suburban London[21] . This position is likely to be strengthened by the governments' spending programme for the NHS and the substantial new investment earmarked for public transport. The perceived higher quality of health, education and policing provision in the suburbs are also an important part of their attraction.

Suburbs at-risk

3.18. Since the late 1970s the inner city has been the focus for policy-makers and more recently attention has turned to city centres and peripheral estates. Planning policy has sought to control the sprawl of suburbs but, once built, these suburbs have been largely forgotten. However while the attractions listed above have ensured that most suburbs continue to prosper, other suburbs may not be entirely immune from the problems that have affected other parts of cities[22] . Our hypothesis at the outset of this research, as we described in the introduction, was that the government's focus on the renaissance of urban areas could create the conditions for the decline of some suburbs. This has not been entirely borne out. We have not found large areas of suburban decline of the kind that once affected the inner city. There are however pressures that are starting to affect London's suburbs and that could lead to future problems. We list below the potential pressures that could affect suburban London based on our literature review:

Population cascade

3.19. Champion has described a population cascade that characterises migration within cities[23] . Each successive ring around a city gains

population from the inner rings while losing population to more periph-eral rings. For example, Nicholas Schoon[24] quotes a resident of his home suburb in Bromley:

> *'Hayes still remains clean and tidy with good schools, plenty of parks, but gradually the area has become less friendly and the spread of London seems to be drifting our way. Within five years we will have moved further into Kent to give our children a better start in life'.*

3.20. It is not however clear whether suburbs like Hayes are deteriorating or whether its residents just feel that they are. It may be that residents are raising their aspirations rather than the suburb that is declining. This view of suburbs as stepping stones of social advancement has existed as long as the suburbs have. It does not necessarily lead to problems since the people moving out are replaced by new arrivals. However problems could arise if the cascade were to slow to a trickle or reverse its direction because some suburbs may be unable to replace the people lost to more peripheral areas.

FIGURE 6: Population change in London's suburbs Source: Greater London Authority (2001) %population change by ward. Numbers of wards in each band in brackets

13 to 175 (151)
8 to 13 (159)
5 to 8 (122)
1 to 5 (139)
-55 to -1 (125)
all others (64)

3.21. Data on population trends in London is inconclusive on this issue[25]. In fact it was in the 1970s and 80s that the population of the suburbs fell and since 1991 there has been something of a recovery. This suggests

Number of burglaries per 1000 households:
- 3.5 to 8.5
- 2.75 to 3.5
- 2.0 to 2.75
- 1.25 to 2.0 0
- 0 to 1.25
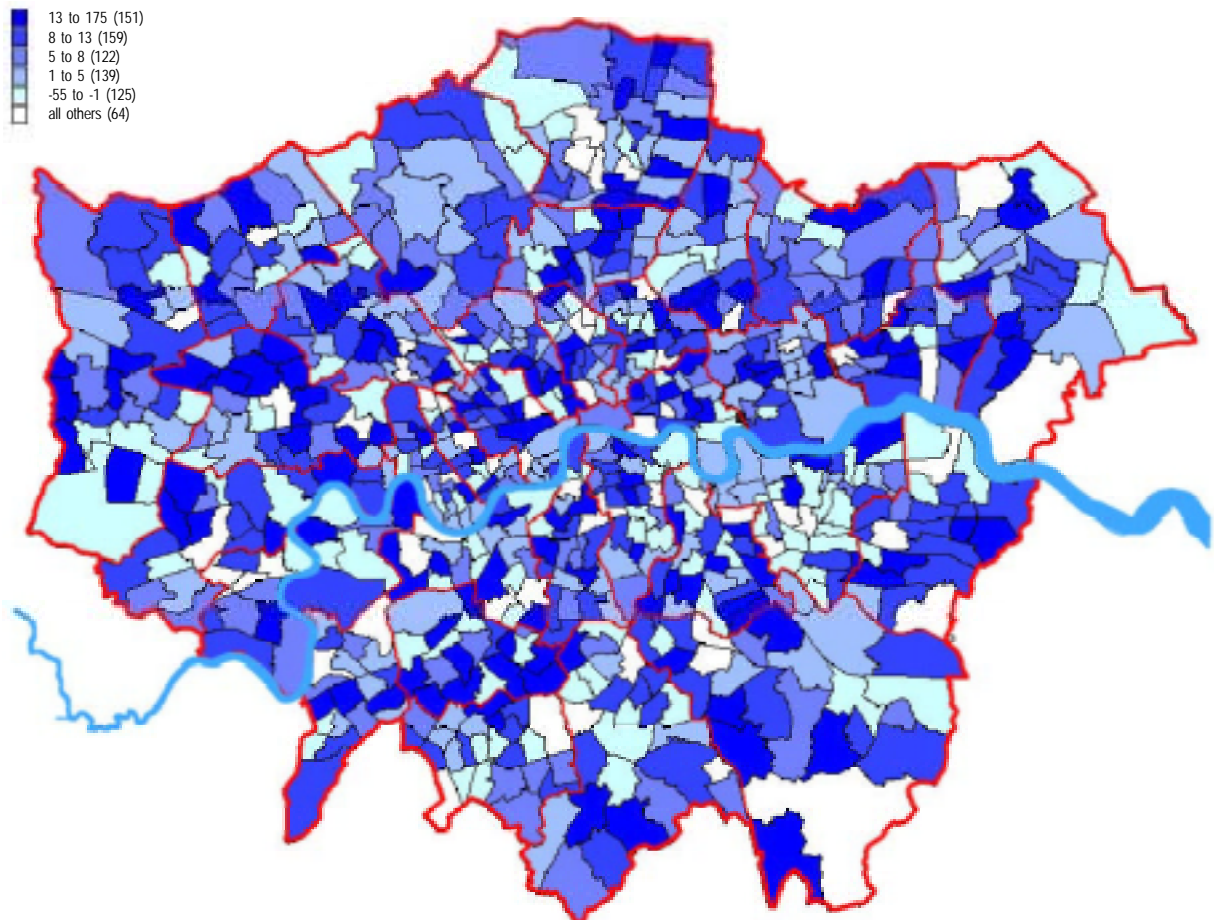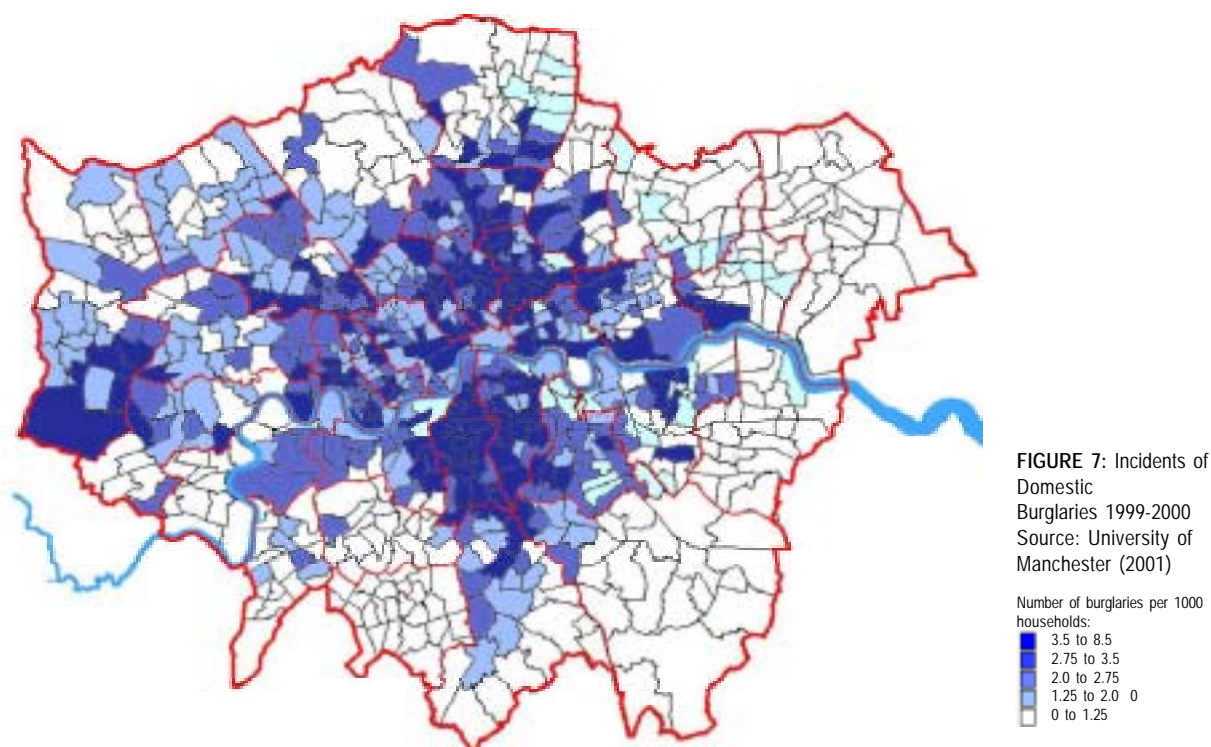
that in the earlier period Greater London as a whole was losing population as a result of the population cascade. Since that time inward migration to London has exceeded outward migration so that, even though the population cascade has continued, it has not resulted in falling populations. However even in this period suburban population growth of 6.6% has lagged behind growth in inner London of 9.1%. The pattern of migration also has not been even with suburban boroughs such as Richmond, Merton, Barnet and Barking & Dagenham showing significant growth of around 13% since 1991. By contrast the population of Havering, Hounslow, Bexley, Brent and Bromley grew by just 3%. The picture at ward level shows that the borough trends mask huge local variation with some wards growing rapidly while others lose population.

Exported inner-city problems

3.22. Of course it is possible that suburbs really are being invaded by inner city ills. Problems such as drug use and its associated crime, which were once confined to the inner city, may be spreading to the suburbs. Alternatively this may be more perception than reality. As Figure 7 shows, crime, as represented in this case by domestic burglaries, is still mainly an inner London issue. Part of the urban condition is a feeling that things are always getting worse – crime, drugs, anti-social behaviour, poor quality public realm and litter - even when they are not. Surveys by MORI[26] for the Mayor show that, along with the cost of living and housing, crime is one of the main concerns for London residents. However as URBED's attitudinal work for the Urban Task Force[27] showed, this is fuelled by local newspapers whose stock-in-trade is crime reporting and often bears little relationship to the actual situation which is that, not withstanding recent concerns about street crime, the long-term trend for many types of crime is downwards.

Suburban council estates

3.23. London's suburbs have always included pockets of deprivation. In the past these tended to be associated with the private rented sector, since council estates (especially in the suburbs) were highly sought-after. However in the 1990s the shortage of social housing meant that it was only available to those in greatest need (which in London often meant homeless families). As David Page[28] documented, this led to stigmatisation and to the rapid decline of some estates. This was a particularly problem for the 150,000 council properties in suburban 'cottages estates' in London which until then had always been regarded as desirable, unlike high-rise and inner city estates. Right-to-buy policy tended to polarise this effect. In areas with large numbers of right-to-buys there was often a stabilising affect. However this only served to concentrate the problems in other areas.

3.24. The early results of URBED's current research for the DTLR[29] suggest that this situation has changed markedly in the last few years. There are a number of reasons for this. It is clear that social landlords have learned the lessons of the 1990s and also that they have become much less tolerant of anti-social tenants. Problems of affordability in the housing market have also reduced the stigma of social housing. This combined with the redevelopment of the poorest estates (like Chalk Farm in Brent) means that there are far few problems in social housing estates than there were even three years ago.

FIGURE 8: The distribution of council housing in London (Source Experian 2001)
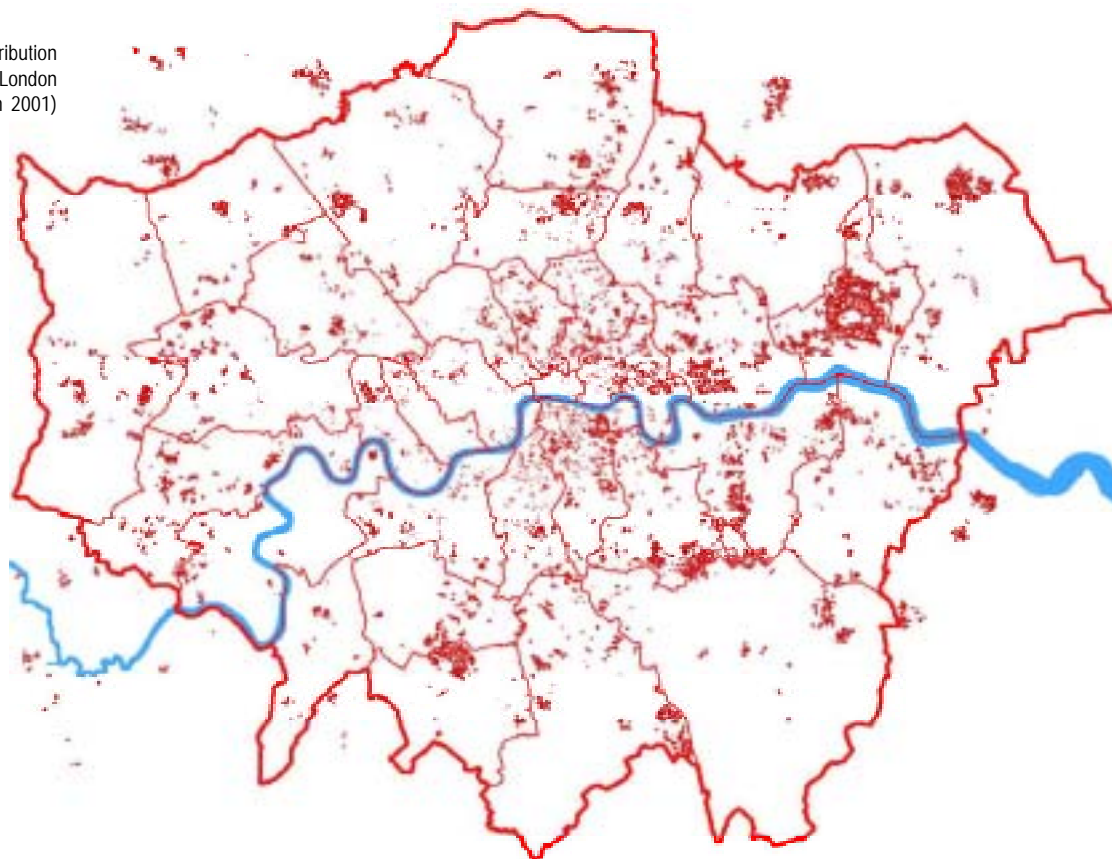
Private renting:

3.25. One of the consequences of the improvement in social housing is that problems have been pushed into the private sector. Initiatives by councils to tackle 'bad neighbour' families have pushed these households into the private sector creating further problems. This has led to pockets of deprivation in areas characterised by private renting at the lower end of the market. In these areas lack of investment by private landlords has led to a deteriorating (and in some cases obsolescent) housing stock[30]. However this is not typical of the private rented sector which has seen significant growth as rentals and investment returns have risen[31]. In large parts of suburban London this makes a positive contribution to housing choice.

Obsolescence

3.26. As Hall[32] points out: *'The suburbs will not last for ever… they are between 50 and 70 years old. Not all were well built, not all have been well maintained… Some may well degenerate into new slums and the question of clearance and rebuilding will then loom large'.* In suburbs that are prosperous this is unlikely to be an issue as people have the resources to maintain their homes and values are sufficiently high to enable incremental redevelopment to replace obsolescent stock. However in areas like Hayes and Wealdstone where population is transitory, values are weaker and the above-mentioned private landlords predominate, obsolescence is becoming an issue.

Retail change

3.27. One of the suburban pressures that has received considerable attention is the decline of suburban shopping centres. There are 2 international centres, 10 metropolitan centres, 35 major centres, over 150 district centres and more than 1,500 neighbourhood centres in London according to research by the GLA. Figure 9 shows the location of the main centres and illustrates that all ten of the metropolitan centres are in suburban areas while 17 of the major centres and 95 of the district centres serve suburban London. A large proportion of the 1,500 neighbourhood centres are also in the suburbs. London's suburbs therefore contain more than 60% of its shopping centres and perhaps even a greater proportion of its shopping floorspace. These centres, many of which were originally villages, are what gives London much of its character. They play a vital retail role, particularly for more vulnerable members of society, as well as being a focus for community facilities.

3.28. Work for LPAC[33] in the 1990s illustrated how out-of-town retailing trends have undermined many suburban centres. Smaller centres had been hit by the loss of convenience shopping to supermarkets. There was also a concern that larger centres would be affected by out-of-town centres such as Bluewater although this fear has largely proved unfounded. All centres have nevertheless seen a loss of diversity as independent retailers have been supplanted by multiple chains. Ethnic shopkeepers have filled the void in some areas, such as Kenton; how-
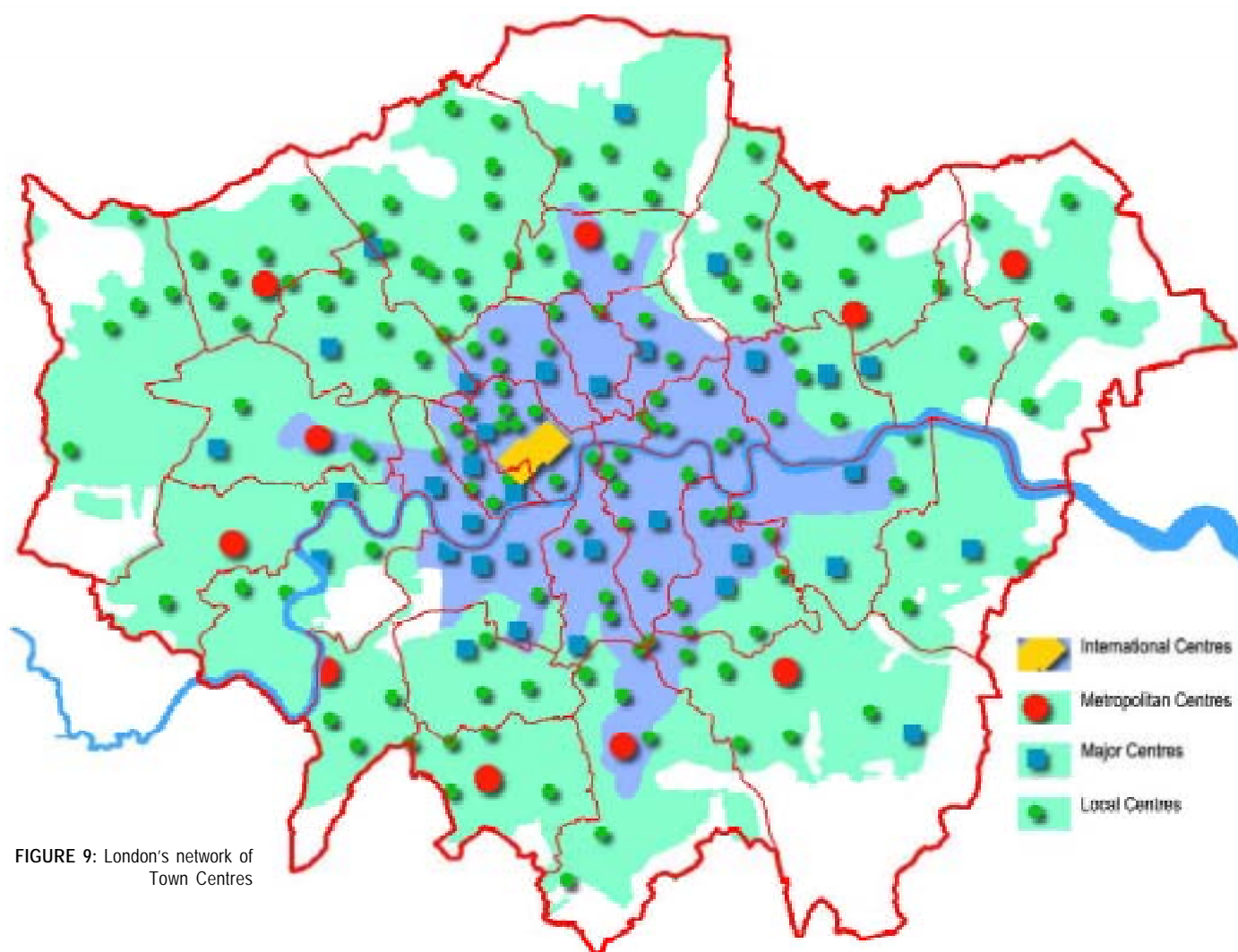
FIGURE 9: London's network of Town Centres

ever they too are suffering in the face of 24-hour supermarkets. In some small parades vacancy is an increasing problem and alternative uses such as take-aways are a source of litter and disturbance.

3.29. The growth of non-retail uses such as restaurants and bars is also changing the pattern of uses and activities within some centres such as Temple Fortune. In some boroughs like Hillingdon this is being resisted while others are beginning to encourage diversification such as in Wealdstone (see case studies).

3.30 There are however hopeful signs of retail prosperity in town centres as planning policy restricts new out-of-town stores and the retailers re-spond with new formats such as 'metro' stores that are located in local centres. E-retailing and home delivery services currently represent a small but increasingly significant niche market, and it is possible to envisage future growth shifting the focus of retailing from outlets to

distribution and customer services.[34]

Economic trends

3.31. Around 66% of London's 4,337,400 employees live in the suburbs which are therefore net exporters of labour[35] . The amount of employment located in the suburbs rose slightly from 1,655,950 jobs in 1989 to 1,683,200 in 1999. However this is in a context when total employment in London increased by 329,500. Within these figures the proportion of suburban jobs in manufacturing fell from 18% of the total in 1991 to just 9% in 1999 with no loss in output due to productivity improvements.

3.32. As with demographic change the small overall increase in suburban employment masks significant local differences with some suburbs such as Barking & Dagenham, Croydon, Ealing, Enfield and Waltham Forest[36] having lost significant employment. These tend to be the former 'blue collar' suburbs that grew up around manufacturing industry. The contraction of manufacturing and rationalisation of utilities has meant factories have closed or relocated. However even where employers have remained, productivity improvements have led to a smaller but more skilled and highly paid workforce. This often means that the remaining workers no longer choose to live in the surrounding council neighbourhoods.

3.33. The main employment growth in London has been in services. This has benefited some suburbs such as Hillingdon, Barnet and Hounslow through the development of employment locations like Stockley Park. However there is no reason why the suburbanisation of employment should stop at the Greater London boundary and much greater employment growth has taken place outside the M25. Many suburbs therefore find themselves competing with both the centre and towns that surround London leaving suburban workforces isolated from new employment growth areas.

FIGURE 10: London's Strategic Employment Sites

Figure 11: Suburban Employment % Breakdown (1999)

	Manufacturing	Construction	Wholesale and Retail	Hotels and catering	Transport and communications	Financial and Business services	Public Administration	Health and Education
East and NE	13.5	6.3	21.2	5.7	6.6	19.4	5.6	21.6
South	8.5	7.7	24.0	6.1	6.1	25.5	4.7	17.4
West and NW	9.4	4.7	22.4	7.2	12.7	25.0	4.4	14.4
% Outer London	10.4	6.0	22.5	6.5	9.2	23.5	4.8	17.3

Source: GLA 2001

Cultural diversity

3.34. London is a city which prides itself on its ethnic and cultural diversity with 27% of Londoners being of non-white ethnic origin[37] . Ethnic minority communities have tended to start off in inner areas and to gradually suburbanise so they are now as likely to be found in suburban areas as in inner London. Ethnic diversity represents a significant strength for many suburbs and can be a powerful antidote to possible decline. The London Development Agency has highlighting their significant contribution to the economy in North West London[38] . However the prosperity and success of black and minority ethnic communities is still held back by persisting discrimination which creates 'inequalities of opportunity and income'. Incidents such as the Stephen Lawrence murder and the activity of far right organisations in areas like Welling suggest that the suburbs may be more prone to conflict. This needs to be tackled through a co-ordinated response to issues of hate crime, equality of access to education and employment, and by responding to the distinct needs of different communities such as, for example, larger dwelling sizes and access to places of worship. The LDA has also highlighted the need for greater support for black and minority ethnic owned businesses.

Transport difficulties

3.35. Some of the literature on sustainable settlement patterns equates sustainability with an element of self-containment. The urban village concept, for example, is based on a mix of housing, employment and services so that people can reach their work and local services on foot. However the concept of a suburb has always depended on a symbiotic relationship with the host city. Suburban residents rely on the city for employment, leisure and other activities that are not available in a small town. A city, in turn, relies on its suburbs to house its residents so providing workers, customers and citizens without which it would not survive. City suburbs cannot therefore be self-contained and good public transport links are essential. It is already the case in London that the accessibility of suburbs by public transport equates closely to their popularity which in turn is reflected in higher house prices. The PTAL map of London (Figure 12) illustrates the relative accessibility of different parts of London. The dark blue areas on the plan equate closely to the suburban areas that are at most risk of decline.

Environmental Sustainability

3.36. We have talked so far about the attractions of suburbs and the risks that they face – in other words their social and economic sustainability. However we have not addressed the important issue of their environmental sustainability. The suburbs are where the majority of Londoners live and are therefore crucial to the SDS vision set out in 'Towards the London Plan' of achieving 'fundamental improvements in environmental management and use of resources'[39].

The scale of the task

3.37. The 'ecological imperative', as the Urban Task Force[40] termed it, has been widely researched and documented. What this research shows is the huge gap that exists between what needs to be achieved and the likely impact of current policy initiatives. Bringing London's environmental impact within the carrying capacity of natural systems would involve far more radical targets than are presently being considered such as:

□ Improvements in resource efficiency by a factor of at least 15[41]
□ Reductions in CO_2 emissions of at least 60% on 1990 levels by 2050[42]
□ Significant reduction in damage to the integrity of natural ecosystems[43]

3.38. The figures illustrate the scale of the problem. London's energy use amounts to 165 Terawatt hours a year[44] of which 56% is used by the suburbs. London also produces 23 million tonnes of solid waste a year[45] with 54% of municipal waste being generated by the suburbs. London's ecological footprint is estimated to be some 125 times its physical area, roughly the same area as the UK's productive land capacity. To date London has lacked an overall strategy to address these issues, however recent targets such as 60% household recycling rates by 2015[46] and the integration of environmental sustainability issues into the SDS suggest there is a willingness to tackle the issues.

3.39. If London is truly to become a sustainable city radical changes will be required to existing policy and market frameworks. The UK's emphasis on market-driven policies has put London at a disadvantage compared to the more pro-active policies of European cities in Germany and Denmark (see Appendix 3). Commentators such as Mayer Hillman have argued that the scale of the task implies fundamental changes in the way cities like London operate[47]. The London Plan creates the opportunity to plan for the next 15-20 years and is based on assumptions of population and economic growth. Unless action is taken this growth will increase the city's environmental impact. The SDS recognises that growth will not therefore be sustainable if it is achieved at the expense of the environment not least because of the flooding risk that London faces and the exposure of major financial institutions to global climate change liabilities.

3.40. This reveals a tension at the heart of the term 'sustainable development'. The literature argues it is about the 'triple bottom line' of social, economic and environmental sustainability - described by the London Study as the 'E3' approach – Economy, Environment and Equity[48]. But whilst no-one could argue with the Government's aim of securing 'a better quality of life for everyone'[49], the notion of maintaining 'high and stable levels of economic growth' holds inherent contradictions. Social, economic and environmental sustainability can work together, as in the

example of improved public transport increasing the accessibility and desirability of a declining suburb. However improved social and economic sustainability can create greater spending power which in turn leads to higher levels of resource consumption.

3.41. As MORI's 2001 London Survey[50] showed, there is concern amongst London's population about these issues. Environmental issues such as air pollution, transport, housing conditions and litter rank high on the concerns of Londoners. This comes as no surprise given a recent survey of world cities that placed London 102nd out of 215 for cleanliness and environmental quality[51]. The question is whether there is potential for links to be made between Londoners' concerns, the challenges the city faces and the radical policies needed.

3.42. The other problem is the limitations of the policy tools available to the GLA and indeed the public sector as a whole. As URBED highlighted during our London Sustainability Exchange study[52], affecting such radical change will require a combination of:

☐ *Reduced consumption* – to minimise the scale of demand for resources
☐ *Cultural shift* – to shift the priorities and choices of people and organisations
☐ *Institutional innovation* – to develop adequate responses to address the issues
☐ *Technological innovation* – to develop more sustainable ways of using resources
☐ *Market transformation* – to grow the market for new products and services
☐ *New economics* – challenging conventional economic assumptions and measures of progress

3.43. Many of these changes can be addressed at the scale of demonstration projects such as the Beddington ZED (Zero Emissions Development) scheme. Much more difficult is change across a city the size of London with the powers available through the planning system. As the report 'Sustainability in Development Control' by CAG Consultants argued[53], the planning system should be more strategic and proactive but its powers are limited. Issues such as market transformation and consumption patterns go beyond the remit of the SDS and local UDP's, and will require addressing as part of a broader policy framework.

The key environmental issues

3.44. From our review of the work that has been done on London's environmental sustainability (described in Appendix 3), it is clear that the following key issues need to be addressed:

Energy

3.45. If London is to achieve the 60% reductions in Carbon Dioxide emissions

projected by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) as being required to stabilise global warming, it will need to significantly increase its energy efficiency and develop more efficient and renewable energy supplies. This will have radical and far reaching effects on the suburbs. The interwar suburban housing stock is amongst the least thermally energy efficient. Low densities could also frustrate the development of efficient energy systems such as Combined Heat and Power (CHP), though proposed increases in development densities could help, and there could be significant potential for renewable energy technologies such as solar photovoltaics and thermal collectors.

3.46. Whilst the 1993 London Energy Study[54] addressed many of the key issues, and the Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) has required Boroughs to report progress to Central Government, there is a long way to go before London can claim to match progress being made in EU cities such as Berlin. The average improvement in the efficiency of London's suburban housing stock was just 6.3% between 1996 and 2001[55]. In the process London could also be missing out on opportunities to exploit the potential economic benefits of the emerging market for energy efficient technologies.

Mobility

3.47. A related issue is transport. Whilst congestion and pollution have significant societal costs, in environmental terms transport related CO_2 emissions are eclipsing savings being made in all other sectors. Mobility goes to the heart of what a suburb is. Most suburbs were built to provide attractive residential environments away from work. The dormitory suburb is therefore dependent on the mobility of its residents for its very survival.
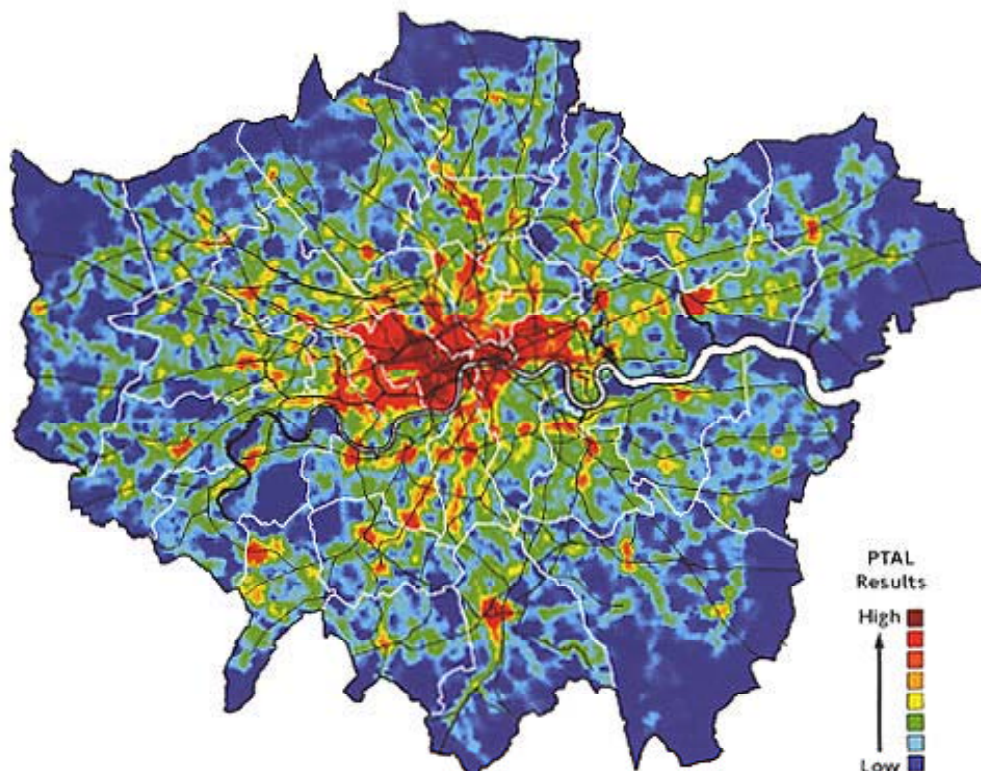

FIGURE 12: The accessibility of London to public transport based on PTAL methodology - Source LB Hammersmith and Fulham.

3.48. This is not necessarily unsustainable. The majority of London's suburbs were based on public rather than private transport. However those suburbs with poor access to public transport are likely to be adversely affected by any restrictions on car use such as road charging. Use of the private car has become much more prolific as a result of car-orientated development during the 1980-90s and an increase in households with more than one car. The result is that journeys by other modes are less convenient, and walking or cycling have become more dangerous.

Waste

3.49. Waste is a major issue because of the need to preserve natural resources, reduce CO_2 emissions, and crucially for London, to improve the public realm and reduce reliance on disposal by landfill and incineration. Waste arisings are on the increase, and whilst reducing household waste is important as a means of raising awareness, the majority of waste is commercial or industrial.

3.50. Tackling this issue will require Londoners to reduce, re-use and recycle significantly more than the current suburban household recycling rates of 9.7%[56]. This will require efficient segregation and collection systems. For business it will mean the redesign of production and distribution systems, as well as resolving the issue of weak prices and lack of markets for recyclables. London has taken the lead through the pioneering work of Ecologika[57], the work of boroughs such as Bexley and Sutton, and projects such as London ReMade. Ecologika have also suggested that recycling could change attitudes to waste, potentially tackling London's litter problem, and contributing to economic regeneration through attracting new industry.

Food

3.51. Food production has risen to greater prominence as an environmental issue following the BSE scare and the debate over Genetically Modified food. The main issue for London are the transport distances involved in shipping food from all over the world (sometimes referred to as 'food miles'), the resources required to subsidise industrialised farming techniques, and the car journeys generated by supermarkets. As Roger Levett said some years ago 'with the exception of food production, almost everything can be done more greenly in cities'[58].

3.52. Here the suburbs have a potential edge. The availability of gardens and allotments creates the potential to grow more food in the suburbs. Composting could also substantially reduce the environmental impact of food production. Links with farmers are gradually being re-established through the expansion of farmers markets[59]. In turn this is supporting traditional market gardening and growth in independent organic and wholefood food retailers.

Water

3.53. Water has become an important environmental issue due to scarcity in the South East of England, and the increasing energy required for treatment and transport. The rising water table is also creating flooding concerns. People are becoming more aware of their consumption with the gradual introduction of water metering, however, like energy-use, the suburbs are probably the least efficient water users. The future may be more hopeful as suburban housing is well suited to water efficiency measures such as rainwater collection. The rising water table also creates opportunities for using groundwater as an alternative to mains water for low grade uses such as toilet flushing and irrigation.

Conclusions

3.54. Elsewhere in the world the pressures facing suburbs are creating significant problems. In continental cities such as Paris the suburbs or 'Banlieu' have always been seen as less desirable than the centre and have experienced problems as severe as anything in the UK's inner cities. However, the US is more comparable to the UK because of its similar history of population dispersal. According to Orfield's Suburban typology[60] this process having depopulated the inner city, is now under-mining the inner suburbs. Orfield suggests that 40% of US suburban communities are now at risk because of increasing poverty, educational underachievement, declining fiscal capacity, failing commercial corridors and ageing infrastructure. As in London these suburbs do not have the resources available to central areas to pull themselves out of a downward spiral.

3.55. The US response has been to link urban renewal to sustainability and economic renewal in the 'Smart Growth' movement. This is leading to plans to use tax credits to improve transit services and to develop high-density housing around suburban metro station such as in Arlington Country in Vermont.

3.56. In London the situation has not yet reached the stage seen in either France or the US. Indeed the processes at work are different. In France the suburb has always been seen as second best compared to the centre. In the US inner suburbs are suffering from the spread of inner city problems. In London the suburb retains much of its appeal and the threat comes from the revival rather than the further decline of the inner city. Some may think that the danger is that the 'Urban Renaissance' will reduce the outflow of population to the suburbs while the attractions of the Home Counties continue to exert a pull on suburban populations. However our study shows it is not as simple as that.

3.57. The conclusion of our literature review is that most of London's sub-urbs are doing very well and that urban renaissance and suburban growth need not be incompatible. Having said that the suburbs have lost ground. Population growth is lagging behind central areas and in
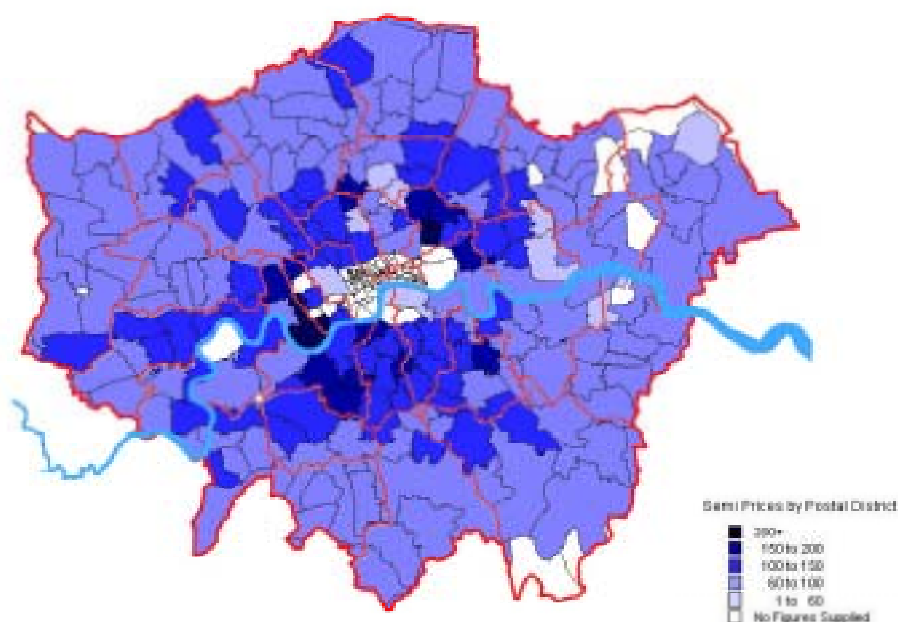
FIGURE 13a: % Change in prices for semi-detached houses 1995 - 2000 (source Land Registry)
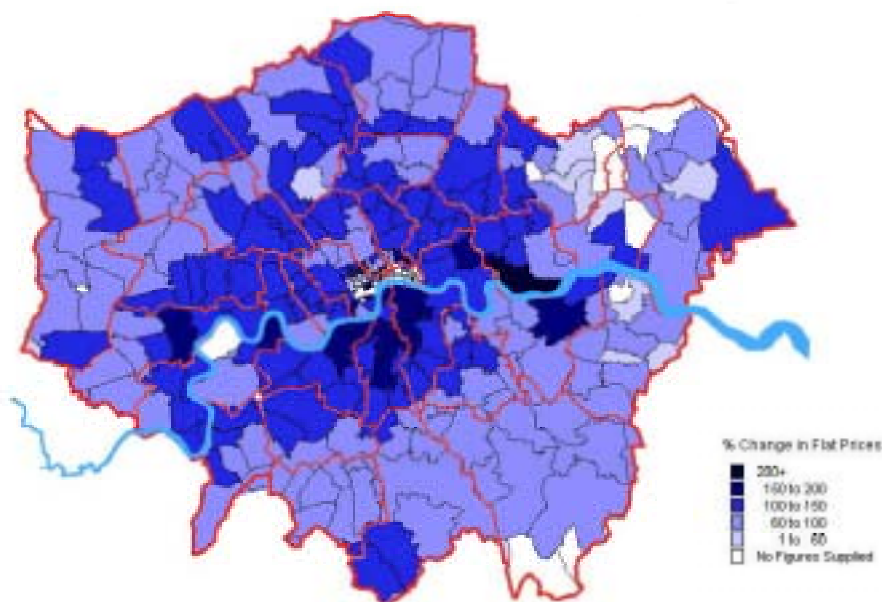
FIGURE 13b: % Change in prices for flats 1995 - 2000 (source Land Registry)

the London Evening Standard's review of up and coming areas all had a 0207 phone number. All this at a time when the economy and the population of London is growing rapidly. In these circumstances, and particularly given the rise in house prices, people will be attracted to areas that might otherwise be seen as undesirable because they are affordable. This prevents a spiral of decline becoming established and means that very few parts of London can be said to be declining. The problems will arise if London's growth falters. If this happens then the sort of suburban decline that has affected some of the provincial cities, like Newcastle, could start to affect parts of London.

3.58.   In fact the findings from our case studies as described in the next chapter are that the problems of success rather than decline are preoccupying many suburban boroughs. As populations grow and pressure for development increases the most pressing issues relate to congestion, parking and a fear that over development could undermine the suburban charac-

teristics that people find so attractive. In other words, the threat to suburban London is not that it is declining but that it is being urbanised.

3.59. In terms of environmental sustainability, the problems we have identified affect both successful and less successful suburbs. In the former residents have the resources to invest in energy efficiency but have larger homes and more cars. In poorer suburbs people have less energy efficient houses and older cars but do not have the resources to spend on energy and so have to limit their use accordingly. It is therefore important that all suburbs are targeted by environmental sustainability measures.

3.60   The literature review has therefore painted a picture of a twin track suburban London. Some areas are growing as rapidly as any part of the capital while other areas are lagging behind and are vulnerable to decline in less favourable economic conditions. In both cases environmental sustainability is likely to be an increasingly important factor in the future. It is these issues that we have explored further in the case studies described in the next chapter.

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4. Research findings

In which we describe the research undertaken as part of the study. This included seven case studies, two workshops, a survey and data analysis. In this chapter we describe the main conclusions drawn from this work.

4.1   A key element of our research methodology has been a structured process of engagement and dialogue with the suburban boroughs in order to explore the issues raised in Chapter 3 and formulate potential policy responses. In this chapter we describe the findings of the following elements of this research:

- **Interviews** – A series of meetings with borough planning officers and representatives

- **Data** – Analysis of datasets for London's suburbs covering social, economic and environmental issues

- **Case studies** – A set of seven case studies to look in detail at the issues facing suburbs.

- **Workshops** – Two workshops to gauge the wider response of the boroughs and other experts to the emerging findings.

- **Survey** – A questionnaire sent out to planning officers in all suburban boroughs. The response rate from this was disappointing so while responses from individual boroughs have provided useful insights the survey has not been used for any statistical analysis.

Selecting the case studies

4.2   In order to select a representative set of case studies we returned to our initial work on typologies. As we described in the introduction, the original aim of the research had been to develop a suburban typology for London as the proposed basis for the SDS policies. However it became clear from the seminars that, while typologies were useful in describing the different types of suburb, they had limitations as a policy tool because of the overlap between the policy response appropriate for different types of suburbs. Nevertheless a typological approach has been helpful in selecting a representative set of case studies.

4.3   Much of the literature on suburbs seeks to develop typologies to categorise different areas in terms of similarities in buildings and lifestyle[1]. Mace and Gallant[2] summarise a range of attempts to develop a suburban typology based upon location, use, age, social class, transport and

physical form. The work by the Civic Trust[3] developed a six level national typology based upon a combination of age, form and mode of transport:

- ☐ **Historic inner suburb;** most of Victorian inner London
- ☐ **The planned suburb;** a general grouping including areas such as Hampstead Garden Suburb
- ☐ **The social housing suburb;** built both before and after the Second World War such as the Becontree estate in Dagenham
- ☐ **The suburban town;** with some level of self-containment but subordinated to a major city.
- ☐ **The public transport suburb**
- ☐ **The car based suburb**.

4.4   This typology is useful in describing the variety of suburban areas but has limitations from a policy perspective. There is firstly a mismatch between the size of different categories. The planned suburb, for example, while hugely influential, accounts for a relatively small proportion of London's suburbs compared to the public transport suburb. The categories are also not mutually exclusive – as the Civic Trust concedes – so that the public transport suburb incorporates certainly the first three categories and possibly the fourth. Category four, while it could apply to places like Croydon, is more relevant to the new and expanded towns outside Greater London and around provincial cities. It is also probably

FIGURE 14: Mosaic plan of London, Source: Experian Limited, Automobile Association 2000
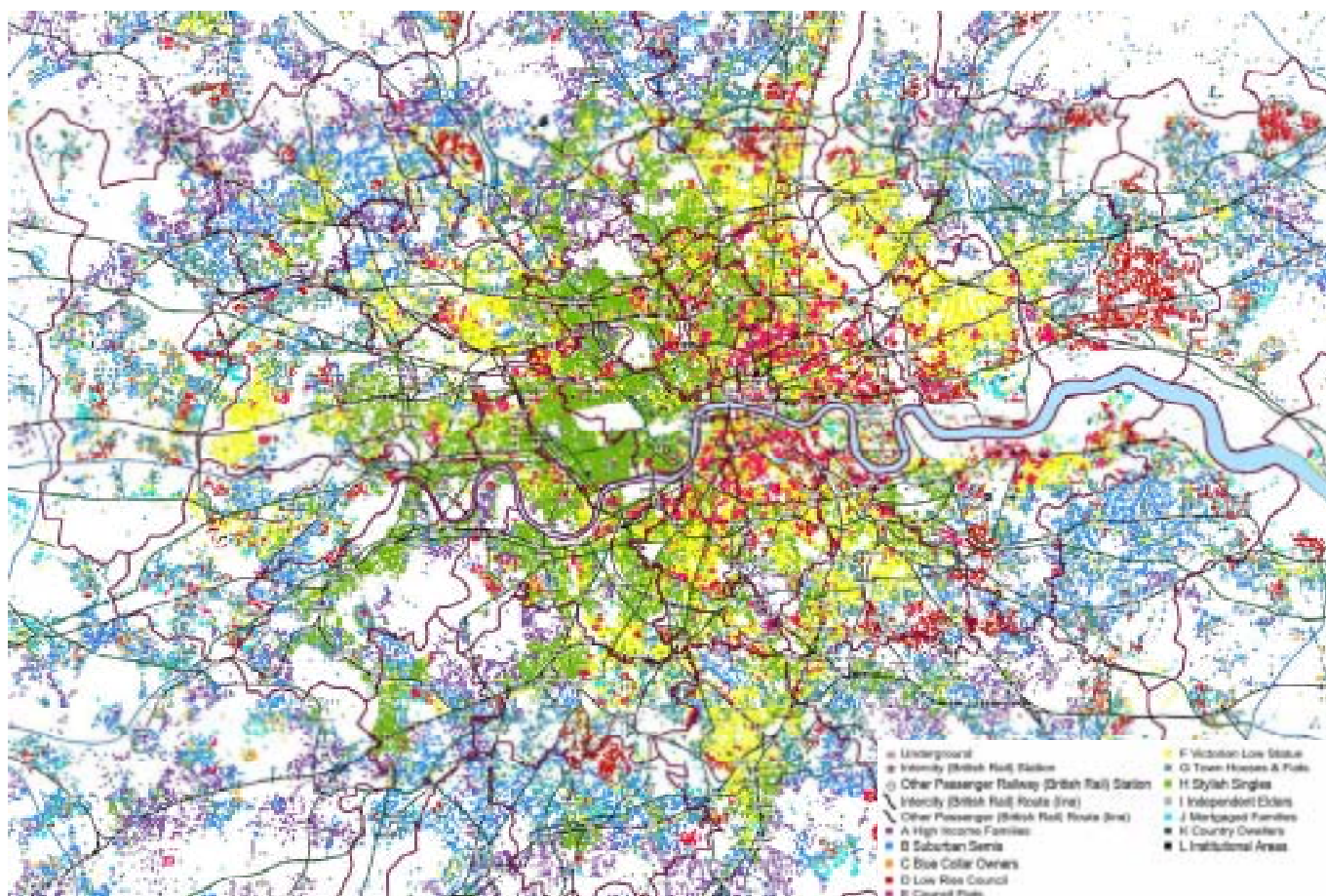
the case that while there are some car-based suburbs in Greater London most of the true car suburbs are to be found outside its boundaries in counties such as Berkshire and Essex.

4.5   We have therefore sought to modify this typology to fit the situation in London. The aim has been to develop a typology of places that share similar characteristics and which are likely to have similar policy needs. There are a number of ways in which this could be done. It could be based on the age of the suburb as described in Chapter 2. However much of suburban London falls into the interwar period so that this has limitations. Another possibility would be to use transport, such as the railway suburbs and car-based suburbs suggested by the Civic Trust. However in London at least, the vast majority of suburbs are railway suburbs and there are relatively few that are entirely car based.

4.6   Prompted by our expert seminars we have also explored typologies based upon social grouping using a specially commissioned MOSAIC plan of London[4] (Figure 14). This picks out the geographical distribution of groups such as 'stylish singles', 'suburban semis', 'blue collar own-ers' and 'low-rise council' etc… The plan shows that the stylish singles correspond largely to the inner parts of London that we suggested on Figure 1. The 'Victorian Low Status' picks out the early railway suburbs quite well. The 'low-rise council' category is also useful in identifying the main suburban council estates (see Figure 8). However the other suburban classifications such as 'suburban semis', 'blue collar own-ers', 'mortgaged families' and 'affluent suburbs' are more widely distrib-uted. While these do broadly relate to the area that we have identified as suburbs on Figure 1, it is difficult to discern patterns of distribution within these areas. The assessment of social class therefore rein-forces our definition of suburbia but is of less value in defining a typol-ogy within this broad definition.

4.7   We have therefore synthesised previous work on typologies with our assessment of the age of suburbs, their history and social groupings to suggest a suburban typology for London as set out on the following page. We would however stress that this is a descriptive tool rather than a policy tool and its main role is to focus on the area of study and assist in the selection of the case studies.

4.8   Case studies were selected to represent each of these typologies as well as to achieve a geographical spread across London (see Figure 16). They range from classic havens of prosperity (Surbiton and Temple Fortune), to areas whose main role was to provide cheap housing for commuters (Welling or Becontree), and three industrial areas that are in a state of transition (Colliers Wood, Hayes and Wealdstone).

4.9   The main focus of the case study work was on the socio-economic status of each area, the quality of the physical environment, and UDP issues. Each of the case studies is written up in Appendix 2. We have

FIGURE 15: A typology of London's suburbs

Type	Form	Typical Net Density	Tenure	Population	Mix	Proportion of London's suburbs	Examples	Possible Case Study	Comments
Garden City	Semis and short terraces on curving tree lines streets.	30 dwellings per hectare (12 d/acre)	Private	Intended to be mixed but ended up as affluent middle class	Residential with local shops and facilities	Approx. 5%	Bedford Park, Hampstead Garden Suburb, Muswell Hill, Ealing	Temple Fortune	Very significant model for suburbia. Many of the areas are very successful and therefore have been less relevant to the policy issues discussed in this report.
Victorian Railway Suburbs	Terraces	35 – 60 dwellings per hectare (15-25 d/acre)	Owner occupied and private rented	Working class	Residential with some employment and local shopping	Approx. 25%	Peckham, Tooting / Colliers Wood, Walthamstow, Battersea and Kilburn	Colliers Wood	While these are suburbs they tend to include areas that are thought of as inner London. As such they fall outside the scope of this study.
Blue Collar Suburbs	Semi-detached	30 dwellings per hectare (12 d/acre)	Owner occupied	Working class	Residential with facilities and local centres along with large employers	Approx. 15%	Colliers Wood, Parts of Dagenham, The North Circular, Western Avenue	Wealdstone, Hayes	This is the one of the categories where we might expect to find problems. Could now include council estates sold through Right to Buy.
Commuter Suburbs	Semi-detached	30 dwellings per hectare (12 d/acre)	Owner occupied	Predominantly middle class	Residential with facilities and local centres	Approx. 20%	Bexley Heath/ Welling, Hillingdon, Havering	Welling	Similar in form to the blue collar suburb but based around commuting and more affluent
Public Sector States	Semis and short terraces with some flats and non-traditional forms	30-40 dwellings per hectare (12-18 d/acre)	Council and Right to buy	Working class and unemployed	Residential with limited facilities (depending on era)	Approx. 10%	Bellingham, Becontree, St Helier, and Thamesmead	Becontree	While covering a long time period these estates share common issues of suburban social housing.
Affluent Car Based	Detached and semi detached	30 dwellings per hectare (12 d/acre)	Owner occupied	Middle class and affluent	Residential with limited facilities	Approx. 25%	Surbiton	Surbiton	Likely not to have great problems. However centres of consumption and car use and therefore a target for environmental sustainability.

also drawn on information and examples from our previous work and from studies looking at a range of other suburban areas, including Gants Hill, Hayes, Bromley, and Kenton in North-west London.

Findings from the Case Studies

4.10   In the remainder of this chapter we draw a series of conclusions from the case study work, survey responses and workshops. The reports of the workshops can be found in Appendix 1.

4.11   While the suburbs covered by the case studies are very diverse they have a number of features in common. When they were built, most of the areas offered a much higher quality of life for families moving out of London and this appeal remains strong. The centre of most of the suburbs retains a distinct identity even if the surrounding housing is sometimes non-descript. The suburbs often inspire fierce loyalties and it was clear from the case studies that the sense of London as a city of villages still holds true. This is not always so evident in central areas but is fundamental to the character and personality of the suburbs – it remains what makes London a unique world city.

4.12   It is also clear from the case studies that nowhere in suburban London is suffering greatly. There are signs of stress in the poorer areas such as poorly maintained housing and vacant shops. However the overall picture is one of rising house prices and income levels. There is little sign yet of the renaissance of central London having a negative effect on the case study suburbs.

4.13   Nevertheless, there are concerns, particularly within local authorities that the suburbs are being sidelined by an increasingly urban policy
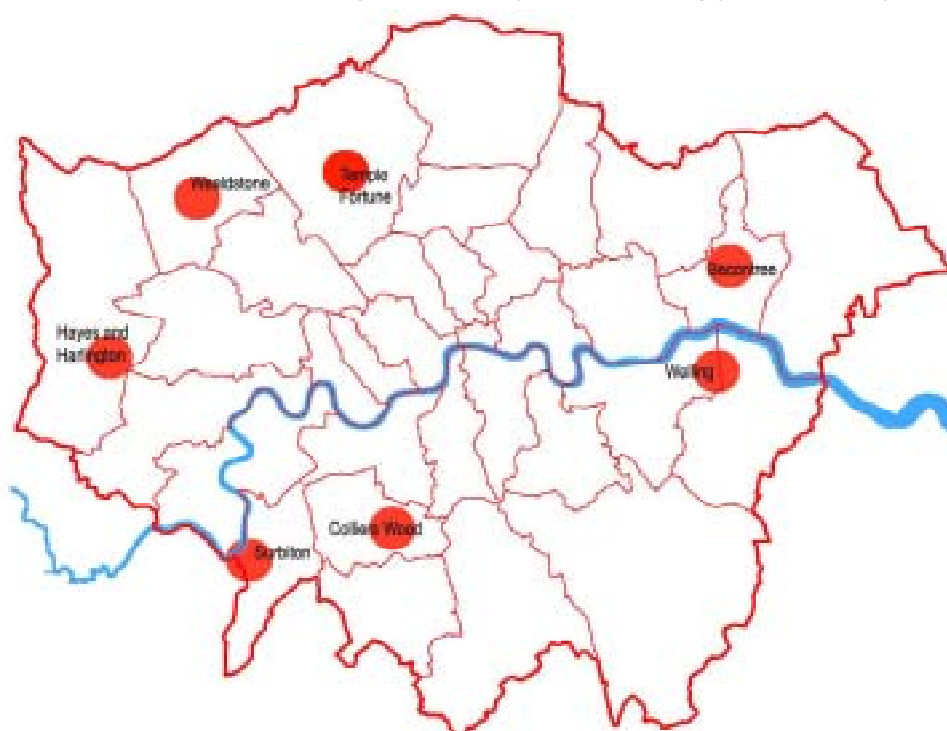

FIGURE 16: The selected case studies

agenda. There was concern that suburban quality of life is under threat and that there is a lack of resources to tackle them (many areas not eligible for grants). The threats facing suburbs clearly varied however a number of factors were common to all of the case studies and survey responses:

☐ **Traffic and congestion:** Rising levels of car use mean that walking and cycling are becoming more dangerous, and air and noise pollution are getting worse. Particular problems are being experienced with the school run.

☐ **Parking:** Related to this is the difficulty in many suburbs of accommodating parked cars. This is equally true of affluent and poorer suburbs, even if the type of car differs. Many suburbs were laid out before mass car ownership so that on-street parking is difficult and intrusive. The application of Controlled Parking Zones and maximum parking standards was suggested by some boroughs although this was not universally supported.

☐ **Poor management of the public realm:** All of the case studies highlighted concerns about deteriorating environmental quality such as litter, dog mess and lack of maintenance. Particular problems were perceived around hot food take-aways, particularly in residential areas.

☐ **Youth and insecurity:** A sense of insecurity was also common to the case studies although to different degrees. This was often focused on groups of young people, often clustered around fast food outlets with 'nothing to do and nowhere to go'. This adds to a sense of fear and insecurity, particularly for older people.

☐ **Development opportunities:** The other characteristic that most of the case studies had in common was the opportunity for 'Ped Shed' type mixed-use development around railway stations. Examples such as the eight acre Railtrack site in Hayes, the station car park and Post Office in Surbiton, the former underground depot in Golders Green and a range of opportunities in Wealdstone show that very different types of suburb have the opportunity for higher density development within walking distance of transport and facilities.

4.14   There were however major differences between the thriving suburbs and those which are more at risk:

At-risk case studies

4.15   We suggested in Chapter 3 that some of London's suburbs are at-risk from changing demographic, economic and environmental trends. The survey and case studies suggest that this is not yet a major problem in London, unlike the poorer suburbs of provincial cities. However, there

were signs of strain in parts of Becontree, Wealdstone, Hayes and even parts of Welling. From the case studies and the workshop write-ups (Appendix 1 and 2) it is clear that parts of these suburbs suffer from the following problems

- **Lack of identity:** Away from the local centres these suburbs are often made up of large estates, built over a short period of time with similar house types. They lack local distinctiveness and identity unlike more successful suburbs.

- **Eroded social capital:** Many blue collar and council suburbs were developed with few facilities, and where they were included they have declined leading to an erosion of social capital such as churches, local societies, sporting facilities etc.

- **Poor housing stock:** Declining quality of the housing stock is a concern in areas like Wealdstone and in the right-to-buy stock in Becontree and Hayes. This is not because the housing stock is any poorer than, for example Welling, but because of lower values, transitory populations and private landlords.

- **Declining shopping:** A clear difference between successful and at-risk suburbs is the health of local shops. The at-risk case studies suffered from vacant shop units. Of particular concern is the decline of local shopping parades which were developed to cater for the community's main food shopping. This role has now been taken by supermarkets leaving local parades reliant on top-up trade which is insufficient to sustain them. In some areas like Wealdstone, Colliers Wood and Hayes this is also affecting local centres. Both Hayes and Wealdstone have lost district-centre supermarkets to stronger neighbours. Welling by contrast appears to be surviving competition from Bluewater, and has retained two supermarkets, however it has seen an increase in take-aways, which have resulted in increased litter in surrounding residential streets.

- **Anti-social behaviour:** At-risk suburbs suffer disproportionately from anti-social behaviour such as vandalism, graffiti and joy riding. In at-risk areas the presence of vacant shops or pubs has become a focus for this activity.

- **Poor public transport:** There is a correlation between the popularity of a suburb and its accessibility. This is particularly true outside the local centres where the scale of the estates means that many properties are distant from public transport routes and the quality and frequency of local bus services are poor.

4.16 These problems are shared by many 'at risk' council and blue collar suburbs and were to be found in Becontree, Hayes and Wealdstone. The root cause is the inflexibility of these areas to respond to changing

social and economic trends. There are however also differences between these suburbs. The private housing stock of Wealdstone tended to be less well built and maintained than council estates of Hayes and Becontree. It is likely to have poorer energy efficiency than 'improved' council housing and may be more prone to vacancy (although London's vacancy rate is currently very low). Council estates, by contrast tend to have a stable but more impoverished population. This can lead to more severe economic problems as well as to the problems of an ageing demographic profile with lower spending power and declining school roles.

Thriving case studies

4.17   Most of our case studies contained areas that were thriving. This included Temple Fortune and Surbiton as well as parts of Colliers Wood, Hayes and Welling. These areas enjoy healthy demand, the housing stock is popular and well maintained and the environment corresponds to the leafy suburban ideal. Unlike at-risk suburbs the demand for property means that a good deal of infill development has often taken place so that densities are relatively high. However this can lead to local concerns about the clutter of extensions and a fear of overcrowding. The thriving suburban case studies also shared the following characteristics:

☐ **Appearances:** While concern over deteriorating environments is common to all suburbs the actual quality of the public realm is very different. In thriving suburbs the quality of the street scene and the level of maintenance is noticeably better than in the at-risk suburbs, perhaps because of the greater engagement of people in looking after their streets.

☐ **Successful shops:** Population densities and high spending power tend to mean that there are few vacant shops even in the smaller parades. The local centres are also expanding. In contrast to Wealdstone and Hayes for example, Surbiton, which already had a Sainsbury and Somerfield, has attracted a new Waitrose. The local centres are also diversifying into café-bars and restaurants, including a focus on distinct ethnic markets such as at Temple Fortune, so that demand and rents remained healthy.

☐ **Social divisions:** As we described in Chapter 3 there is a tendency in successful suburbs towards exclusivity as rising prices exclude everyone except the affluent. There was a real concern about affordability in most of the thriving suburbs.

☐ **Over development:** While it is difficult to generalise, thriving suburbs tend to be developed more intensely. It would also appear that they contain more local centres and fewer areas remote from Ped Sheds (Figure 17). There is concern in the local authorities about the

capacity for intensification and the negative impact that this could have on the character of the area. This relates to issues such as the subdivision of property into flats, extensions and redevelopment. However as mentioned above a number of the successful suburbs did have significant opportunities for new development near to their centres.

☐ **Community engagement:** An apparent difference between successful and at-risk case studies is the extent to which the community is active in amenity groups or residents associations. This is also true of traders associations in local centres. In successful areas like Surbiton there are many active and articulate groups in close contact with the authorities and able to get problems dealt with quickly. The opposite is often found in Inner London where it is the areas with the greatest difficulties that tend to generate the greatest community activity. Perhaps inner city residents are galvanised by a desire to bring about change and suburban residents by a desire to prevent it.

Conclusions

4.18   The case studies and survey illustrate the wide diversity of experience in suburban areas and cannot easily be categorised. None of the areas could be said to be in severe decline although Becontree, Hayes and Wealdstone all contained areas that are experiencing stress. Colliers Wood is characterised by relatively successful residential areas around a declining centre which has suffered as a result of pressure from unsustainable retail malls. Welling is also relatively stable economically and socially but increasingly unsustainable as public transport commuting into London is replaced by car based commuting.

4.19   The more affluent suburbs of Surbiton and Temple Fortune share the problems of congestion and concerns about the environment and security. However on the whole they are insulated from the problems that have affected other areas. They have, for example been subject to the same retail trends but the market has been strong enough to keep shops viable or to replace them with alternative uses such as wine bars. The housing is the same age and sometimes no better built but it is valuable and occupied by people with the resources to undertake maintenance.

4.20   We have therefore drawn the following conclusions from our research:

Accessibility is key

4.21   While the early suburbs may have maintained their exclusivity through inaccessibility, there is now a strong correlation between the accessibility of a suburb and its desirability. Temple Fortune and Surbiton for example have the best rail connections to London. Good accessibility between and within suburban areas, as well as links to central London

is vital to the success of a suburb. Public transport improvements are perhaps the best way to address the problems of at-risk suburbs.

Local links

4.22   A number of the case studies like Wealdston and Hayes cited the importance of local accessibility to the success of local centres. If it is easier for people to get to a neighbouring centre or to drive to an out-of-town facility, local shopping centres will decline. It is important to improve links into the local centres and to maximise the population within the catchment area of these centres. A number of suburban authorities have accepted the need for a higher-density, mixed-use development around centres and were considering this as part of UDP reviews.

Positive image

4.23   Accessibility is not however everything. Wealdstone was perhaps the third most accessible case study with both a tube station and a fast rail link to Euston. However it does not have the assets to make it as desirable as other parts of Harrow. This is partly because of its history and the poor housing stock that it has inherited and partly lack of confidence and investment in its centre. This has created negative cycles of low aspirations, low values, lack of maintenance and private renting which have not allowed it to capitalise on its accessibility.

The importance of the centre

4.24   Economic, social and environmental sustainability are all affected by the ability of a suburban district centre to fulfil its retail role. A strong retail centre contributes to the economic and social confidence in an area. This in turn is reflected in levels of community engagement, inward investment and also in reduced levels of car-use as the centre attracts local shoppers more likely to travel on foot, cycle or use public transport. Retail trends are tending to polarise thriving and at-risk suburban centres and policy needs to address the weaker centres.

The importance of public realm management

4.25   The public realm of the suburbs takes as much looking after as inner urban areas but there is a perception of there being proportionately less resources available for its upkeep. In successful suburbs the upkeep of public areas is undertaken or at least overseen by the residents who are concerned to protect the quality of their streets. This is less likely to happen in poorer areas. However the efforts of articulate residents probably means that, with the exception of some council estates, the areas with the best environments also get the most resources spent on upkeep while the poor areas are not seen as such a priority.

Tenure mix

4.26   The boroughs responsible for affluent suburbs were keen to increase the mix of tenures to counter polarisation and the 'island' mentality. The poorer areas conversely were less interested in the idea of a balanced community. This is perhaps because there are very few areas that

remain social housing ghettos (unlike the provincial cities) due to right-to-buy.

Environmental Sustainability:

4.27   The main environmental issues raised by the case study boroughs and survey respondents were car dependency and improved public transport. Home energy efficiency and the potential for 'sustainable' design guidance were raised as priority issues by only one of the boroughs. Recycling was raised by two of the survey respondents. It is possible that the relatively low priority attached to these issues reflected a lack of integration into key policy areas, with responsibilities being fragmented across several departments . Apart from early success stories such as the recycling services established in Barnet, Bexley and Sutton, there is limited evidence of the policy framework for environmental sustainability emerging from government and the GLA being translated into effective policies and implementation mechanisms by the boroughs.

4.28   The case studies described in this chapter along with the literature review set out in the previous chapter provide a good picture of the issues facing suburban London. In the next two chapters we develop these conclusions into a policy framework for the suburbs.

Chapter 4 References

[1]   Whitehand, J.W.R. and Carr, C.M.H. **- Twentieth Century Suburbs a morphological approach – Routledge, 2001**

[2]   Mace, A and Gallent, N **- Sustainable Suburban Areas; Towards a suburban typology - Bartlett School of Planning, University College London, September 2000**

[3]   Gwilliam,M, Bourne ,C, Swain,C, and Pratt,A **- Sustainable Renewal of Suburban Areas - Joseph Rowntree Foundation, York Publishing Services, 1998**

[4]   Experian Limited **- Mosaic, 2000**

5. A policy framework for London

In which we outline a four-level approach to developing a spatial framework for London's suburbs. This is based on Local Centres, 'Ped Sheds', suburban heartlands and employment areas. We describe how this four level approach could be used to structure a policy framework and how the different areas should be defined.

5.1   The starting point for developing suburban policies is to consider how they might fit into the Spatial Development Strategy (SDS). In this chapter we therefore develop the idea of a spatial structure for suburbs based on Local Centres and public transport nodes. This is widely accepted as the most sustainable structure for large cities and is ideally suited to London which is already a polycentric city. It has also been proposed for London in the past – notably through LPAC's Sustainable Residential Quality (SRQ) work[1]. In this chapter we describe the thinking behind this policy framework. This has then been used to frame our proposals for SDS policies as set out in Appendix 4.

A suburban spatial framework

5.2   The emerging draft SDS sets out a vision for London based on sustainable growth. This is derived from an analysis that London must grow if it is to retain its place as one of the three pre-eminent global cities. It must therefore expand its capacity to accommodate substantial growth in its economy and population rather than limiting growth to the capacity of the current infrastructure. This potentially creates huge pressures on space, transport systems and raises issues of affordability, sustainability and equity that the SDS seeks to address.

5.3   An example of this is housing capacity where the GLA projects a growth of 311,000 households over the next 15 years [2] with a significant number of households in existing housing need. The GLA has estimated that 112,000 affordable homes will be needed in order to meet this existing need within the next 10 years. LPAC's urban housing capacity work[3], which is regarded as one of the best studies of its kind, demonstrated capacity for 380,000 homes across London up to 2016. The plan accepts that responding to these figures will be a challenge and will require the redevelopment, for example, of single storey shopping developments. It also states; *'The GLA will explore the impact of mixed-use intensification of development at locations that currently have good public transport accessibility and capacity or where it could be improved.'* It is clear that the suburbs will need to contribute to this aspiration.

5.4   In spatial terms the emerging draft SDS seeks to reconcile the mis-match between the areas of greatest growth pressure in central and western parts of London and the areas in the east with greatest regeneration needs and growth potential.

5.5   Overlaid onto this is a network of local centres. As we described in paragraph 3.27, there are 2 international centres in London, 10 metropolitan centres, 35 major centres, over 150 district centres and more than 1,500 local centres[4] (see Figure 9). The emerging draft SDS suggests a range of policies for these centres to consolidate and expand their retail role, to promote them as a location for business, to improve the quality of their environment and to upgrade public transport links as well as promoting housing through the estimated capacity of 30-40,000 flats above shops.

5.6   The draft SDS also proposes major residential development around existing transport interchanges, new transport infrastructure on sites sufficiently large to support new transport links. These developments are to be promoted in conjunction with the Boroughs based on the emerging model of the Greenwich Millennium Village. Presently these proposals relate to new development rather than existing areas.

5.7   The draft SDS also includes proposals for neighbourhood regeneration and specifically discusses the application of these to suburban neighbourhoods. This discusses enhancing the distinctive character of neighbourhoods, while helping them to contribute to the sustainability, social cohesion and economic success of London. The purpose of this research has been to add detail to these aspirations.

A four level approach

5.8   In developing a spatial framework for the suburbs it is important to build upon these emerging themes in the drafts of the SDS and previous work such as the LPAC Sustainable Residential Quality research. We are therefore proposing a four level spatial framework for London's suburbs as the basis for suburban policies:

Local centres
5.9   The first level includes the Town Centres that the draft SDS is already promoting as the focus for retail and commercial development as well as transport improvements and housing opportunities via living over the shop. In all of our case studies these centres were defined in local plans and subject to specific policies. Many authorities have also taken initiatives to improve the environment of these areas and to promote town centre management and partnerships with traders and local groups.

Ped Sheds
5.10   We are then proposing that an area around each local centre be de-

fined. In the SRQ research these areas were called 'Ped Sheds', a term with its origins in Australia which describes a walk-in distance area around Local Centres of between 400 and 800m. Throughout this research the term Ped Shed has been almost universally disliked. It is however widely understood and we have not found a better term. It describes the area around a local centre where there is the greatest opportunity to intensify development. This is flagged up in the emerging draft SDS and our proposal is that it be formalised as a UDP designation subject to a specific set of policies.

Suburban heartlands

5.11   The areas outside the Ped Sheds would be the third level of the framework and would again be subject to a specific set of policies. These are the areas that tend to be ignored at present but under this system would be subject to specific policies to address issues such as management, access, the public realm and distinctiveness.

Suburban employment sites:

5.12   We had originally envisaged a 3 tier framework. However we have added to this suburban employment sites because they raise different issues to the residential heartlands. While the priority for new business may be within town centres, there are many large employers that can only be accommodated in the suburban heartlands. As we described in Chapter 3 it is preferable for industry and distribution uses to locate in the suburb rather than moving out of Greater London altogether. Existing and planned industrial areas therefore need to be protected in the SDS and located near to accessible locations. These uses also need to be subject to policies and guidance to reduce car dependency.

5.13   It is true that the idea of Ped Sheds as the basis for intensification and the accommodation of household growth has been resisted by some boroughs. However in our case studies we have not found widespread resistance to the idea of Ped Shed intensification. What does exist is a wider concern that planning policies relevant to inner London are being applied inappropriately to the suburbs. If Ped Sheds are seen as a means to further ratchet up these urban policies they may be resisted by many of the suburban boroughs. However there is the opportunity to use this framework to appease these concerns. It is possible, for example, that the Ped Sheds are the area where SDS policies, to reduce parking for example, are applied whereas in the Suburban Heartlands boroughs are able to apply their current policy regimes. Over time this would be reviewed allowing policies to be phased in a way much more acceptable to the boroughs.

Defining the areas

5.14   This four level policy framework raises issues of definition and boundaries. In principle these should be left to the boroughs to define in their local plans. However it is important that the SDS sets out guidance for the definition of Local Centres and Ped Sheds.
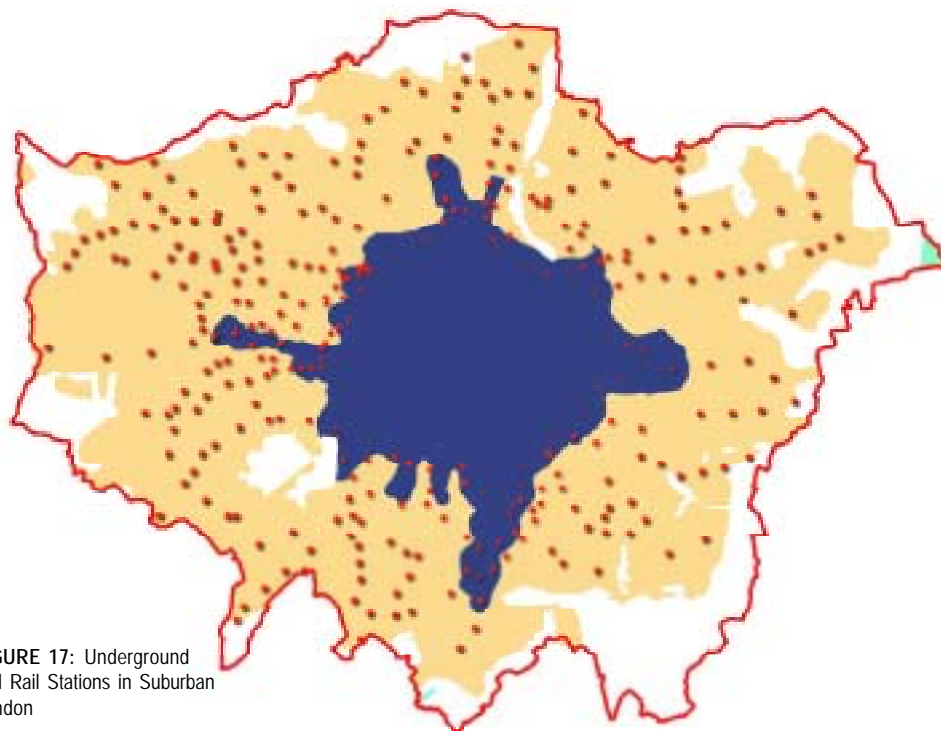
FIGURE 17: Underground and Rail Stations in Suburban London

5.15   The first issue is the definition of the local centres. This is already covered in the SDS to an extent. However it is clear that not all of the 1,500 local centres will be appropriate as the nucleus of a Ped Shed. The appropriateness of a local centre as a nuclei for a ped shed will depend upon two factors:

□   Does it provide a range of local facilities and services so that the population of the Ped Shed can meet most of their daily needs on foot without having to travel to other centres?

□   Does it provide access to high-quality, frequent public transport so that local people can get access to the rest of London and particularly to employment without needing to use a car?

5.16   Figure 9 on page 20 identifies the 122 metropolitan, major and district centres that serve suburban London. To qualify as the focus for a Ped Shed the first criteria suggests that a local centre should provide a basic level of services including a good range of food and convenience shopping along with services such as a post office, local council housing office, health centres and chemists. It should also include leisure facilities such as pubs and cafes. It is likely that most of the centres on Figure 9 will meet these criteria. It is also likely that most of the 1,500 smaller centres in London will not. However some may and these could become important when considering new Ped Sheds as suggested below.

5.17   The second criteria for a Ped Shed nucleus is accessibility. Figure 17 identifies just under 300 underground or train stations in suburban London. Most of these are likely to meet the criteria for high public transport accessibility. There is, of course, a broad correlation between

this plan and Figure 9 since most of the district centres will have a station. Where a miss-match does exist it tends to be because stations were built outside, or perhaps between local centres in which case it is probably possible to identify a joint Ped Shed. There are however examples in the outer boroughs of centres without a station. In these cases it will be important to assess the quality of bus links before deciding whether these are appropriate as a Ped Shed nuclei. There are also many stations that are not within local centres, again these need to be assessed to see whether they meet the first criteria and are appropriate for Ped Sheds.

5.18   The next task is to draw the boundaries of the local centre and Ped Shed. The former is relatively straightforward since the centres are defined as policy areas in the UDP. The only issue to be raised by the case studies relates to the fringe of these centres where surface park-ing and service areas create environmental problems. There may be value in drawing the boundaries slightly more widely so that initiatives such as Town Centre Management can address these issues.

5.19   The boundary of the Ped Shed is more difficult to define. The Sustain-able Residential Quality research sets out criteria for the definition of Ped Sheds to include an 800m zone around each centre, based on the notion of a 10 minute walk. The Ped Shed walk-in distance was meas-ured from the edge of local centres so that the walking distance to an
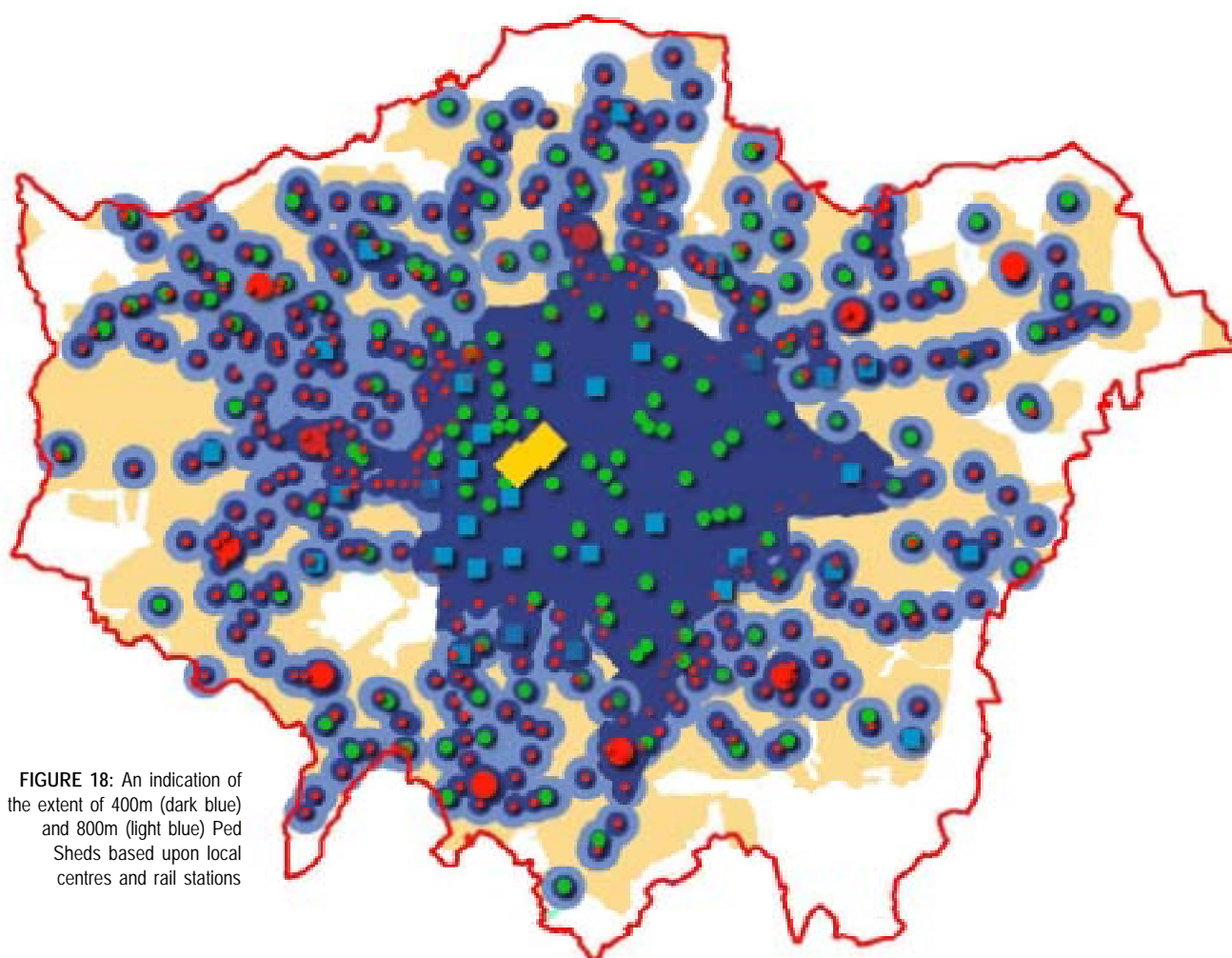

FIGURE 18: An indication of the extent of 400m (dark blue) and 800m (light blue) Ped Sheds based upon local centres and rail stations

Underground Station, especially in a linear centre could be substantially more than 800m. The methodology does however adjust the boundary to take account of barriers such as railway lines.

5.20   Accepted practice (in town centres for example) is that 800m is at the upper end of what people are prepared to walk and that 400m to 600m is more suitable, especially where people are carrying shopping. Figure 18 shows the impact of 400 and 800m Ped sheds on suburban London. These are based on a combination of local centres and train stations. The 800m zones nevertheless cover almost two thirds of suburban London, and cover some boroughs almost entirely.

5.21   It is appropriate to relate the size of the Ped Shed to the importance of the local centre. Larger centres will exert a bigger draw and will therefore support larger Ped Sheds. It is therefore suggested that the boroughs be required to define the location and boundaries of the Ped Sheds in their area based on the shape and importance of the centre and with a walk-in distance of between 400m and 800m depending on the size and importance of the centre.

Filling the gaps

5.22   Figure 18 highlights areas that are distant from local centres. In some cases these are areas with large amounts of open space (such as Richmond). However in other cases they show areas of population that are isolated from local facilities and transport. In these circumstances there is value in creating new Ped Sheds. This could include the major housing developments set out in the SDS or opportunities opened up by new infrastructure such as the Croydon Tram. There may also be areas (such as the centre of Becontree for example) where it is sensible to 'plant' a Ped Shed through the expansion of a local centre with new facilities and improved transport links. The aim would be to ensure that, over time, all Londoners are within reach of a Local Centre. A good yardstick might be that all of London is within 1600m of a local centre.

Chapter 5 References
[1]   Llewelyn Davies - Sustainable Residential Quality - New approaches to urban living, LPAC, January 1998

[2]   Greater London Authority, Towards the London Plan, May 2001 - additional data for suburban household growth derived from GLA projections

[3]   LPAC - Urban capacity study, 2000

[4]   URBED and Donaldsons – High Accessibility and Town Centres, LPAC 1994

6. Detailed policies for the suburbs

In which we set out a series of more detailed policies for London's suburbs based upon: reinforcing the role of local centres, promoting sustainable development patterns, improving the existing housing stock, reducing car-dependency, improving environmental sustainability, protecting and promoting suburban employment, and improving the quality of design and the public realm.

6.1   As we describe in Chapter 2, we initially planned to structure policies on a typology of suburban areas. We have however concluded that this is not possible for two seemingly contradictory reasons. The first is that every suburb is unique and requires a tailored response. The second is that the ingredients of this tailored response are very similar across London's suburbs – just mixed together in different ways. All of the case studies, for example, suffer to some extent from parking problems and congestion. We are therefore proposing that the policies are applied on the basis of the four-level framework set out in the previous chapter. This can be cross-referenced with the policy responses set out in this chapter to create a tailored response to each type of suburb.

6.2   We have divided the detailed policy framework into 7 sections:

   □   Reinforcing the role of local centres

   □   Promoting sustainable development patterns

   □   Improving the existing housing stock

   □   Reducing car-dependency

   □   Protecting and promoting suburban employment

   □   Improving the quality of design and the public realm

   □   A comprehensive approach

In the following sections we deal with each of these areas in turn listing policies under the policy framework headings of Local Centres, Ped Sheds and Suburban Heartlands. In Figure 19 we then bring these together and detail how each of the element could fit into the wider policy agenda.

6.3   Reinforcing the role of local centres
Local shopping centres and transport hubs are the heart of suburbia and the key to its success. They should be protected and enhanced.

6.3a *Local centres*

□   **Location policy** – The emerging draft SDS includes presumption against out-of-town retail and leisure development. New retailing and leisure should be encouraged to locate within local centres and the scale of new development needs to be related to the size of the centre.

□   **Vitality and viability of local centres:** The SDS should encourage town centre health checks and the application of the policies in PPG 6 to ensure the success of local centres.

□   **Town centre management:** Support for town centre partnerships and management to involve the community and local business and ensure a co-ordinated approach to management and promotion. This role should be expanded to encompass Ped Sheds (see chapter 5)

□   **Non-retail uses:** The planning system is not the appropriate tool to protect declining retail uses – it can perpetuate vacancies. Instead alternative uses should be encouraged whilst seeking to retain active frontages and ensure takeaways do not dominate. Alternative uses may include community facilities, cafes and restaurants. If demand for these uses is low then residential or workspace should be considered.

□   **Environmental improvements:** See below 6.9

□   **Access and parking:** See below 6.6

6.3b *Suburban heartland*

□   **Presumption against major retail development:** Major new retail development should not be permitted in the suburban heartlands.

□   **Diversification of declining local parades:** Where local parades are declining the policy should promote alternative uses that are not detrimental to the surrounding residential area (see 6.4)

6.4 Promoting sustainable development patterns

Development should be concentrated in Ped-Sheds in order to reduce car dependency and enhance the role and identity of local centres.

6.4a Local centres

☐ **Living over the shop:** Housing in local centres and particularly above retail units should be encouraged.

6.4b Ped sheds

☐ **Capacity studies:** Ongoing urban capacity work should review and update the capacity for new housing in Ped Sheds in line with PPG3.

☐ **Subdivision into flats:** The subdivision of property into flats within Ped Sheds should not be resisted unless there are overriding issues of conservation or parking pressures.

☐ **Density standards:** New housing within suburban Ped Sheds should be built to net densities of at least 50 units per hectare.

☐ **Infill development:** There should be a presumption in favour of mixed-use development on all vacant sites as well as through the redevelopment of existing retail and commercial uses.

☐ **Redevelopment at higher densities:** The redevelopment of existing housing at higher densities should be encouraged unless there are overriding issues of conservation or parking pressures.

☐ **Housing diversification:** A mix of housing types and tenures should be encouraged in Ped Sheds to include elderly persons, key worker and social housing. Housing provision should respond to the specific needs of ethnic and minority communities.

☐ **Parking standards:** see below 6.6b.

6.4c Suburban heartland

☐ **Major infill opportunities:** Employment sites should only be promoted for housing where the site has been vacant for more than 5 years. These sites should be subject to planning briefs and masterplans and should be linked by public transport to local centres.

☐ **Redevelopment of low density/vacant areas:** Boroughs should undertake masterplanning exercises for low density and under occupied areas to look for opportunities for intensification over time.

☐ **New Ped Sheds:** In areas distant from Ped Sheds, infill and redevelopment opportunities should be used to explore the opportunity for new Local Centres and Ped Sheds.

☐ **Density standards:** New housing within suburban heartlands should be built to net densities of at least 30 units per hectare.

☐ **Parking standards:** See below 6.6c.

6.5   Improving the existing housing stock

A package of measures should be assembled to improve the condition and energy efficiency of suburban housing, particularly in the private sector.

6.5a All areas

☐ **Stock condition surveys:** Stock condition surveys and energy efficiency assessments should be undertaken and updated on a regular basis.

☐ **Demonstration retrofit house types:** Demonstration projects should be promoted to illustrate how suburban housetypes can be made more energy efficient.

☐ **Energy performance standards and guidance:** Where levers exist – such as grant funding, council stock improvements, or the licensing of private landlords – performance standards at the same level or in excess of building regulations should be implemented.

☐ **HECA (Home Energy Conservation Act) Targets:** The Mayor should monitor the progress of boroughs towards meeting their HECA targets.

☐ **Local energy agencies and learning networks:** Local energy agencies and support networks should be expanded to cover the whole of suburban London.

☐ **Fuel poverty strategy:** Fuel poverty strategies should be developed for deprived suburban areas.

☐ **Market mechanisms:** The Mayor should encourage the introduction of energy labelling accompanied by energy audits for housing.

☐ **District energy/CHP systems:** See below 6.7a.

☐ **Renewable energy:** See below 6.7a.

☐ **Fiscal incentives:** The Mayor should promote the introduction of housing improvement grants and loans for the private and private rented sectors to improve the condition and energy efficiency of the housing stock. This should include lobbying to remove VAT on refurbishment work.

6.6   Reducing car-dependency

The suburbs are significantly more car-dependent that inner London, causing congestion, pollution and undermining the quality of life. Reducing car dependency is an important aspect of suburban policy.

6.6a   Local centres

☐   **Parking:** Parking provision should enable centres to compete with out-of-town uses but surface parking should be avoided.

☐   **Public transport:** The frequency and quality of public transport should be increased including high quality intermediate transport.

☐   **Orbital transport services:** The development of orbital and cross-town public transport routes is particularly important for suburbs.

☐   **Improve stations:** The quality of stations and bus stops should be improved, particularly to make them safer to use at night.

☐   **Real-time travel information:** Bus stops and stations should incorporate real time travel information to improve the use of services.

6.6b   Ped sheds

☐   **Parking standards:** Parking standards should be set locally at a level that does not disadvantage business in relation to out-of-town uses.

☐   **Controlled parking zones:** Parking controls should be used to reduce the clutter of cars and prioritise roadspace for pedestrians.

☐   **Promotion of car free housing:** Housing without parking and car free housing based on formal agreements should be encouraged.

☐   **Car Club schemes:** Car Clubs should be encouraged, particularly around stations and as part of new mixed-use development.

☐   **Mixed-use development:** Development in Ped Sheds should be mixed-use to provide walkable employment and other services.

☐   **Home-working:** See below 6.8b.

6.6c   Suburban heartland

☐   **Home Zones:** Home zone type design solutions are encouraged.

☐   **Alternatives to the car:** Public transport, footpaths and cycle routes should improve links into the Ped Sheds and to major employment.

☐   **Bus stops:** Bus shops should be improved with better lighting and real-time travel information.

☐   **Public realm:** See below 6.9.

6.6d   All areas

☐   **Green Travel Plans:** All major traffic generators (employers, schools and retail parks) should be required to prepare a Green Travel Plan.

6.7   Improving environmental sustainability

The suburbs make a significant contribution to London's ecological footprint. They will be affected by a tightening of environmental policy in the future (see Appendix 3) and must make a contribution towards becoming more environmentally sustainable.

6.7a   All areas

☐   **Green Communities:** The Mayor should promote a network of 'green community' initiatives across London to provide a focus for initiatives to improve the quality of the local environment and increase environmental awareness (see chapter 7).

☐   **District energy/Combined Heat and Power (CHP) systems:** There should be a presumption that all significant development, particularly in Ped Sheds should incorporate CHP and/or district energy systems.

☐   **Renewable energy:** The promoters of major development should demonstrate that renewable energy sources have been considered.

☐   **Recycling targets:** The GLA's proposed recycling targets should be monitored, and promotion and assistance should be provided to ensure that they are achieved.

☐   **Recycling guidance:** GLA research on the logistics of segregated recycling collections for different house types should be used to frame guidance for boroughs.

☐   **Learning networks:** Learning networks should be established to enable the boroughs to share experience and best practice with regard to energy efficiency, energy supply and recycling.

☐   **New development:** New schemes and masterplans should be required to prepare energy strategies to achieve significant reductions in CO_2 emissions. They should also be subject to sustainability assessments such as BREEAM (Building Research Establishment's Environmental Assessment Method) as part of their design process. This should form part of planning submissions and design for sustainability should be incorporated into GLA Design Guidance.

☐   **Economic development:** The London Development Agency should develop links between sustainability strategies and new green industry, including those using recycled materials.

☐   **Local business:** Local businesses should be encouraged to adopt more sustainable practices through forums such as waste minimisation clubs, Trade Associations, business park based associations and the Regional Supply Network.

☐   **Food Supply:** Retailers and local initiatives that reduce 'food miles' and increase the availability of organic produce should be encouraged. This could include farmers markets and allotments, requiring the designation (or protection) of appropriate space.

6.8 Protecting and promoting suburban employment

The suburbs are an important source of employment. They continue as a location for manufacturing, distribution and large floor area uses that cannot be accommodated in central areas. This role must be protected and enhanced while also addressing issues of accessibility.

6.8a Local centres

☐ **Retail and leisure uses:** All new retail and leisure developments should be concentrated in town centres. This will be in accordance with the sequential test and as appropriate to the scale and function of the centre.

☐ **Business uses:** A diversity of employment uses are to be encouraged in local centres including the creation of space for business start-up.

6.8b Ped sheds

☐ **Mixed-use development:** Development in Ped Sheds should, where possible, contain a mix of uses. This should be used to attract knowledge based industries that might otherwise locate in out-of-town business parks.

☐ **Home-working:** Working from home should be encouraged and the development of live-work accommodation and community workstations should be promoted.

☐ **Employment sites:** The reallocation of employment sites to housing should only be considered if they have been vacant for at least five years and have been appropriately marketed during that period.

6.8c Suburban heartlands

☐ **Providing industry:** Manufacturing and distribution uses requiring large sites should be encouraged to locate in suburban employment sites.

☐ **Employment sites:** The reallocation of employment sites to housing should be resisted unless the sites have been vacant for at least five years and where proposals form part of a new Ped Shed when mixed-use development would be appropriate.

6.9 Improving the quality of design and the public realm

At their best the suburbs provide some of London's most attractive environments. However many areas are drab, unattractive and dominated by standard house types.

6.9a All areas

☐ **Design Guidance:** Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) should include guidance for suburban centres, Ped Sheds and heartlands.

☐ **Conservation areas:** This guidance should not override conservation area guidance.

☐ **Development Briefs Neighbourhood plans:** All areas of significant change should be the subject of briefs or neighbourhood plans.

☐ **Open space and landscape:** The quality and quantity of open space, habitats and biodiversity should be enhanced including the protection of private gardens.

☐ **Civic Pride Initiatives:** The suburbs should be the focus for the civic pride initiatives proposed in the emerging SDS. This could be initiated by 'green community' organisations (see 6.7a).

6.9b Local centres

☐ **Design Guidance:** Guidance should be based on three/four storey, back-of-pavement development with active frontages.

☐ **Town centre improvements:** Improvements should be promoted to the public realm, lighting, street furniture and street trees. Traffic impact should be reduced but pedestrianisation will not always be appropriate.

☐ **Town Centre Management and traders' forums:** Local management of centres should be promoted as the most effective means of ensuring high standards of management and maintenance.

6.9c Ped sheds

Design Guidance: Guidance should be based on mixed-use, medium-density, street-based layouts with terraces and flats.

☐ **Neighbourhood management:** The town centre management model should be extended to Ped Sheds as a vehicle for the neighbourhood strategy and implementation plan (see Chapter 7).

☐ **Road space reallocation:** Public realm improvements should reduce the space for traffic and increase the space for cycling and walking.

6.9d Suburban heartlands

☐ **Design Guidance:** Guidance should be based on low to medium density, street-based residential environments.

☐ **Public realm:** Where improvements are planned streets should be redesigned to accommodate on-street parking, cycling and walking.

☐ **Street trees:** Street trees should be maintained and renewed.

6.10 A comprehensive approach

6.11 Together this set of policies and initiatives makes up a comprehensive package to address the social, economic and environmental issues faced by London's suburbs. However not all of the items fall within the remit of the GLA and many have resource implications that are beyond the scope of existing budgets. We have therefore broken the policies down into four types as detailed on **Figure 19**.

6.12 In framing a policy toolkit we have been very aware of the limitations of the GLA's powers and budgets. Many of the issues highlighted by the case studies are of local concern and are the responsibility of the boroughs. The suburbs are so large that the resource implications of even modest proposals such as improving street cleansing are potentially huge. We have therefore considered the policies at a series of levels:

- **SDS Policies:** Policies that are legitimately the concern of the SDS and which can be written into the plan. Appendix 4 includes a set of proposed policies for the SDS.

- **Other Mayoral responsibilities:** Proposals that affect Transport for London (TfL) and the London Development Agency (LDA) are being considered separately. While this report makes recommendations in these areas the GLA is not able to make commitments.

- **Local UDPs/ Supplementary Planning Guidance:** Policies that fall within the remit of Borough UDPs. In some cases these could be considered directly by the boroughs. In others, such as design, it is likely that the GLA will set out Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG).

- **Local Actions:** Policies that fall outside the remit of the planning system are included in a practical toolkit of suggested initiatives. These could be implemented in a number of ways as described in Chapter 7.

Smart Growth for London

6.12 These mechanisms add up to a campaign, led by the Mayor and the London Development Agency, to promote the benefits to London's population and business community of locating in Ped Shed areas. This would be akin to the 'Smart Growth' movement in the USA, of which key elements of Smart Growth campaigns have included [1]:

- **Increasing awareness** – publicising the economic impacts of the dispersal of housing and economic activity
- **Business-to-business education** – in order to promote better development practices

□ **Urban revitalization** – initiatives to address liveability and infra-structure in centres

□ **Brownfield development** – support for infill and mixed-use developments

□ **Commuting** – reducing car-use in ways that benefit employees and businesses

□ **Publicity** – promoting success stories

6.13 In this respect we believe there are more parallels to be drawn and lessons to be learnt from the USA experience of 'sprawl busting' than with EU cities, which already have stronger public transport (and rail-freight) orientated development patterns. London as a 'city of villages' is ideally suited to rise to this challenge.

FIGURE 19: Implementation Framework

Columns: SDS Policies | The Mayor | UDPs | Local Action

Reinforcing the role of local centres

Local centres
- Location policy
- Vitality and viability of local centres
- Town centre management
- Non-retail uses
- Environmental improvements
- Access and parking

Suburban heartland
- Presumption against major retail development
- Diversification of declining local parades

Promoting sustainable development patterns

Local centres
- Living over the shop

Ped sheds
- Capacity studies
- Subdivision into flats
- Density standards
- Infill development
- Redevelopment at higher densities
- Housing diversification
- Parking standards

Suburban hinterland
- Existing policy regime
- Major infill opportunities
- Redevelopment of low density/vacant areas
- New Ped Sheds
- Density standards
- Parking standards

Improving the existing housing stock

All areas
- Stock condition surveys
- Demonstration retrofit house types
- Energy performance standards and guidance
- HECA Targets
- Local energy agencies and learning networks
- Fuel poverty strategy
- Market mechanisms
- Fiscal Incentives
- District energy/CHP systems
- Renewable energy

Reducing car-dependency

Local centres
- Parking
- Public transport
- Orbital transport services
- Improve stations
- Real-time travel information

Ped sheds
- Parking standards
- Controlled parking zones
- Promotion of car free housing
- Car share schemes
- Mixed-use development
- Home-working

Suburban heartland
- Parking standards
- Home Zones
- Alternatives to the car
- Bus stops
- Public realm

All areas
- Green travel plans

Improving environmental sustainability

All areas
- Green communities
- District energy/CHP systems
- Renewable energy
- Recycling targets
- Recycling guidance
- Learning networks
- New development
- Economic development
- Local business
- Food supply

Protecting and promoting suburban employment

Local centres
- Retail and leisure uses
- Business uses

Ped sheds
- Mixed-use development
- Home-working

Suburban hinterlands
- Promoting industry
- Employment land
- Vacant land

Improving the quality of design and the public realm

All areas
- Design Guidance
- Masterplans
- Open space and landscape
- Conservation areas
- Civic pride initiatives

Local centres
- Design Guidance
- Town centre improvements
- Town Centre Management and traders' forums

Ped sheds
- Design Guidance
- Neighbourhood management
- Road space reallocation

Suburban heartlands
- Design Guidance
- Public realm
- Street trees

Chapter 6 References

[1]   National Association of Local Government Environmental Professionals
- Profiles of business leadership on Smart Growth, USA, 1999

7. Implementation and Resourcing

In which we describe four mechanisms for implementing the elements of the policy that go beyond the planning system. These include Neighbourhood Management, Green Communities, Energy Agencies and Local Transport Partnerships.

7.1   In Chapter 5 we proposed a four level spatial strategy for London's suburbs based on Local Centres, Ped Sheds, suburban heartlands and employment sites. In Chapter 6 we expanded this into 80 policies to reinforce a pattern of local centres and Ped Sheds and to support economic development, improved environmental sustainability, and the social diversity and cohesion of London's suburbs.

7.2   At the end of Chapter 6 we outlined the way in which the policy framework could be incorporated into the SDS, implemented through other Mayoral responsibilities or incorporated into UDPs. However many of the 80 suggested policies are beyond the influence of spatial planning. Because of their relative affluence few Boroughs are eligible for regeneration funding, creating a resource gap for new initiatives.

7.3   Addressing these issues will require complimentary implementation and funding mechanisms that are area-based and collaborative, bringing together a range of stakeholders to address the provision of services and the social, economic and environmental sustainability of areas. In order to do this we are proposing four additional mechanisms, which could initially be piloted as demonstration projects:

☐   **Neighbourhood management** – local stakeholders working together with the support of Boroughs to strengthen and diversify local centres and their Ped Sheds and to address the liveability of local neighbourhoods

☐   **Green Communities** – the establishment of community-led organisations dedicated to improving the quality of the local environment and to raising environmental awareness

☐   **Energy Agencies** – the expansion of the network of local energy agencies to cover all of London. The main focus of these partnerships would be to deliver HECA targets by improving household energy efficiency, to work with business, and to develop opportunities for new and renewable energy technologies.

☐   **Neighbourhood Transport Partnerships** – the development and implementation of 'micro' measures which can support a modal shift

at the local level, and which integrate with and complement public transport investment by Transport for London.

Neighbourhood management

7.3   Suburban Local Centres and Ped Sheds are central to the policy that we have set out in this report. Many of the policies in Chapter 6 seek to strengthen these Centres and Ped Sheds both in terms of their retail role and as places to do business and to live. In inner London it has often been possible to implement such policies through targeted initiatives such as the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund or Single Regeneration Budget. This may be possible in some suburbs, however most fall outside these priority areas so that new mechanisms are required.

7.4   Our suggestion is that the successful model of town centre management be expanded into Neighbourhood Management Partnerships to co-ordinate action. This would involve extending the geographical scope of town centre management to cover the Ped Sheds, expanding its remit to cover residential and business as well as retail issues and widening the partnerships to more fully involve residents and employers.

7.5   In areas accredited for Local Strategic Partnerships we would envisage emerging Community and Neighbourhood Renewal Strategies developed at a local level forming the appropriate vehicle to address key elements of this neighbourhood-based approach. In doing this Community Strategies would need to respond to the overall policy framework and objectives for Local Centres and Ped-Sheds.

7.5   These partnerships would bring together local residents, businesses, shops, service providers and the Boroughs to provide a focus for discussion and action within identified Ped Sheds. These partnerships would develop a neighbourhood strategy for their area linked to an implementation plan. The nature of the plan would vary for each area however it is likely to include the following elements from the policy framework described in Chapter 6:

Vital and viable town centres:

7.6   The strategies will encompass all of the proposals that would be expected in town centre management initiatives including promotion, strategies to protect local shops, to diversify the retail and service offer and to retain and attract customers.

Transport initiatives:

7.7   We describe below a proposal for local transport partnerships to co-ordinate transport initiatives at the local level. These would liase closely with the Neighbourhood Management partnerships to improve the accessibility of local centres. In some cases such as in Hayes this may involve cars being brought back into centres, with easier short term parking to support local shops.

Promoting employment:

7.8   There is also a case for diversifying the mix of uses within Ped-Sheds. This could include initiatives to expand the service and knowledge-based sectors as well as ICT (Information and Communication Technology) infrastructure and community workstations. This could also include the re-use of underused existing buildings to create workspace for new and existing small businesses, accompanied by targeted support for a range of business sectors including cultural industries.

Liveability:

7.9   An important part of the work of these partnerships would be to improve the 'liveability' of Ped Sheds. This will include management issues such as litter and the maintenance of the public realm. As resources permit it may also include environmental improvements. A vital part of livability is also the safety of an area, and the partnership could look to extend services such as local wardens, and develop practical responses to the Metropolitan Police's new focus on measuring local visibility[1].

Local services:

7.10   The quality of public services is something that influences perceptions of how attractive an area is, and provision also needs to be responsive to the changing profile of areas. The neighbourhood based approach is in-line with the current emphasis on being responsive to local priorities, as demonstrated by the increased emphasis on NHS Primary Care Trusts[2]. While public services will be harder for local partnerships to influence outside of designated action zones and priority areas, they will need to play a role in promoting higher standards in the key areas of education, employment, crime, health and housing. Priorities and improvement targets could be set, and with the involvement of Boroughs and public service providers could form the basis for Public Service Agreements[3] and/or targeted spending within existing action zones. This could create a means of accessing additional funding and ensuring greater flexibility to achieve results.

Promoting housing development:

7.11   The partnerships would have a role in promoting local housing development to create more balanced communities and ensure that there are a range of housing opportunities within Ped-Sheds. This may for example identify a need for key worker accommodation or for elderly person's housing so as to free up larger homes. It is also likely to be linked to work on urban housing capacity to identify opportunities for new housing development.

7.12   We believe that a focus on local centres and their Ped-Sheds will strengthen rather than dilute town centre partnership initiatives. By promoting employment, public services and housing within the walk-in zone the market for local shops and services will be expanded and the sense of vitality and safety of the centre will be improved.

7.13   There will however be a need to properly resource these partnerships without relying on time-limited funding. This raises wider issues about local funding. However in the short term we suggest that funds are made available to cover the core costs of local partnerships. Project funding could then come from planning gain contributions - either Section 106 contributions or their equivalent as set out in the government's new Planning Green Paper[4] and the associated review of Planning Obligations. This could allow for the pooling of developer contributions within Ped Sheds to support Neighbourhood Partnerships. Funding could also come from the bending of mainstream programmes, such as Housing Plus initiatives by local Housing Associations or, in the future, from local tax based initiatives such as Business Improvement Districts.

Developing 'Green Communities'

7.14   As MORI's recent London Survey[5] has shown environmental issues such as air pollution, litter and green space are important concerns for Londoners. What is more difficult is making the link between these issues and the more radical changes in resource-use highlighted earlier in this report as being required to make London more environmentally sustainable. Making progress depends upon making the link between the global and local, and inspiring people about the possible solutions which could range from a community garden to recycling and car sharing.

7.15   There is also the potential to link this to civic pride initiatives. One of the issues to come out of the case studies was the need for concerted efforts to improve the quality of the suburban public realm. Dirty streets, uncollected rubbish, litter and vandalism are perceived as problems across London. In central areas this is being successfully addressed by the boroughs. The problems, while not as bad in the suburbs, are more difficult to address. This is partly because the suburbs cover such a large area and partly because many of the problems concern private land such as gardens. Suburbs that have successfully addressed the quality and maintenance of the public realm have done so by engaging local people - something that has tended to happen in suburbs with strong social capital such as Surbiton.

7.16   One of the initiatives that has been successful in raising the level of community engagement as well as building links between local and global issues is the Canadian Green Communities model[6] described in Appendix 3. The nearest equivalent in London is Suttons' Centre for Environmental Initiatives[7], originally initiated by Friends of the Earth, that has combined awareness raising and community outreach with practical work to deliver tangible environmental improvements. In Canada the Green Communities movement was initiated by the government as a network of local organisations to help households, neighbourhoods and districts to reduce their environmental impact. Each of the organisa-

tions, that now exist across Canada, have developed their own local identity whilst receiving support to achieve the generic aims and objectives of the Green Communities Association.

7.17   It is suggested that the Mayor promote a similar network of Green Communities across London working through the newly-established London Sustainability Exchange and building on existing initiatives such as the Sutton project. These projects would then combine local surveys and environmental audits with community involvement and practical activities such as tree planting, spring cleans, and campaigns in schools. There are other projects working in this area including Local Agenda 21, Groundwork, Going for Green and the London Timebank[8] (which encourages Londoners to make a voluntary contribution to their community). The Green Communities programme would not replace these initiatives but would give them a local focus tailored to the needs of the suburbs.

7.18   The value of the green communities programme is that it can build upon these local concerns to develop an interest in wider environmental initiatives. In Sutton, for example, the Centre for Environmental Initiatives has given rise to the Bioregional Development Group. In Canada these groups have become an effective focus for the promotion of household energy efficient and local energy services as described below.

7.19   The London Green Community network would undertake promotion, guidance and networking to support and encourage local communities, business and local authorities to establish local groups. In Ped Sheds these are likely to be combined with the Neighbourhood Management initiatives proposed above. However the real value of the Green Communities programme is likely to in the suburban heartlands and the smaller centres where town centre management is not practical. In order to support these groups it is suggested that a small budget be established, possibly administered through the London Sustainability Exchange. This could be available for Green Community Groups to apply for set-up and project funds.

Energy Agencies

7.20   As the problems with delivering on the Government's Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) targets[9] have highlighted, improving the energy efficiency of the older housing stock presents a major challenge and boroughs are making only limited progress. The condition of the suburban housing stock has raised wider concerns such as obsolescence and fuel poverty, and it is clear that improving energy efficiency could contribute significantly towards a number of agendas.

7.21   In Chapter 6 we proposed the use of design guidance, planning controls, energy labelling, and demonstration upgrades of suburban house

types to raise standards whilst meeting local planning requirements. However to achieve a greater level of implementation will require more effective outreach and support to stimulate investment by private sector landlords and owner occupiers. It will also require the co-ordination of potential sources of funding, financing and tax breaks.

7.22   Private landlords pose a particular problem in raising standards. One response would be to require some form of accreditation (potentially forming part of the governments proposed selective licensing regime[10]) together with revolving loans made available to bring properties up to the required standards. In the future the Danish model of requiring energy audits before properties are resold[11] could be applied to rented and owner-occupied property however in the short term it will be necessary to rely on persuasion and incentives.

7.23   There is also the need to promote wider domestic energy and commercial energy efficiency including electricity used for appliances and lighting, and efficient energy supply systems such as condensing boilers, Combined Heat and Power (CHP) and renewable energy technologies. This promotion and education is currently undertaken very effectively by organisations such as the Southwark Energy Agency and, for the residential sector, the Croydon Energy Network.

7.24   We therefore propose the extension of the network of Energy Agencies across London facilitated by Boroughs through their HECA strategies. This would bring together a range of partners such as utilities, technologists, developers and local businesses to provide a dedicated focus and technical support in rolling out the energy efficiency measures proposed in Chapter 6. The centres would also support and facilitate demonstration projects within each local area, and assist with funding applications and brokering appropriate partnerships where appropriate. Accompanying targets could be set which would focus on delivery of actions and initiatives with specific outcomes such as energy systems installed, appliance sales, household upgrades etc…

7.25   Revenue funding for these centres should be available through existing HECA budgets. There may be a need to supplement these funds through affinities and partnerships with suppliers and utilities as well as the possibility of attracting in-kind technical support from partners. Agencies could also co-ordinate funding bids for capital works, demonstration projects as well as revenue funding from the EU or Energy Saving Trust to support their activities - as has been done by the Southwark Energy Agency. There is also the possibility of expanding existing agencies or sharing facilities between two boroughs. The aim should be to have total coverage across London.

Neighbourhood Transport Partnerships

7.26 The need to tackle air pollution, congestion and energy use within London requires policies that challenge the use of the private car. The multi-nodal structure of London is ideally suited to a public transport-oriented development model. In this report we have suggested a pattern of development for suburban London based on high accessibility nodes of development around Local Centres to increase the number of people within easy reach of public transport.

7.27 This will however put further pressures on the public transport system and will not succeed if there is not the capacity on the underground, rail, tram, or bus systems to meet the increased demand. The infrastructure improvements planned by Transport for London are therefore essential to the implementation of this policy. This will also create the need for more local action to improve links into the Ped Sheds from the surrounding suburban heartlands.

7.28 However the imperative to control car use cannot wait for the creation of Ped Sheds across suburban London or indeed for the completion of all current and planned infrastructure projects. The evidence from EU cities such as Freiburg is that more immediate results can be achieved by combining investment in public transport with measures to promote and support a shift away from car dependency. Local action can therefore provide the initial lead-in to a culture change as more major changes are put in place.

7.29 We are therefore proposing the establishment of Local Transport Partnerships to plan and implement 'micro' transport measures at the local level. This is a similar proposition to the measures set out in the government's 1998 Integrated Transport Strategy[12] which argued for a greater input from local communities into the shaping of Local Transport Plans in order to achieve modal shift and ensure effective targeting of spending. Whilst this has led to greater consultation by Boroughs during formulation of transport plans, and more recently the use of regeneration funding to improve accessibility for some areas as indicated by our survey results, the approach is still very top-down. What is needed is a mechanism to explore and support the implementation of the 'micro' measures at a local level, and integrate these with the upgraded public transport services and stations.

7.30 These Local Transport Partnerships would promote the following policies set out in Chapter 6:

☐ Improving access into Ped Sheds from the Suburban heartlands via walking, cycling and buses.
☐ Reducing the level of usage and impact of the car by reducing parking, re-allocating road space and promoting car clubs.
☐ Reducing the impact of public and private sector employers as well

as retail and leisure uses through Green Transport Plans.
☐ Addressing community safety and safe transport to schools
☐ Improving stations and interchanges in order to integrate public transport improvements with local measures
☐ Promoting local pay-as-you-use car and cycle clubs
☐ Promoting niche services such as cycle taxi's and community transport
☐ Support teleworking and community workstations to reduce commuting
☐ Providing better information about public transport

7.31   While many of these measures are commonplace in EU cities, they represent a significant culture change for the UK. They will require careful promotion, demonstration and trial on the ground in order to determine which are likely to be accepted, and which could realistically contribute to a modal shift. It is also about integration of spending to upgrade stations and services with other local measures, so for example in Germany rail operator Deutsche Bahn has been involved in co-ordinating cycle parking, cycle hire and 'Station Car' schemes.

7.32   Local Transport Partnerships would involve local communities and employees so that they feel 'ownership' of the measures. A good model is Hanover Sustainable Transport in Brighton, a community-led organisation which, with the help of Sustrans and the City Council, has successfully bid for Lottery funding to support establishment of local Car Club, Cycle Hire and information services. They have also been working with developers to broaden the target audience for new services.

7.33   One of the measures that such grass roots organisations have been successful in promoting elsewhere are car share schemes. In Berlin the StattAuto Car Club[13] has been very successful in signing up members and in the UK Smart Moves has highlighted the potential of daytime car services for employers as a substitute for company cars. Local services can also form the basis for experimenting with new technology such as low emission vehicles, which could also contribute to the current pro-

posals for low emission zones. The establishment of the London TH!NK partnership with Ford[14] could potentially provide support for such initiatives.

Conclusion

7.34   For the last half of the 20th century the suburbs were the poor relation of urban policy. The focus initially was on rebuilding the centres and inner city areas damaged by war or blighted by slums and subsequently on putting right the mistakes made in this rebuilding. Suburban policy concerned green belts and new towns. The great mass pre-war suburbia was taken for granted and quietly continued to provide homes, space, peace and quiet for generations of Londoners.

7.35   Urban areas however are always evolving and changing as districts fall in and out of fashion. Certain parts of Georgian London were built for rich families, degenerated into multiple occupation, were improved and converted to flats and have since been turned back into single family homes by affluent professionals. The key to success is the ability to adapt and accommodate these changes. The suburbs are not immune to these trends. They too can fall in and out of fashion and the type of people they house can change over time. The problem with suburbs is that they are less able to adapt to these trends.

7.36   If the much heralded urban renaissance materialises, and all the current signs are that it will, suburbs are likely to enter a new phase. The successful, highly accessible suburbs are likely to develop into 'urban villages' with many of the characteristics of the city both negative and positive. However in the inaccessible suburban fringes and the less fashionable suburbs there are areas at-risk of decline. This is a risk that is still largely unrealised but it is a risk that policy must address.

7.37   In this report we have sought to develop a set of policies that can both accommodate success and head-off decline. In doing so through a framework of suburban centres and Ped Sheds it is our hope that we can protect and reinforce the unique character of London as a great city of small villages.

Appendix 1
Workshop proceedings

Workshop One: 16th October 2001

OPENING DISCUSSION
Some initial concerns were raised, including:

☐ the difficulty of defining typologies, given the wide differences in experience both between and within suburban areas

☐ the reach of issues beyond planning to encompass economic and community development, transport and housing

☐ the problem of defining 'decline' and 'success'

☐ the relative emphasis within the term 'sustainability' on a prioritisation of issues, particularly the environment and climate change

☐ the importance of social capital and interconnectedness through networks within suburban areas

☐ the importance of understanding why some areas have declined

☐ a recognition that 'exclusivity' is not necessarily positive, and that ethnic groups bring vitality.

URBED stressed that this work recognises the complexity of the question, but is trying to find a useful way to understand that complexity. This was supported by the view that a classification is necessary to give structure, and that building form can inform an understanding both of energy consumption and patterns of lifestyle.

GROUP DISCUSSION (1)
SUBURBS 'AT RISK'
There was a difficulty in defining 'failure' – particularly the scale of consideration as areas are not homogeneous – a need to focus on the direction of change, and the different perceptions of that change by different age/social groups.

Finding a satisfactory definition of 'sustainability' further complicated this, as a 'successful' suburb might well be a failure environmentally.

Different indices of failure were suggested, such as rising crime, falling income and health and education figures. One suggested definition was that 'decline' could be seen as 'no longer fit for purpose', i.e. an area had not adapted, such as a mismatch between households and dwelling size. Identifying 'Tipping Points' might be a useful way of addressing step changes where reaching a threshold can result in a more dramatic change than might be expected. It was noted that in many cases the possible planning mechanisms for response are limited.

Suggestions for a practical toolkit began with a discussion of the need for change in many suburban areas. Many outer boroughs were seen to be anti-change, and this would therefore require a vision, and positive management rather than benign neglect.

The question of transport highlighted the 'double-edged sword' that higher accessibility can also be problematic – rather there is a need for the 'right kind' of transport, particularly walking and cycling. Investment was seen as the key – both by the public and private sectors, and that this would lead to

enhanced perceptions and image. The example of Dagenham was discussed, with the conclusion that despite multiple regeneration initiatives, the withdrawal of Sainsbury's from Dagenham Heathway has done most to decimate local morale. A 'vision' of desirable outcomes was drawn up:

- Increasing the offer – of schools, parks, employment, etc.
- Public transport
- Improve local 'ownership', to encourage investment
- Adaptability
- Diversity
- An image campaign
- Heritage/culture/community more interesting

GROUP DISCUSSION (2)
CONSOLIDATING SUCCESSFUL SUBURBS

The purpose of this group was to look at why certain suburbs are already or become successful and to discuss how they can be made more sustainable.

The group concluded a number of points:

- Growth should be concentrated along transport corridors. Higher density mixed-use development close to transport nodes to encourage walking, cycling and use of public transport and lower densities in locations away from these nodes, thereby providing a mix of different types of housing to suit people's differing needs.

- Transport should be of high quality if it is going to encourage people to switch from cars to public transport. Promoting sustainable transport is a vital component of improving the overall sustainability of suburbs. It is often a range of smaller initiatives, e.g. lower parking standards, working form home and home zones, that can help in addition to more strategic transport schemes such as better linkages between suburban centres. There needs to be an organised programme to develop and improve the transport network.

- Diversity is generally a good thing, but may not be what people want. Encouraging such diversity is important since it helps to overcome the elitism that is often a consequence of successful suburbs.

- The availability of land for development is also important. While it is possible to intensify development in already developed areas, it is much easier, and less contentious to redevelop large areas of brownfield land. It was suggested that even in successful suburbs such land exists.

- Attractive centres are seen as important to the success and sustainability of an area. It was noted that the role of district centres has changed so that shopping is often no longer the main activity. Rather, eating, drinking and even education are playing a far greater role. Shopping was mainly done in out-of-centre shopping centres with a larger catchment area, which has implications for sustainability in relation to transport.

Other issues and points were raised in the group, particularly relating to what makes a suburb successful and therefore what can be learned in relation to less successful areas. Successful is not necessarily sustainable due to the low densities. Others, such as Kingston are successful because of their town centres, but is failing in relation to transport. Another factor is schools, these have a big influence on whether or not an area is successful and also on house prices - people will often pay premium prices for homes near to decent schools. Telegraph Hill was cited as an example of a Victorian suburb that has been gentrified and a strong community, which has developed around a good school. The area is however exclusive.

GROUP DISCUSSION (3)
HOW TO MAKE SUBURBS MORE SUSTAINABLE?

It was suggested that the discussion should not discuss typologies at length but concentrate on solutions to the problem of devising policies to make suburbs more environmentally sustainable.

Mayer Hillman set the scene in terms of global environmental requirements:

- 90% reduction in CO_2 emissions (10% per annum for 25 years)

- He suggested thermal imaging could identify high energy intensivity suburbs

◻ Public transport he suggested was not a good indicator of low energy use as this can also use up large quantities of finite carbon based resources

The aim of reducing need for travel (except cycling and walking) was generally accepted and the possible extension of the somewhat architectural concept of the 'urban village' to ensure it included employment leisure and other uses which would reduce travel needs was supported. In this context more cycle routes and pedestrian friendly environments were to be supported.

It was felt that physical design solutions were possible over the long term in suburbs and that perhaps we should consider typologies in terms of those that perform best in terms of energy efficiency etc. This could lead to principally physical policies.

Intensification was raised and there was concern that reducing the availability of employment sites would encourage sparsely developed housing land at higher densities. However others were concerned that reducing the availability of brownfield employment sites would be unwise given the widespread need for more brownfield housing sites.

There was general support for the concept that redeveloping housing land at higher densities could bring reductions in energy use etc. but that these might tail off at very high densities.

Important factors in making 'urban villages' fulfil local needs and reduce the need to travel were seen as:

◻ Accessible public services, (particularly in the context of local authorities centralising many library leisure and social services facilities)

◻ Levelling land value: using planning designations to enable community land uses and other mixes of uses to take place on sites otherwise too expensive for such uses due to their residential land value

◻ Levelling parking charges so that out of town attractions did not benefit from the attraction of free parking over and above in centre facilities

◻ There was one suggestion to remove the subsidy

to public transport since this encourages people to travel

It was suggested that out-of-centre development should be tackled by

◻ Attracting major uses to existing centres
◻ Use serviceswithin a centre for a range of purposes / polycentric types of centre

If intensification were to occur in an effort to create higher density 'urban villages' the following would need to be addressed:

◻ Size?

◻ Addressing economic needs of local areas/ protecting employment land

◻ No loss of public open space (this was seen as a crucial safeguard against too high densities),

◻ Some areas could be intensified particularly where stock needs to be renewed

Low density in this discussion was regarded as developments up to 15 to 25 dwellings per acre. Anything above 25 was seen as acceptably high. This was partly because of the desire of many people to own a house with a garden. Intensification concerns were summarised as follows:

◻ Protection and provision of open space (some of the most popular high density developments are adjacent to large parks and other open spaces)

◻ Higher energy standards would be needed in future development, in Sutton industrial buildings were now being required to meet 10% of their own energy needs themselves

Finally the point was made that different house types generated different energy use ratings and that different types of urban form would equally generate different rates of energy use and sustainability. It would therefore be logical to address suburban typologies from this standpoint.

KEY POINTS FROM WORKSHOP REPORT BACK

There was a perceived clash between the need for immediate change to tackle pressing global problems and the recognition that suburbs traditionally change slowly over time. The findings of the workshop divided into two areas, first the more radical recommendations for immediate action:

☐ Higher energy standards to be applied to new homes such as meeting 10% of their own energy requirements (this is technically a matter for Building Control legislation however planning policies in a London Plan could 'recommend' such levels);

☐ Reverse the parking charge imbalance to make in centre parking cheaper than out-of-centre (a policy recommendation of this kind would be for Transport for London rather than the London Plan);

☐ Identify highly energy intensive suburbs with a

mapping or typology technique and apply policies for sustainability more aggressively to these areas, possibly targeting these areas for redevelopment at densities over 20 dwellings per acre (this could form the basis of London Plan policy but would depend on the typology work).

And secondly recommendations for more incremental change:

☐ Designating sites within high value suburban areas for low value but sustainable land uses such as public services, community uses and employment uses and bringing these uses into suburban areas by various means;

☐ Attempting to attract major uses to existing centres again through designating sites for that purpose rather than providing out-of-centre sites.

Workshop Two: 8th November 2001

The outcome of the first Seminar was used to develop some draft policies for suburban areas. The second Seminar began with a presentation of the case studies by Dr Nicholas Falk and an introduction of the Draft Tool Kit for 'affluent suburbs', 'council suburbs' and 'Blue Collar suburbs' by David Rudlin and Nick Dodd.

GROUP DISCUSSION (1)
AFFLUENT SUBURBS

Affluent suburbs do have real potential for improving sustainability, but there could be strong resistance from residents. Many affluent suburbs are also Conservation Areas, but while they are most resistant to change, local pride in an area is something generally to be encouraged. Suggested changes must be part of a concerted package, they must appear to offer a choice and not just controls.

Town centres could provide the focus for change, and a catalyst to improve sustainable communities. However the suburb is defined, it needs a focal point for regeneration and identifying priorities – although people band together over shared problems, it can be difficult to orchestrate change in the long term, and therefore the 'centre' provides a focus for local attention.

There is a need to balance the retention vs the increase of local employment with housing. Is there a potential for working from home/provision of small, high quality office space in local centres? Need to support local shops and businesses to keep centres vital for other community uses.

Use of the car is contentious – local centres want parking provision and there is local resistance to reducing car use. Need to reduce car use in ways that are acceptable to those that live there – and to offer alternatives, e.g. cycling for intermediate distances.

Under-occupation of houses is one area with potential to increase housing provision, with a wider choice of high-quality smaller homes freeing up larger houses that are currently under occupied, e.g. after a family has left home.

The SDS must be flexible enough to recognise diversity, considering why suburbs have developed as they have, and why they have changed. The importance of the local community must be recognised as an important element – and the approach taken should not over emphasise the physical.

GROUP DISCUSSION (2)
DECLINING SUBURBS

Developing social capital was seen as being an important aspect – linking to issues of crime, unemployment and sense of community. The suggestion was that there should be less emphasis on the purely physical measures. Policies should also be developed which address householder concerns in areas

While suburbs that are seen as 'declining' may, for example be energy inefficient, the issue was raised that suburbs that are seen as 'thriving' economically may be declining environmentally through increased car use. How should declining therefore be considered / defined – in environmental, social or economic terms?

There is also a pre-supposition that public transport is a good thing – though fleets of vehicles enable the fuels used to be switched more easily.

In relation to energy efficiency of the housing stock a number of the boroughs, such as Bexley, had been using thermal imaging to look at heat loss

In order to determine policy areas we first need to identify the relevant issues. Restrictive and permissive policies can be placed side-by-side. Priority seen as issues / potential solutions where there is overlap between what is socially, economically and environmentally sustainable.

Maintenance and management polices were seen as being important for the long-term up-keep. In relation to improving the housing stock, private landlords dividing up properties for sub-letting was mentioned as a potential issue to be addressed.

There was debate over whether there should be one kind of Ped Shed policy or variations to suite local circumstances, and depending on the capacity to accept higher densities. The concept of liveability as

flagged up as a good way of looking at the issues. The issue of who new housing in the Ped Sheds would be targeted at was also flagged up ie. Would it be appropriate for families? It was also mentioned that many of the more affluent suburbs are conservation areas.

From an economic point of view decentralising can be economically viable given the property prices in central areas – together with the potential to apply ICT capabilities. However the move towards a greater proportion of people working from home for a number of days during the week is probably not applicable to 'entry level' workers.

Balance between being aware of the need for longer term cultural change, and in the short term actions that can be taken to improve areas.

An example was given of a large employer which created a lot of employee car journeys. On one hand the local authority could work with the employer to put in place measures to reduce journeys, and at broader level (we also touched on the potential long-term impacts on local economic diversity caused by inward investment) local business promotion and support to develop and make local business more robust.

The problem of funding / resources for initiatives was also raised.

GROUP DISCUSSION (3)
COUNCIL SUBURBS
The typology and sustainability of council suburbs varied considerably amongst the participants, however a number of issues and conclusions can be drawn. These can be split into four key areas.

☐   Transport was a particularly relevant issue in these suburbs, particularly in relation to their lack of public transport and relative isolation. This was especially important in communities that have poor access to shops and other facilities. Community buses were seen as a possible solution. The ped-shed idea came in for criticism for areas that had no obvious heart.

☐   Patterns of employment have changed significantly since the development of the estates. In Barking for example, residents were originally almost exclusively employed in the Ford factory to which most people walked or cycled. These days however, the nature of the factory means that most residents no longer have the skill levels required in the plant and so most employees come from outside the area. A similar skills mismatch can be seen in Southwark.

☐   The issue of local shops and facilities is an important one. The increase in larger more centralised facilities, such as supermarkets is having a detrimental affect on local shops. Barking is finding that it is having to offer local units at subsidised rates in order to prevent them from remaining empty or converting to takeaways. This is causing a particular problem for the less mobile, i.e. the elderly and poor.

☐   It was noted that the populations of council estates were very stable, bringing with it benefits and problems. Most notable is a now ageing population in estates designed for young families. This leads to the need for a different type of service provision (this has a strong link to the need for adequate accessible public transport). It also offers opportunities for intensification and densification in certain areas, although the interwar suburbs already tend to be fairly dense. Opportunity areas include open spaces between higher rise developments, large rear gardens (more difficult now as a result of right-to-buy) and derelict allotments (some of these are statutorily protected and it may by a mistake to develop too many due to potential for future demand).

Case studies

As described in Chapter 5 the case studies for this project have been carefully selected to represent a range of situations, both in terms of types of place and parts of London. The case studies are intended to illuminate the issues facing a cross section of London's suburbs, and to provide a basis for developing and testing out proposals for a 'toolkit' that could form part of the SDS. In order to highlight the issues and options we have:

- Prepared **Profiles** of each case study, summarising information on type of place, evolution and environmental capital, access and location, housing stock and demand, and shopping and public facilities.

- Illustrated plans of each area's **Urban Anatomy** consisting of an aerial photograph, a map showing public transport links, a Mosaic map, and information on housing demand for semis, terraces and flats from Up My Street.

- Undertaken a **Health Check** to review the **Key Issues** in physical, social and economic terms, identifying strengths and weaknesses in each dimension of sustainability, including issues such as residential renewal, population change, economic balance, linkages, public realm, local shopping, and image

- Identified **Potential Action** that could be taken forward by the GLA, through the SDS, Transport for London, or the LDA, and which together might form the 'toolkit'.

The case studies range from classic havens of prosperity, like Surbiton, to areas whose main role was to provide cheap housing for commuters, like Welling or Becontree, plus a couple of areas that are in a state of transition, Colliers Wood and Hayes. We have also drawn on information and examples from a range of other places, including Wealdstone, and published studies on Hayes Bromley, and North West London.
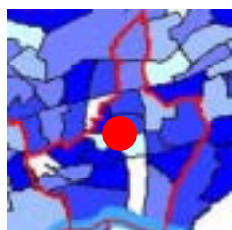
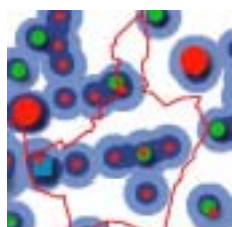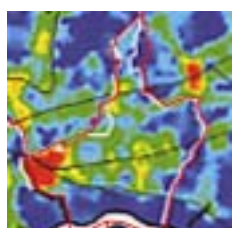# Becontree
Barking and Dagenham

PROFILE

Type: Becontree was the largest municipal housing scheme in the world when it was built by the London County Council in the inter-war period to re-house people from East End slum clearance, and though it is now half privately owned it is affected by its location and image.

Evolution: Becontree covers an area of four square miles on the borders of Barking, Dagenham and Ilford. The aim was to create an estate of about 27,000 houses on 'garden city' principles, which included a number of banjos or cul-de-sacs. There are some 90 different house types, though the impression from the straight roads running through the estate is rather monotonous. Indeed when people first moved in they often got lost trying to find their way home. A large open space in the centre has become Parsloes Park, and the estate also has a large number of 'amenity greens'. By 1934 the population was about 115,000 compared with about 150,000 for the whole of the Borough today. Though it is often associated with Ford, in fact relatively few of the people living in Becontree work at the Ford plant. The area's main role has been to provide cheap housing for people commuting to work in London. Since the introduction of Right-to-Buy about half the houses have been bought leading to a profusion of Home Improvements.

Housing: The houses are mostly short terraces, with small gardens front and rear. There are some flats near the junctions, where local shops are located, often along with other facilities such as doctors' surgeries. There is very little post-war development except for about six sites, where the local authority has promoted the redevelopment of

back gardens or allotments. One of the achievements has been the provision of a number of sheltered housing schemes, which have enabled the older houses to be released for families. Many of the Council-owned houses have already been improved, and there is a £140 million Neighbourhood Renewal scheme, one of the largest in the country, to upgrade some 23,000 houses, typically with double glazed windows, improved bathrooms and kitchens, and new central heating.

Shopping: There is a strong loyalty to Dagenham and a reluctance to use neighbouring Barking. There are six parades of shops, some of which are looking quite weak, as shops have closed, sometimes to be replaced by fast food takeaways. There are several large empty pubs, closed because of anti-social behaviour, and they present potential development opportunities.

HEALTH CHECK

Environmental: Though the individual houses generally look well-cared for, and the Council prides itself on the high standard of maintenance of the public realm, the overall impression is somewhat dispiriting. This is not only because the area is showing its age, but because cars now dominate the area (in contrast to the bicycles that people used in the past). There is a huge problem fitting all the cars in, with households only being allowed to keep one car off the road, and in some cases narrow streets make parking very difficult. The trees have been pollarded, so it does not seem as leafy as somewhere like Hampstead Garden Suburb, on which it was partly modelled. Also the roads feel very long and walking home is not the pleasure it once was. There is a Single Regeneration

Budget (SRB) project to improve the environment of one of the centres, and this may act as a demonstration to the others of what is possible. Hopper buses are being introduced but the low density of the estate makes it difficult to provide a good public transport system.

Economic: The borough has the lowest average incomes in London, and has suffered from the weak position of the East End economy, and the decline of traditional riverside industries. It is still seen as an extension of the East End, though high density housing around Barking town centre, and the impact of the University of East London, together with the mixed-use Barking Town Square development proposals from London-based developer Urban Catalyst could change the image over time. Currently Becontree's main attraction tends to be that it is the cheapest place to find somewhere to live in London, and this in turn means that house prices have tended to be flatter than elsewhere.

Social: An extensive one-class area, largely white, makes the whole of Barking and Dagenham rather different from most of London. The population now is ageing and there has traditionally been a desire to better oneself by moving out of the Borough. Like many areas there is a fear that gangs of youths hanging around create a security issue, but in general it seems relatively harmonious. Barking Reach, the development of potentially 6,000 homes by Bellway, is having difficulty in improving the quality of what it offers because of relatively low house prices. It also suffers from the relative isolation and overhead power cables. Hence, unless the attraction or accessibility of the neighbourhood as a whole can be improved, Becontree could be at risk.

POSSIBLE ACTION

◻ The SDS could emphasise the importance of improved orbital infrastructure, particularly the proposed river crossing

that will create a bridge link through toThamesmead. This is a similar area which also suffers from being 'on the edge'.

◻ The funding for home improvements could be supplemented by projects to upgrade the external appearance, such as encouraging houses to be stuccoed and painted white, more tree planting, and traffic calming measures along the main roads.

◻ Projects to improve local centres, and find new uses for empty shops could be combined with some redevelopment, for example of vacant pubs, perhaps as health and community centres with flats above.

◻ Support for urban design work could seek solutions to parking problems, in some cases narrowing carriageways or even cutting into pavements, coupled with Controlled Parking Zones.

◻ Support for measures to encourage people to restrict car use and car ownership could include the encouragement of cycling, and making walking feel more pleasant (which could involve more street parking, and less use of front gardens for parking).
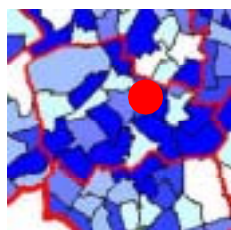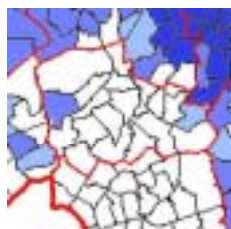
Colliers Wood
Merton
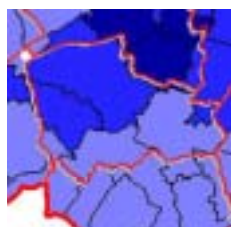
PROFILE

Type: Colliers Wood is essentially a Victorian industrial suburb that has turned into a commuter suburb, and is poised to become much more desirable as access by public transport is improved.

Evolution: While the area around Colliers Wood was the site of a pioneering mid 19th Century model estate, its location on the River Wandle made it one of the earliest industrial locations in London, with a cluster of textile designers (Liberties and Morris), and then paper industries. As well as a suburban rail link, it was on the borders of the London tram system, and then benefited from the Southern extension of the Northern Line to Morden in the 1930s, which in turn led to the vast St Helier Estate being built nearby. After a period when the area was covered in scrap yards, it has been redeveloped, largely for out of town retail. Today, it still contains some of the largest areas of land available for development in London.
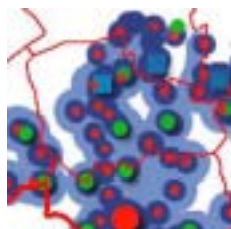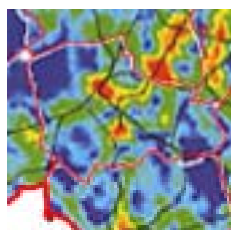
Access: The area is dominated by heavy through traffic, and the new road which bypasses Merton High Street is no longer going to be extended. The station is being upgraded, and there should be a better interchange with buses and taxis, and a possible extension of the Croydon Tramlink. However as an environment for walking or cycling it is as hostile as any place in London.

Housing: Though the predominant housing is two storey Victorian low status terraced housing, there is quite a mix, including the Phipps Bridge housing estate, the subject of a Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) scheme, as well as a range of relatively recent 'starter' housing. Following the collapse of proposals for a major leisure development, Countryside Properties are proposing to build a substantial high density housing scheme with a new hotel - though the scheme has been called in by the Secretary of State. It is said that house prices have doubled in the last couple of years in Merton, and the area is becoming 'discovered'.

Shopping: The small shops on Colliers Wood and Merton High Streets struggle, as food shopping is now done in the vast Savacentre hypermarket, and there are a host of retail warehouses, and a shopping mall. There is not yet a distinct eating area, though there are some large historic pubs. Merton Abbey Mills, the conversion of the old Liberty Silk Printing Works provides a valuable weekend market and popular riverside venue.

HEALTH CHECK

Environmental: Though Merton have been leaders in the application of Agenda 21, and it is still proposed to develop the RENUE (Renewable Energy in the Urban Environment) Centre to promote reduced energy use, in reality the development of Colliers Wood has been highly unsustainable:

- Despite the attractive riverside walk and large Morden Park owned by the National Trust, walking or cycling around the area feels very unsafe, with large roundabouts
- The retail uses are surrounded by large individual car parks
- The new housing has tended to be quite low density up until recently
- Though some workshop uses have been introduced, the area has become a kind of 'Edge City' with similarities to US towns

1. Population change
2. House prices (Semis)
3. Crime (Burglaries)
4. Mosaic plan
5. PTAL (Public transport Accessibility)
For keys see the relevant figure in the body of the report

- Industrial firms complain of a lack of parking space, and the opportunity to share parking has not yet been realised
- A masterplan was developed for the area by URBED for Groundwork and English Partnerships, but in reality different developers have tended to determine what happens
- At present Merton are insisting on lower buildings than Countryside Properties would prefer to develop, and it is not clear if there will be any real links between the RENUE centre and the new housing (a kind of Millennium Village)

Economic: A relatively small proportion of residents now work locally, and there is an issue of how to maintain a balance:

- The industrial estates have tended to be turned into retail parks.
- The large 60s office block by Colliers Wood station, formerly an engineering firm, is now more likely to be converted into flats.
- There are a wide range of jobs that are easily accessible from Colliers Wood, both in Central London, and also further out, for example in Croydon. However pockets of deprivation have remained, and the Council has tended to see it as a poor relation to nearby Wimbledon.
- However, access by car to anywhere else is much harder than North London because of congested roads and the area's sustainability is affected by whether orbital rail links are improved.

Social: Though Tooting, immediately to the North, has a high ethnic population, (with a significant number of South Indian restaurants), Colliers Wood is predominantly white, but with a broad social mix:

- The MOSAIC plan shows that there is a surprisingly dense and diverse population living close by, (explaining why the location has been attractive to retail developers)
- Though the environment looks hostile, it is

a relatively safe area, and the subject of some innovative projects, eg urban farm
- Because it is on the Underground map, it has the potential to become much more fashionable, like Fulham for example

POSSIBLE ACTION

- The SDS could promote the idea of making the Wandle Corridor a demonstration project for the application of sustainable development principles, linking through to Sutton and schemes like Bed ZED, for example.
- The empty shops on the High Street could be used to increase the supply of premises for small firms, and for encouraging the development of ethnic businesses in particular
- A Business Improvement District for the wider area could draw on the larger property owners to cross subsidise higher standards of cleaning, security and promotion.
- The development proposals for the remaining land, which includes substantial land owned by Thames Water, could be the subject of sustainability appraisals, and properly resourced masterplans.
- There may be scope for major community development projects, using people who are unemployed and living in the nearby estates.
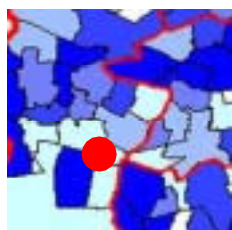
Hayes and Harlington

Hillingdon
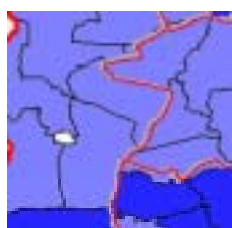
PROFILE

Type: Hayes and Harlington is essentially an industrial suburb that grew up to house people working in the industry that developed along the Grand Union Canal and the Great Western Railway, particularly between the wars. While the mixture of housing seems quite diverse, and now houses a very multi-cultural population, much of it consists of interwar London County Council (LCC) housing estates which are in a poor condition and are surrounded by Green Belt land. Hayes lies in what the GLA describe as the Western Wedge in a strip which runs along the railway line, and which includes the old Southall gas works, gravel extraction pits, and what was Greater London's main rubbish dump. There has been a £27 million Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) scheme for Hayes and West Drayton, and current projects focus on the town centre.
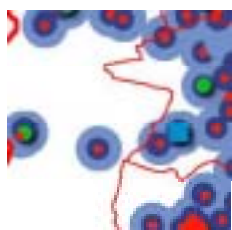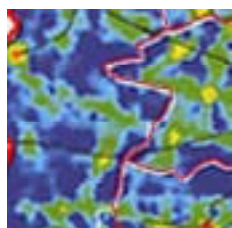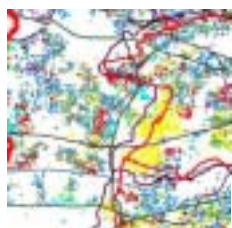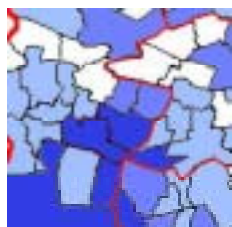
Evolution: Hayes' roots are quite old, lying just off the main Bath and Oxford Roads. Hayes Village, a Conservation Area, along with the layout of the town centre give it considerable character. However the town's development did not take off until 1868, when the Great Western Railway (GWR) opened the station, and in 1904, when the tram reached the town. Its location attracted new industries like the gramophone, and after the last war, Heathrow Airport. EMI and Thorn were major employers until recently, and there are substantial areas of redundant land and buildings looking for new uses, as well as new warehouses or logistics operations. When Thorn closed 30,000 jobs were lost, but unemployment is currently quite low at around 3% as people have found jobs elsewhere. Just outside Hayes is the spectacular business park of Stockley Park.

Housing: The MOSAIC plan shows a relatively diverse area. But Hayes includes a number of areas with high levels of deprivation, and there are great contrasts between the Northern and Southern parts of the area. As well as some late Victorian housing near the station, and a post war Council estate of slab blocks built down to the canal, most of the housing is made up of Garden City type semis and terraces built by the LCC. Most of the former Council housing has been bought under the Right-to-Buy. The roads are quite wide and tree-lined, and Central Avenue has been 'traffic calmed' with 'bump outs' to discourage through traffic. One of the multi-storey factories has been converted into Live-Work units, and a 60's office block in the town centre has been turned into a hostel for refugees.

Shopping: Hayes is a substantial district centre that still boasts quite a good range of shops, including multiples such as Wool-worths, and Wilkinsons, which replaced Sainsburys. However apart from Iceland and some small shops, all the food offer has moved to out of centre locations, and there is also an out of town clothes store. Part of the main street was pedestrianised quite attractively in 1992 when the Hayes bypass was opened and this is blamed by traders for the loss of trade. There is a long stretch of rather non-descript shops running up to the Uxbridge Road, which is also full of shops and services. The centre is over-shadowed by competition from Uxbridge for clothes shopping, and from Southall for eating. It does not yet seem to have found a new role, with significant amounts of vacant premises.

HEALTH CHECK

1. Population change
2. House prices (Semis)
3. Crime (Burglaries)
4. Mosaic plan
5. PTAL (Public Transport Accessibility)
For keys see the relevant figure in the body of the report

Environmental: Like many smaller centres, many of the shops look a little shabby, though overall the the centre appears quite vibrant, and the pedestrianised area looks well-designed and looked after. There is talk of allowing more access for cars, and further environmental improvements are planned. There are signs of litter, and little provision for parking, which probably leads to conflicts. As in other areas like Welling, the wide pavements in the surrounding estates are used to park on, but most of the front gardens and hedges still seem intact. The town is let down by the depressing area around the station, where an 8 acre site owned by Railtrack lies derelict, despite a Planning Brief produced by the Council in 1996. Proposals for Hayes Hub, a high quality Transport Interchange where the Heathrow Express would have stopped, seem to have fallen through. However bus links have been opened up with the airport and Stockley Park, and there are 80 buses an hour running through the centre.

Economic: Though the area has lost local employment, it is still part of a very important industrial area, with major employers like Nestlé, and a cluster of firms in data processing and logistics. Despite having the kind of population who might be expected to start or run small businesses, business formation rates are quite low, possibly reflecting difficulties in obtaining suitable premises, given the competition for land. In the last couple of years there has been an upsurge of activity. The Heathrow area is now one included in one of the City Growth Strategy Areas aimed at promoting clusters of business.

Social: In marked contrast to Welling or Becontree, there is a very racially mixed population, but there is no dominant group, unlike Southall. There has been some conflict over the housing of refugees, and concerns over crime.

POSSIBLE ACTION

☐ Use the SRB partnership, which is chaired by a representative of the British Airport Authority (BAA), to promote a comprehensive visioning and master planning exercise to take in all the vacant and under-utilised land. This could promote higher density housing and mixed-use development to create a 'Ped Shed'.

☐ Make better use of the Canal and nearby open space, some of which is being turned into a park, and there would potentially be benefit from both from joint working with neighbouring Ealing.

☐ Upgrade the transport interchange with better services to London currently 3 an hour, (possibly a cheaper option than the proposed tram link along the Uxbridge Road to Shepherds Bush)

☐ Promote Pride of Place possibly extending the Conservation Area to include some of the Inter-war estates, as part of an urban design exercise to sort out parking, and improving facilities for walking and cycling (currently only six stands for bikes at the station)

☐ Encourage new roles for vacant shops in the town centre, including the possibility of redeveloping parades of single storey shops as housing with workspace below.
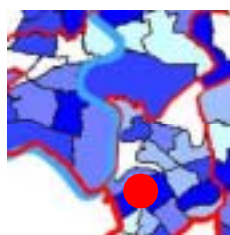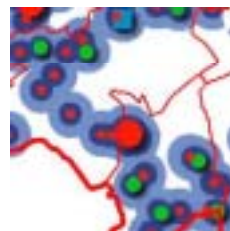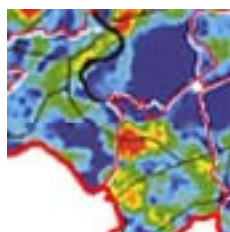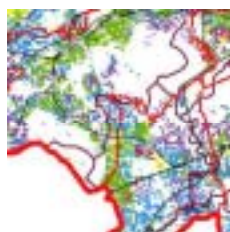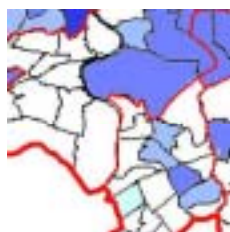
Surbiton

Kingston
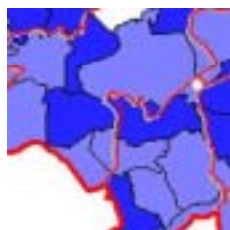
PROFILE

Type: Surbiton is essentially a residential suburb that has grown, and retained its popularity, from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, through its excellent railway links with London. Located within the Royal Borough of Kingston-upon-Thames the Surbiton neighbourhood is one of 7 neighbourhoods established in 1994 to operate alongside the Cabinet and bring decision making to a local level. Meetings are held in local schools and the committee comprises the nine local councillors, three from each ward.

As an administrative unit it comprises three wards, St Marks and Surbiton Hill to the west and Berrylands to the east. However, this latter ward is very different in character from the other two, having been developed within a much shorter period during the interwar years and having a more uniform appearance than the rest of Surbiton, which has developed over a longer period. Surbiton has become synonymous with the successful middle-class suburb. It lent its name (if not its streets) to the setting for the television series 'The Good Life' and was fodder for Monty Python's sketch on the populating of the suburbs. However like many of London's older suburbs it began as an independent village and has a diverse range of housing.

Evolution: Between 1837 and 1852 the population of Surbiton grew from 200 to 2,800, and by 1887 had increased to 10,500. This was largely due to the opening of the London to Southampton mainline railway in 1830 causing

Surbiton to benefit at Kingston's expense. Today the fastest trains reach Waterloo in 16 minutes. As well as the rail service to central London there is easy access to the A3 and M25 roads and excellent local bus services to the neighbouring centre of Kingston. Local amenities include a riverside walk – lying directly across the Thames from Hampton Court Palace – and an attractive built environment.

Housing: Housing in Surbiton Hill and St Mark's varies greatly in age and style. The centre is dominated largely by substantial Victorian houses - many of which have been sub-divided - with smaller Victorian and 1930s houses towards the river, three and four bedroom semis in Berrylands, and some modern purpose-built flats. Flats and houses vary in price according to their proximity to the station, underlining the importance of commuting. However the mixed nature of the housing types in Surbiton (as opposed to Berrylands) means that it provides housing opportunities for a range of buyers, not just families. The two wards of St Mark's and Surbiton Hill are effectively separated by the railway tracks, and the 'centre' can only be crossed by a footbridge at the station.

Shopping: Surbiton's shopping streets radiate out from the railway station forecourt, and despite being so close by bus from the centre of Kingston, it retains an apparently thriving retail centre, recently augmented by a newly built Waitrose supermarket - with a large car park. Surbiton is also served by a Sainsbury and a Somerfield, and other multiples on the main shopping street - Victoria Road - include a food-dominant Marks and Spencer. It is Council policy to retain, and where possible increase, the provision of small retail units in the district centre to 'retain the town centre's individual character', but the UDP also recognises the need to be 'adaptable to meet changing needs' and that 'opportunities need to be provided to accommodate modern shopping facilities'.

HEALTH CHECK

Environmental: The vitality of Surbiton as a district centre is apparent from the heavy traffic the centre generates. A recent meeting of the Surbiton Neighbourhood Committee (7 November 2001) included several items relating to environmental matters, including a report on street cleansing, an improved bus/rail interchange at the station and traffic calming schemes, with options for mini roundabouts or raised tables.

Pedestrianisation schemes have been discussed in the past but rejected. Commuter 'rail-heading' is also a problem around the station, and while Controlled Parking Zones will be introduced in the northern part of the Neighbourhood shortly, there has been concern from residents in the Southborough area of displaced commuter traffic. After consultation, there are plans to introduce yellow line restrictions here.

There are several Conservation Areas, including Victoria Road, Ewell Road and Southborough. The UDP states its aims to 'Repair our historic fabric don't replace it!' and 'Design new buildings to be our historic buildings of the future!' The seven development priorities for Surbiton District Centre begin with 'protect and enhance the character and townscape of the centre', and include increasing housing provision while protecting residential amenity, maintaining a wide range of food and comparison shops, and upgrading the quality of shopping to retain a balance with commercial services and restaurant provision.

Although housing densities are being introduced in line with PPG3, there have been objections regarding the designation of Berrylands as a lower density area because it may mean that other areas become over-developed. Two major sites that may become available for development are the former Post Office Sorting Office, and the Station Car Park, owned by Railtrack, for which the council is developing a planning brief. This has the potential for up to 200 residential units

but local councillors are concerned about losing parking provision at the station.

Economic: There is a defined office area between Victoria Road and the station, and although this is considered to be close to capacity, there could still be scope for additional offices as part of mixed development. There are conservation constraints on introducing office use elsewhere. A recent Business Forum meeting attracted nearly 400 local businesses to a Business Breakfast.

Social: House prices are generally high in this area of Kingston, and the MOSAIC plan shows that the population is largely made up of stylish singles with some mortgaged families and some Victorian low status. Hence it is more diverse than surrounding areas such as Long Ditton and Thames Ditton to the south and southwest, which are primarily made up of high income families, and Tolworth to the southeast, which is dominated by suburban semis.

POSSIBLE ACTION

- Improve the interchange facilities at the station (funding applied under London Bus Priority Network Package bid).
- Encourage cycling to the station with improved provision of secure cycle storage, and safe cycle routes to the station. Improve signage around the station and generally in the shopping centre.
- Address commuter parking around the station, including introduction of Controlled Parking Zones, and possible introduction of commuter car parking
- Promote environmental improvements in the centre and in residential streets.
- Widen the mix of cultural and entertainment provision to increase the appeal of the centre, particularly during the evening, and to bolster the existing community facilities at the YMCA on Victoria Road.
- Investigate capacity for mixed-use 'Ped shed' type development near the station and residential conversions over shops.
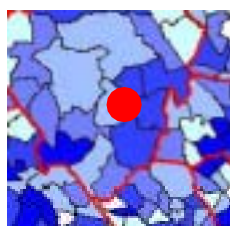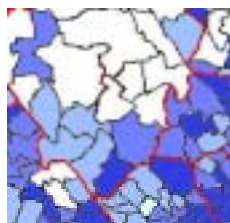
Temple Fortune

Barnet
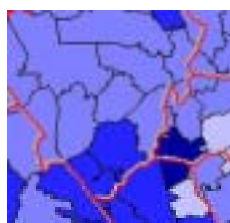
PROFILE

Type: Temple Fortune is the name of the local shopping centre on the Finchley Road, which is flanked on one side by Hampstead Garden Suburb, an Edwardian model settlement, and on the other by interwar semis. It is one of the most prosperous areas in London, and is undergoing pressures as it attracts more people working in the City, with prices becoming out of reach of the families who have traditionally lived in the area.

Evolution: Temple Fortune developed as a residential area when the Northern Line was extended through to Golders Green in 1906. A land swap to protect the extension of Hampstead Heath led to Henrietta Barnett promoting a masterplan drawn up by Parker and Unwin, with the centre designed by Lutyens. Houses were often designed in small groups by leading architects, and initially were occupied by a wide range of people, with some allocated to artisans, for example. After the First World War the land owned by the Suburb Company continued to be developed with gardens front and rear to create 'street pictures'. Elsewhere conventional North London housing was built without a masterplan. There are still extra controls over what can be done in the Suburb, which has provided an inspiration to many subsequent developments, including inter-war London County Council (LCC) estates.
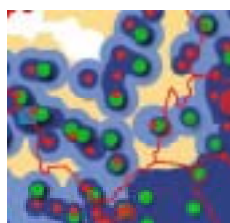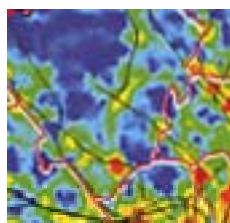
Access: Originally accessed by the Northern Line from the City and Central London, Temple Fortune now lies just off the North Circular and the link road to the M1. As a result many journeys to work are now by car. A Hoppa hail and ride bus provides a popular round trip every 15 minutes linking the suburb with Golders Green. Several buses run down

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Finchley Road on their way into central London, and there are also cross London buses and long distance coaches which run from Golders Green.

Housing: The houses in Hampstead Garden Suburb are nearly all in owner occupation, and in an excellent state of repair. There has been pressure for loft conversions, but the tight control over design has kept home extensions and garage building to the minimum. While there are a significant numbers of blocks of flats in the Suburb these are no longer let out to single professional women. There is a strong local school and the Institute is used for language teaching, creating strong demands for student housing, which is met to some extent in Golders Green.

Shopping: Unlike many local centres, including the original centre at The Market Place, Temple Fortune does relatively well, with a high level of occupancy. It is now anchored by a small Waitrose and a relatively new M&S food store. Brent Cross is close by for comparison shopping. There are relatively few restaurants and pubs, but more than in other centres in Barnet, and a significant number of specialist food and other shops, reflecting local demand. The area has also attracted specialist retailers for the larger units, including a lighting showroom and two golf equipment companies. Space above the shops is largely used as flats.

HEALTH CHECK

Overall Temple Fortune is a good example of a very successful suburb, though one where the quality of life could be threatened by the further growth in car use.

Environmental: The overall quality of life is extremely attractive, with few drawbacks:

- Easy access to Hampstead Heath
- Well cared for pavements and street trees, overlooked by picturesque housing and protected by a Conservation Area
- Pleasant looking local centre with well-

cared for public realm and some attractive improvements e.g. gateway to the suburb.

- Traffic calming to make the road crossing easier, with Finchley Road being a good example
- Restrictions on parking alongside Hampstead Heath deters commuters from parking
- Gardens are well cared for

There are however some weaknesses:

- Relatively few people now walk or cycle except to the shops
- If the size and number of cars grew there would be problems allocating space
- Journey times into London are quite long, and can be made worse by the poor quality of the waiting facilities for buses at Golders Green and irregular services.
- Proposals have been devised for further traffic calming in the Suburb, but little has been done to implement them

Economic: The area supports a lively shopping centre, and many people work part of the time from home; the shops do quite well because cars can often stop for a short while, and people enjoy using the centre:

- Few vacancies now
- Substantial number of independent shops, serving a range of markets eg Iranian food
- Nearby Golders Green has lost some comparison shopping to Brent Cross, but is developing its evening economy role.

Social: There are a large number of associations and the relatively close-knit community includes a long-established Jewish community:

- The centre of the Suburb is a little dead, with two churches, one redundant; the growing Jewish population use synagogues close by.
- There is also land given over to tennis courts that are not all fully utilised
- There has been a major conflict over the

school and adult education sharing the same premises which is being resolved

- There has been a dispute over the idea of making the whole Suburb an Eruv where Orthodox Jews will be freer to move around on a Saturday
- There is a successful Neighbourhood Watch Scheme, and a vigilant community association
- The Local Agenda 21 partnership and Hampstead Garden Suburb Residents' Association are both active.

POTENTIAL ACTION

- There is scope for more infill housing on either side of the station, and on the edge of the Central Square. The SDS could encourage the use of urban design consultants in sensitive situations like this.
- There is potential for a model high density mixed-use scheme near Golders Green Station on both the forecourt, and on part of the underground depot provided London Underground and Barnet can agree a brief. The LDA could promote development on key sites and could issue Supplementary Planning Guidance
- Improved bus links down the Finchley Road, and better interchange facilities, with increased bicycle storage could greatly reduce car use. TfL could make this a demonstration project
- The LA21 partnership is promoting a farmers' market, and the Institute could provide a mechanism for promoting more sustainable forms of behaviour eg. local food. Colleges could play a leading role in promoting sustainable living eg. courses, with Boroughs having the key role through their Community Strategies
- As one of the pioneering suburbs, links could be made with other similar places through Interreg, and a demonstration project devised for the Finchley Road corridor to share good practice eg recycling, late night zones.
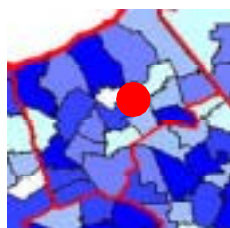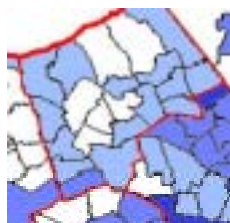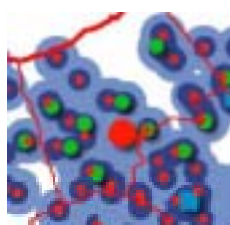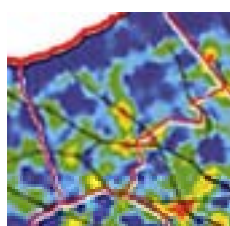
Wealdstone

Harrow
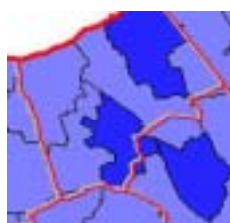
PROFILE

Type: Wealdstone is a traditional 'working class suburb', half a mile from the metropolitan town centre of Harrow in northwest London. Wealdstone was identified in the 1997 Sustainable Residental Quality report as an area with potential for housing development its centre.

Evolution: Wealdstone developed as a railway suburb. It is a district centre comprising of two wards, Wealdstone and Marlborough, with a population of approximately 13,000. It is cut through north west to south east by busy mainline railway lines. Harrow and Wealdstone station, on the southern edge of the shopping area is the north-west terminus of the Bakerloo line and it is the first station out of Euston on mainline services north, so that it has a 15 minute connection to central London.

In 1994 a by-pass was constructed to the east of the station/shopping area and the high street was partly pedestrianised with a one-way traffic system (routinely ignored by car traffic). Wealdstone is the only part of the Borough of Harrow designated for targeted area regeneration. The Wealdstone Steering Group commissioned Greater London Enterprise to produce an Action Plan, some of whose recommendations are currently being implemented. However despite numerous initiatives and programmes both traders and residents feel that insufficient is being done for the area. The most visible sign of investment is the redevelopment of the railway station. This is a listed building and negotiations between English Heritage, the council and Railtrack's architects have only recently been resolved.

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Housing: The housing dates mainly from the late nineteenth century and is mostly modest terraces along fairly wide roads, with very few trees. The 'suburb' of Wealdstone comprises the ward of Wealdstone and the adjacent ward, Marlborough, west of the railway lines, where houses are larger and semi-detached, dating from the 1930s. The only established residents' association is in part of Marlborough ward, a more affluent area around King's Way, Baron's Mead and Princes Road. Housing in Wealdstone itself is the cheapest family housing available in the borough. It is generally too small to be subdivided into flats, though there are some conversions, and is over 80% privately owned with high levels of private-rented accommodation. This is an area where housing stock obsolescence is becoming an issue.

Shopping: Despite an appearance of liveliness on the High Street, traders are generally negative about the current health of the retail centre. This is reflected in Wealdstone's chequered relationship with the supermarket chains. Safeway moved out of an anchor store at the north end of the High Street in 1996 to a larger store in Brent. Asda wanted to develop a 7000m² store on the High Street, which would have involved demolishing half of the existing shops. This was eventually withdrawn when a call-in looked likely. Sainsbury also had a scheme on a key site in the centre although that application has also been withdrawn.

There is currently only a Costcutter in town, and a large Tesco in Harrow. Multiples include Boots and a Woolworth Local, but there is no interest from the sandwich and coffee chains. Cappuccino culture has recently arrived with the opening of an independent café.

The secured 'Shoppers car park' is a low-level multi-storey adjacent to the by-pass, well used but access is not clearly signed. The main shopping street has been well landscaped and currently has a one-way system

for bus traffic. Plans to reinstate two-way bus traffic will require that some of this landscaping be remodelled. A long-term plan to move a school and library into a former-Safeway building with Private Finance Initiative (PFI) funding would reinforce community uses in the shopping centre – they are currently separated by the by-pass.

HEALTH CHECK

Environmental: The introduction of the by-pass has influenced the existing pattern of local road usage. Several residential roads are now used as 'rat runs', while other roads that have been calmed due to heavy traffic are now only lightly trafficked. The housing is of a mixed standard, with pockets that are well-cared for, but often residential street frontages are broken up by small commercial units (typically garages and car repair businesses). Car ownership levels are generally low, and front gardens mostly remain intact (and are too small to accommodate cars off-street). The borough has a gum removal steam cleaner (in operation in Wealdstone on the day of the visit), however levels of graffiti, fly-posting etc are felt to be increasing.

Economic: Wealdstone retains several local manufacturing companies, which employ over 3,000 people, including Kodak, which was located on greenfield land in the early twentieth century and followed other companies including Racal and Windsor and Newton. There are several small industrial parks, some healthier than others, housing a range of SMEs.

The shopping centre has 160 retail units, which, the council believes, may not be sustainable and which has a policy of consolidation in the northern part of the parade where change to residential uses would not be opposed. Wealdstone's location close to Harrow has caused it to lose trade furthering its decline. Lobbying by local retailers was instrumental in the targeted regeneration of Wealdstone in 1998.

Social: There is a high BME population, particularly Asian families; higher than the 40 per cent projected for the whole borough. The MOSAIC shows that it is predominantly Victorian low status, with some suburban semis to the west (in Marlborough). However the low house prices and low levels of amenity mean that turnover rates are quite high as this is seen as an area for first-time buyers. The establishment of Wealdstone Active Community, with support from the council, has been an attempt to engage a diverse and often transient population in regeneration and community issues. Education league table results in the borough are generally high, but are deteriorating in Wealdstone.

POSSIBLE ACTION

- Wealdstone's SRB round 6 bid failed, and funding has been from fragmented funding pots (including street wardens, home zone, etc). Greater coordination is necessary and cross-cutting working could enable themes such as 'liveability' to be encouraged.
- Focus more on the quality and character of the residential streets rather than the shopping centre, which was the focus of the GLE study for the Wealdstone Steering Group
- Investment in the public realm, particularly cleaner streets, would support a sense of confidence by local retailers. Address the feeling of helplessness caused by the supermarkets' decisions to invest and then withdraw.
- The energy of local residents needs to be harnessed. Support a 'pride of place', even amongst transient populations.
- Ensure easier access on foot, by bicycle and by car to shopping streets from surrounding residential area.
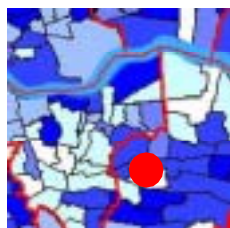
Welling
Bexley
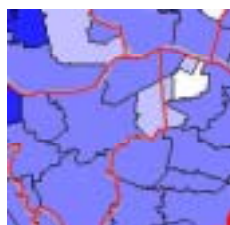
PROFILE

Type: Welling is a classic interwar commuter suburb in South East London, which has been affected by changes in patterns of shopping, and pressures from people moving out of Inner London.

Evolution: The old Roman Road (Watling Street) to Dover runs through Bexley, and the twelfth century St Michael's church now accommodates a Greek Orthodox congregation. There are several landmark Victorian buildings including the Moon and Sixpence public house (built as the Station Hotel in 1897) and Foster's Educational Trust's former school, now converted for residential use. The main expansion in residential population occurred in the inter-war period and many of the estates north of the railway were built to accommodate munitions workers in the now defunct Woolwich Arsenal.
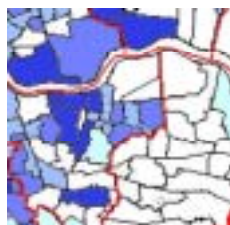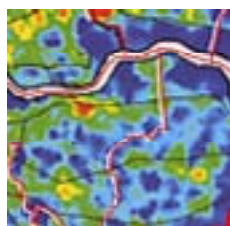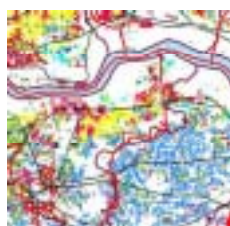
Housing: Housing is predominantly privately-owned and property values have not risen as rapidly as other areas of London. Most of the houses are in similar-looking streets made up of semi-detached housing, many of which have been extended over the adjoining garages so that they now effectively join the neighbouring house to create an appearance of terraces. This has enclosed views along many streets, to the detriment of the streetscape, particularly north of Welling High Street. Car ownership levels are high and front gardens have often been replaced by hard standing for off-street parking space. There are some flats over the shopping parade and little post war development.

Shopping: Welling's shopping parade extended alongside the tramway and almost runs into Bexleyheath, which developed as the main shopping centre in the 1970s. The importance of Welling's shopping centre has been eclipsed somewhat by Bexleyheath during the last three decades, but retains the stronger range of independent businesses, with furniture retailing being especially resilient to competitive pressures. Today both centres have had to face up to competition from Bluewater and the impact of superstores.

The district centre of Welling, identified as a Major Business Centre with 220 businesses in the Bexley UDP, has been the subject of a study leading to some improvements in parking and the environment (URBED 1998 *Welling Town Centre Action Plan*). There is an increasing number of A3 uses, particularly take-aways on the High Street, which can result in high levels of litter in nearby residential streets. Outlying parades such as Falconwood and Wrotham Road have also suffered a loss of trade.

HEALTH CHECK

Overall the original URBED town centre study suggested the centre needed to improve its appearance if it was to compete with other centres. The Welling Partnership, established in 1998 to bring together local councillors, local traders and residents, meets three to four times a year and a promotional web site has been established. Welling shares a Town Centre Manager with other district centres, but being based in Bexleyheath can understandably only devote limited time to Welling.

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Environmental: Cars are used extensively for going to work and shopping, and congestion is a major problem. The North Kent line has had a poor image even though the stock has been improved, and the Safer Stations partnership between Bexley Council and train operator Connex has worked to improve passenger safety. Trains to London are routed to Charing Cross and Victoria, and at most times there are just two trains an hour each way. Parking at the station is very limited. A direct bus link to the Jubilee Line station at North Greenwich has eased access to the West End, and the route also serves the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Bexley has been recognised as a Beacon Council for recycling, and facilities are located in the main car park of the shopping centre.

Economic: Commuting to London is still the most important source of employment although many take advantage of the range of jobs accessible via the M25. One of the great differences from before the war is that many more women now go out to work (the 1991 Census Travel Survey showed that 48% of residents travelled more than 10km to work) , and where both partners work, this can add to the demand for cars. Confidence in the area's economic prospects might be much improved if a decision is made about a possible new road bridge across the Thames at Gallions Reach and Silvertown, a Woolwich Rail Tunnel or another cross-river spur of the Docklands Light Railway.

Social: South East London has suffered from an image of racial conflicts, and concerns about security may have limited house sales and house price growth.

The nearby historic park at Danson, occasionally hosting circuses and festivals, is a major bonus to local social life, and the upgrade of the adjacent football ground of non-League Welling United is imminent, which may broaden its appeal and increase the range of entertainments offered there. There are a dance studio, small gym, bingo hall, library and internet café, and the Crook Log Sports Centre is situated midway between Welling and Bexleyheath, although the two cinemas have long since closed.

POSSIBLE ACTION

☐ The SDS should ensure that no further retail and leisure expansion takes places at out of town locations to help maintain demand in suburban centres.

☐ The GLA could provide help with design advice (possibly with English Heritage) to upgrade the appearance of classic shopping parades.

☐ Studies could be undertaken of how to improve local bus services, and their links with major interchanges, for example Lewisham or the Channel Tunnel Rail Link (CTRL) station.

☐ Studies could be undertaken to promote alternatives to using the car, including greatly increased cycle use and walking.

☐ The Town Centre Partnership could provide a mechanism for developing and disseminating ideas for making Welling more sustainable.

Environmental sustainability

In order to explore the way that sustainability policy might be applied to London's suburbs we have looked at three key issues from the perspective of households: transport and reducing car dependency, energy use, and waste minimisation. There are other important issues that could be considered such as food production and water-use however the aim is to demonstrate an approach which focuses on the root cause of problems rather than to be comprehensive. So, for example, whilst air pollution is a major problem in London fundamentally it will not be addressed without tackling car dependency.

Reducing car-dependency

Carbon dioxide emissions from road based transport are the fastest growing source of greenhouse gas emissions in the UK, and typically account for around 30% of a household's CO_2 emissions. Current levels of congestion in London reflect a situation in which roadspace has already reached capacity, with journey to work times nearly double those for the rest of the country. However despite a combination of gridlock and the highest fuel costs in Europe car use has remained relatively inelastic, suggesting that living and working patterns are such that the car has become fundamental to travel patterns in London's suburbs.

As we described in the last chapter mobility goes to the heart of what a suburb is. Statistics from the National Travel Survey for 1997-99[1] show that outer London may be better than the rest of the South-east but is still overwhelmingly dependant on the car. The car accounts for 72% of distance travelled for outer London residents compared to 54% for inner London residents. Further more only 19% of people working in outer London travel to work by public transport compared to 79% in inner London.

The effects of this can be seen in a suburban borough such as Havering where the Local Transport Plans is assuming traffic grow of 1-2% per year for the next decade[2]. The plan cites a number of reasons for this increase:

☐ An increase in the number of households by 5% between 1981 and 1991
☐ An increasingly mobile workforce - 71,000 people work in the Borough, of which 62% commute by car.
☐ Changes in attitudes – more parents driving

Proportion of journeys by mode by area of residence

	1985/86	1997/99	1985/86	1997/99
Public transport	32%	32%	20%	20%
Car/motorbike	57%	54%	71%	72%
Bicycle	1%	1%	1%	1%
Walking	7%	6%	5%	4%
Other	3%	8%	3%	4%
	100%	100%	100%	100%

Proportion of journeys made by area of residence. Source Transport for London 2000

Comparison of modal transport split for EU Cities

	km/person		Cars/1000	Average
	car	public tran.	population	Journey to work km
London	**4114**	**2047**	**365**	**7.2**
Paris	**3936**	**1763**	**450**	**9.1**
Barcelona	**2165**	**1764**	**410**	**7.4**
Berlin	**3071**	**1736**	**354**	**9.8**

Comparison of modal split for EU cities Source Commission for Integrated Transport.

children to school, more younger drivers, and increasing disposable income.

Yet congestion is already a huge issue for Londoners with average door to door car journey speeds, even in outer London, of less than 10mph. The challenge for London will therefore be to disconnect car use from car ownership. Car ownership is a function of affluence and in London the number of households with one or more cars has risen from 47% to 64% since 1971. These figures are however still comparable with car-ownership levels in other large EU cities examined by the Commission for Integrated Transport [3] (Figure 11) yet in these cities the proportion of journeys by car is considerably less than in London. This is due to a combination of higher densities, excellent integrated public transport, segregated cycle routes and retail policies which limit large out-of-town outlets. These are all issues that are within the remit of the GLA. The problem is that past policies have allowed car-based commercial and retail development to take place along with under-investment in public transport. Car-use in London has therefore become deeply ingrained especially in the suburbs.

We discuss below some of the policy measures that could be used to address this car dependency in the suburbs although, of course many would also be appropriate across London:

Development patterns
'Towards the London Plan', in-line with government policy, already promotes a shift towards less car-dependent development patterns by promoting high-density, mixed use development and discouraging out-of-town, car based schemes. In the suburbs this means concentrating retailing and leisure within existing centres and promoting higher density mixed use development around these local centres and public transport nodes.

Public transport:
Accessibility by public transport has been mapped using Hammersmith and Fulham's PTAL (Public Transport Accessibility Level) methodology [4]. This shows the inaccessibility of much of London's suburbs. In line with the Mayor's Transport Strategy [5], Transport for London are developing a rolling programme of investment in the Underground, Cross Rail and Orbital bus and rail links. This will increase the accessibility of many of the suburbs helping to providing an acceptable alternative to the car. The continental emphasis on trams and the success of Croydon's Tramlink suggest that ''intermediate' light rail schemes such as the proposed West London Transit [6] could also play a signifcant role in achieving modal shift. Tramlink and other high profile schemes such as Manchester's Metrolink have been successful because trams are perceived to be more attractive than buses, with proposed new routes in Manchester already begining to influence patterns of new housing development.

Market mechanisms:
Public Transport Accessibility Level (PTAL) mapping could have a wider application. It is already being used as a spatial planning tool by boroughs such as Hammersmith and Fulham to determine levels of car parking provision. In the future it could also made available for more subtle housing market mechanisms such as the Location Efficient Mortgages being trialled in the US [7].

'Green' Travel Plans:
As mentioned above, four times as many people

travel to work by car in the suburbs than in outer London. Green Travel Plans [8] are becoming more common obligations for employers as part of planning consents, and are increasingly being looked at for schools (which are major generators of car journeys due to concerns about safety and the larger catchment areas for successful schools), and are potentially also applicable to retail parks. Such plans therefore have particular relevance in the suburbs.

Car Clubs:
One of the techniques that has been successfully implemented in continental cities such as Berlin is the car club or car share scheme. This involves a communal car fleet available to members of the club who are charged on a monthly basis based on their use. In Berlin this has provided a cost-effective alternative to car ownership and has been shown to reduce car use by 50% where the alternatives are attractive [9]. Flexibility is key - a variation in the USA is the 'Station Car' [10] which links car clubs to suburban stations allowing people to drive to or from stations, with the parked cars being available to other users during the day or night. UK operator Smart Moves, now running the Edinburgh Car Club, have also been developing services for daytime use by employers as a substitute for company cars. Cycle hire can also be added to the transport pool and has been very successful with rail commuters in Munich where cycles are used for onward journeys at railway stations [11].

Homeworking:
Research in conjunction with Greenwich University on commuting scenarios for London [12] has shown that homeworking could reduce journeys by 25%. This is something being promoted by many large employers as well as through the growth of self-employment. There is limited research relating homeworking trends to London's suburbs [13] but limiting factors could be lack of support networks and facilities. This could be addressed with mixed use development around suburban centres as well as facilities such as community workstations to provide facilities, technical support and meeting space for suburban homeworkers.

Promoting walking:
While only 4% of distance travelled by people in outer London is as pedestrians, 83% of journeys of less than a mile are by foot [14]. An important aspect of promoting walking is therefore the dense, mixed-use walkable neighbourhoods as described above. It is also important to ensure that streets are attractive, well lit and safe and that surface level space is given over to pedestrians on main roads (rather than they being relegated to dark subways or lonely bridges)

Cycles:
Cycling is one of the quickest forms of transport in London if also the most dangerous. Only 1% of the distance travelled by people in London's suburbs is by bike compared to more than 30% in summer in Copenhagen [15]. There is much that can be done to increase the amount of cycling. The cycle network can be expanded and more road and storage space can be given over to cycles, as can be seen in Holland with segregated cycle lanes, cycle storage at stations and retail centres, storage space in flats, along with services such as cycle hire and repair. There has also been a recent growth of interest in Rickshaws or 'Pedicabs' such as those operating out of the Sainsburys in Islington.

Culture Change:
The deeply ingrained patterns of car use will require a culture change in transport planning and patterns of mobility to reverse the situation. Practical awareness raising and attitudinal work are important– so that decision-making can be made based on a users perspective. Techniques such as the 'travel blending' pioneered by consultants Steer Davies Gleave [16] have proved very successful at helping households re-assess their journey patterns . A participatory approach to local transport planning can also ensure a users perspective and help focus resources. Schemes such as car clubs also represent a major culture change for the UK and so successful application will require careful market testing and refining.

Energy Use

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's projected 60-80% cuts in CO_2 emissions required to stabilise global warming imply the need for a fundamental change in the way society uses energy [17]. This could have far reaching effects on the suburbs. The interwar suburban housing stock is amongst the least

thermally energy efficient. It was built without insulation or double glazing and its wide-frontage, semi-detached form has a far greater area of heat-loss wall than the earlier terraces. This has been highlighted by the governments 'affordable warmth' and 'fuel poverty' campaigns – delivered at a local level through grants such as 'Warm Front' and organisations such as Energy Action Grants Agency (EAGA) and Staying Put.

Changes to Part L of the Building Regulations will raise standards for new housing. But this will not address the problem of the existing housing stock – much of which has a SAP rating of less than 50 [18]. Thermal imaging work by boroughs such as Bexley and SAP rating estimates for the Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) [19] have highlighted the extent of heat loss from interwar suburban areas. Boroughs are required by the Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) to deliver savings on 1996 energy use levels of 30% across all stock by 2006. This has been an important impetus for action with leading boroughs such as Woking achieving substantial energy savings due to a rolling programme of home upgrades and CHP technology [20]. In London the greatest success has been achieved by inner boroughs through their investment in council housing and stock transfer, however the average improvement in the efficiency of Londons suburban housing stock was just 6.3% between 1996 and 2001 [21].

The suburbs have found progress more difficult because they have a much higher proportion of private owned and rented accommodation. The best performing suburban boroughs in terms of actual energy savings have been Barnet, Croydon and Hillingdon due to their success in using grant schemes to promoted investment in owner-occupied properties [22]. The main problems are in areas of less affluent owner-occupier and private rented property.

In Germany and Scandinavia this has been addressed through energy labelling and regulations requiring energy audits and basic performance standards before property can be sold or remortgaged [23]. There has also been interest in energy efficient mortgages (from the Co-operative Bank in the UK) but no product is available yet. In both cases the key issue is being able to capitalise the

lower running costs into added resale value.

Such measures however lie outside the remit of the GLA or local authorities and the approach in London so far has been to provide advice and education backed up by modest financial incentives. A number of successful Energy Advice Centres have been established in the suburbs providing home energy audits, contractor recommendations, low interest loans and even renewable energy in the form of solar thermal systems. Croydon's success is due in large part to the Croydon Energy Network which has also been working in Hillingdon [24].

However, with the level of outreach required to reach the suburban housing market new approaches are required, particularly to address efficient lighting and appliances (which in terms of emissions are comparable with thermal loads but have a less direct impact on quality of life). With liberalisation of the energy market the government expected energy service companies to emerge – 'providing a complete energy service ie. combining energy supply with the provision of measures concerned with efficient use' [25]. However the response of the mainstream utilities has been poor.

The Green Communities programme in Canada [26] has shown that an energy services approach combined with awareness raising in local communities can deliver results. Conceived by the Canadian government as not-for-profit companies helping households, neighbourhoods or districts reduce their environmental impact, they can act as one-stop-shops applying the best outreach and marketing techniques. They have been very successful having sold over £200 million worth of environmental products and services.

Practical education and awareness raising are crucial to establishing a culture of energy efficiency. The energy services approach could be linked to participatory awareness raising of the kind used by the UN Environment Programmes 'Eco-teams' approach [27]. Households sign up to be part of a team of other households, and in their teams they share experience of trying to reduce their environmental impact (addressing car use and waste minimisation as well).

Developing more efficient forms of energy supply is important and could form the basis for a local energy services approach. High density mixed use development around local centres are ideal for Combined Heat and Power (CHP) and district energy systems – as has recently been demonstrated by Thameswey Energy Services in Woking Town Centre and Barkantine Power in the Isle of Dogs. Though the development of micro-CHP systems could be more applicable to suburban heartland areas. Boroughs could use the planning system to make presumptions in favour of district energy for new-build and regeneration schemes – as in Southampton. Future proofing of schemes is also important for desirable technologies that may not currently be viable given prevailing market conditions eg high gas prices.

Like CHP, renewable energy is poorly developed in the UK primarily because of the cost. Most projects todate have been led by 'pioneers', and it is likely that attempts to develop renewables in the suburbs will require building on work achieved by:

☐ Companies – Solar Century have established solar PV demonstrations
☐ Demonstration projects – Peabody Trust have demonstrated biomass CHP
☐ Clubs – Solar clubs have formed the basis for training households in DIY installation
☐ Utilities – new 'green' utility Ecotricity is building wind turbines without subsidy
☐ EU funding – support has been secured for a range of demonstration projects
☐ Investment Funds – Triodos Banks' Wind Fund supports independent wind farms

At present solar water heating is the most viable technology that could be installed across lower density areas. Beddington ZED has recently demonstrated the feasibility of biomass fuelled CHP systems. The RENUE (Renewable Energy in the Urban Environment) Centre being established in Merton also provides a useful model – with its focus on 'seeing is believing' reflecting the lack of renewable energy projects in London .

The establishment of the Southwark Energy Agency (SEA) provides a useful local model in seeking to provide an enterprising approach to energy issues and bring in extra resourcing. SEA has provided a focus for a range of energy initiatives cutting across energy efficiency, more efficient supply technology, renewable energy, and transport [28]. Their work has also addressed non-residential energy use – something which is not presently addressed by HECA.

Overall it seems unlikely that the current efforts to improve energy efficiency in the suburbs will come anywhere near the savings necessary to meet the targets required to halt global warming. It is therefore likely that more radical measures will be required in the future. While much of the action required to change attitudes and markets is outside the remit of local authorities or the GLA, it is important that the SDS provide the framework for these more radical measures to take place. The suburbs in particular are likely to be central to this issue containing, as they do, the majority of London's population and some of the most inefficient housing stock.

Waste Minimisation

One of the areas where the early drafts of the SDS do suggest targets is in the proportion of municipal waste recycled in London. There is a growing ecological imperative to reduce the amount of materials used to preserve natural resources, reduce CO_2 emissions and reduced reliance on landfill. This will need to be achieved by reducing the amount of waste generated, re-using products and materials where practical and recycling the remaining materials.

In its Waste Strategy the Government set targets for Local Authorities to recycle or compost at least 25% and 30% of municipal waste by 2005 and 2010 respectively [29]. The GLA have gone further in in claiming that a 60% recycling rate is achievable [30]. This is a particular issue in London because of the dwindling landfill space at a time when household waste may be increasing by 3% annually (though the GLA has questioned this), significant problems with litter and fly-tipping, and household recycling rates in the suburbs currently average only 9.7% [31].

Barnet, Bexley and Kingston have put in place strategies to reach a 25% target which Bexley already

claims to have been reached. Bexley's strategy [32] - for which it has received Beacon Status - consists of a mix of household paper collections with 'bring' sites together with waste minimisation and awareness raising campaigns of the kind used by Going for Green in their national 'Slim Your Bin' campaign. However, Sutton's recent problems with the accuracy of their recycling figure raises a note of caution.

International experience has shown that for medium to low density urban areas multi-material kerbside collections, with source segregation of materials by householders forms an effective basis for recycling rates of 25% and beyond. This approach also forms an effective starting point for developing a culture of waste minimisation. Boroughs in Central and West London have been successful in raising their recycling rates through the establishment of trial kerbside collections – with most contracting to the not-for-profit Ealing Community Transport . Barnet in particular has recently entered into a partnership with ECT and this has required moving away from the traditional approach to waste management contracts.

Recycling rates of over 50% have been claimed in North America and in EU countries where 'green' organic kitchen waste has also been collected. This is a pressing issue because from 2003 an EU Directive will set targets for progressive reduction in co-disposal of biodegradable (organic) and dry household wastes [33]. Linkages can also be made with local retail uses, with Sainsburys supermarkets in the South East trialing the composting of food waste from their stores as a means of reducing their exposure to the landfill tax and to supply farms. URBED have been exploring the potential to combine this with local domestic collections.

London is often associated with large amounts of litter on the streets. Experience from cities such as Toronto suggests that intensive household recycling changes attitudes towards litter. Recycling can form the basis for a culture change in how we perceive waste, creating in-direct cost savings on street cleansing. To capture these benefits Ecologika have recommended that the true costs of waste management should be offset against recycling start-up costs [34].

Resourcing is a key issue. Ecologika Consultants have suggested that kerbside schemes can be devised with very low startup costs [35] – but this requires a careful focus on logistics and a more enterprising approach than has been shown so far by Local Authorities. The government has recently earmarked funding to establish kerbside schemes – primarily to ensure Local Authorities reach the 2005 targets. The GLA is planning to bid for a significant proportion of this money, but in the medium to long-term waste management costs will need to be re-appraised in order to achieve high recycling rates.

Making recycling services cost effective requires effective marketing and efficient logistics, particularly as most of the materials are of low value. Efficient collection methods need to be developed for different housing types – as demonstrated by Islingtons electric Pedestrian Controlled Vehicles. Time and Motion studies showed a pavement vehicle was more efficient for terraced houses than road based vehicles – because parked cars hinder access.

Marketing is essential if recycling services are not to falter because of poor participation rates - though charging for non-participation has been trialled in Brent. However most schemes rely on goodwill. It has been shown that community recycling companies (often with support from the Community Recycling Network) achieve higher participation rates than private sector companies [36]. The time and money invested in literature and outreach is an important part of the equation. Developers and landlords can play a significant role in promoting and incorporating recycling services into housing and workspace. Encouraging waste minimisation and the redesign of items such as packaging could also be encouraged, potentially by working with householders and retailers to increase awareness and examine alternatives.

Whilst our discussion has focussed on households recycling, important because of its role in changing attitudes, the majority of Londons waste is produced by commerce and industry. In this respect waste minimisation clubs such as the Business Eco-Network in Sutton and Croydon [37] have been successful in engaging with business to foster environmental responsibility – particularly where waste creates a visible problem. Other forums such as supply chains - potentially through the Regional

Supply Network - Trade Associations and Business Parks can also form a good starting point.

Recycling has also been promoted as an engine for economic development - important in creating new markets for waste materials. Ecologika highlighted the potential for strong links between economic development and a future waste strategy based on intensive recycling, and the potential to use the planning system to support this process and earmark sites. This has formed the basis for strategies such East London's 'Remade' SRB market development project [38]. At a local level Kerbside schemes also need drop-off and bulking sites to support their logistics.

As we have discussed, waste minimisation and recycling has much less of a suburban slant than energy and mobility. Some of London's suburbs already achieve higher recycling rates than inner London. It is however clear that not even the most successful suburbs are coming close to the proposed target of a 60% recycling rate. If this is to be achieved the best practice starting to be developed in some boroughs will need to be rolled out across greater London.

The Emerging Policy Framework

Our review of the three main policy themes of car dependency, energy use and waste minimisation has revealed the cross-cutting nature of environmental sustainability issues. It is clear from this review, and the results of the survey work in the boroughs that affecting real change will require a policy framework which addresses a number of key policy areas, some of which go beyond the remit of the planning system:

Raising Awareness: In order to change attitudes and lifestyles it is important to raise awareness of the issues. This can be done through campaigns and initiatives of the kind run by Going for Green, though this may simply preach to the converted. Another approach successfully demonstrated by United Nations and Canadian projects involves working directly with households to improve their environmental performance. Local environmental initiatives involving business and the community

can also help make the link between global and local issues. Suttons Centre for Environmental Initiatives is an excellent example, having led to the establishment of the groundbreaking Bioregional Development Group [39] .

Changing Practices: Hall and Landry have highlighted the importance of changing current practices [40]. This can be achieved by raising aware ness, promoting Best Practice and learning from practitioners, but also through regulation and incentives to influence practices. Regulation can take the form of taxes and quota's and can be supported by incentives in the form of tax breaks, and access to finance and grants. It is also possible to benchmark current practices against what can be achieved in order to illustrate how much progress needs to be made.

Demonstration Projects: There is a great deal that can be done to further the debate and raise awareness through the implementing practical projects such as Beddington ZED. There is a steep learning curve associated with making such projects happen, and there is no substitute for 'learning from doing'. This is also important because there are a limited amount of tangible London based examples, with inspiration usually being drawn from the EU or the USA. There also needs to be support for a wide range of 'eco-pioneer' companies and organisations such as ZERO (a London based work-bicycle operator) who are trying to make things happen.

Service delivery: The development of services such as CHP, recycling systems, and car clubs can make improved environmental performance more convenient and accessible. Successful services have generally been supported by partnerships between Local Authorities, Companies and 'eco-pioneers'. It has also been shown by the community recycling sector that service delivery can effectively be combined with community development work and awareness raising.

Future Visioning: It is important to envisage future scenarios for tackling environmental sustainability in order to anticipate the societal changes that may need to take place, and put in place long-term

policies and strategies. Organisations such as the Sustainable London Trust have been leading the way, and research work which we have already highlighted by the (former) London Research Centre and Ecologika illustrate the kind of approach that is needed.

Local Planning: As research for the LGA by CAG has shown [41] the scope for implementing sustainability through the planning system is limited. However the report does suggest that in the imposition of conditions, in the refusal of consent, consideration of planning gain, and through enforcement action it is possible for planners to contribute towards more sustainable patterns of settlement. Work in authorities like Bristol has also shown how authorities can go beyond their statutory powers by consent with larger developers.

Targets and Indicators: HECA and recycling demonstrate the importance of establishing targets in order to monitor progress. However problems can arise if they are not complimented by support and resourcing so as to ensure efforts are not frustrated. Indicators are the source of much current debate, particularly regarding the methodology for choosing them and the sheer number that are being generated – this can potentially hold back progress where there is limited experience of implementation, and where reporting time could be better spent focussing on action.

Market Transformation: New products and services designed to deliver improved environmental sustainability will be need to be accepted by an increasingly discerning public used to choice and convenience. New products and services may therefore need a competitive edge and/or deliver real or perceived benefits to consumers. Measures such as energy labelling to illustrate potential cost savings are a good example. Issues such as food and recycling raise wider market development and supply chain issues.

Economic Benefit: There is significant potential for London to gain competitive advantage by pursuing radical environmental sustainability measures. The growth potential of 'green' industry has been linked to a 'second industrial revolution' and the early signs from countries such as USAand Germany are encouraging. East London's 'Re made' recycling market development initiative and Suttons Bioregional Development Group are good London based examples.

Settlement patterns: This is the extent to which London's suburbs can move towards a more sustainable pattern of settlement. There is remarkable agreement about what such a pattern would look like. The Urban Task Force, the TCPA, the Urban Village Forum and the American New Urbanists all agree on the idea of a polycentric model consisting of a network of high-accessibility, walkable, dense centres served by good public transport and providing a full range of local facilities. This pattern can be seen in many North European cities. Because of its dense public transport network and heritage of 'engulfed villages' London is better placed than most large cities.

Conclusion

The three environmental issues described in this chapter are just some of the issues facing London's suburbs. However it is clear from these examples that the challenges posed by environmental issues are potentially huge and their implications far-reaching for the suburbs. It is possible that measures to reduce car use and to penalize energy inefficient housing could harm the suburbs and add to the pressures described in the previous chapter. However in other areas such as recycling it is possible that the suburbs are already leaders. The suburbs must make huge progress if London is to achieve the GLA's stated objective of being an 'exemplary sustainable world class city'.

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Proposed Draft SDS Policies

Main policies

1. Suburban policies
The Mayor will work with the GLA, the LDA, TfL and the Boroughs to promote improvements to London's suburban areas. These will apply to all suburban areas including those at threat of decline and those that are thriving. The aim of these policies will be to support economic development, improved environmental sustainability, and the social diversity and cohesion of London's suburbs.

2. Spatial strategy for suburbs:
The spatial strategy for the suburbs will be based on a four level approach that should be defined by boroughs in their UDPs:

☐ **Suburban centres:** District and local centres that are the focus for retail, leisure and commercial activities and that are significant public transport nodes (normally with an underground or rail station).

☐ **Ped Sheds:** The area around each suburban centre that is to be a priority area for higher-density and mixed-use developments. (This draws upon the previous work on Sustainable Residential Quality).

☐ **Suburban heartland:** The residential areas outside the neighbourhoods will be subject to a specific set of policies and guidance to improve their public realm, environmental sustainability and quality of life.

☐ **Suburban employment sites:** centres and neighbourhoods are priority areas for commercial and retail uses. Employment generating uses and Strategic Employment Locations in suburban heartlands will be subject to policies and guidance to reduce car dependency and ensure high accessibility.

The definition of these areas will need to be determined by each Borough based on the individual characteristics and importance of each suburban centre and on the basis of guidance to be published by the GLA. The neighbourhood areas will be defined by a maximum walk-in distance of 800m and public transport access will to these areas will be given priority in Local Transport Plans. These UDP designations are supported by a framework of policies covering housing, commerce, retail and leisure.

3. New Suburban centres and neighbourhoods:
In areas where major development is planned or where suburban neighbourhoods are widely spaced, boroughs should consider establishing new suburban centres and neighbourhoods linked to new transport infrastructure such as on the Greenwich peninsular.

4. Supplementary Planning Guidance:
The Mayor will publish Supplementary Planning Guidance or Best Practice Guidance which will include sections tailored to guide development policies in Suburban Centres, Suburban Neighbourhoods, Suburban Heartlands and Suburban Employment Sites. This SPG will cover design, planning policy, public realm and parking standards. The aim will be to increase the density, accessibility and mixed-use nature of development within the Suburban areas.

5. Toolkit:

The Mayor will publish a toolkit of policies to promote the social, economic and environmental sustainability of suburban areas. For different types of suburb this will cover measures:

- ❑   Reinforcing the role of local centres
- ❑   Promoting sustainable development patterns
- ❑   Improving the existing housing stock
- ❑   Reducing car-dependency
- ❑   Improving environmental sustainability
- ❑   Protecting and promoting suburban employment
- ❑   Improving the quality of design and the public realm

The toolkit will be implemented through a range of delivery mechanisms including:

- ❑   UDP's
- ❑   Neighbourhood-based proposals - see Chapter 7
- ❑   Local Strategic Partnerships
- ❑   Town Centre Management
- ❑   Public and private sector investment
- ❑   Demonstration projects (see below)

6. Demonstration Projects:

The Mayor in partnership with other EU states will identify and initiate demonstration projects to show how the suburban policy toolkit can be made to work. Demonstration projects will bring together a range of partners including specific boroughs, TfL, and the LDA. Other public and private sector organisations will be involved as appropriate to the successful demonstration of the toolkit.

Detailed policies

Reinforcing the role of local centres

Boroughs will use local plan designations to strengthen and support suburban centres by ensuring a critical mass of activities and mix of different uses. This should be supported by the development of partnerships to manage town centres and by undertaking periodic health checks in collaboration with local businesses, residents and town centre users. The Boroughs together with their Town Centre partnerships and other relevant agencies should endeavour to support and encourage a diversity of local businesses and retailers (with reference to the SDS Policy on Local Distinctiveness).

The Boroughs policies should make a presumption against major out-of-centre retail and leisure activity. Boroughs will work to ensure that local communities have adequate provision for a range of basic local services - including health, leisure, education and retail. Boroughs will work with local communities and relevant organisations to identify shortfalls in the quality and the 'completeness' of the range of facilities and services available in centres and neighborhoods. Priority will be given to locating facilities in centres and neighbourhoods where there is good access, and where they will contribute to the mix of uses.

Promoting sustainable development patterns:

Design and density standards for new-build housing are to be set out in Supplementary Planning Guidance on suburban design to be published by the Mayor. Mixing of uses and re-designation of non-residential properties are encouraged as a means of increasing densities and supporting the viability of local centres – provided that they do not conflict. Boroughs should use affordable housing targets and on-site contributions to ensure the development of mixed and balanced communities. Sub-division of existing residential properties should be encouraged as a means of raising densities.

Improving the existing housing stock

the Mayor will work with the Boroughs to raise the energy efficiency of the suburban housing stock and non-residential buildings. For housing this will be achieved through Building Control, the current HECA framework, and with reference to the SPG on Design and the Suburban Toolkit. The SPG and the Toolkit will include guidance on low energy design for new and existing properties, specific examples of improvement strategies for different housing typologies, and provision of a voluntary performance rating system for existing housing stock. The Boroughs will work together to identify and share best practice in raising standards. To support this task boroughs are encouraged to establish dedicated Energy Agencies whose aim will be to improve energy efficiency and transform the energy supply (see below).

Reducing Car Dependency

In recognition of the need to reduce the high level of car dependency of London's suburbs, boroughs should ensure that Local Transport Plans target investment and improvements at suburban centres and neighbourhoods. The main aim will be to improve accessibility in-line with the area designations. This will include high levels of bus accessibility into suburban centres, improving services and interchanges, improving ticketing and information systems, as well as public realm and roadspace treatment designed to ensure cycling and walking are safe and practical. These measures will be supported by appropriate parking standards based on the four area designations. Local employers will be required to work with the Boroughs to develop 'green' travel plans.

The mayor will work with boroughs to earmark investment with a view to increasing the accessibility of suburban centres and neighbourhoods by public transport. This will be achieved by improving the safety, quality and frequency of services to the Suburban Neighbourhoods in order to increase passenger numbers. Cross linkages such as orbital routes will also be examined in order to improve services between suburban centres and between centres and employment locations. The GLA will establish a common methodology which Boroughs will use to assess and compare levels of accessibility to suburban centres.

Boroughs should revise parking standards in line with guidance set out for the four-area designations (with the most stringent parking standards in Suburban Centres and Neighbourhoods). Controlled Parking Zones will be used in conjunction with public realm treatment designed to give priority to cyclists and pedestrians. They should also be used to designate space within these areas for shared vehicles forming part of Car Clubs.

Improving environmental sustainability

The Mayor will work with the Boroughs to promote and examine the potential for more efficient and renewable forms of energy supply. The Boroughs will promote and examine the potential for local centre and neighbourhood district energy systems using CHP technology. Boroughs will explore use of the planning system to make presumptions in favour of district energy for new-build developments, large-scale redevelopment's and area regeneration schemes. Where this is not currently viable the design of uses in local centres and neighbourhoods should consider future connection to a district energy supply. The Mayor will work with the Boroughs to explore the potential for increasing renewable energy supplies.

The Mayor will work with the Boroughs to raise household recycling rates in suburban areas. The main mechanism for achieving this will be through the establishment of multi-material recycling services. The boroughs will consider local housing typologies and the social mix when developing recycling services and accompanying social marketing for each suburban area. The Boroughs will work together to identify and share best practice in raising recycling rates and reducing waste arisings. Boroughs will establish local waste minimisation clubs to encourage local retail, commerce and industry to reduce waste arisings and recycle more. Boroughs will work with relevant agencies to promote and support the development of re-use and recycling based industry with regard to the Supplementary Planning Guidance on Waste.

Protecting and promoting suburban employment

Boroughs will use the UDP to promote and support suburban employment and reduce car dependency for journeys between the workplace and home. This will be achieved through mixing of uses in suburban centres and neighbourhoods, the provision of workspace and live/work opportunities in suburban centres and neighbourhoods, and the development of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) infrastructure to support home-working and distributed work patterns.

Strategic Employment Locations in suburban areas will be considered for residential development if they are within suburban centres or neighbourhoods, have been vacant for at least five years and have been appropriately marketed during that period. The reallocation of employment locations to housing in suburban heartland areas may be considered if it

forms part of proposals for a new Ped Shed, in which case, mixed-use development which responds to affordable housing targets, design requirements (subject to the Design SPG), and parking policies would be appropriate.

Improving the quality of design and the public realm: The Mayor will work with the Boroughs to improve the quality of the public realm throughout the suburbs, with reference to the Public Realm Strategy for London, and to policies to increase the potential for walking and cycling (to be covered by suburban SPG). The Mayor will work with the Boroughs to improve the quality of open space, and local communities' access to open space. Boroughs will work at a local level to develop initiatives that foster civic pride and ensure local ownership of improvements to the public realm.