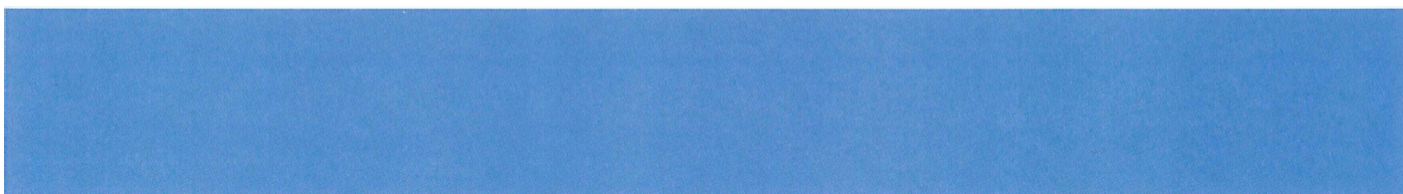


## **Semi-Detached: Reconnecting London's Suburbs**

June 2007



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## Chairman's foreword



Most Londoners, from Hampton Wick to Hackney Wick, when asked, would say that they live in their own distinctly local community. Places in their own right, which just happen to be located inside the boundary of something called "Greater London".

The suburbs reflect the history of London. They remind us that while many well-established towns and villages have been absorbed by London they offered a welcome break from the hustle and bustle, the noise and the dirt and the cramped greyness of much of city life.

London is distinct from the other great European cities such as Paris, Madrid or Berlin, because they are densely occupied, and more obviously "planned". Perhaps the major difference is that enduring symbol of suburban life and British icon - the semi-detached house with front and back garden. And that semi was usually within walking distance of the local shopping parade from which most of the daily necessities could be bought. Nearby would be jobs, social, spiritual and leisure facilities, which created a shared community rather than just a shared location.

But the suburbs have been neglected and many of them are showing signs of stress. They are threatened by a loss of local amenities, rising congestion, ever increasing house prices, fewer local jobs and a decline in the quality of the environment and the public realm. There has been a retreat from community provision to individual provision. Google, YouTube and Playstation have provided a library, playing field and meeting place in every living room.

At a time when sustainability is high on everyone's agenda it seems strange that the suburb's potential to underpin community – a network of local and inter connected places where people live, work, shop and take their leisure – may be jeopardised.

This report looks forward - towards unlocking the suburb's potential to contribute to London's future. We should be looking at ways to reconnect homes with local jobs and communities with community assets. The stereotype of the commuter need not be the future. There must be a choice of work life balance within London.

I very much hope that this report will reinvigorate the debate about the role and function of the suburb in 21st century London and will demonstrate that there is more to the capital than the central zone. That the suburbs can be more than dormitories to feed the Great Wen.

Being semi-detached and suburban is to contribute to the most diverse city in the world.

**Tony Arbour AM**

Chairman of the Planning and Spatial Development Committee  
June 2007





## London's suburbs – executive summary

London is a “City of Villages”. It contains nearly 200 district centres and 1300 neighbourhood centres, each with their own identity and character, which grew up around, what was at the time, an advanced suburban transit system of trams, underground and suburban railways.

Two thirds of Londoners live in suburbs and while the more urban parts of London have been subject to concentrated efforts to revive, regenerate and rejuvenate them, the suburbs have been thought to be relatively stable and in need of little attention.

But the suburbs are facing significant challenges including the closure of local shops, the loss of local jobs which means more commuting, often by car, a shortage of larger homes with gardens and a deterioration of what once was an large part of London with open spaces and a clean safe environment. The suburbs can no longer be seen just as a comfortable backdrop to the life of the city.

Many suburbs are less sustainable now than when they were first built.

The London Plan, which is currently being revised, sees the centre as being the place where jobs will increase whilst there is a forecast loss of employment to outer London. At the same time, town centres beyond the M25 are also providing a draw for commuting.

This report assesses the London Plan's policies for the suburbs and also looks at what else needs to be done by the boroughs and suburban Londoners themselves to ensure their parts of the city are more sustainable.

Suburban London must avoid becoming just a series of dormitories – so it needs to retain a healthy mix of housing, local employment, shops and other services that can be accessed in ways that are not always by car.

Local jobs need to be protected and retained – there needs to be new thinking about what suburban London can offer – new technology could be exploited to encourage home-work centres in suburban district centres – places for people to have a cheap, flexible base and not have to commute for one or two days a week. Pressures on employment land must be carefully monitored. Once lost to other uses such as housing, it will be difficult to find accommodation for local employment when the forecast increases in suburban employment take place.

The Mayor has decided that future housing growth should be largely contained within the city's existing boundaries and has set ambitious targets for each borough to increase its housing stock over the next ten years. 47 per cent of all new housing in London will be built in the suburbs in the period up to 2016.

The issue of housing density will be crucial for the suburbs to both take their share of new housing but at the same time retaining the space and environmental factors which make them attractive to those who live in there.

There is some question about whether the higher suburban densities will allow for larger family homes, which have been traditionally provided in low-density suburban areas.

Already there are examples of successful higher density suburban housing schemes in London and much can be learned from places in Dutch and German cities. But the boroughs must be vigilant if they are to ensure that the right type of housing is encouraged and the Mayor must monitor developments and their cumulative effects to ensure that the density of new housing is not set too high for suburban areas and care must be taken to see that it maintains the local character..

Suburban transport is another major challenge. Traffic is predicted to rise by 14 per cent over the next ten years. And the forecast growth in the number of jobs in central and inner east London, Canary Wharf and the Thames Gateway will mean commuting from the suburbs will increase.

Public transport schemes such as new bus transits, tram extensions and better orbital train services are slowly coming off the drawing board and nearer to becoming reality. Higher densities of housing and jobs around suburban interchanges may help revive suburban areas and build the case for more transport investment in these areas. Equally transport investment has been the catalyst for revival.

One of the central attractions of the suburbs, when they were first developed, was the access to greater amounts of space in a quieter and safer environment. There are distinct problems with many of the suburbs that are suffering from neglect and underinvestment.

Over 1,000 hectares of green space has been lost since 1994. Up to 2,000 London street trees have been given the chop in the past five years. Other reports have identified the loss of playing fields and an area 22 times the size of Hyde park has already been at least partially paved over in London as a result of front gardens being turned from grass to concrete

Suburban London needs to retain elements of the environment that attracted people to it in the first place – so there must be larger houses that are better designed, with open spaces and a clean safe environment. We need to take more care of the quality of both the public and private realm in suburbia.

We need to start very important conversation that needs to occupy key decision-makers in the capital and residents in suburban communities over the coming years - a debate on what is the future of suburbia in 21st century London.

This debate must be about ways to invigorate the suburbs and to make them sustainable; to reconnect homes, jobs and community assets; to improve the quality of life and reduce the environmental impact of the reliance on the car.

Most Londoners are suburban, their homes should be in places where there is a sense of community.

# 1 Introduction - London's suburbs

- 1.1 London is a world city. It is Europe's financial capital and one of the world's great economic centres. London is the largest city in the European Union and the most culturally diverse in the world. It has grown at a rapid pace in the last fifteen years and will continue to do so in the future. It is being aggressively promoted, and internationally recognised, as "urban".
- 1.2 But despite this focus on the city, suburbia is still Britain's cultural default mode.<sup>1</sup> The suburbs are home to 86 per cent of England's population and even two thirds of Londoners live in them.
- 1.3 While "the city" has been treated to an urban renaissance, urban centres have been revitalised and major areas of deprivation regenerated, the suburbs have had to be content with being parodied in endless TV sitcoms and being gently mocked in John Betjeman's poems. Indeed the word "suburban", from its Latin root, implies some kind of subordinate role to "the city". And through all this, it has been convenient to assume that suburban areas are stable and need little attention.
- 1.4 Indeed, for many years London's suburbs have been seen as a comfortable backdrop to the life of the city, but many residents and commentators are concerned that the suburbs are ill-equipped to face the challenges of changing patterns of work, shopping, leisure and travel. Suburbs are less sustainable than when they were first built. They are becoming dormitories dependent on the private car.
- 1.5 Suburbia has now, uncharacteristically perhaps, forcefully pushed itself forward as a serious issue for policy makers.
- 1.6 The Mayor too has recognised that these areas face significant challenges, which may, if not addressed, lead to a decline in the quality of life in the suburbs. There are now specifically "suburban" policies to meet these challenges in the currently proposed revisions to the London Plan.
- 1.7 But, the London Plan sees the centre as being the place where jobs will increase whilst there is a forecast loss of employment in the suburbs. At the same time, town centres beyond the M25 are also providing a draw for commuting as their employment opportunities increase.
- 1.8 Over the last decade much has been written about the challenges and threats faced by the suburbs. Studies have looked at ways of improving their sustainability and guidance has been produced to steer their development and, in some instances, protection.
- 1.9 Is the London Plan sufficiently robust to deal with the issues? Has previously published "best practice" been complemented by these policies?

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<sup>1</sup> Beyond City Living: Remaking the Inner Suburbs, Max Nathan Rachael Unsworth, Built Environment 2006

- 1.10 Our original intention for this report was to look at the issues facing the suburbs and whether the London Plan's proposals provide the right kind of support to ensure London's suburbs can meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The Mayor has recently published a report that addresses the concerns that the Assembly, and others, have raised with respect to the Plan and its policies for the suburbs.<sup>2</sup> That report concluded, "There is no evidence of an alternative strategy that is both coherent across all sectors and realistic about powers and resources." This will be tested at the London Plan's Examination in Public.
- 1.11 So, this report, while it assesses the London Plan's policies for the suburbs, also looks at what else needs to be done by the boroughs and suburban Londoners themselves to ensure their parts of the city are more sustainable.
- 1.12 We want to look forward, at ways to invigorate the suburbs and to make them sustainable; to reconnect homes, jobs and community assets; to improve the quality of life and reduce the environmental impact of the reliance on the car.
- 1.13 It aims to inform the imminent discussions around the alterations to the London Plan but, more importantly it aims to start a much more important conversation that needs to occupy key decision-makers in the capital over the coming years - a debate on what is the future of suburbia in 21<sup>st</sup> century London.

### **A note on our consultant's report**

We commissioned consultants to synthesise a host of research reports, as well as conduct conversations with a range of experts in different parts of London on the challenges facing the suburbs. Their report "London's suburbs – unlocking their potential"<sup>3</sup> has been published to accompany our Committee report.

We make a number of references to it here, and while the recommendations contained within the consultant's report may not always accord with the Committee's views, it is a useful and comprehensive summation of the suburban dilemma.

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<sup>2</sup> Outer London – Issues for the London Plan, May 2007

<sup>3</sup> London's suburbs – unlocking their potential. Potts, Falk and Kochan, 2007

## 2. Defining suburbia

- 2.1 *"Everyone has an idea of the suburb, can recognise and feel his or her version of the thing. At that point unanimity ends. The suburb has meant different things to different people. Refuge for the riffraff beyond the confines of the ancient or medieval city; haven for the family, idyll of comfort, safety, ordinariness and respectability; picturesque medley of half-grasped building styles and over-foliaged gardens; place and space without definition or feeling sandwiched between the sincerity of the countryside and the vitality of the city; focus for the independent and private way most people now live and want to live."*<sup>4</sup>
- 2.2 Can these "ideas" of suburbia be made more distinct? One way of defining the suburbs is to simply say that they are outer London – an area that makes up about 90 per cent in land mass and houses and about 61 per cent of its population. But this is too vague a concept because outer London contains some centres with an "urban" feel like Croydon, Barking, Brent and Greenwich. Equally, inner London boroughs still contain areas with a "village" feel like Dulwich and Highgate.
- 2.3 The term suburb implies a type of development as well as simply being a non-central urban location. They include a variety of building types, uses and social classes.<sup>5</sup> But the predominant character is frequently of low-rise, relatively low-density housing and, increasingly rarely, industrial areas, laced with local centres.
- 2.4 London is a "City of Villages". It contains nearly 200 district centres and 1300 neighbourhood centres, each with their own identity and character, which grew up around, what was at the time, an advanced suburban transit system of trams, underground and suburban railways.
- 2.5 In London, as elsewhere, suburbs emerged in stages:<sup>6</sup>
- Pre 1840 the first true suburbs such as Clapham and Regents Park developed. These predated public transport and were largely only accessible to those affluent enough to travel by private carriage.
  - Between 1840 and 1914 the first public transport suburbs developed as the Metropolitan and District lines were opened, the railways expanded following the Cheap Trains Act of 1883 and tram services became common. Most of these suburbs were terraced houses around stations in areas such as Peckham, Walthamstow and Kilburn. This period also saw the development of garden city estates such as Hampstead Garden Suburb with semi-detached houses and short terraces with gardens. Muswell Hill and Ealing are also examples of these "greener" environments.

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<sup>4</sup> London's Suburbs, Andrew Saint (Editor), Merrell Publishers Ltd. 1999

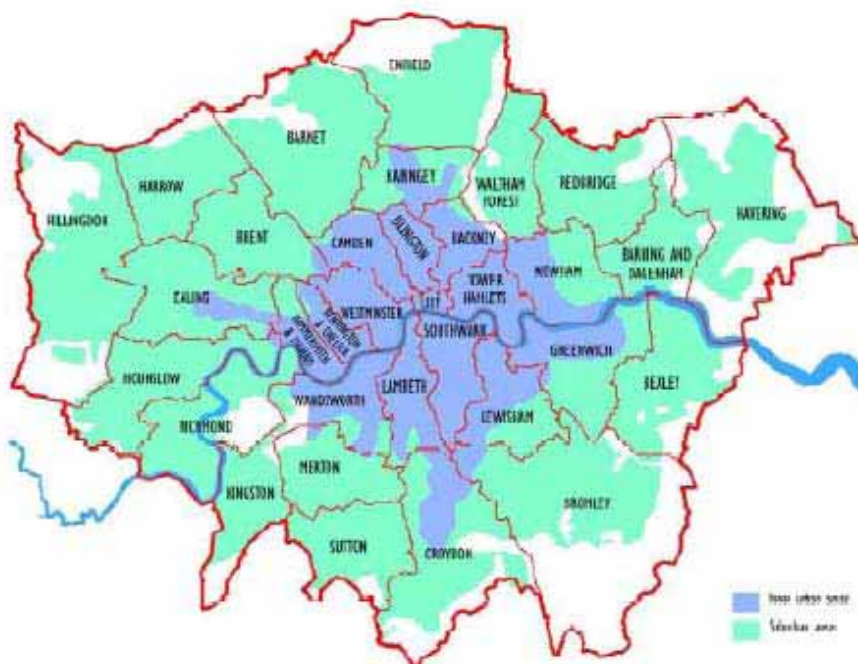
<sup>5</sup> The suburbs all include diverse groups such as "Affluent Greys, Flourishing Families, Prosperous Professionals, Aspiring Singles, Starting Out, Secure Families, Settled Suburbia, Prudent Pensioners, Blue Collar Roots, Struggling Families. CACI - ACORN categorises households using all 1.9 million UK postcodes, which have been described using over 125 demographic statistics within the UK, and 287 lifestyle variables, <http://www.caci.co.uk/acorn/acornmap.asp>

<sup>6</sup> A City of Villages, URBED 2002 for the GLA

- The inter-war period saw a rapid expansion of the Underground system – classical “Metroland”. New arterial roads made even more cheap building land accessible. More than two-thirds of the suburbs were built during this period and contain a wide variety of building types that were aimed at different social classes; large London County Council estates such as Becontree; blue collar private suburbs around the industrial areas of the North Circular and the middle-class residential developments in areas such as Finchley or Hayes.
- After the Second World War 31,000 London County Council properties were built in “out-county” estates such as Harold Hill and in the first of the New Towns. Since the 1950s new private housing concentrated on filling the gaps between inter-war suburbs – many of which relied on the private car for access. The outward spread of the suburbs was contained by imposition of the green belt, but they now extend beyond Greater London’s boundary to places like Virginia Water in Surrey or High Wycombe in Buckinghamshire.

2.6 In its various work in this area the Urban and Economic Development Group (URBED) has suggested the suburbs can be narrowed to two basic typologies: older, often denser and mainly inner London suburbs extending further along some railway corridors, for example up the Lea valley and east along the Thames, and largely lower density suburbs in outer London, some of which have spread out from formerly free-standing towns with distinct centres, that are characterised by lower densities and green spaces.

2.7 For want of a better definition the focus here is 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 in the map below. They cover two 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.



Source: A City of Villages, URBED 2002 for the GLA

- 2.8 So, the “modern” London suburb has a history of more than 150 years and those earlier ones are now more likely to fit our perception of inner London. Yesterday’s suburb has become today’s inner London. What then is the future of today’s suburb, or even tomorrow’s suburb?
- 2.9 Suburbs are not the unchanging, homogenous parts of London that are not “urban”. Instead, they are a series of unique areas with their own form, built for a particular function and are evolving constantly.
- 2.10 There is one common thread that does unite these areas however. Suburbs were, in the main, created in large part by the availability of land and cheap mass transport. They are now facing the challenges caused by the scarcity of land and cheap private transport in the form of the car.



### 3 Sustainable suburbia? - challenges & the London Plan

- 3.1 *"Child of the first war, forgotten by the second, we called you Metroland. We laid our schemes, lured by the lush brochure, down by-ways beckoned, to build at last the cottage of our dreams, a city clerk turned countryman again, and linked to the metropolis by train.*
- 3.2 *Why not, said a clever member of the board, why not buy these orchards and farms as we go along, turn out the cattle, and fill the meadowland with houses.*
- 3.3 *You would have a modern home of quality and distinction. You might even buy an old one if there was one left. And over these mild, home county acres, soon there will be estate agent, coal merchant, post office, shops, and rows of neat dwellings; all within easy reach of charming countryside. Bucks, Herts and Middlesex yielded to Metroland, and city men for breakfast on the fast train to London town."*<sup>7</sup>
- 3.4 Dreams of a new life away from the cramped spaces, noise and bustle of the city led many hundreds of thousands of Londoners to occupy new space that was opened up beyond the city boundary. But as we described earlier, London caught up with the houses in the orchards and farms, and these cottages in the country became London again. And now they are within the boundaries covered by the London Plan.
- 3.5 The Mayor's London Plan starts from the vision of an exemplary sustainable world city, one based on the principles of strong economic growth, social inclusion and fundamental improvements in London's environment and use of resources.
- 3.6 To achieve this vision, an integrated approach to the development of all parts of London will be crucial, and the suburbs – as the major focus for residential living, with related services and employment – have a central part to play.<sup>8</sup>
- 3.7 The Mayor has already published some Best Practice Guidance (BPG) on sustainable suburbs – "Tomorrow's Suburbs: Tools for making London more sustainable".<sup>9</sup> This publication, prepared in conjunction with URBED identified the key challenges for the suburbs.
- 3.8 We accept these as an appropriate description of the challenges faced by the suburbs and we analyse them further in the report. These challenges are:

#### **Reinforcing the role of local centres**

- 3.9 Although London's suburbs are primarily residential areas, one of their important features is that they include a large number of local centres of retail and employment. Indeed local centres are at the heart of the suburbs. But many suburban shopping centres are failing, and can never expect to compete

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<sup>7</sup> "Metroland" television script presented by John Betjeman (BBC, 1973)

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.london.gov.uk/mayor/strategies/sds/toolkit/docs/suburbs.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.london.gov.uk/mayor/strategies/sds/toolkit/docs/suburbs.pdf>

again on equal terms with out of town or larger centres that are now far more accessible to a car-driving public

- 3.10 There is a tendency for new communities to function largely as dormitories, unlike the classic suburbs of the past, which included churches, shops, pubs and pleasant walks to the railway station. This reduces their appeal to many people, and creates places with high levels of resident turnover.

### **Making new developments sustainable**

- 3.11 The concept of sustainable development runs throughout the London Plan. If resources are not to be wasted, new developments must be designed to last for many years. They must be capable of meeting changing requirements. They need to use scarce resources efficiently, including land, energy and water. They need to be inclusive, accessible to all and well connected to existing residential areas. They should be well served by public transport, and any additional needs for local infrastructure (e.g. schools, health centres, etc.) should be planned for.

### **Promoting alternatives to travel by car**

- 3.12 As a result of both the dispersal of retailing and leisure, and various forms of employment, often to out-of-town locations, which is enabled by the growth of car ownership, patterns of movement are changing dramatically. As more people want to move orbitally and are prepared to drive as far to work as time allows, congestion is escalating. Yet in suburbs there is often neither the road space to segregate different forms of transport, nor the densities to support a high quality public transport service.
- 3.13 Tackling the effects of the growth of car use is perhaps one of the greatest challenges. This can only be addressed in the long term context of improved provision of attractive public transport alternatives which facilitate orbital movement through the suburbs.

### **Protecting and promoting suburban employment**

- 3.14 Though jobs are forecast to grow fastest in the centre of London, URBED claims that there is a much greater diversity of employment to be found on the periphery, much of which is threatened by rising land values from pressure for housing development. It is argued that small enterprises find it harder and harder to obtain affordable space in the locations closest to where the new entrepreneurs are likely to live.
- 3.15 An important challenge for the London Plan is to ensure that there is the right mix of housing, jobs and services available to encourage people to live and work locally in view of the sustainability gains this brings. But pressure on land from housing may reduce the number of sites previously occupied by employment uses. Once the land has been changed to housing use it will be difficult to find accommodation for local jobs.

### **Improving design and the public realm**

- 3.16 URBED argues that despite efforts by bodies like the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) and English Heritage, and the government's Cleaner Safer Greener programme, the quality of the suburban

townscape is deteriorating, partly because of the difficulties in managing and funding local improvements, but also because of lack of controls over the private realm.

- 3.17 One of the central attractions of the suburbs, when they were first developed, was the access to greater amounts of space in a quieter and safer environment. There are distinct problems with many of the suburbs that are suffering from neglect and underinvestment.
- 3.18 These issues will be analysed in more detail in the following sections of the report using information and views received by the Committee and commissioned research.

### **If sustainability is the question, is policy 2.A6 the solution?**

- 3.19 Last year the Mayor consulted the Assembly on his proposals for Further Alterations to the London Plan. It identified the suburbs as a major policy area which needed further attention in the Plan by the inclusion of policies that would be more supportive of the commitment to implement a polycentric strategy for London's development in order to prevent the creation of purely "dormitory" areas.
- 3.20 In the Further Alterations to the London Plan the Mayor does not promote a separate "outer London policy" any more than an inner London policy.<sup>10</sup> But there is now a policy 2A.6 "The Suburbs: supporting Sustainable Communities" which specifically addresses the suburban areas of both inner and outer London.<sup>11</sup>
- 3.21 This policy seeks to support and enhance the quality of life, economy and the environment by:
- Realising job opportunities that will be generated by population growth in the suburbs;
  - Maintaining those features which make the suburbs attractive such as open space, community services and the public realm;
  - Concentrating retail, leisure and commercial activity in town centres – which are also to be the focus for new housing and transport services;
  - Supporting smaller local and district centres which can be "walked to";
  - Providing a full mix of housing types, sizes and tenures including affordable housing.
- 3.22 The Mayor clearly believes that his proposals in the Plan do enough to set the strategic framework for policies to revive the suburbs and suggests that it is now up to the boroughs to work harder to make their areas more sustainable.
- 3.23 The remainder of this report assesses the London Plan's policies for the suburbs against the challenges that they are facing and also looks what else needs to be

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<sup>10</sup> Outer London: Issues for the London Plan, Mayor of London, May 2007

<sup>11</sup> Appendix 1 sets out this policy in full

done by the boroughs and suburban Londoners themselves to ensure their parts of the city are more sustainable.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Research by the Civic Trust identified three dimensions of sustainability: economic, social and environmental. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation says that according to some, suburban development is inherently antithetical to several of these sustainability characteristics, for example, in terms of use of land and energy. This has led some commentators to attack suburbs as collectively unsustainable. On the other hand, in practice there are many parts of suburbia which are visually attractive, socially popular, economically stable and which enjoy a strong sense of community. Analysis suggests that there is scope to increase the relative sustainability of most suburbs.  
<http://www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/housing/219.asp>

## 4 This town, becoming like a clone town - suburban town centres

- 4.1 *"In the mid 1970s Reginald Perrin lived with his wife in a suburb somewhere in south London called Climthorpe and every day walked through unmistakably suburban streets on the way to the railway station from where he commuted to Sunshine Desserts, where he worked as a sales executive.*
- 4.2 *We don't see much of the rest of Climthorpe but it probably had a church, a butcher, baker and newsagent. It may even have had a parish hall. Undoubtedly the houses had neat front gardens and larger back gardens; they were probably from the inter-war period, built at densities low enough to give most of today's planners a sense of guilt.*
- 4.3 *Thirty years later, has Climthorpe changed? Is the butcher's now a take-away? The baker's a charity shop? The newsagent's now vacant and boarded up? Are the front gardens paved over to make way for parked cars? Indeed, does the modern Reggie now drive to work in their main car while Elizabeth takes the second to the out of town retail park where shopping is so much more convenient?"<sup>13</sup>*
- 4.4 The most evident sense of loss of economic vitality is the decline of many of the local and district centres. Changes in shopping and working patterns have probably had most impact on this, coupled with an increase in short term lets, pound shops, other shops with a bland and uninspiring retail mix, and in general a lack of investment by landlords in commercial property.
- 4.5 Many suburban shopping centres are failing, and can never expect to compete again on equal terms with out-of-town or larger centres that are far more accessible to a car driving public. Restoring these centres to health is a key objective to revitalise suburbs.
- 4.6 Town centres not only face the threat from out-of-town retail developments. The success of national chains is changing the face of suburban high streets. Places that pride themselves on individual local shops such as Blackheath and Notting Hill are struggling against high rents and the superior buying power of coffee and sandwich chains and gastro-pubs.<sup>14</sup> Richer areas will usually maintain their specialist shops but in poorer areas the residents are less able to support independent shops – where often the existence of "local food deserts" and financial necessity makes it cheaper to travel to superstores.
- 4.7 How does the London Plan address these issues and what more needs to be done?
- 4.8 The London Plan's policy 2A.6 (The Suburbs: supporting Sustainable Communities) is very clear that town centres need to be supported by concentrating retail, leisure and commercial activity in town centres – which are also to be the focus for new housing and transport services - and to support smaller local and district centres which can be "walked to".

<sup>13</sup> Extract from the Rise and Fall of Suburbia. Planning in London October-December 2006

<sup>14</sup> Clone Towns – New Economics Foundation [http://www.nrepf.org/PDF/nrepftopic\\_clonetowns3.pdf](http://www.nrepf.org/PDF/nrepftopic_clonetowns3.pdf)

- 4.9 The Further Alterations seek to support intensification – targeting higher density development (housing, offices, retail and community services) to existing local centres, curtailing out-of-centre commercial development and, where practical, redeveloping such areas primarily for family housing. This is in line with Planning Policy Statement 6 (PPS6 - Town Centres and Retail) that prioritises retail development in town centres for new retail development. Support for town centres relates to ‘metropolitan’ and ‘major’ centres - rejuvenation of ‘district and smaller centres’ is mainly to occur through convenience retailing.
- 4.10 In the last twenty years or so national, regional and much of local planning policy has been consistent in concentrating and supporting retail and other service development in existing centres where it is possible to do so. Has this stemmed the tide of closures?

#### **Town centre case studies<sup>15</sup>**

- 4.11 Barnet Council’s strategy is to protect areas with a high quality environment, enhance some areas to meet the needs of the local communities and to promote growth on some major development sites. The borough’s Unitary Development Plan identifies several centres for intensification and, on others such as Mill Hill East and Colindale, a wide range of uses including new employment and housing is proposed to make them more sustainable. The major developments are housing-led but include other services.
- 4.12 In Redbridge the strategy being adopted in Ilford is to develop new housing within the town centre itself. The Borough expects to achieve about 6,000 new homes by 2016 through the redevelopment of underused office blocks. The council is to encourage a mix of uses, with business and leisure uses on the ground floor and housing above which could be as high as 15 storeys in the new schemes. The current policy is for one and two-bedroom flats in the developments. Around the town centre, the council hopes to secure a further 8,000 homes in local and district centres. The council is hoping that high design quality will persuade local communities to accept the new scheme.
- 4.13 Croydon is a classic candidate for suburban regeneration. It is the 13th-largest business centre in England, yet the town centre is characterised by 1960s office buildings that have seen better days. Much of the commercial space remains unlet and could be transformed into apartments. The local council has prepared a 2020 Vision and hopes to transform the fortunes of the town by attracting new businesses and improving the centre’s image as a shopping destination. Transport connections are excellent with the tram system up and running for several years now and the Fairfield Hall concert centre provides a cultural anchor. Two schemes are under way that will add a touch of glamour. Cityscape is a 14-storey building of 95 apartments. Its developer, Barratt Homes, has come up with a contemporary design. It has a glazed, three-storey foyer and a swooping silver roof tops the building. Here, too, there will be a concierge, fitness suite and underground parking. One-, two- and three-bedroom apartments are available, all with a balcony or terrace. Central C is

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<sup>15</sup> London’s suburbs – unlocking their potential. Potts, Falk and Kochan, 2007

another Croydon scheme: it has a smart image, contemporary architecture and is close to the business district. Berkeley Homes is the developer.

- 4.14 In Wealdstone, Harrow, the Council has redeveloped an old supermarket site to provide: a healthy living centre, library, health centre, youth centre and training café for special needs students. Library membership has increased by nearly 100 per cent in the two years it has been running. However even this improvement and the increasing housing density has done little to improve the retail mix and performance of the shopping centre, except bring in another betting shop to a vacant bank site. For many residents things have changed but not improved.
- 4.15 Sutton Council has adopted a policy for Sustainable Suburbs, and is applying a number of the possible tools. It is working with Transport for London (TfL) on a major scheme to change travel behaviour through individual travel plans. It is also working on an Action Plan for Hackbridge as a sustainable suburb, with the idea of extending what has been achieved at BedZed, and testing out the application of the One Planet Living principles to a relatively disadvantaged suburb.
- 4.16 In some cases boroughs are beginning to turn around the decline of their town centres, but in others, they are facing a struggle.
- 4.17 The recent Barker review of Land Use Planning<sup>16</sup> may take this struggle to another level. The report says that protecting the vitality and viability of town centres is, rightly, an important policy priority. And there are a number of means whereby this goal is promoted, including the sequential test and the impact test of Planning Policy Statement 6.
- 4.18 Planning Policy Statement 6: Planning for Town Centres promotes town centre vitality and viability by; planning for the growth and development of existing centres; promoting and enhancing existing centres, by focusing development in such centres and encouraging a wide range of services in good environments.<sup>17</sup>
- 4.19 The sequential test is a planning principle that seeks to identify, allocate or develop certain types or locations of land before others. There is a presumption that it is better to develop brownfield land before greenfield sites and town centres before out-of-centre locations.
- 4.20 Barker believes these policies should be retained but also believes that planners should not be attempting to determine if there is sufficient 'need' for a given application – rather the developer, who is bearing the risk, should be responsible for assessing that likely demand is sufficient to make the development viable. There are implications for the 'town-centre first' policy if the requirement for applicants to demonstrate need should be removed.
- 4.21 How these recommendations are taken forward will have an important impact on those trying to protect and nurture town centres.

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<sup>16</sup> [http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/4EB/AF/barker\\_finalreport051206.pdf](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/4EB/AF/barker_finalreport051206.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> [www.communities.gov.uk/pub/821/PlanningPolicyStatement6PlanningforTownCentresPDF342Kb\\_id1143821.pdf](http://www.communities.gov.uk/pub/821/PlanningPolicyStatement6PlanningforTownCentresPDF342Kb_id1143821.pdf)

- 4.22 While a lot of policy advice is now available on increasing the attraction of larger centres, not much attention has been paid to what can be done to promote the vitality and viability of the smaller local and neighbourhood centres which, when considered en masse, are of strategic significance. Some of them, especially those with good public transport, will have potential for more intensive development, including more housing and employment. Others, such as smaller neighbourhood centres and parades of shops, may need support if they are to continue to meet the needs of all local residents, including disabled people and people with limited access to a car such as the elderly or parents with young children.<sup>18</sup>
- 4.23 The problem for these smaller centres is they are often not “deprived” enough to attract regeneration funding which would provide shop front improvements or safety and security schemes, nor large enough to develop Business Improvement Districts or other collective investment schemes.
- 4.24 Many of these centres need to attract back those residents who still live locally but choose to use other centres. This involves assessing the development of housing around these centres and the transport used to access them.
- 4.25 **The Mayor has shown how he can support boroughs through issuing Supplementary Planning Guidance and Best Practice Guidance on a variety of themes but the Mayor has other powers.**
- 4.26 **The Mayor has important policy, delivery and funding responsibilities through the Greater London Authority (GLA), TfL and the London Development Agency (LDA) and the Further Alterations to the London Plan should be clearer in the amount of support from the wider GLA that would be available to assist boroughs translate the strategic policies into local action.**
- 4.27 **There are examples of successful town centre intensification and diversification of activities and the GLA, sub regions and boroughs have worked to understand the factors involved in regeneration of these areas. These should be recognised and encouraged.**

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<sup>18</sup> London's suburbs – unlocking their potential. Potts, Falk and Kochan, 2007



## 5 London will soon be next door to us - housing and suburban development

- 5.1 *'The chain of buildings so closely unites the country with the town that the distinction is lost between Cheapside and St George's Fields. This idea struck the mind of a child, who lived at Clapham, with so much force, that he observed "if they go on building at such a rate, London will soon be next door to us". By the time he grew to be a man, his words had come to pass.'*<sup>19</sup>
- 5.2 *"When I came to this great city" an American traveller wrote, "I looked this way and that way; there is no beginning and no end". Between 1760 and 1835 the development rivalled that of the preceding two hundred years... By 1872 it had expanded exponentially again... London colonised each village or town as it encompassed them, making them a part of itself, but not necessarily changing their fundamental topography. They were now London..."*<sup>20</sup>
- 5.3 The ever-expanding amount of housing, reaching out to towns and villages and joining them together, has always been a key factor in supporting London's growth. The Mayor has decided that future growth should be largely contained within the city's existing boundaries and has set ambitious targets for each borough to increase its housing stock over the next ten years.
- 5.4 The London Plan targets give outer London a 47 per cent share of all new housing to be built up to 2016. This can only be achieved by increasing the density. Suburbs, because they are low density and cover vastly more space than city centres, cannot be easily excused from taking a share of new housing in areas of high demand such as London.<sup>21</sup>
- 5.5 But suburban London has traditionally been about moving on in the world, achieving more space, access to greenery and a better quality of life. London, if it is to be successful, must be able to offer a whole range of environments so that it can satisfy Londoners' different needs and choice of lifestyle.<sup>22</sup>
- 5.6 As Charles Darwin, someone who understood a little about the importance of adaptation and finding one's niche, said *"What a turmoil I have been living in house-hunting - I long to be settled in pure air, out of all the dirt, noise vice and misery of this great Wen, as old Cobbett called it - I am going to Westcroft [Sutton] on Friday with a valuer and then mean to make an offer."*<sup>23</sup>

### Increasing housing density

- 5.7 "London's suburbs – unlocking their potential"<sup>24</sup> notes that recent housing developments have been at a much higher density. In London, the average

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<sup>19</sup> London – the biography, Peter Ackroyd.

<sup>20</sup> London – the biography, Peter Ackroyd.

<sup>21</sup> Potts – Suburban Regeneration, Property Week, 1 May 2007

<sup>22</sup> London's suburbs – unlocking their potential. Potts, Falk and Kochan, 2007

<sup>23</sup> Charles Darwin sends news of his house-hunting, September 1841

[www.darwinproject.ac.uk/darwinletters/calendar/entry-609.html](http://www.darwinproject.ac.uk/darwinletters/calendar/entry-609.html)

<sup>24</sup> London's suburbs – unlocking their potential. Potts, Falk and Kochan, 2007

density of new development has doubled between 2000 and 2005 – from 56 dwellings per hectare to 112.

- 5.8 The London Plan wants density to be directly related to public transport accessibility – which seems to open up the possibility for urban densities in those suburban locations that are within 10 minutes walking distance of a district centre or that are along major arterial routes. The Further Alterations suggest that in suburban areas new housing could be as high as 65 homes to the hectare. Even the lowest densities in the proposed new matrix (35 – 55 units per hectare) are still higher than the density of the existing dwelling stock in some local areas, and so granting permissions in line with the matrix may affect the existing local character.
- 5.9 The danger is that wealthier suburbanites seeking more space may be lost to other towns and cities outside the capital. This could work against mixed and sustainable communities in the suburbs they vacate if many move to outer metropolitan area towns in search of larger houses and more open space whilst retaining jobs in the capital, it could also lead to increased in-commuting.
- 5.10 Of course we should not necessarily reject the idea of higher density. The Georgians built at very high density. The high-value terrace homes in Kensington and Chelsea and in many urban areas are high-density terrace houses, which are popular and could probably meet the aspirations of suburban dwellers if they were better planned and served by good local facilities and transport.
- 5.11 London's density is much lower than Paris and New York<sup>25</sup> and, as the likes of Bayswater and Earl's Court show, higher densities can mean attractive city districts with good shops and public services.
- 5.12 There are already some successful housing schemes in London's suburbs and examples of good practice from continental Europe in Dutch and German suburbs which show how it is possible to develop high density housing while retaining open spaces that are especially attractive for families with children.<sup>26</sup>
- 5.13 Schemes are also coming forward that incorporate environmentally sustainable features. Probably the best-known environmental housing scheme is in the suburbs – the BedZed (Beddington Zero Energy Development) on an old sewage works near Hackbridge in the south west London borough of Sutton.
- 5.14 Issues surrounding housing, suburban liveability, improving design and the public realm are discussed further in section 8 of this report.

### **Delivering appropriate suburban density and larger homes**

- 5.15 There is some debate about whether the higher suburban densities will allow for larger family homes, which have been traditionally provided in low-density suburban areas.

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<sup>25</sup> Time to Buckle Down on the Green Belt? Tony Travers, Evening Standard, 9 July 2002

<sup>26</sup> London's suburbs – unlocking their potential. Potts, Falk and Kochan, 2007

- 5.16 It has been noted however that there is not really any policy drive to build anything like a garden suburb anymore. *"In most countries in Europe new dwellings are bigger than the average of the existing stock, because that is what people want. Not so in Britain."*
- 5.17 *In Britain we are actually going down. We are getting smaller. We are now building 76 square metres on average, but we are still building the most rooms per dwelling which, in turn, means that we build the smallest rooms all over the developed world."*
- 5.18 *"So something seems to be going wrong here. Especially if you compare the 76 square metres to the sizes you would get in other countries. You would have about 110 square metres in Switzerland or Germany, 130 in Denmark, and even 200 in New South Wales. I think if other countries are showing this clear demand for space for privacy, for this nice living environment which is probably reflected in Hampstead, then I cannot really see the point of building 76 square metres and trying to put people in boxes."<sup>27</sup>*
- 5.19 The London Plan recognises that provision has to meet the full range of housing needs, particularly larger family accommodation. However densities are, after all, primarily determined not by the London Plan density matrix but by the schemes submitted by developers and the decisions by local authorities.<sup>28</sup>
- 5.20 **The issue of housing density will be crucial for the suburbs to both take their share of new housing but at the same time retaining the space and environmental factors which make them attractive to those who live in the suburbs. Good design will be essential to intensification and the delivery of new housing in the suburbs. This should be supported by the Mayor and his agencies including Design for London.**
- 5.21 **The boroughs must be vigilant if they are to ensure that the right type of housing is encouraged and the Mayor must monitor developments and their cumulative effects so that the density matrix is not set too high for suburban areas.**

### **The Green Belt**

- 5.22 In 1944 Sir Patrick Abercrombie incorporated a 'Green Belt ring' into the Greater London Plan for the Minister of Town and Country Planning: "In this ring the general intention is to provide primarily for recreation and fresh food for the Londoner, and to prevent further continuous suburban outward growth".<sup>29</sup>
- 5.23 National policy is set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 2: Green Belts and Planning Policy Guidance 2 (PPG2). It describes how Green Belts are designated and their land safeguarded. Green Belt land-use objectives are outlined and the presumption against inappropriate development is established.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Dr Oliver Marc Hartwich, Planning & Spatial Development Committee meeting, 20 February 2007

<sup>28</sup> London's suburbs – unlocking their potential. Potts, Falk and Kochan, 2007

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.cpre.org.uk/campaigns/planning/green-belts/green-belts-success-story>

<sup>30</sup> <http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1143928>

- 5.24 The Mayor's policy is set out in 3D.8 of the London Plan with "a general presumption against inappropriate development in the Green Belt, and such development should not be approved except in very special circumstances."<sup>31</sup>
- 5.25 This policy direction seems set to continue with the current Planning White Paper stating that "The Government is committed to the principles of the Green Belt and will make no fundamental change to planning policy as set out in Planning Policy Guidance Note 2."<sup>32</sup>
- 5.26 Despite the continuing policy of protection of the Green Belt some commentators believe that by adopting policies to accommodate London's growth, such as the Green Belt, the operation of the planning system itself as the creator of land shortages that drives up costs of housing and results in the need for higher densities, which they now see as threatening the suburbs.<sup>33</sup>
- 5.27 Some have also suggested that suburban housing, at low densities in an era of high housing market demand, may be worth more as development sites.
- 5.28 If the right kind of housing at appropriate densities cannot be accommodated in the suburbs – either because sites simply are not available, or land is too expensive – other solutions may need to be considered by policy makers or individually by the more mobile suburban Londoner's themselves.
- 5.29 The Barker review of land use planning (December 2006)<sup>34</sup> considered wider aspects of land use regulation. Among the proposals are measures to make the planning system quicker and simpler, speeding up the appeals process and for local authorities to allow more building in the Green Belt.
- 5.30 The London School of Economics housing economist Christine Whitehead suggests that there is a case for "relaxing planning constraints on green land, allowing many more people to achieve the traditional ambition of living in homes with gardens. A more positive and planned alternative is to promote more selective forms of relatively compact development on green-field sites outside London, which would complement a more modest intensification strategy within London."<sup>35</sup>
- 5.31 Even the Royal Town Planning Institute has called for reviews of Green Belts to be part of the local planning process.<sup>36</sup> It suggested an approach where, without compromising the strategic objectives of the green belt, additional areas of land may be released and made available for development.
- 5.32 However, as set out above, the national policy and the Mayor's position is that there is no case for reviewing the Green Belt surrounding the capital. 96 per cent of London's development occurs on brownfield land. Current housing

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.london.gov.uk/mayor/strategies/sds/further-alt/s/docs/alt-s-all.pdf>

<sup>32</sup> [http://www.communities.gov.uk/pub/669/PlanningforaSustainableFutureWhitePaper\\_id1510669.pdf](http://www.communities.gov.uk/pub/669/PlanningforaSustainableFutureWhitePaper_id1510669.pdf)

<sup>33</sup> Dr Oliver Marc Hartwich, Better Homes, Greener Cities, Policy Exchange 2006  
<http://www.policyexchange.org.uk/publications.aspx?id=165>

<sup>34</sup> <http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1504875>

<sup>35</sup> <http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1504875>

<sup>36</sup> Modernising Green Belts: A discussion paper The Royal Town Planning Institute May 2002

capacity calculations identify capacity for 30,000 new homes to 2016 almost all on previously developed land. The Mayor also points out that capacity for 850,000 new jobs to 2026 will be found mainly through intensification of existing sites.

- 5.33 **Contrary to the views of some commentators the Committee would not wish to see the protection offered by the Green Belt diminished in any way.**
- 5.34 Looking beyond London's boundaries, to the adjoining regions of the South East and East of England, housing provision there will also be a factor for those who still wish to work in London.
- 5.35 There is little point worrying about suburban house building if there is high provision forecast for areas twenty or thirty miles away in locations that have good transport links into the capital. The London Plan, and more specifically the housing targets for London, ought to be set in conjunction with surrounding regions.<sup>37</sup>
- 5.36 **We need to start a debate on:**
- **How can better-designed larger houses at higher densities that appeal to families be encouraged and how can boroughs monitor the effects of density on the suburbs?**
  - **How can mixed-use development be used in the suburbs to combine new housing with jobs and local services for communities?**
  - **How the GLA should be liaising formally with the South East and East of England Region development Agencies and Regional Assemblies, so that developers and house builders will have a clear picture of what is required from them, and where there is capacity, possibly through some kind of "charter for smarter growth"?**

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<sup>37</sup> London's suburbs – unlocking their potential. Potts, Falk and Kochan, 2007

## 6 A journey to the planet Quaoar - suburban transport

- 6.1 In 2002 scientists discovered a new planet called Quaoar.<sup>38</sup> It is about one-tenth the diameter of Earth and circles the Sun every 288 years. Far further away than Pluto, the planet is about 4 billion miles from the Sun.
- 6.2 The 4.6 million residents of outer London travel 858 miles a year further than their inner London counterparts.<sup>39</sup> This is the equivalent of about 4 billion miles – a journey to the planet Quaoar - and much of this extra travel is done by car.
- 6.3 As we have seen, improvements in transport have allowed people to live further and further away from the city centre. Initially it was private horse-drawn carriages, then with cheap railways, omnibuses and the extension to the Underground that allowed this. But it is the car, which helped develop the post-war suburban areas, which is setting policy-makers the greatest challenge in terms of sustainability.
- 6.4 In autumn 2000, 80 per cent of people working in central London travelled to work by public transport, compared with 42 per cent in the rest of Inner London, and only 18 per cent in Outer London. Suburban households have higher rates of car ownership and they use them more, with about 65 per cent of their journeys being made by car.
- 6.5 TfL predicts that traffic will rise in suburban areas by 14 per cent over the next ten years.
- 6.6 But suburban London, by comparison with other world city suburbs is relatively well served. The extent of the public transport system in outer London compares favourably: the length of Underground and rail routes in London is more than double that in both Tokyo and New York.<sup>40</sup> However, this is variable throughout the suburban ring with, for example, only 10 per cent of the tube network serving south London.
- 6.7 The Mayor's Transport Strategy and Transport 2025 set out the main public transport improvements proposed over the next 15 years, covering rail (e.g. Crossrail, Thameslink 2000), the Underground and Docklands Light Railway, bus and tram schemes and river crossing schemes. The London Plan integrates these fully into a spatial development strategy.
- 6.8 Despite this record investment in transport infrastructure the problem is that in a growing London, demand for public transport has long been outstripping supply. Between 1996 and 2026 demand is expected to grow by 60 per cent while capacity is planned to rise by only 30 per cent.<sup>41</sup>
- 6.9 There are further fears that with the forecast massive rise in the number of jobs in central and inner east London, Canary Wharf and Thames Gateway

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<sup>38</sup> Pronounced "kwah-oh-wahr" <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/sci/tech/2306945.stm>

<sup>39</sup> Report for The Independent Transport Commission, The Future of Suburbs and Exurbs Marcial Echenique & Rob Homewood 2003

<sup>40</sup> Outer London – Issues for the London Plan, May 2007

<sup>41</sup> Stephen Glaister, Finding funding for transport infrastructure to meet the demands of growth, in Kochan, B. (ed.) London - bigger and better, (LSE London, London 2006).

commuting into the centre from the suburbs will increase. This increase will be particularly high for travel into central London, where there will be an additional 240,000 trips each day.

- 6.10 Organisations such as Transport 2000 have suggested ways of reducing dependence on car use by introducing travel plans for large employers, locating new developments at points of greatest public transport accessibility, at greater densities, and providing more demand-responsive public transport.<sup>42</sup>
- 6.11 The Assembly's Transport Committee reviewed options for more sustainable transport in the suburbs in its report in 2002 and made a number of recommendations that covered similar themes.<sup>43</sup>
- 6.12 One of the key issues for public transport in suburban London is orbital movement. The current transport system is heavily radial, which makes accessing central London relatively easy but travelling orbitally to a neighbouring town centre often more difficult.
- 6.13 Improved orbital public transport would also help to stimulate the economy by creating a network of mutually supporting suburban centres. There has been some progress with the development of orbital travel services but there remains the opportunity to realise an orbital rail link and to find new ways to fund stalled schemes.
- 6.14 The Mayor has of course gained increased influence over national rail services in London under the Railways Act 2005 and the Assembly would welcome early indication of potential proposals for rail services and other orbital schemes in London, which could support new development in suburban town centres.
- 6.15 A way forward would be if the Mayor and boroughs could work together to reinforce the messages from the Assembly Transport Committee's reports on "London's forgotten railway" and "Public transport in outer London" which set out recommendations to reduce car dependency and promote public transport.
- 6.16 A difficult situation will always exist in justifying investment in major transport infrastructure improvements in areas of relatively low population density. There was disagreement amongst the Committee as to the extent that funding commitments need to be in place prior to significantly increased levels of housing density.
- 6.17 But it must be desirable that new developments of housing or employment uses are tightly linked to sites of good public transport access and that development and infrastructure go hand in hand wherever possible.
- 6.18 Higher densities around suburban transport interchanges may help reinvigorate suburban areas and build the case for transport investment. Some have suggested a "beads on a string" model where housing is concentrated around

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<sup>42</sup> Low Carbon Transport for Outer London and Making Way for Better Transport in Outer London, Transport 2000, 2007

<sup>43</sup> [http://www.london.gov.uk/assembly/reports/transport/transp\\_all\\_lon02.pdf](http://www.london.gov.uk/assembly/reports/transport/transp_all_lon02.pdf)

nodes along transport routes. Portland in Oregon has pioneered this “smart growth” approach.<sup>44</sup>

- 6.19 While the bus is the principal public transport alternative in the suburbs there are examples of rail, tram and bus transit proposals that are being developed along corridors in suburban areas of London.
- 6.20 The planned Thames Gateway Transits in East London are bus-based network of routes, linked by the Thames Gateway Bridge, which will improve orbital travel in east London. The first major part of the network, to be operational in 2009, will be Phase 1 of the East London Transit between Ilford and Dagenham Dock. Phase 1 of the Greenwich Waterfront Transit is planned to be operational between Abbey Wood and North Greenwich by 2011. The West London Tram is being developed to serve the existing, busy bus corridor between Uxbridge and Shepherds Bush.<sup>45</sup>
- 6.21 The East London Line Extension is being progressed and will eventually link to the North London Line with longer-term plans to link into south London railway lines.
- 6.22 One of the best examples of a suburban public transport scheme is of course the Croydon Tramlink.<sup>46</sup> Tramlink comprises 28 kilometres of route with 38 stops and serves the four London Boroughs of Croydon, Bromley, Merton and Sutton. It is based on streets running in a loop around Croydon town centre with branches running west to Wimbledon, east to Beckenham Junction and Elmers End, and south to New Addington.
- 6.23 An extension of the system to Crystal Palace is being taken forward.
- 6.24 The boroughs also have an important role in delivering the policies and proposals contained in the Mayor’s Transport Strategy. Every year TfL agrees a programme of local transport schemes and initiatives with the boroughs. These programmes are varied and often address “softer” actions such as walking, cycling and travel demand management.<sup>47</sup>
- 6.25 These local transport schemes tend to total around £3 - £6 million per borough and are supplemented by funding from local sources such as income from parking controls.
- 6.26 **Reducing the need to travel or reducing distances that need to be travelled depend as much on where housing and employment are sited as on how much new transport infrastructure is provided. The Mayor and boroughs must continue to ensure that new developments of housing or employment uses are tightly linked to sites of good public transport access.**

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<sup>44</sup> Potts – Suburban Regeneration, Property Week, 1 May 2007

<sup>45</sup> Outer London – Issues for the London Plan, May 2007

<sup>46</sup> Proposals for the scheme were first identified in the 1970s and early 1980s. A feasibility study in 1990 confirmed the business case and a Private Bill was promoted in Parliament in 1991. Powers were obtained from Parliament in 1994; Tramtrack was awarded the concession in 1996 and started operating the service in May 2000.

<sup>47</sup> Outer London – Issues for the London Plan, May 2007



- 6.27 Given that more than twice as many people commute into central London as out, there should be greater consideration of how commuting patterns might be rationalised, to make the most efficient use of London's transport infrastructure.
- 6.28 Boroughs should consider pilot studies of electronic commuting by developing local centres with high-speed electronic communications to allow suburban workers to "work from suburbs" – electronic commuting.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> See London's suburbs – unlocking their potential. Potts, Falk and Kochan, 2007

## 7 Roneo, Roneo! - protecting and promoting suburban employment

- 7.1 *Romford's local tradition of light industry, well established by the end of the 19th century, has since then been continued and extended. The largest modern factory is that of Roneo Vickers Ltd., manufacturers of office machinery. It lies at the junction of South Street and Hornchurch Road, now called Roneo Corner. All Roneo's manufacturing and assembly facilities are situated in the Romford factory, which is also the company's head office.*<sup>49</sup>
- 7.2 As at the end of 1984, [only] 128 people were employed in manufacturing; of these approximately 80 were engaged in assembly of postal franking machines. Until June 1985 some duplicators were also assembled at Romford but these then were imported from Japan. Roneo's factory closed shortly after.
- 7.3 Many "industrial" suburbs have not yet recovered from the loss of their major employment source, particularly light and heavy industry, and have quite high levels of long-term unemployment and people on disability benefit as a result.
- 7.4 Central London is expected to see the vast majority of employment growth in the city. Recent LSE work predicts that between 2001 and 2016 Inner London's employment will grow by 17.6 per cent and London's periphery (such as Watford, Chelmsford and Reading) will grow by 12.7 per cent. By contrast Outer London is a relative trough – just 3.9 per cent growth predicted.<sup>50</sup>
- 7.5 This is not sustainable. It relies on commuting into the centre on increasingly congested transport networks. It creates dormitory areas in the suburbs and may perpetuate a spiral of decline. Loss of employment land to housing means that it will be difficult to accommodate the growth in jobs, which is forecast after 2016.<sup>51</sup>
- 7.6 As our consultant's report notes in the following paragraphs, the Further Alterations say that 70 per cent of jobs in London are currently located outside the Central Activities Zone (CAZ)<sup>52</sup> and predicts that 64 per cent of the job growth will be outside the CAZ over the Plan period. It needs to be remembered however that the 'area outside the CAZ' includes Canary Wharf where 110,000 additional jobs (13 per cent of London's total) are envisaged.
- 7.7 Twenty 'outer London' boroughs, would only gain 10 per cent of London's projected overall employment growth (for 2016- 26 this would improve to a 29 per cent share). Ten outer boroughs are projected to lose jobs up to 2011, with figures unlikely to improve until 2016.

- 7.8 How does the Plan address these issues and what more needs to be done?

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<sup>49</sup> A History of the County of Essex (1978). [www.british-history.ac.uk/report.asp?compid=42817](http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.asp?compid=42817).

<sup>50</sup> Professor Ian Gordon, Future Growth in the Outer London Economy: a review of employment predictions and their implications, (North London Strategic Alliance and partners, 2006).

<sup>51</sup> London's suburbs – unlocking their potential. Potts, Falk and Kochan, 2007

<sup>52</sup> The Central Activities Zone, as set out in the London Plan, covers parts of Westminster, the City, Camden, Southwark, Lambeth, Wandsworth and small parts of Hackney and Tower Hamlets. In the zone planning policy promotes finance, specialist retail, tourist and cultural uses and activities as well as focusing on London's linkages with the UK and the world.

- 7.9 In the Further Alterations the main sectors of growth in the suburbs are seen as essentially consumer services (retail, leisure etc.) and public services. The first London Plan sought to concentrate the supply of retail and leisure facilities and other services in the most accessible places and spread them between central London, town centres and development areas such as the Thames Gateway.
- 7.10 The amendments urge stronger emphasis on the role of retailing and leisure development in rejuvenating town centres. If realised this will see more people shopping in towns rather than on retail strips and more residents and workers taking leisure locally rather than travelling into central London or elsewhere in London. This is happening in many centres but the challenge is still the smaller district centres, many of which are also transport nodes.
- 7.11 The Finance and Business services sector is projected to provide over half of the gross total growth in employment over the next fifteen years. But the Outer London office market is weak and suburban office accommodation has suffered with rents of between £20 and £25 per square foot making it uneconomic to develop new space.
- 7.12 The suburbs are sandwiched between the Central Activities Zone that has some of the highest rental values in the world (greater than Tokyo and Manhattan) and the office market beyond the M25 and in the London fringe areas such as Weybridge and Reigate. The Further Alterations predict a continuing contraction in the demand for industrial and office space in suburban locations at least until 2016.
- 7.13 The Further Alterations suggest that there will be some employment opportunities in wholesale distribution but the future of manufacturing in the capital will be largely restricted to high value-added and design-led manufacturing – of the sort being seen in the Thames Valley and around Cambridge.
- 7.14 The Alterations offer the welcome suggestion that synergies between science parks and universities will be explored – the capital lacks a major science cluster – although there is no attempt to champion a role for the suburbs in the new technology, exporting, ‘knowledge economy’. For all the discussion about cultural and creative industries, little is being done to provide seedbeds or incubators for enterprise in the suburbs.
- 7.15 Maintaining and enhancing a range of employment uses in suburban areas is important to support sustainable communities. As employment uses become increasingly compatible with residential environments, there may be growing opportunities for local employment activities, including home-working and live/work spaces.
- 7.16 The Further Alterations refer to the management, enhancement and ‘where necessary protection’ of London’s industrial capacity which ‘lies almost wholly in the suburbs’ but also restates the policy for a net total release of 39 hectares per annum, mainly in North East and South East London – much of which is to free up land for housing.

- 7.17 There is a need to monitor land release – a West London Alliance study in 2006 found that at least 37 hectares of employment land had already been released by March 2006 against a target set out in the West London Sub-regional Development Framework of 40 hectares to be released by 2016.
- 7.18 Disposal of land for housing means that, to all intents and purposes, it is permanently lost for business despite projections that suggest that after about 2016, demand for business space could take off in the suburbs. Another danger is the loss of industrial sites to retail development away from town centres, which will neither add to the stock of jobs nor create the kinds of jobs that are most needed locally.
- 7.19 **The London Plan needs to reconcile policies on the release of industrial land in outer London with its own projections that suggest that there will be a need for more of this employment land by 2016. Once this land is lost it will be particularly hard to recover for the type of local employment that is needed to make suburban London sustainable and to contribute to a truly polycentric London.**
- 7.20 **Whilst the business and financial services sectors are essential to London's economy, there is no reason why elements cannot be located in outer London, particularly business support services. The Plan could do more to promote strategically important office locations in large suburban town centres.**
- 7.21 **Boroughs need to be creative in reinventing suburbs as employment centres for the 21<sup>st</sup> century with initiatives such as:**
- **Centres for green industries, cheap space for creative industries priced out of central London or a new "knowledge centre" around suburban universities**
  - **Home-work centres in suburban district centres – places for people to have a cheap, flexible base and not have to commute for one or two days a week.**

## 8 The good life - suburban liveability, improving design and the public realm

- 8.1 *In the inter-war years residents of inner London were tempted with advertisements for the good life like. "I never had any other desire so strong as that one which I have had always had, that I might be Master of a small House and a Large Garden with moderate conveniences joined to them" - Leave this and move to Edgware"*<sup>53</sup>
- 8.2 The suburbs, in the past, have pioneered new standards of urban and housing design – Hampstead Garden Suburb and New Ash Green in Kent are just two examples of model suburbs that are still highly valued.<sup>54</sup>
- 8.3 But now, many suburbs, once symbols of aspiration, have a reputation of being uninspiring or even boring in design terms.<sup>55</sup>
- 8.4 One of the central attractions of the suburbs, when they were first developed, was the access to greater amounts of space in a quieter and safer environment. There are distinct problems with many of the suburbs that are suffering from neglect and underinvestment.
- 8.5 Despite efforts by bodies like the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment and English Heritage, and the government's Cleaner Safer Greener programme, the quality of the suburban townscape is deteriorating, partly because of the difficulties in managing and funding local improvements, but also because of lack of controls over the private realm.<sup>56</sup>
- 8.6 For example, between 1990 and 2004 London has lost some 1,000 hectares of green space.<sup>57</sup> Up to 2,000 London street trees have been given the chop in the past five years, condemned by usually unwarranted subsidence claims.<sup>58</sup>
- 8.7 The relentless pressure on land in the capital, the need to build at high densities, mean that allotments are slowly but surely being eroded. There has been a net loss of 32 sites, or 4.2 per cent over the last decade in London at a time when demand has never been higher.<sup>59</sup>
- 8.8 Other reports have identified the loss of playing fields and an area 22 times the size of Hyde Park has already been at least partially paved over in London as a result of front gardens being turned from grass to concrete.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> London Underground poster, 1924.

<sup>54</sup> London's suburbs – unlocking their potential. Potts, Falk and Kochan, 2007

<sup>55</sup> London's suburbs – unlocking their potential. Potts, Falk and Kochan, 2007

<sup>56</sup> London's suburbs – unlocking their potential. Potts, Falk and Kochan, 2007

<sup>57</sup> Evening Standard 2004

<sup>58</sup> Chainsaw massacre: A review of London's street trees. London Assembly Environment Committee May 2007

<sup>59</sup> A lot to lose: London's disappearing allotments. London Assembly Environment Committee October 2006

<sup>60</sup> Offside: The Loss of London's Playing Fields, May 2006 and Crazy Paving: The environmental importance of London's front gardens, September 2005, London Assembly Environment Committee

- 8.9 English Heritage, in a recent report, 2007, believes that the policy drive towards high-density development, demographic changes and rising property prices are all putting increasing pressure on the identity of many suburbs. The character of many suburban areas is being jeopardised or eroded by the insensitive redevelopment of former factories, the conversion or redevelopment of large homes into flats, the concreting over of front gardens for car parks, and increasing levels of traffic and congestion.
- 8.10 The London Plan Alterations refer to 'maintaining and improving the features that make London's suburbs attractive', but with no discussion about how housing targets might affect this. There are no recommendations on urban design that relate specifically to the suburbs. However, the Mayor's design proposals, such as ensuring that new blocks have balconies or to create new kinds of public spaces, could play a key role in overcoming objections to living at higher densities.
- 8.11 Similarly, the proposal to improve the public realm around interchanges can also help facilitate the all-important reduction of suburban traffic by encouraging people into public transport hubs. Amidst the talk of neighbourhood empowerment that surrounded the recent Local Government White Paper there also needs to be design that fosters a sense of neighbourhood – the places where so many people live. Many of the locations identified in the Mayor's 100 Public Spaces project are in the suburbs and the attention needs to focus on how they are being taken forward.<sup>61</sup>
- 8.12 Suburban liveability is not just about the environment. Developing and maintaining a sense of community also needs to be addressed – particularly as the number of new suburban residents will increase.
- 8.13 The Plan Alterations widened the definitions of community facilities and infrastructure but without setting targets or without any suburban dimension. It is important that all areas have adequate space for the voluntary and community sector – including those that cannot necessarily afford rents. Boroughs and developers may wish to think about how to provide premises for community uses – modern "parish halls" maybe - perhaps in the hands of Community Land Trusts.<sup>62</sup>
- 8.14 A similar approach was suggested by the independent Quirk Review<sup>63</sup> which looked at community management and ownership of assets. It concluded that community organisations can realise tremendous potential by taking on the management and ownership of community assets. The review looked at the barriers which may be standing in the way of more communities managing and owning assets such as village halls, community centres, building preservation trusts and community enterprises. It recommended ways of encouraging an environment to allow more community management and ownership of assets.

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<sup>61</sup> London's suburbs – unlocking their potential. Potts, Falk and Kochan, 2007

<sup>62</sup> London's suburbs – unlocking their potential. Potts, Falk and Kochan, 2007

<sup>63</sup> [www.communities.gov.uk/pub/517/MakingassetsworkTheQuirkReviewofcommunitymanagementandownershipofpublicassets\\_id1510517.pdf](http://www.communities.gov.uk/pub/517/MakingassetsworkTheQuirkReviewofcommunitymanagementandownershipofpublicassets_id1510517.pdf)

- 8.15 Some of the vacant properties in outer London district centres could be used for this purpose, and would enable trusts to generate ongoing revenue that could then be used to support efforts to build better neighbourhoods.
- 8.16 **In terms of suburban liveability, improving design and the public realm it will be for the boroughs in partnership with their residents to ensure that the local environments are improved and not subject to further neglect.**
- 8.17 **Specifically:**
- **The Mayor and boroughs need to keep a careful watch on the effect that housing targets are having on ‘maintaining and improving the features that make London’s suburbs attractive’**
  - **The Mayor should support boroughs to ensure that social infrastructure and essential services are developed alongside new housing, including health, education and transport services.**
  - **Boroughs should encourage suburban communities to develop “visions for a new suburbia” and be involved in planning and managing their areas**
  - **Boroughs need to review, protect and develop community facilities that foster social ties that will come under increasing pressure through the upturn in commuting – perhaps by encouraging involvement of community land trusts.**

## 9 Reinventing suburbia - conclusions

- 9.1 When the Mayor's Best Practice Guidance "Tomorrow's Suburbs: Tools for making London more sustainable" was being tested in a number of outer London areas it was remarked that residents did not see themselves in relation to central London but as suburbanites, and living in places in their own right that happened to be located within Greater London.<sup>64</sup>
- 9.2 The London Plan clearly states that every suburb is unique and requires a tailored policy response in accordance with local circumstances to be set out in borough Development Plan Documents.
- 9.3 The London Plan also sees the centre as being the place where jobs will increase whilst there is a forecast loss of employment in outer London. At the same time, town centres beyond the M25 are also providing a draw for commuting. There will always be those who prefer to live their life in the heart of the city, but most Londoners are suburban, their homes should be in places where there is a sense of community.
- 9.4 The London Plan goes some way to addressing the issues but needs strengthening in certain key areas such as protecting local jobs, investing in public transport and managing the balance between housing growth and retaining the suburban environment which suits some Londoners needs and aspirations.
- 9.5 Suburban London must avoid becoming a series of dormitories so each suburb needs to retain a healthy mix of housing, local employment, shops and other services that can be accessed in ways that are not always by car.
- 9.6 Local jobs need to be protected and retained – there needs to be new thinking about what suburban London can offer – new technology could be exploited to encourage home-work centres in suburban centres – places for people to have a cheap, flexible base and not have to commute for one or two days a week.
- 9.7 Suburban London needs to retain elements of the environment that attracted people to it in the first place – so there must be larger houses, with open spaces and a clean safe environment. Density must be closely monitored.
- 9.8 Communities must be involved in thinking about and planning for how they want to see their neighbourhoods develop in the future and make active contributions to realising it.
- 9.9 A large amount of work has already been done. Numerous local arrangements, both informal and those such as Local Strategic Partnerships and Local Area Agreements, continue to develop measures that can address these problems.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Piloting the 'Tomorrow's Suburbs' Toolkit [www.groundwork-london.org.uk](http://www.groundwork-london.org.uk)

<sup>65</sup> Local Strategic Partnerships bring together the different parts of the public, private, community and voluntary sectors to support one another so that they can work together more effectively. Local Area Agreements set out the priorities for a local area agreed between central government and a local area. They simplify some central funding, help join up public services more effectively, allow greater flexibility for local solutions to local circumstances and devolve decision making.



- 9.10 The trick is to ensure the levers that work are incorporated into both the strategic London Plan and the boroughs own visions.
- 9.11 If we can identify the kind of tools needed to revive our suburbs, we shall be able to consider the role of local politicians and other civic leaders in building consensus about what needs to be done. Do we need to devolve responsibility more locally, so that those neglected places, which look like no-one cares about them, become places where we want to go? In many suburbs there is already great pride of place, where there is a desire to maintain and advance the atmosphere of areas that retain their character and provide a range of work, commercial and leisure facilities.
- 9.12 We need to start a very important conversation that needs to occupy key decision-makers in the capital and residents in suburban communities over the coming years - a debate on what is the future of suburbia in 21st century London.

## **Appendix 1: Policy 2A.6 The Suburbs: supporting sustainable communities**

### **Further Alterations to the London Plan, 2006**

The Mayor will and boroughs should support sustainable communities in suburban areas of both inner and outer London. DPDs, Community Strategies and other relevant policies for these areas should seek to enhance the quality of life, economy and environment of suburban London by:

- Realising job opportunities that can be generated by population increase associated with new housing; addressing structural economic challenges, including changes in the office market, facing some areas (particularly outer London); promoting and rigorously managing strategic and local industrial locations; improving provision for small and medium sized enterprises; refreshing the local skills base; increasing childcare provision; developing the contribution of the public sector to the wider economy; realising scope for home based working and providing better access to the wider opportunities of the city region (see also Chapter 3, Parts B and C).
- Maintaining and improving the features that make London's suburbs attractive, including improving the public realm, conserving open space and providing spatial policies that support improvement of services, including health facilities, schools, community facilities and policing.
- Focusing retail, leisure, key commercial activity and community services in town centres; increasing housing provision within them; improving their safety and security and where necessary promoting public transport accessibility and capacity improvements (see Policy 2A.5, Chapter 3, Parts C and D).
- Supporting and enhancing the role of district and more local centres for 'walk to' services and meeting day to day needs, especially for convenience goods (see also Policy 2A.5, Chapter 3D).
- Promoting and making more efficient use of land in areas around town centres that have good access by public transport and on foot to the town centre as appropriate for higher-density and mixed-use development including housing (see also Chapter 3A)
- Where appropriate, modernising or redeveloping the housing stock and providing a mix of housing types, sizes and tenures, including affordable housing, that can meet the full range of residents' needs (see also Chapter 3A)
- Encouraging a low carbon emission approach across London's suburbs, including lower density areas, taking into account the need to foster more sustainable approaches to the re-use, recycling and management of waste and the use of water, energy and land by Londoners themselves through changing lifestyles; within the existing stock of buildings; in the design and construction of new development, and in transport use and choices. (see also Chapters 3C and 4, Parts A and B).

The Mayor will support the continued improvement of services which enhance the quality of life in London's suburbs such as health centres, hospitals, care centres,

schools and nurseries and community facilities. He will continue to invest in public transport and take measures to improve the quality of policing and crime prevention.

2.18 A key spatial priority for this plan is to focus action on the suburbs of London and their varied communities. They are the places where most people live and work and the Mayor wishes to enhance the quality of life and economic prosperity of these areas. Although much of suburban London is unlikely to experience major change, sustained investment in high quality local services increases the attractiveness of suburbs and will lead to continued improvements in the quality of life for their residents. The Mayor will continue to encourage investment in the improvement and expansion of key local services such as neighbourhood policing, local transport provision and high quality, affordable childcare. These policies have already resulted in improvements to quality of life in many suburban areas. The Mayor will work with other agencies to coordinate investment in health, education and other services.

2.18i London's suburbs are hugely varied in character with a diverse population. Some suburban areas have low-density development and predominant car use. While the attractive image of suburban London as offering good schools, green space and quiet holds true for some areas, pockets of deprivation and physical decay can be found in others. Some suburbs are also experiencing significant cultural and ethnic change.

2.19 Every suburb is unique and requires a tailored policy response in accordance with local circumstances to be set out in DPDs and Community Strategies.

2.20 The suburbs provide a range of employment opportunities, particularly in services, manufacturing, distribution and other uses requiring large floor areas. The public sector is a substantial employer within suburban London, for example in hospitals and schools. Maintaining and enhancing a range of employment uses in these areas is important to support sustainable communities.

2.20i 70% of London's jobs are currently outside the Central Activities Zone. Almost two thirds of London's projected job growth is also expected to take place outside the CAZ, increasing towards the end of the plan period. Some parts of suburban London have significant growth prospects but in others, especially in outer London, little or no growth might occur if historic trends continue (see Figure 1.2).

2.20ii However, new research points to new trends. Proposed residential development will be a major source of new suburban employment. It is estimated that, on average, for every extra 1000 new residents, 230 new local jobs are created. There is particular potential for growth in the retail and leisure sectors as well as local business services. Mixed use redevelopment of out-moded offices can support selective renewal of the office stock and enhance the business environment. New activities such as logistics and waste management can revitalise old industrial areas and provide local jobs. Provision for SMEs is especially important in suburban areas. Public sector agencies, which are often the largest individual suburban employers, can be significant drivers of local regeneration through their corporate activities e.g. training, estate management, new technology use. More effective training and improved childcare facilities will open up both local and wider opportunities. Most of London's Opportunity and Intensification Areas and Strategic and other Industrial Locations are in suburban London and together contain substantial growth potential. As economic activities become increasingly compatible with housing, there may be growing opportunities for more local employment, including homeworking and live-work spaces.

2.20iii However, the greatest potential for enhancing job prospects for suburban Londoners remains improved access to the opportunities of the labour market of the wider city region as a whole. Chapter 3C outlines the strategic transport investments which will support this and SRDFs and TfL's sub-regional network plans provide details of more local proposals. Through reverse commuting there will also be opportunities in the growing nearby parts of the wider South East.

2.22 The Mayor has identified a four tier approach to guiding change in suburban areas, focusing on the following types of suburban area: town centres, employment locations, neighbourhoods and residential heartlands.

2.22i Guidance on town centre development is set out in Chapter 3D with more local detail provided by SRDFs. The rejuvenation of District and smaller centres, especially through new convenience retail provision, will improve 'walk to' accessibility for local suburban communities.

2.23 Areas around town centres will be most appropriate for higher density development and a greater mix of uses in accordance with their greater levels of accessibility relative to other suburban areas. Development of these areas should be tailored to the level of public transport accessibility.

2.23.i London's industrial capacity lies almost wholly in the suburbs. Chapter 3B and the Industrial Capacity SPG provide guidance on its management, enhancement, and where necessary, protection to ensure that it makes an effective contribution to London's changing economic needs. Most of London's Opportunity and Intensification Areas also lie in the suburbs, representing its greatest individual reservoirs of capacity for brownfield development and intensification. The SRDFs provide guidance on implementation of policy in Chapter 5 to achieve the potential of Opportunity and Intensification Areas.

2.23.ii In order to achieve sustainable communities the housing stock should have the capacity to meet the needs of people throughout their life and to offer housing that is affordable. They must also be supported by adequate social (Chapter 3A) as well as physical (Chapter 3C and 4) and environmental (Chapter 3D) infrastructure. High quality design (Chapter 4) will be critical to maintaining and enhancing the quality of the suburban environment. The Mayor's new Regional Housing Strategy will ensure that public sector investment in housing in suburban areas supports these policies.

2.23iii The quality of some of the now ageing suburban residential stock and its environment needs to be upgraded to modern standards. Residential neighbourhoods require attention through local improvements to the public realm, maintenance, management and access, as well as some sensitive redevelopment, while having regard to biodiversity issues and the need to encourage a low carbon emission approach.

2.23iv Chapter 1 outlines how individual Londoners can contribute to this approach. Chapter 4A shows how new development, including waste management arrangements and facilities, can help London's suburbs move towards 'carbon neutrality' and Chapter 4B provides guidance on retrofitting the stock of existing buildings.

2.23v In transport terms, outer London's once generous road capacity is becoming increasingly congested and improvements to public transport to town centres and

employment areas and increased demand management of road use will be needed (see Chapter 3C). The continued improvements to bus services and the Mayor's plans for national rail services will be especially beneficial in the suburbs (see 3.183i). In some places tram schemes will also improve accessibility and many suburban areas will have improved radial access when major projects such as Crossrail, the East London line extension and Thameslink are completed (see table 3C.1).

2.24 The Mayor has already published best practice guidance on how these challenges might be addressed. This has been piloted in a variety of different types of inner and outer suburbs.

## **Appendix 2 - List of organisations contributing views and information**

Peter Bradwell, Demos

English Heritage

Groundwork London

London borough of Bexley

London borough of Bromley

London borough of Croydon

Derek Epstein, Hampstead Garden Suburb Residents Association

Dr Nicholas Falk, URBED

London borough of Haringey

Dr Oliver Marc Hartwich, Policy Exchange

London Councils

Stewart Murray, London Borough of Barnet

Martin Simmons, Planning Consultant

South London Partnership

West London Alliance

## **Appendix 3 – Principles of London Assembly scrutiny**

### **An aim for action**

An Assembly scrutiny is not an end in itself. It aims for action to achieve improvement.

### **Independence**

*An Assembly scrutiny is conducted with objectivity; nothing should be done that could impair the independence of the process.*

### **Holding the Mayor to account**

*The Assembly rigorously examines all aspects of the Mayor's strategies.*

### **Inclusiveness**

*An Assembly scrutiny consults widely, having regard to issues of timeliness and cost.*

### **Constructiveness**

*The Assembly conducts its scrutinies and investigations in a positive manner, recognising the need to work with stakeholders and the Mayor to achieve improvement.*

### **Value for money**

*When conducting a scrutiny the Assembly is conscious of the need to spend public money effectively.*

## **Appendix 4 – Orders and translations**

### **How to Order**

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