Chapter 14 Changing settlements in the UK

Objectives

- Recognise the economic, social, political and demographic processes operating in urban areas.
- Investigate the impacts of these processes on UK urban settlements.
- Explain how the processes have led to variations in the quality of life for people in cities.

How and why are settlements changing?

Changes in UK urban areas in the last 50 years

Towns and cities in the UK have experienced a series of major changes in the last 50 years as a result of different processes.

Economic processes

One of the main changes has been the decline of older, traditional industries such as iron and steel making, engineering, textiles, shipbuilding and motor manufacture. This decline is a result of growing international competition, especially from Japan and Korea, government policies, and a failure to introduce newer higher-tech machinery and equipment. The UK shipbuilding industry had produced 60% of the world's shipping in 1913 but it then declined dramatically. In 1976 the UK still produced 134 vessels but by 2011 the total was down to just four. The decline was due to competition from countries like Japan, South Korea and (most recently) China – countries who are able to use the very latest technology in ship construction. The UK shipbuilding industry was slow to introduce mechanisation and to give up old working practices. So some towns and cities, such as Glasgow, Sunderland and Wallsend, experienced more yard closures (Figure 1) and rising unemployment.

The decline in traditional industries left many inner city areas by the 1980s with empty, derelict works and factories – and decaying housing. Some cities, like Birmingham, still had car making but even this collapsed in 2005 when the industry moved out of the city. This meant that even more local factories which had made the components for the cars, vans and lorries also closed. So unemployment rose and people moved away in search of work.

By contrast, London has experienced rapid economic growth in the last 50 years, partly as a result of the development of the financial services industries in places such as London Docklands. In addition, newer, light industries such as printing, publishing and light engineering were attracted to London by the size of the market, its excellent communications network, its large, skilled labour force and, after 1994, its easy access to the markets of the rest of Europe via the Channel Tunnel. This economic growth attracted more and more people to live in London which had lots of jobs. So population grew in and around London and the demand for houses and flats grew with it. The new industries preferred locations just outside the urban areas, close to the green belt where there was more space and cheaper land. So industrial estates grew up in these locations on the edge of urban areas (Figure 2).
Political processes

Towns and cities were affected by political processes too. After the 1980s, governments began to try to regenerate decaying inner-city areas by using Enterprise Zones. These zones set about redeveloping the areas by demolishing older houses and empty factories, building new offices and creating more open space. The London Docklands development (see Figure 3) is one example of this redevelopment process which created many new jobs in the growing financial services. It also included ‘luxury apartments’, which began a process or re-urbanisation, as younger, richer people chose to move back into areas close to the city centre. The attraction was easy access to the jobs, entertainments and shops of central London. A major part of the growth of London in the period after 1986 was the government deregulation of the financial markets. The government introduced these measures in order to make financial institutions in London more competitive with those in other world cities, especially New York. The deregulation was introduced on 27 October 1986 and was known as the ‘Big Bang’ because of the ‘explosive’ growth in financial activity as a result of the changes. The effect of the changes was to strengthen London as a major world financial centre and to create an economic boom which led to massive new office, apartment and retail developments in the Isle of Dogs and Canary Wharf areas of the old London docklands.

The 1980s also saw the privatisation of many industries such as steel, airlines, telecommunications, water, gas and electricity. These changes had a major impact on key industries like steel, with factories closing or being modernised and re-organised. Also part of the political processes affecting towns and cities were the planning policies in the period. Throughout the period from 1970 to the present planning has had a major impact on the shape, form, function and economic makeup of towns. Planning legislation throughout this time has focused on:

- redeveloping and rebranding inner city areas
- establishing green belts between towns to prevent them merging into one large urban area
- Improving infrastructure such as roads and more recently railways
- Protecting historic buildings, often in city centres
- Reviving shopping areas in city centres – but also encouraging out-of-town retail developments.

Social processes

Social processes affected urban settlements through the processes of redevelopment. Cities like Birmingham decided to redevelop its older inner city areas. In order to do this, the local residents had to be moved away from their old decaying houses and flats into new estates in the suburbs. Birmingham created five new Comprehensive Development Areas (CDAs) with new flats and more open space. In some cities, however, many people from the inner city areas have had to move further away – in some cases to one of the many New Towns, such as Telford in Shropshire.
Throughout the period since 1980 a major trend has been the increasing number of single-person households. Some of these are students seeking places to live – and many larger houses have been divided up into student flats. There are also growing numbers of divorced people who are seeking accommodation in flats or small houses. More women have gone out to work in the last 20 years. All these changes in society have affected the demand for homes – their number, their type and their location. Some aspects, such as access to good roads and parking have become more important and others, such as garden size, less important. Settlements have changed as the number and type of homes being built has responded to all these changes in social processes.

**Demographic processes**

Demographic processes have also affected urban areas – especially the movement of large numbers of people away from city centres into the suburbs or even further into villages in the surrounding countryside. In addition, many cities have seen an influx of people from other countries attracted by the prospect of better-paid jobs. Many new immigrants are prepared to live in cramped, sometimes sub-standard houses and flats, in order to get established in the workforce. Areas such as Handsworth in Birmingham have become famous for the variety of shops selling exotic fruit, vegetables and food introduced by the newcomers (Figure 4). More recently the influx of immigrants has been from Eastern Europe (see table below). The newcomers have also tended to be young people who have subsequently started families. As a result, population growth in many cities has been rapid.

### Net immigration to the UK 1996–2005 (thousands)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>From the Commonwealth</th>
<th>From Eastern Europe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>72</td>
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<tr>
<td>1999</td>
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<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>101</td>
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<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The result of all these processes is the complex ethnic mix that is found in many cities. In Birmingham for example, 34% of the population are non-white, compared to the 30% non-white in London and 7.7% in Liverpool. The figure for Liverpool is low because at the time of the peak immigration the job opportunities in the city were poor. Minority communities tend to have their own momentum of growth – so in cities like Birmingham they grow around similar communities, once a core area has been established. The table on page 225 shows the ethnic mix in Birmingham in 2011.
Birmingham’s population in 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>627,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British</td>
<td>24,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irish</td>
<td>22,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other White</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>627,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White and Black Caribbean</td>
<td>16,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White and Black African</td>
<td>2,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White and Asian</td>
<td>8,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other mixed</td>
<td>5,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian or Asian British</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>61,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistani</td>
<td>114,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladeshi</td>
<td>23,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Asian</td>
<td>13,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or Black British</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Caribbean</td>
<td>44,900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black African</td>
<td>17,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Black</td>
<td>4,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese or other</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>12,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gypsy and Traveller</td>
<td>54,750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Ethnicity</td>
<td>12,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,064,850</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Variations in the quality of urban residential areas

The economic, social, political and demographic processes have led to a pattern of different quality residential areas in UK cities.

Access to recreational areas

Better-off residential areas in cities tend to have good access to open spaces like parks, country parks, and open green space for recreation. This is because the people planning these areas realised the importance of giving people access to recreational areas. In poorer areas of cities, such as Aston in Birmingham, houses and flats are often crammed close together with little open space between them. This is because many of these areas were built in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries when towns were growing very quickly as large numbers of people left the countryside to find work in towns. The pressure was to build houses as quickly as possible, not to create open space for recreation (Figure 5). In the recent past, many inner city areas such as Islington and Hackney in London have undergone rapid changes, including ‘gentrification’. This is the process by which wealthier (mostly middle-income) people move into, renovate, and restore housing and sometimes businesses in inner cities. This process has led to improved access to recreational areas in these inner city areas. Ease of access to recreational areas is also linked to income, in that people with good incomes can access recreational areas easily and quickly, often by car.

Activity 1

Study a large town near you.

(a) Try to map the areas of housing, shopping, industry and recreation for the town.

(b) Now try to explain the pattern you have mapped in terms of economic, political, social and demographic processes.
Access to amenities

Amenities are things like parks, playgrounds and golf courses, as well as health clubs, restaurants, shops, community centres, cinemas and theatres. Some residential parts of cities have good access to these amenities. These are usually places near city centres or in the parts of cities where people have more money. Amenities like restaurants and cinemas are located in city centres because routes and public transport services converge there, so people can reach them easily. In the same way, richer areas of cities have more people who will pay to go to health clubs, restaurants and luxury good shops.

There are also ‘disamenities’ – things people do not want to be near, like rubbish tips and air-polluting incinerators. So one result is that there is competition and conflict to either live close to or away from amenities and disamenities. For example, more affluent areas try to ‘capture’ as many services and amenities as possible in order to have easy access to them.

Access to services

There are many different types of services in residential areas, such as transport, electricity, waste disposal, water supply, and medical services. One example of this is the access to medical services, such as doctors. This affects the quality of the urban area. In the UK, research shows that 0.75 km is the upper distance limit of walking for mothers with school-age children. Access to medical services is linked to: distance from the surgery; access to a car; and the quality of public transport. So single parents on low incomes, for example, living in high-rise flats with no car have very poor access to medical facilities.

Most General Practitioner (GP) surgeries are located in older, more middle-class areas or higher socio-economic areas. This is reinforced by two factors. First, doctors tend to live and work in well-established, high quality areas, and secondly many council estates were built without suitable places for surgeries. The result is that there is an uneven distribution of medical resources. This is called the inverse care law, in which the availability of medical services is inversely proportional to the needs of the population. Figure 6 shows the accessibility to medical services in the different parts of Birmingham, based on an ‘accessibility index’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Accessibility index</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sutton Coldfield</td>
<td>135</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erdington</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perry Barr</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hodge Hill</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yardley</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sparkbrook</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hall Green</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selly Oak</td>
<td>132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northfield</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edgbaston</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ladywood</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 6: Accessibility to medical services in Birmingham
Access to different types of housing

Areas of expensive housing in cities tend to be either on the outskirts of the city, where houses are bigger and there is better access to open space and recreational areas, or in the city centre where land is expensive but where high rise flats give access to all the amenities of the city centre. The city centre flats are often the result of urban redevelopment schemes which have seen older, derelict areas demolished or rebuilt with high rise flats. In places like London, old warehouses have been redeveloped as luxury flats (Figure 7). In some parts of inner city areas there are ‘gated communities’, which are only accessible via a gate which serves to filter who can enter the area. This is often a reaction to high crime rates, and in many areas the numerous wall-mounted cameras testify to a community which is afraid. Cheaper housing tends to be in older areas or some council estates with poorer access to amenities, services and open space.

Changes in UK rural areas in the last 50 years

Figure 8: The four types of countryside outside the urban area

Change is everywhere and that includes the UK’s countryside. ‘Change’ is a big umbrella under which many things happen. The nature of countryside change varies from place to place. The most important factor is distance from a major city. According to this, it is possible to recognise four different types of countryside, as shown in Figure 8.

- The urban fringe – This type of countryside is being quickly lost to urban growth, particularly where there are no planning controls such as green belts.
- The commuter belt – This is countryside, but the settlements within it are used as dormitories by urban-based workers and their families.
- The accessible countryside – This is beyond the commuter belt, but within day-trip reach. Still very much a rural area.
- The remote countryside – This takes the best part of a day to reach from a city. Almost totally rural.
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Figure 9 shows the distribution of these four types of countryside in England and Wales.

These four types of countryside are being affected by a number of processes of change. As shown in Figure 10, some of the processes span from the city to the remote countryside, whilst others involve just two or three of the countryside zones. Remember that these processes are working in two directions – a few towards the city, the majority outwards from the city.

### Skills Builder 1

Study Figure 9 and refer to an atlas.

(a) Where are the main areas of remote countryside?

(b) What are the physical features of these remote areas?

### Types of rural settlement

Commuter villages have grown up in the commuter belt for people who are able to afford to live in rural villages and commute to jobs in towns. Belbroughton in the West Midlands is a typical example (Figure 11).

Belbroughton has developed from a small village with a population in 1960 of 603, to a large commuter village of 2,400 people in 2011. It has developed as a result of:

- being close to Birmingham (17 km away) and the Black Country
- having good road and rail links to Birmingham and the Black Country
- having space in the fields around the old village to build new houses
- people wanting to move out of Birmingham and the Black Country into a rural area where they hope to find cleaner air and less crime
- farmers willing to make money by selling their farms.

In the past, Belbroughton was a centre of scythe making and sharpening for local farms. Up until the 1960s it had a school, post office, pub, numerous shops and some farms within the village. Now there are lots of new houses and lots of new residents. The new residents often have two or more cars and they tend not to shop so much in the village but go to supermarkets nearby. So some shops have closed, but restaurants have opened catering for the new villagers.
Retirement communities have also developed in parts of rural areas which have attractive scenery, such as coasts or hills. These settlements are usually in the accessible or remote rural areas. Currently about 10% of people who retire from work choose to go and live in villages and small towns. These villages and towns (Figure 12) have developed as a result of:

- the hope by people who retire that living in the country will give access to cleaner air
- the hope that there will be a strong sense of community to which the newcomers can belong
- the hope that there will be less crime and danger in the countryside
- the growing affluence of some retired people
- the fact that most people are living longer and are seeking a better quality of life.

The retired people do not always mix with local people, and they can create a strain on local health services because more people need treatment. Retired people can afford to pay more for houses and flats than local people so house prices rise and young local people may be unable to afford to buy a home in their own village.

Remote rural villages and small hamlets grew up in the past when more people worked in farming. They have declined because:

- people have left because local jobs have disappeared as farming has become more mechanised
- some farmers have left farming, especially in hilly areas where soils are thin and acid, so farming is challenging and restricted to hill sheep or cattle farming
- they do not attract commuters or retired people because they do not have access to good, fast roads and they are a long way from major towns and cities.

East Anglia – A prosperous rural region?

East Anglia consists of Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire and part of Essex (Figure 14 on page 230) and is home to nearly 3 million people. East Anglia is a region with a generally high quality of life and low levels of deprivation. The rate of unemployment is lower than the national average, and East Anglia is, in general, one of the UK’s more prosperous rural areas. For example, in terms of the Index of Multiple Deprivation (see table on page 230) it is clear that over half of the very highest areas of multiple deprivation (the ‘1% areas’) are in North West England and that only 2% are in the East of England (which contains East Anglia).

Activity 2

Figure 13 shows an example of the type of English village landscape that has been much admired for well over one hundred years.

(a) State three reasons why some people would see this as an ideal place to live.

(b) State three reasons why some people would not want to live here.

(c) Identify three features in the photograph that make it an unusual view of an English village in the twenty-first century.
The reasons for East Anglia’s relative prosperity are:

1. A prosperous agriculture. This is a region with large flat areas, much of which used to be marsh (locally called ‘fenland’) which has been reclaimed. This has created an important agricultural area based on the fertile soils of the reclaimed land. East Anglia produces much of the English crop of cereals, such as wheat and barley, as well as crops such as peas and potatoes. There are some very large farms in the area which have become even bigger as farms have adopted newer and bigger machines and used more intensive farming methods.

2. The growth of traditional industries such as those based on food and drink, and the development of new industries, particularly biotechnology and Information and Communications Technology firms – especially in and around Cambridge. These firms have been attracted here by the scientific expertise of the people of Cambridge and the good access by rail and road to London and the South East. Other new industries include the manufacture of wind generation equipment. Part of East Anglia is also in the London–Stansted–Cambridge corridor, one of four growth areas in the UK which in the 1990s attracted new industrial growth, much of which is based on financial and business services offices. In turn, this has led to a strong demand for more new houses and the services they need.

3. Growing employment in ports such as Felixstowe (the largest container port in the UK) and Ipswich. New docks have been built at these ports to take even bigger vessels, and as the ports grow so does the number of available jobs – either in the ports themselves or in industries attracted by the ports.

4. Good transport links by road, rail and air with London, the rest of South East England and mainland Europe. This has attracted firms to locate in the area – it is close to London but the land and houses are less expensive.

5. The growth of tourism, based on the coast and the Norfolk Broads (an area of flooded peat workings now popular for boating holidays – Figure 15) has also helped to make this a relatively prosperous area.

However, not all of East Anglia is prosperous. There are significant pockets of deprivation, particularly in some of the more remote rural areas of Suffolk.

Index of Multiple Deprivation scores (2010) for the English regions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Percentage of the most deprived areas (the ‘1% areas’)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North East</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yorkshire &amp; Humberside</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Midlands</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Midlands</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East of England</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South West</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Highlands of Scotland

The Highlands of Scotland consist of the area north and west of the Highland Boundary Fault (Figure 16). This is a huge area covering half of the landmass of Scotland – but it has only 4% of the total population (about 210,000). The highlands are a region with a quality of life which varies from place to place. There is lower than the UK average unemployment but prosperity is generally low. The reasons for this are:

- This is a region where agriculture is limited by steep slopes, high mountains, including Ben Nevis (1344 m) the highest mountain in the UK, and thin acid soils. It is also an area which gets a lot of rainfall (over 1500 mm per year) so farming is restricted to hill sheep and cattle rearing, with small patches of better agricultural land for oats, barley and wheat. In the past, more people lived here on small farms (or ‘crofts’ as they were called) but in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the large landowners drove the crofters away from the land, because they wanted to create large sheep farms. This was called the ‘Highland Clearances’. Since then the outward migration of people has slowed, but this is still a difficult area in which to earn a living, and young people are still leaving for better paid jobs in the big cities. This means that there are far fewer young people living in the Highlands than in East Anglia, for example.

- Fishing used to be an important industry here but has also declined as the fish stocks shrank. The growth of fish farming has done a small amount to slow the exodus of people but there are relatively few jobs.

- Tourism has developed in places like Aviemore (skiing) and some coastal areas, and this has helped to provide jobs and to slow the loss of population – but many of these jobs are seasonal.

- People in the Highlands sometimes complain about the long distances they have to travel for services such as hospitals, schools, shops and libraries and this explains why some people leave the area.

- There is little industry in the Highlands. There are a few distilleries producing whisky, plus some clothing factories and industries linked to timber or fish processing, but these are automated industries requiring relatively few workers and, in the face of foreign competition, many are now contracting.

- Although there is a growth in people working from home (Figure 17) using teleworking, the numbers are still relatively small.

Decision-making skills

(a) Working in pairs, write down five features of your local area that you think are positive and five things that you think are negative.

(b) Suggest two ways in which your list might be different if you were aged 40.
How easy is it to manage the demand for high quality places to live?

Leeds and the impacts of rising demand for good living spaces

**Economic impacts**

Leeds in West Yorkshire has undergone rapid economic growth in the last 20 years. This economic growth has attracted lots of new firms to the city, many of them located in the new office developments in and around the city centre. Leeds has had an image of itself as the ‘Barcelona of the north’ and between 1988 and 1995 the Leeds Development Corporation spent £72 million building new offices and shops. After this, in the period 1995 to 2010, £6.7 billion of major construction schemes were built. At the same time the population of Leeds has increased from 696,000 in 1981, to 715,000 in 2001, and 798,000 in 2011. The most recent growth in population parallels the economic growth which is changing the face of the city.

The attractions of Leeds are:

- Intensive redevelopment schemes, especially in the city centre creating new space for offices and shops.
- Excellent communications with the rest of the UK and with mainland Europe via the motorways (M62, M1, M18), rail and the Leeds Bradford airport.
- A large well-trained and educated labour force.
- Three universities in the city.
- A large affluent local market in the city itself and in the rest of West Yorkshire.
- Its status as a regional centre for northern England which has attracted the regional headquarters of large firms.

The result has been the rapid growth of employment in the city. Specific ‘quarters’ have now emerged within the city centre, such as the financial quarter, the shopping quarter and the entertainment quarter. Initial economic growth has led to the city becoming very attractive to new firms which in turn has led to even more economic growth. Much of the new growth is housed in new skyscraper buildings (Figure 18).

**Environmental impacts**

The rapid economic growth of Leeds in the last 20 years has meant a huge demand for new houses and flats. Much of this new development has taken place on brownfield sites which were the location of older industries such as brewing. Large blocks of new flats (Figure 19) were built, either in converted warehouses, often close to the River Aire, or on redevelopment sites close to the river and the canal. In these ways the environment of many central parts of Leeds has been improved by the construction of new homes. In other areas, such as Headingley and Hyde Park, nineteenth-century houses have been updated and redeveloped for students attending the universities in the city.
In other cases, the rapid growth in the demand for high quality places to live has put pressure on the green spaces in and around the city. Leeds is fortunate to have some major parks (such as Roundhay Park) and green spaces, as well as a green belt around the city. There has been a lot of pressure for developments close to these scenic areas and in the areas close to water (rivers and canals). So far the city planners have been able to resist building too much new development on either the green belt areas or the remaining green areas in the city. However a 2012 report said that there was a need for 70,000 new homes in Leeds between 2012 and 2028. Only 16% of this building could be accommodated on brownfield sites, so the rest would have to be in the green belt.

**Social impacts**
As more and more people have moved to Leeds in search of new and better jobs, so the social pattern of the city has changed. Leeds is now a place with many young people. This is because many of the city's residents are moving to the city for work or attend one of the three universities in the city. Distinct student areas, such as Headingley, have emerged, where nineteenth-century houses have been modernised and converted into flats for students. Many of these stay on in Leeds after they have qualified, having found jobs in the city.

**Strategies to improve urban areas**
A range of strategies have been adopted to try to improve urban areas.

**Comprehensive redevelopment**
Comprehensive redevelopment generally means ‘knock it all down and start again’. It was the approach adopted in cities like Liverpool and Birmingham in the 1950s and 1960s. Some central areas in these cities had large areas of sub-standard housing, so slum clearance was a main aim. In the process of knocking down the slums people had to be moved out to estates on the edges of the city, and many small businesses closed for good. The slums were replaced by big tower blocks of flats which had amenities that most of the older houses lacked, such as inside toilets. However the tall blocks of flats in Birmingham soon began to have problems of damp and condensation. Often the construction was poor quality and so buildings deteriorated quickly. Flats lacked any soundproofing and they were poorly insulated. Residents on the upper floors had to rely on lifts for access, especially the elderly and parents with prams and pushchairs. Often the lifts were vandalised or broke down. So many people were afraid of being mugged in the corridors and they felt trapped in the flats. There were few play areas and no community facilities for young people. In recent years some of the tower blocks of flats have been demolished to be replaced by high-density low-rise housing. In other places close to the city centre tower blocks have been redeveloped as luxury flats and sold to young professionals (Figure 20).
Enterprise Zones

In the 1980s the government began to use Enterprise Zones as a way of improving many inner city areas. The Enterprise Zones were given powers within their areas which largely bypassed local planning controls. They were designed to promote industrial growth, and firms locating there had a range of financial benefits including grants and loans. One of the main Enterprise Zones was at Dudley in the West Midlands. Here between 1984 and 1990 the site of a derelict steelworks was redeveloped to create a large shopping centre (the Merry Hill Centre in Figure 21) with 260 shops, offices and restaurants, 5,500 employees, and a turnover in 2009 of over £500 million. This development still attracts over 50,000 people a day and more than 70,000 at weekends. However the results locally have not all been positive. Nearby town centres such as Dudley and Brierly Hill were seriously affected by Merry Hill, with shops closing and unemployment rising. Traffic in the area is congested with the many visitors, and the new jobs are often only part-time.

Urban Development Corporations

Urban Development Corporations (UDCs) were property-led regeneration agencies for inner city areas. They operated in areas where there was serious economic decline and a lot of derelict land. The UDCs were able to buy land and attract private investment to rebuild the infrastructure and develop attractive office and housing developments. One of the largest and arguably the most successful UDC was London Docklands. This rebranding (changing names to start a new identity) used flagship projects such as Canary Wharf to attract investment. New roads, new offices, houses, flats and shops have been built and the area is seen as a big success in terms of redevelopment.

However, some experts argue that although it is claimed that Docklands ‘created’ over 40,000 jobs, 20,000 of them were not new at all – they were just jobs moved from other parts of London. Other issues are that the new jobs did not match the skills of the local people, many of whom remained unemployed. Population decline has been replaced by population growth, but the new, mostly young people have very different lifestyles to local people. Local people cannot afford the high cost of the new houses and flats. In response the Development Corporation agreed to build 1500 cheaper homes and to make 25% of the jobs available for local people. Critics still argue that ‘two docklands’ exist side by side, the new enclave for the richer newcomers and the poorer council estates for the original tenants. The issue here is has this ‘rebranding’ been successful, and could more have been done with the money?

Action for Cities, City Challenge Schemes

Governments continued to try to regenerate inner city areas through ‘Action for Cities’ and later ‘City Challenges Schemes’. These regeneration projects invited local authorities to bid for government money to spend on inner city projects in their area. One such project in the Hulme area of Manchester spent £24 million over ten years from 1992 to 2002, which included building and improving housing, developing more job-creation and training projects, and reversing the loss of population. The population grew 3% over the period (compared to 0.2% for Manchester as a whole) and deprivation improved.
relative to other areas of the city. But the planned new small shops never materialised, and Hume remained an area of poverty in 2002. Deprivation was still an issue in terms of employment, education and child poverty.

Recent developments
A ‘New Deal for Communities’ was established in 2001 to try again to regenerate inner city areas. In Aston in Birmingham, for example, £54 million was spent on a scheme called ‘Aston Pride’ between 2001 and 2012. New health centres were built and money was spent on education for unemployed people and schemes which found jobs for 1328 people. Other projects helped improve flats and houses and started training schemes for unemployed men and women. One of the results was a big improvement in crime figures, with burglary down 54% and robbery down 28%.

Strategies to improve settlements in rural regions of the UK
Different strategies can be used to improve the quality of settlements in rural regions of the UK to make them sustainable. People living in rural areas in the UK are faced with many challenges:

- Out-migration. Many young people leave rural areas like northern Scotland to find work and to find housing they can afford.
- There is a lack of jobs. Agriculture, fishing and forestry – the traditional jobs in more rural areas – all need fewer people as they become more mechanised or as they contract (and they are relatively poorly paid).
- Some rural areas, such as parts of Mid Wales, have poor communications, with little or no bus services and difficult roads.
- There is often a lack of shops, pubs and post offices (Figure 22), due to changes in shopping habits as more people seek to shop in supermarkets and larger stores which are able to offer cheaper goods.
- The lack of easily accessible entertainment. For people living in Kington in Herefordshire, for example, the nearest cinema is 36 miles away, in Shrewsbury.
- Some small schools in rural areas, such as parts of Shropshire and Herefordshire, may have only three or four staff to cover everything. As a result they may struggle to deliver the full range of subjects in the National Curriculum.
- The high price of housing. In Cornwall the average house price is eight times the average annual income, which means that many local people cannot buy a house.
- Some areas, such as parts of Herefordshire, do not have a broadband connection to the internet – something that is essential for people working from home.

Activity 3
(a) What do you think a person living in Aston in 2001 and still unemployed 10 years later would think about the Aston Pride project?
(b) What might a school leaver getting help to find a job in 2010 think about the project?
(c) How would you try to measure the success or failure of projects like this?
(d) Why do you think the challenges of inner city areas are so difficult to resolve?
Rural development schemes: the Eden Project

One approach to improving rural living spaces is the development of large-scale projects such as the Eden Project in Cornwall (Figure 23). This project has converted a series of former china clay quarries, using two huge enclosures consisting of adjoining domes that house thousands of plants. The domes consist of hundreds of hexagonal and pentagonal, inflated, plastic cells, supported by steel frames. Each enclosure illustrates a natural biome – the first dome contains the plants found in a tropical environment, and the second the plants in a Mediterranean environment.

The advantages of this type of development are:

- Jobs for local people in an area with high unemployment and few alternative forms of employment. The project employs 600 people directly.
- The project attracts over 1 million visitors each year. This brings big benefits to local hotels, restaurants and shops who have far more customers. A 2011 survey showed that the biggest increase in customers was in travel and accommodation but there were also increases in jobs in catering. St Austell, the closest town, had the highest positive effects, followed by Penzance and Plymouth.
- The project is generating over £150 million indirectly to the region annually.
- It prioritises local suppliers for its annual £7 million spend, and this too brings big benefits to the area.
- The project calculates that it has secured 200 local jobs in addition to the people it employs directly.

However, as with all such projects, there are some disadvantages:

- Traffic in the area has become worse as a result of the large number of visitors.
- Some local firms argue that recruiting staff has become more difficult because of the competition for staff from the Eden Project.
- The St Austell area benefits, but areas not close to the project lose out.
- Some other local firms and attractions claim a drop in their visitor numbers and turnover as result of the attraction of the Eden Project.
- There are still many people in poverty and there is still significant deprivation in the area.
How easy is it to manage the demand for high quality places to live?

Planning policies for rural areas

Rural areas are under pressure from:
- The growth and expansion of towns and cities
- The desire to build new shops, offices and factories on greenfield sites
- The need to build new roads and new rail lines
- The demands of more people with more leisure time who want to enjoy the countryside in lots of different ways. Some people want peace and quiet, while others want to drive 4-wheel-drive vehicles across the countryside.

Green belts

So the government tries to ensure that the planning process puts a limit on urban growth. It has done this through establishing green belts around towns and cities. Green belts are made up of mostly open space – agricultural land and woodland that is protected by planning controls. Green belts have five main functions:
- To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas
- To prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another
- To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment
- To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns
- To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.
How successful have green belts been?

- Green belts have had some success in containing urban sprawl.
- Much of the land in green belts is degraded and actually brown-belt or brownfield land. As much as 20% of London’s green belt consists of this type of land, with sewage works, power stations and landfill sites.
- Some people argue that jobs have been lost because people do not try to build new developments where planning controls are so strict.
- There is huge pressure to release land for more housing.
- There is extra pressure on rural land just beyond the edge of the greenbelt for new shops, offices and homes.

**National Parks**

National Parks are areas of countryside where scenery and wildlife are protected. The first parks were created in the 1950s when there was a fear that some of the UK’s best scenery would be damaged, so conservation – the protection the environment – is very important. Now there are 15 parks (Figure 24).

![Diagram of Britain’s National Parks](image-url)
How easy is it to manage the demand for high quality places to live?

The main aims of National Parks are:

- To preserve and enhance the natural beauty of the countryside
- To provide places for recreation
- To protect the social and economic well-being of the people living or working in the parks.

How successful have the National Parks been?

- Some national parks, such as the Yorkshire Dales, have large quarries in them, extracting the limestone for roadstone and cement. The quarries create noise and dust (from blasting) and can create problems with large lorries on narrow roads. Spoil heaps from quarries can be eyesores, and farmland and wildlife may be lost.

- In other parks, such as the Lake District, so many visitors are attracted to the main viewpoints in the park that footpaths become eroded by the sheer number of feet using them, and roads can be filled with the noise and fumes of traffic. Other issues are farmers finding their animals harmed by dogs, and too many boats on some lakes (like Windermere), disturbing the peace and quiet.

National Parks have put in place plans to overcome these challenges, such as restricting quarrying within the parks, and managing different parts of a park for different activities, such as one area for noisy activities, another zone for peace and quiet. They have also undertaken a lot of work to repair footpaths damaged by erosion. In addition, park managers argue that they have been successful in protecting wildlife and habitats within the parks. In the Cairngorms National Park, for example, the numbers of deer are managed to maintain healthy sizeable herds. On Dartmoor, the upland heath, blanket bog, valley mire and grass moor have all been conserved and protected.

Figure 26: It can get very crowded at the top of Snowdon

Activity 4

1. Draw up a matrix to show ‘Successes of National Parks’ and ‘Challenges in National Parks’.

2. Explain why you think National Park planners have or have not been successful.
There have been many changes in both rural and urban settlements over the last 50 years as a result of government policies, as well as economic, social and demographic changes. Settlements in some places have grown rapidly, whilst in other they have declined as people have left. The result is a set of wide variations in the quality of residential areas. In areas where there is a great demand for high quality places to live there is pressure on the environment. In other places the challenge is to improve the quality of the area, both urban and rural.

You should know...

- The economic, social and demographic processes operating in urban areas
- The impact of these processes on urban settlements
- How the different processes have led to variations in the quality of life for people in cities
- The factors that affect access to recreational areas, amenities, services and different types of housing in urban areas
- The challenges facing different types of rural settlements from the urban fringe to the remote countryside
- The different types of rural settlement
- Why there are variations in the quality of life and deprivation in East Anglia and the Highlands of Scotland
- Why there is a rising demand for urban living space in Leeds
- What are the main economic, social and environmental impacts of the demand for more urban living space in Leeds
- What are the successes and failures of strategies to improve urban areas
- What are the challenges facing people in rural areas
- The advantages and disadvantages of the Eden Project
- The successes and challenges of National Parks and green belts

Key terms

- Accessible rural areas
- Amenities
- Brownfield sites
- Commuter villages
- Deregulation
- Enterprise zones
- Green belt
- Rebranding
- Redevelopment

Remote rural areas
Retirement communities
Urban development corporations

Which key words match the following definitions?

A Countryside within easy reach of urban areas
B Adopting a new name in order to create a better impression of an area
C Rural areas that are distant from and thus little affected by urban areas and their populations
D Places where most of the people are retired
E An area designated by the government to promote economic growth and where firms get grants and relaxed planning regulations
F Local places people want, such as theatres, restaurants, hotels
G Places of mostly farmland where development is strictly controlled
H Reducing or abolishing state regulations on institutions such as banks and insurance companies

To check your answers, look at the glossary on page 321.
**Foundation Question:** State three ways in which economic processes have affected urban areas in the UK in the last 50 years. (6 marks)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student answer (achieving 2 marks)</th>
<th>Feedback comments</th>
<th>Build a better answer (achieving 6 marks)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Factories closed and people moved away so some parts of towns became derelict.</td>
<td>This is a really good start and scores 2 marks.</td>
<td>Older industries in some cities have declined and so people lost their jobs and factories have closed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some new industries grew in London.</td>
<td>Needs to explain why the new industries grew there, so this is only part of the answer, so no mark.</td>
<td>Some cities like London have had rapid growth as a result of the development of the financial services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New industry have made towns grow quickly.</td>
<td>This is partly correct but misses the point about the location of new industries, so no mark.</td>
<td>New industries preferred to locate on the edge of towns so these areas have grown rapidly.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total available for spelling, punctuation and grammar = 3 marks. Marks achieved: 2.

**Higher question:** Explain the environmental impacts of the rising demand for high quality residential areas in one UK city. (8 marks)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student answer (achieving 4 marks)</th>
<th>Feedback comments</th>
<th>Build a better answer (achieving 8 marks)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leeds has had some very fast economic growth so more houses are being built.</td>
<td>This scores no mark as it does not look at the environmental impact of growth.</td>
<td>More houses and flats are built on brownfield sites in Leeds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flats have been built on brownfield sites.</td>
<td>Good part of the answer, scores 2 marks.</td>
<td>Nineteenth-century houses have been upgraded and improved.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More houses are being built in the green belt</td>
<td>Just gets to the point but could have linked it to the pressure for more homes. Scores 2 marks.</td>
<td>There is increased pressure to build on green spaces including the green belt.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total available for spelling, punctuation and grammar = 3 marks. Marks achieved: 2.