BLOCK PDH.101

DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

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Preface

This first block in the Unit on Development Strategies will set the strategic context in which housing development is undertaken.

The first section looks at National Planning Policy strategies and explains what the planning system is and how it controls the location of housing. It also briefly considers the historical development and the 'plan led' system.

The second section reviews the development plan system, including the role of development plans, and the different types of plans and what they cover. The section also looks at the relatively recent addition of a regional planning dimension to complement the existing local and county level development plan structures.

Having obtained an overview of the development planning system, the third section examines the various development motives and perspectives of local authorities, RSLs and private developers. This leads into a discussion about the concepts of neighbourhood and community and what these mean for housing design and development. We then turn to examine the many different regeneration programmes and partnerships and their effectiveness.

The fourth and fifth sections round off the block by considering housing needs surveys and the use of housing needs data, respectively. The fourth section concentrates on defining and classifying housing needs, and approaches to identifying needs through surveys and waiting lists. The fifth and final section highlights the way in which public and private sector developers use housing need data in making their development decisions. The motives and perspectives of developers with regard to markets, profits, affordability and needs are all covered.

Outcomes

When you have completed this block, you will be able to:

- identify the historical development of planning control;
- name the different types of development plans;
- describe how development plans have been interpreted with reference to case studies;
- name some of the planning criteria you need to consider when making a development proposal;
- understand how the motives and perspectives of local authorities, RSLs and private developers have an impact on housing developments;
- identify different types of inter-agency partnerships;
- discuss the concepts of neighbourhood and community, including what they mean for housing design and development;
- name the main regeneration programmes and highlight concerns about their effectiveness;
- describe various definitions of housing need;
- understand how needs are classified and describe how housing expectations have changed over time; and
- compare the ways in which private and public developers assess the need and demand for new housing.

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A. National Planning Policy Strategies

1. Introduction

This section explains what the planning system is and how it controls the location of housing. It briefly examines the historical context of the "*planning movement*" as a basis for understanding the ideological drive behind that movement and the way current legislation has been manifested.

The section concentrates on the main Housing Policy issues which arise in the consideration of major housing schemes.

As discussed earlier, Acts of Parliament apply to specific parts of the UK. They are the same for England and Wales (although not always interpreted the same way) but different Acts apply in Scotland. Legislation referred to is English and Welsh, but Scottish legislation, where different, is referred to separately.

2. Historical Context

Town Planning may be defined as that process which controls the development of land in the interests of the public good. In the year 2000, the UK-wide planning system is concerned with:

- creating opportunities for development
- conserving environmental quality
- achieving sustainable development
- promoting public participation
- protecting the rights of the individual

However, statutory planning began not with land use but with sanitation. As an illustration of why such controls were necessary, read the letter overpage, sent to one of the July 1849 editions of *The Times* newspaper. It is printed as published.

Parliament passed a series of sanitary laws from 1848 onwards, culminating in **The Public Health Act of 1875** which divided the country into urban and rural sanitary districts and allowed public authorities to adopt bye-laws to control the construction of new streets and buildings.

From *The Times*, July 1849.

"We print the following remonstrance just as it has reached us and trust the publication will assist the unfortunate remonstrants."

"*THE EDITUR OF THE TIMES PAPER*

Sur: - May we beg and beseach your proteakshion and power. We are Sur, as it may be, livin in a Wilderniss, so far as the rest of London knows anything of us, as the rich and great people care about. We live in muck and filthe. We ain't got no privis, no dust pins, no drains, no water-splies, and no drain or suer in the hole place. The Suer Company, in Greek St., Soho Square, all great, rich and powerfool men, take no notice watsodever of our complaints. The Stenche of a Gully-hole is disgustin. We all of us suffur, and numbers are ill, and if the Colora comes Lord help us.

Some gentlemens comed yesterday, and we thought they was comisheners from the Suer Company, but they was complaining of the noosance and stenche our lanes and corts was to them in New Oxford Street. They was much surprised to see the sellar in No. 12 Carrier St., in our lane, where a child was dyin from fever, and would not believe that Sixty persons sleep in it every night. This here sellar you couldn't swing a cat in, and the rent is five shillings a week, but theare are great many sich here sellars. Sur, we hope you will let us have our cumplaints put into your hinfluenshall paper, and make these landlords of our houses and these comishoners (the friends we spose of the landlords) make our houses decent for Christians to live in.

Praye Sir com and see us, for we are livin like pigs, and it aint faire we shoulde be so ill treted.

We are your respeckfull servents in Church Lane, Carrier St. And the other corts.

Tuesday, July, 1849.

John Scott

Emma Scott

Joseph Crosbie

Hanna Crosbie

Edward Copman

and 50 other names added. (Spell checking this letter is a disaster for a computer, and for a proofreader!)

It was not until 1909 that an attempt was made to deal with more general land use problems such as the separation of incompatible uses or the lack of amenity land. **The Housing, Town Planning etc. Act 1909** gave local authorities the power to prepare schemes:

> *"... as respects any land which is in course of development or appears likely to be used for building purposes, with the general object of securing proper sanitary conditions, amenity and convenience in connection with the laying out and use of the land, and of any neighbouring lands."*

However, problems of lack of technical skill, excessive bureaucratic procedures, public participation and the payment of compensation to landowners affected by proposed schemes meant that only a handful of such schemes were implemented.

2.1 The Town and Country Planning Act, 1947

Following three celebrated government reports, Barlow, Scott and Uthwatt in the 1930s and 1940s, **The Town and Country Planning Act 1947** was introduced and formed the basis of modern planning. The essential features of the Act were as follows:

- it created Local Planning Authorities requiring them to prepare development plans indicating the manner in which they proposed land in their areas should be used, whether by development or otherwise. Plans had to be reviewed every 5 years;
- all land was made subject to planning control, not just land within a scheme prepared by the authority. In deciding whether to grant permission, the authority were to be guided by the provisions of the development plan;
- local planning authorities were given powers to deal with unauthorised development, and to secure preservation of trees, buildings of architectural or historic interest and to control the display of advertisements; and
- tax was imposed on landowners to cover the increase in the value of land due to a planning permission.

The Town and Country Planning Act 1947 was part of an impressive bundle of new planning laws introduced following World War II, all part of the concern for state intervention for the benefit of social welfare. However, this new system had its problems.

Activity 1

What do you think might have been the main problems in the 1950s and 1960s that this planning system presented to developers and landowners of potential housing sites?

To help answer this question, think about what developers might need or fear from such a system.

Time allocation: 10 minutes

2.2 Planning in the 1950s and 1960s

Neil, a practising planner, described the problems as follows:

> *"I would describe the problems arising from the Town and Country planing Act 1947 for developers as follows:*
>
> - *the control over development value of land inhibited owners from selling to developers which stifled development at a time of rapid social and economic growth. (In fact, in a series of Acts in the 1950s the owners' rights to development value and market-value compensation for compulsory purchase were gradually restored)*
> - *despite a developing technical expertise and professional approach to planning, local planning authorities had fallen behind in preparing and reviewing development plans*
> - *in the development boom of the 1960s, it became apparent that the planning system was too rigid and slow to cope with a rapidly changing society. The need to get central government approval for plans was a major cause of delay. Increased car ownership and the consequences for the spatial arrangement of land uses were creating demands for development in places not anticipated in outdated development plans*
> - *there was a realisation that land-use planning had significant interrelationships with social and economic planning. The development plan system needed to be broadly based and give the public more opportunity to influence planning policies."*

On the advice of a committee of experts, the Planning advisory Group, set up by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, new legislation was introduced in 1968 and 1971 which, together with more recent legislation in 1990, forms the basis of the current system.

2.3 Current planning legislation

The primary legislation governing land use planning is now contained in the **Town and Country Planning Act 1991** which is a consolidating Act encompassing several earlier Acts, including:

- The Town and Country Planning Act 1990
- The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
- The Planning (Hazardous Substances) Act 1990

In addition, parts I-III of the **Local Government Act 2000** have an impact on planning by giving local authorities a new power to promote the well-being of their areas; a duty to draw up community strategies and new political and managerial structures. In particular, the development of community strategies will draw in planners, as every local authority must now prepare a strategy for improving the economic, social and environmental well-being of its area, including sustainable development.

2.4 National planning guidance

As well as Acts of Parliament, in England different aspects of national planning policy are set out in Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs) which are issued by the government. In Scotland, PPGs are known as National Planning Policy Guidelines (NPGs). In Wales, the government's land use planning policies are set out in a document called Planning Guidance (Wales) Planning Policy. Planning circulars are also issued for England and Wales by the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR) and the Welsh Office respectively. These circulars give additional guidance on specific issues, such as planning appeal procedures. Access to the government's planning guidance can be found on the DETR website at: detr.gov.uk

2.5 Regional Planning Guidance

The government in England also issues Regional Planning Guidance Notes (RPGs). There is no regional planning guidance issued in Wales, a lack which has been the subject of some criticism, although the National Assembly for Wales has undertaken to address this. The main purpose of regional planning guidance is to set out broad strategic policies where there are issues which, although not national in scope, apply across regions or parts of regions and which cross local authority boundaries. The DETR has issued guidance on the preparation of RPG in PPG 11:*Regional Planning*.

Local planning authorities are expected to be guided by the regional spatial strategy set out in RPGs which covers a 15-20 year period and identifies the scale and distribution of provision for new housing and priorities for the environment, transport, infrastructure and economic development.

2.6 Regional planning bodies

The RPG is meant to link directly into other strategic plans and forms the strategic framework for transport plans and the regional economic strategies of the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) in particular (we will deal in more detail with the new RDAs in section C of this block). RPG is produced by Regional Planning Bodies (RPB) who are mainly, at present, the regional forums of local planning authorities.

Housing is seen as a 'key component' of the regional spatial strategy and planning. Given that the government's national target for housing is that 60% of additional housing will be provided on previously developed land by 2008, housing plans will be expected to support 'urban renaissance and deliver sustainable development'. RPBs are, therefore, required to prepare a housing strategy which comprises housing policies, the desired pattern of housing development, and distribution of housing provision in their region. RPBs are advised to work with 'stakeholders' who represent the various interests of housing providers, people in housing need, and the environment itself, and are to include:

- The Housing Corporation
- The House Builders Federation
- The National Housing Federation
- Shelter
- RDAs
- Campaign for the Protection of Rural England/other environmental bodies
- Neighbouring RPBs

The RPBs are also tasked with developing housing strategies which help:

- **create more sustainable patterns of development**, through following the principles set out in PPG3 (which we shall examine next);
- **manage the release of land** through setting principles for the managed release of sites with the detailed policies for this contained in the unitary development plans and local plans of local authorities;

- **make best use of land** by avoiding developments which are less than 30 dwellings per hectare;
- **re-use previously developed land and buildings** by proposing a recycling target which will contribute to achieving the national target;
- **create mixed communities and provide greater choice of housing** by promoting a mix of housing in terms of size, type, affordability and location.

3. Planning Policies for Housing

3.1 Government Advice on Policies and Overall Objectives

England and Wales

PPG3

It is worth noting the advice in the Department of environment Planning Policy Guidance Note 3 (PPG3) last updated in March 1992, with respect to the manner in which housing development should be controlled by development plans. This states that housing policies in development plans should embody a number of considerations.

Protection of the countryside

Plans should show how future land requirements for new housing can continuously be met, having regard to other planning objectives such as green belt policy involving protection of the countryside from urban forms of development; conservation of natural habitats; protection of the most versatile agricultural land; and the conservation and enhancement of the urban environment and built heritage.

Sites capable of development

Plans should identify an acceptable choice of sites which are realistically capable of being developed for housing. For example, there should be no development constraints, e.g. lack of public infrastructure such as sewage treatment facilities, gas, electricity; or legal problems to prevent development. Plans should phase development during the plan period, such that it is co-ordinated with proposals, e.g. for new public infrastructure.

Linked to jobs

Plans should ensure housing is available in the areas where jobs are being created to complement economic growth and reduce commuting.

Social considerations

Plans should allocate sites which provide for a range of housing to cater for different social groups. The location of a housing site will largely determine the cost of housing and plans should also make provision for schools, and community facilities to be easily accessible from housing sites.

PPG3 also requires that planning authorities 'promote more sustainable residential developments, both within and outside existing urban areas'. In particular, they are to promote:

- **development that is linked to public transport**, both within and outside urban areas;
- **mixed-use development**, on sites and within individual buildings including flats over shops;
- **a greener residential environment** by protecting and creating open space and playing fields;
- **designing for quality** by adopting policies which create safe, flexible and people centred environments;
- **making the best use of land** by critically examining the standards applied to new development, particularly with regard to roads, layouts and car parking to avoid the 'profligate use of land'.

Scotland

The equivalent of PPG3 for Scotland is NPPG 3, most recently revised in November 1996. However, it has somewhat different advice on what objectives should be regarded when planning for housing. These are:

- to ensure that within a long-term settlement and housing strategy, an adequate and effective supply of land for housing is identified at all times having regard to demand and other needs for housing;
- to ensure that the identified land provides an appropriate choice of sites and caters for special housing needs and their related location requirements;
- to provide for a good quality residential environment in terms of the scale, density, layout, landscaping and facilities required;
- to ensure that existing settlements and the natural and built heritage are not unacceptably affected by the new housing developments;
- to ensure that the continued effectiveness of green belts is not adversely effected by development;

- to achieve a pattern of settlement that is inherently efficient, for example, in terms of energy consumption and infrastructure provision; and
- to support other government policy objectives, notably urban and rural regeneration, the provision of affordable housing, and energy conservation.

(Scottish Office Environment Department National Planning *Policy Guideline 3*, November 1996, p.3).

Activity 2

Consider the above four points outlined in PPG3 and write down in the spaces below the sorts of problems and potentially contentious issues that you think may be present in the preparation of development plan policies. (The issues are similar for Scotland despite the different emphasis of NPPG3).

Protection of the countryside

Sites capable of development

Linked to jobs

Social considerations

Time allocation: 20 minutes

3.2 Fundamental issues

The sort of problems that arise are:

Protection of countryside

The continuing demand for more houses and desire for more attractive living environments inevitably has meant pressures to extend urban areas into the countryside. This results in difficulties in deciding which parts of the countryside should be developed. The lack of clear, objective environmental assessment criteria and the growth in the environmental movement fuels many debates.

The need to build cheap, practical housing is often fundamentally inconsistent with efforts to conserve and enhance the built environment.

Sites capable of development

Planners are often accused of not understanding or appreciating the real constraints on development. Work on development plans generally does not involve detailed site surveys nor does it cost works required to make sites developable, e.g. provision of infrastructure, removal of land contamination. Developers often claim that sites allocated in development plans are uneconomic to develop.

Ownership problems can prevent sites allocated on development plans from being developed. Often, landowners do not wish to release land for development, preferring either to wait for its price to rise or simply continue to use it themselves for purposes other than housing. Phasing of housing development with public utility provision is often problematic simply because the public utility bodies have their own priorities and financial programmes which can be inconsistent with those of the development plan.

Linked to jobs

In times of economic recession, local authorities have to encourage economic development. Often, particularly within urban areas, sites close to housing are unattractive to entrepreneurs due to poor transport links, costly demolition and site preparation cost, etc.

Green field sites on the edge of urban areas, close to motorways and with limited site constraints, are more attractive in an economic sense. There is often, therefore, pressure to develop industrial estates and business parks on the edge of built-up areas, in locations away from main concentrations of housing and good transport links.

Social considerations

Private housing developers need to ensure that a development is financially viable. Providing housing in locations to suit the disadvantaged is often not profitable because it can't easily be sold or achieve an economic rent.

Some of these issues will be explored in more depth in this section, in dealing with the implementation of planning policies.

4. Housing Land Supply

In **Planning Policy Guidance Note 3 (PPG3),** central government advises local planning authorities to ensure the availability of five years' supply of housing land at all times. They should be able to identify specific sites realistically capable of development and provide a five years' supply of housing land in accordance with structure and local plan policies. In the absence of an identified five year supply, there is a presumption in favour of allowing more development.

4.1 Land availability studies

Joint housing land availability studies by local planning authorities and major house builders are encouraged as a way of assimilating the house builder's assessment of market demand and the development potential of particular sites within the local planning authority's planning objectives.

The housing land supply debate has been fraught with problems, and the degree of successful liaison between developers and local authorities has been mixed. The amount of housing land required should be calculated as follows, using *"the residual method"*.

The numbers of houses already built within the five year plan period (structure plans or unitary development plan) should be deducted from the total plan provision (which is worked out using local population projections and household formulation estimates). The residual provision should then be divided by the number of years remaining in the plan period, giving a figure for annual provision. Thus:

$$\text{annual provision} = \frac{\text{(total provision - houses already built}}{\text{plan years remaining}}$$

PPG3 states that studies should not attempt to identify sites of less than 0.4 hectares (1 acre) simply due to the difficulties in spotting all of these potential sites. Nevertheless, an aggregate allowance should be made for them. Sites of over 1 hectare (approx. 2 acres) should be individually identified.

NPPG 3 in Scotland has the same advice on time horizons. Advice on demand assessment is set out in PAN 38.

Activity 3

There have been fundamental problems with the land supply approach. What changes do you think might take place in the supply of land which could give developers scope to appeal against a plan?

Time allocation: 20 minutes

4.2 Land availability problems

Neil, the planner referred to earlier, explained the problems:

> *"There are certain typical problems:*
>
> ***Significant fluctuations in building rates***
> *Building rates are very sensitive to cycles of economic growth which means that the neat apportionment of the residual method and the calculations of overall housing demand by local planning authorities have been discredited. The mutual distrust and polarised views on the control of the market have not helped to forge compromise.*
>
> ***Plan periods***
> *Plan periods often terminate before the end of the five year length of the studies, and in some cases there has been an absence of emerging plan figures for housing demand. This has meant that studies have had no agreed housing demand figure to aim for, causing protracted discussion about future housing demand.*
>
> ***Available sites***
> *Are sites identified in plans genuinely available for development? This issue centres around constraints on the development of sites which local planning authorities may not have appreciated, such as ownership or infrastructure problems.*
>
> ***Small sites***
> *It has been difficult to agree aggregate figures for small sites mainly because of the fluctuations in building rates and the difficulties in assessing whether more small sites will gain permission.*
>
> ***Windfall Sites***
> *These are sites which gain permission which couldn't have been predicted, e.g. sites within built-up areas where the land use is changed to housing and there is no basis for refusal. The problem of identifying these in advance means they can distort the figures."*

A big problem in land availability in older urban areas, like Glasgow, is that the land seen as available by planners for new housing is not in the places where the developers want to build. In particular, inner city and housing estate *'brown field'* sites are available but the developers often want green field sites.

Case Studies

The following appeal cases illustrate some of these problems:

West Wiltshire District Council 1985

The council refused an application for housing on 3.77 acres of land at Trowbridge. The site was allocated for residential development in the first draft of the local plan but deleted given the rate of emergence of small sites. Development now was unnecessary, the council argued.

The inspector stated that housing development in the area was extremely buoyant. The development of sites with permission would exceed the 1991 target. Established planning policies did not however reflect the current vitality.

He also noted that many permissions were small or windfall sites which did not relate to land allocated for housing, as this site had been. The physical suitability and convenient location of the site for housing together with housing demand carried greater weight than the fact that it was not now allocated for residential development in the local plan.

The appeal was allowed.

Fylde Borough Council 1990

A proposal for 420 houses in Lancashire raised issues of land supply calculation.

An inspector considered that there was an identified five year supply despite this calculation being strongly disputed by the appellant company. He rejected assertions that the figure for large sites with planning permission should be reduced by 20% as an automatic allowance for non-availability.

For small sites, he thought that the proper way to assess this part of supply was to make an allowance based on past experience and a realistic appraisal of future potential. In this respect, he thought that the figures for small sites, which were agreed between the parties, were, in fact, an underestimate. Some local plan allocated sites were genuinely available and a figure between that claimed by the parties was adopted (Fylde BC 19.11.90).

4.3 The Market-Led Approach versus Planning

The housing land supply issue is at the heart of the debate relating to the degree of intervention in the free-market by "planning".

Dave, a planning consultant, explained the problem:

> *"Housing developers complain that planning restrictions on the supply of land have been responsible for the inflation of land values and, in turn, house prices. Many house builders blame the massive house-price increase in the late 1980s largely on the failure of the planning system to allocate housing land to match demand.*
>
> *Some adherents to "New Right" philosophy may go so far as to say little or no planning legislation is required, as the functioning of the market would act as an adequate control on development, if only in terms of the need for economic efficiency. Broad allocations of extensive areas of land would ensure sufficient coordination of development and prevent sporadic sprawl of development.*
>
> *Professional planners would, of course, dispute this and put forward a number of justifications for control of the market to create social equity and an acceptable environment."*

Activity 4

Write down the basic justifications that supporters of the two extremes of a market-led approach and a planning or interventionist approach to the control of housing land supply may put forward.

You should think in terms of the extremities of the two viewpoints and may find it helpful to think in terms of the way each "camp" would criticise the other.

Market-led approach

continued...

Interventionist approach

Time allocation: 20 minutes

4.4 Market-Led Approach

A market-led approach would be likely to come up with the following arguments:

Price inflation

Planning restrictions on the supply of land are responsible for the inflation of land values and, therefore, house prices. The free market would increase the supply and, therefore, reduce the ability of landowners to negotiate higher prices. Even where the planning system has recognised the need for housing land, it is slow to respond and can't keep pace with the cyclical nature of the economics of the housing development industry.

Vested interests

Planning merely protects vested interests, e.g. existing residents in the urban fringe or pleasant rural villages not wanting local development (i.e. the NIMBY syndrome - *"Not In My Back Yard"*. Furthermore, the planning concern to consolidate development within existing settlements encourages *"town cramming"* and over-dense urban environments. The market-led approach is more equitable as it would provide a greater number and range of houses in more pleasant environments.

Development Sprawl

The market would naturally ensure that there was not an unreasonable sprawl of development, as there is an element of economic efficiency in the grouping of dwellings and coordination of development, e.g. it may not be profitable for a developer to pay for a long connection into the existing drainage system; it may not be easy to sell houses poorly located for facilities such as schools, public transport and community facilities.

Suitable sites

Planners allocate sites for housing which are not realistically developable. Constraints on development are not assessed in terms of the economic viability of overcoming them, e.g. infrastructure provision, site preparation, involving removal of dereliction, contaminated land, etc. Sometimes the constraints relate to matters such as ownership, where the owner won't sell the land or situations where an individual holds a *"ransom strip"* and asks for an excessive price. (A *"ransom strip"* is a piece of land owned by someone else but required for a particular development, often for access. That other landowner can, therefore, hold the developer to ransom over price (or other terms) for acquisition.

4.5 Market Intervention (i.e. planning) Approach

A planning-led approach would be likely to come up with the following arguments:

Price inflation

Reducing controls on the supply of land would not necessarily make it significantly cheaper for developers to acquire land. In some cases where owners couldn't get a premium for their land, they may be reluctant to sell and want to continue the existing use. This would result in a patchwork of acquired housing land.

Economy

Even if there were no planning, the economies achieved in ensuring more compact development would still be as effectively achieved, e.g. drainage, transport, community facilities. These extra costs (sometimes referred to as "externalities" in economic theory) would still have to be paid, either by the developers (e.g. by tax) or by the community, (e.g. by extra council tax).

Development sprawl

Planning combats unrestricted, uncoordinated sprawl of development and protects and enhances environmental quality and, consequently, social amenity. It is essential in a densely populated island such as ours that the natural landscape and ecological balance is closely guarded.

The market approach would create amorphous tracts of development sprawl and reduce areas of genuine natural quality. It would be more difficult to co-ordinate land-use and result in an increased need to travel, due to great dispersal of land-uses. There would be an increase in $C0_2$ emissions due to more vehicular mileage.

Certainty

Planning gives a reasonable degree of certainty over which decisions on investments can be made. This could relate to private investments (e.g. improving one's own home in the knowledge that the immediate environment is not going to alter in a manner not anticipated) or, alternatively, to public investments involving provision and future programming of infrastructure provision by public utilities companies.

4.6 The ideological basis of planning

These two polarised viewpoints should help you to reflect on the ideological basis of planning. Clearly, the level of planning has oscillated over the years between these two poles without, of course, reaching the theoretical extremes outlined here.

Planning in the Thatcherite era was attacked on the basis that it was too paternalistic, over-bureaucratic, and not in tune with the needs of the development industry. In general, central government attempted to streamline the bureaucracy of planning processes, in particular seeking to achieve the faster preparation of development plans. The greatest impact of the "New Right" philosophy was felt in appeal decisions where in marginal decisions the Secretary of State leant on the side of the development industry.

However, despite the national ideological shift in government approach in the eighties, planning has survived remarkably well. It could be argued that the main basis for its survival is that those on the right, whilst promoting the development industry, realised that planning does act to protect *"vested property interests"* to some extent. Furthermore, the growing strength of the *"environmentalist lobby"* has brought a greater realisation of the need for market intervention.

5. Implementation of Planning Policies

This section deals with the implementation of planning policies and associated issues in the development control areas.

5.1 Housing Mix and Social Balance

Local planning authorities have attempted in the past to influence the type of houses built in certain areas to encourage a balanced mix of social groups, e.g. starter homes, homes for the elderly in a prosperous area or even *"family homes"* in an area dominated by flats and bedsits.

Generally, these attempts, often in the form of conditions on planning applications, have not been supported on appeal unless there is a clear policy in a development plan, based on a survey revealing an actual problem in the area, e.g. in certain remote areas where village life is being eroded and there is a need to provide accommodation for local workers and their families.

Affordable housing

PPG3 (2000) on housing does, however, recognise the concept of *"affordable housing"* as a material planning consideration. This was largely a response to the escalating house prices in certain areas, such as the south east and national park areas in the 1980s.

PPG3 states that where there is a demonstrable lack of affordable housing to meet local needs - as assessed by up-to-date surveys and other information - local plans and UDPs should include a policy for seeking affordable housing in suitable developments.

Together with DETR Circular 6/98, PPG3 further states the following criteria should be adhered to in order to implement affordable housing policies:

- policy must be based in a development plan and relate to a clearly identified need;
- an overall target for provision of affordable housing must be specified in the plan and include targets for specific sites (usually large sites, where the development options would not be unreasonably prejudiced);
- the policies must give a clear indication of what is regarded as affordable housing (taking into account the economics of housing provision in the area) and the arrangements to ensure that this housing is reserved for those who need it; and
- development plan policies should be flexible and leave room for all other material considerations to be taken into account. Where an element of low cost provision is appropriate, its scale will be a matter for negotiation. Policies should not seek to impose a uniform quota on all developments, regardless of market or site conditions.

Tenure (i.e. housing association, local authority or privately owned) should not be limited by planning permissions, but it is possible to limit those eligible to live in a property. Local plans should specify the type of persons who may qualify for affordable housing which could be, for example:

- local people who can prove that they have been resident in an area for a substantial time (10 years is often used) and have been unsuccessful in obtaining accommodation;
- retired people; and
- people in a particular employment.

The government lays emphasis on the role of housing associations who have a concern to provide for housing needs in the provision of affordable housing.

The affordable housing initiative is a unique aspect of planning intervention into the housing market. It has been criticised by local planning authorities on the basis that it is not clear on the extent of affordable housing which may be required and how it may be done (e.g. who administers the allocation of the housing). There is a lot open to interpretation, which could explain why local planning authorities have, as yet, not been successful in negotiating many affordable schemes.

NPPG3 in Scotland also recognises 'affordable housing' in very similar terms, but does not specifically cover rural housing (see below).

Rural housing

PPG3 makes specific reference to affordable housing in rural areas where there may be rural protection policies prohibiting housing development. Where there is an identified local need for cheaper housing in such areas, it is appropriate for local planning authorities to grant permission specifically for affordable housing on sites where it would not otherwise do so. These exceptions should be clearly identified in a local plan and, again, the criteria for persons who may qualify should be clearly identified.

PPG3 gives examples of those persons who may have a local need for affordable housing in rural areas. These are:

- existing residents needing separate accommodation in the area (newly married couples, people leaving tied accommodation on retirement);
- people whose work provides important services and who need to live closer to the local community;
- people who are not necessarily resident locally but have long-standing links with the local community (e.g. elderly people who need to move back to a village to be near relatives); and
- people with the offer of a job in the locality who cannot take up the offer because of the lack of affordable housing.

5.2 Containment of Housing Development

In many cases, demand for land to satisfy housing targets in development plans requires that sites have to be allocated in the countryside. There is an inherent conflict in this requirement with policies aimed at restricting the encroachment of built development into the countryside.

Ministerial guidance recognises this difficulty in PPG3 and appreciates that new sites are required outside urban areas, but states that new development in rural areas should be sensitively related to the existing pattern of settlement with proper regard to policies for the protection of countryside.

5.3 Green Belts

England and Wales

The concept of the green belt embargo has wide political support and is the most difficult hurdle developers have to overcome. The fundamental aim of green belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently under-developed. This policy originated in the **1947 Town and Country Planning Act**. There are 14 separate green belts which exist around most of the major metropolitan areas, encompassing approximately 12% of the land area of England.

PPG2, last revised in January 1995, states that green belts have five purposes:

- to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
- to safeguard the surrounding countryside from further encroachment;
- to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another;
- to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
- to assist in urban regeneration by encouraging the re-use of derelict and other urban land.

Green belt areas correspond to the areas of greatest development pressure, and developers are constantly probing for "chinks" in green belt policies. However, only in exceptional circumstances will housing development be allowed, to ensure that no precedent for further development is created. Even where physical changes have occurred which reduce the environmental quality of a site, the hard line green belt policy is generally maintained.

Planners argue that this type of approach is essential to avoid endless arguments about the release for development of sites of marginal environmental quality.

An analysis of appeal cases where development has been allowed in the green belt, generally refers to situations where:

- there is dispute about the precise boundary of the green belt, e.g. broad green-belt designation is indicated in the structure plan but a local plan has not yet defined the boundary;
- green belt boundary is particularly highly drawn around settlements and there is an overwhelming demand for further growth, and there is no alternative but to use green belt sites; and
- there has been a particularly radical change in the environmental context of a site such that it no longer fulfils a green belt function.

Case Studies

The following appeal cases illustrate some of these problems:

Barking and Dagenham London Borough, 1991

A housing development was proposed on land forming part of a hospital site which was surplus to Health Authority requirements.

An inspector doubted whether housing needs for the Borough could be met and stated that there would have to be compelling reasons why the site should not be used. The land had been in the green belt for over 30 years but was a modest rectangle of land almost enclosed by development.

The appeal was allowed.

Chorley Borough Council 1991

Residential development of an 8.3 acres (3.3 hectares) site was proposed. The council argued that the site was within the green belt in an emerging local plan.

An inspector found that the structure plan "Examination in Public" panel recommended excluding this area of land from the green belt and the plan was modified accordingly. The council countered that detailed boundaries had been left to the local plan, but the inspector gave little weight to this argument. It was concluded that development of the site would not harm wider countryside objectives or local views/landscape and there was a shortfall in housing land.

The appeal was allowed.

PPG2, Green Belts 1988, makes an exception to green belts policies in relation to redundant hospital sites. It is recognised that there are a number of older hospital complexes which were sited within the green belt (often to seek a more healthy environment) which have become redundant because of the rationalisation of hospital provision. Development is allowed on these sites, provided the floor area of the new development corresponds to that of the former hospital and that there is a sensitive layout and design.

Scotland

Green belt advice in Scotland is much the same and comes from a Scottish Office Circular of 1985 (SSD24/1985). NPPG3, Land for Housing, has some additional advice on housing in the countryside. There are three principles:

- developments should be encouraged on suitable sites in existing settlements;
- the coalescence of settlements and ribbon development should be avoided; and
- isolated development in the open countryside should be discouraged unless particular circumstances are clearly identified in development plans or there are special needs.

5.4 Other Rural Protection Policies

National Parks and **Areas of Outstanding National Beauty** (AONB) are areas of particular landscape quality and the presumption against development is stronger than in green belts.

Elsewhere the protection of rural areas is on the basis of policies in local plans. It is in these areas that there have been more controversial outcomes and public inquiries.

It is often difficult for local planning authorities to resist proposals which involve "rounding off" existing settlements or land which is of derelict or even debatable environmental quality.

In Scotland there are **National Scenic Areas (NSAs).** These have been superseded by **Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs)** under the **Natural Heritage (Scotland) Act, 1991.** The provisions for protecting previously identified NSAs remain in force.

Case Studies

The following appeal cases, illustrate some of these problems:

South Kesteven District Council 1987

Housing development was refused on the edge of the Lincolnshire town of Stamford. There was a shortfall in land supply and the inspector observed:

"The application site is bounded north and south by major roads and given the topographical, technical and aesthetic considerations which have determined the built form of Stamford and will continue to restrain any future growth, the proposed extension westwards would be a logical extension of these constraints."

The site would not be seen in conjunction with the historic town centre, and existing and proposed tree belts screened the development.

The appeal was allowed.

Thanet District Council 1990

Residential development of an 8.3 acres site (3.3 hectares) bordering an existing approved development was proposed. The council argued that the site was within the green belt in an emerging local plan. A Kent planning authority refused permission for 54 houses on the edge of a resort town. The housing land situation was that a 7.9 years' supply was available.

An inspector considered that the land supply did not preclude development of the site but that the appeal site lay clearly outside the limits of the existing and approved built up area. The existing approved development already intruded into the open countryside and the proposals would exacerbate the situation. Impact could be reduced if bungalows were built but roofs would still be visible, and the heightening of an existing embankment to screen the development would in itself be an incongruous intrusion.

The appeal was dismissed.

5.5 Loss of recreation land or open space

There are often policies in development plans relating to the protection of playing fields or informal open spaces in the interests of preserving adequate recreation facilities and ensuring an attractive urban environment.

These sites often prove attractive to housing developers as they are effectively green field sites, often within the urban fabric where there are low infrastructure costs because of existing provision, and there is a clear demand due to the location advantage of being close to amenities.

There have been a number of appeals on these issues. The decision often rests on:

- the ability of local planning authorities to prove that the loss of the open space will result in a deficiency of provision in a certain area. There are national guidelines for open space and recreation space provision prepared by the **National Playing Fields Association;**

- the intentions of the local planning authorities to acquire (e.g. by compulsory purchase) the open space land if it is in private ownership. If there are no plans for acquisition, and other factors weigh in favour of development, such as no deficiency of open space; shortage of housing land; a specific local housing need or even the poor quality of the recreation/ open space land; then it is likely the decision will favour the developer.

5.6 Loss of industrial land

Local planning authorities, as part of their policies for economic regeneration, try to maintain derelict industrial sites for industry but they tend to be successful only in cases where it can be proven the land is particularly suitable for industry, e.g. it is close to major transport links or located away from existing housing so *"nuisance type"* industries can flourish without harm to residential amenities.

There is no specific advice from central government on industrial land supply, in the same way as there is for housing. Local planning authorities are simply encouraged to allocate land to facilitate industrial development.

6. Site Specific Matters

This section concentrates on the specific condition of the land and the main factors which often may prevent housing development. You can imagine that some sites have such serious problems that it would not be in the public interest to allow housing development to proceed. What sort of problems might these be?

Activity 5

What sort of site specific problems can you think of which might concern developers and might make planners refuse permission for housing development?

Time allocation: 15 minutes

6.1 Site specific problems

Some of the typical problems that can arise are discussed below. You may well have thought of others:

Overriding technical problems

Land subject to subsidence (e.g. from mining) or flooding may require substantial technical justification that there is no risk to the safety of future residents before permission will be granted.

Many disused industrial sites contain contaminants which would be hazardous if not removed. Methane gas seepage from former mines and landfill sites has proved particularly problematic, largely because the technical solutions cannot provide an absolute safeguard against future gas seepage and explosion.

Ecological Protection

Sites which have outstanding ecological or geological features are designated by the **Nature Conservancy Council** as Sites **of Special Scientific Interest** (SSSI) and there is a presumption against development of these.

Local planning authorities often wish to protect ecological sites which don't merit SSSI status but nevertheless have a degree of nature conservation value. An appeal decision may often turn on the degree of scarcity of similar sites of ecological quality in the area.

SSSIs also apply in Scotland.

Case Studies

The following appeal cases illustrate some of these problems:

Harlow District Council 1987

A large new residential neighbourhood was proposed. The site was in a "Nature Conservation Zone" in the County Council's Countryside Conservation Plan. No expert evidence was offered as to the effects that the development might have on wildlife habitats.

An inspector concluded that the current intensive arable farming practised might be no less damaging than a new development within which there would be extensive areas of open space and new woodlands and lake areas, and the appeal was upheld.

Pollution Factors

It is the rule of planning to consider potential amenity problems for future residents of an housing site. Decisions on these matters often hinge on the consideration of a proposed technical solution.

Noise

PPG24, 1994 recommends various noise levels beyond which residential development should not be allowed. Noise effect can be quite effectively mitigated by physical barriers, sensitive siting of dwellings, wall insulation, double or even triple glazing with mechanical ventilation.

In certain cases, housing developers have funded noise attenuation works outside the development site in an effort to secure planning permission. This often relates to industrial noise which can relatively easily be overcome at a reasonable cost.

Sometimes, however, there is no technical solution or the solution itself, involving formidable acoustic screens such as embankments or walls, is considered to be unacceptable in environmental terms.

Hazardous Uses

Housing is not acceptable close to areas of bulk storage of hazardous materials, e.g. chemical works, propane storage. The Health and Safety Executive are consulted on these proposals and carry out a *"risk assessment"* to advise local planning authorities. The need to safeguard future expansion of strategic sites, e.g. major industrial complexes, is often a factor preventing development.

Smells from Sewage Works

Proximity to these is often considered to represent an unacceptable residential environment. The control of odour is problematic. However, generally the planners have to demonstrate that there is an existing problem. Occasional smell from emptying of *"sludge tanks"* may not be significant enough to warrant refusal.

Drainage and Sewerage

Local planning authorities are required to protect against the overloading of drainage facilities and repercussions such as pollution and flooding. Once planning permission is granted, there is a right, under section 34 of the **Public Health Act 1934,** to connect into public sewers. Discharges of surface water are under the control of the National Rivers Authority but this is rarely a problem and is subject to technical assessment.

Local planning authorities consult these bodies and can refuse permission on their recommendation if the problems are technically insurmountable or there is a lack of commitment by the developer to agree to a technical requirement.

Sometimes planning conditions will restrict the commencement of the development until various works to improve the facilities have been carried out on the basis of funding by the developer.

Highways

Traffic issues raises matters of highway safety and the impact on existing residential and environmental amenities.

Housing schemes may generate extra traffic, requiring improvements to local roads or traffic management measures. Traffic impact studies are often a requirement of a planning application.

Case Studies

The following appeal cases illustrate some of these problems:

Great Grimsby Borough Council 1987

Permission was refused for a large 2,200 unit housing scheme on the edge of the town.

An inspector thought that most of the existing roads which gave access to the site were inadequate. Many were cul-de-sacs, often narrow with extensive residential parking. The amenity of residents would also be affected by an increase in use. Access to the site would, therefore, need to be via a new spine road linking to a major road serving a number of developments.

The inspector considered extensive technical debate as to likely traffic flows on this road and in the wider area, having regard to a number of probabilities and possibilities, but concluded that no material harm would be caused by the proposal, particularly as general relief would be given by the planned "parkway".

The provision of a link road through the site to facilitate possible further development was rejected by the inspector as unjustified and therefore an unnecessary cost falling on the developer.

Conditions were placed on the planning approval" which meant phasing the development in tandem with progress on the construction of this relief road. Some development was allowed to commence before this road had started and some in the period of works. The remainder of the housing units were allowed when the road was opened. Access from the site to the existing residential roads was prohibited.

Vale Royal District Council 1987

A proposal for housing had been refused in Cheshire.

The inspector thought that the roads serving the site were already residential in character and that introduction of more traffic would diminish environmental standards and increase potential for pedestrian/vehicle conflict. On-street parking was a matter of significance particularly where there were children crossing.

On its own this objection did not warrant a refusal but with other factors it was a material consideration (Vale Royal DC 13.1.88).

6.2 Public Open Space

Local planning authorities normally require parts of housing estates to be designated as open space. There can be requirements to lay out the space, provide play-equipment and dedicate the land to the council, after payment of *"commuted sums"* to cover maintenance costs, usually for 5 years.

Developers often quibble with these requirements but they are often founded on development plans or specific site planning briefs, and supported on appeal.

The provision of open space can, however, take account of existing open space provision and if there is an adequate provision, in terms of National Playing Fields Association standards, then the requirement is often waived.

6.3 Schools, shops and community facilities

Large development proposals often generate a need for these facilities. Development plans sometimes have policies that reserve land for provision of these facilities which are provided on the basis of the extra burden of the new development on these facilities.

Local planning authorities have sometimes struck voluntary agreements with developers with regard to additional school facilities. These have usually occurred due to the developers' concern to be able to market the site as being close to *"all amenities"*.

7. Planning Gain

Planning gain has been the subject of central government circular advice in 1983 and 1991 and is defined as the benefit that may be secured for the community as the result of a development. It is a term that has tended to be used to describe those extraneous benefits that developers have been prepared to offer over and above the basic pure planning requirements.

The elements of negotiated planning gain were encapsulated in legal agreements (section 106 of the **Town and Country Planning Act, 1990)** attached to planning permissions. These agreements are enforced by the courts.

Examples of planning gain in the 1980s included:

- dedication of land owned by the developer to the local authority for development unrelated to the scheme;
- commitments to carry out environmental improvement works on land off the development site; and
- provision of sports, recreation or leisure facilities over and above that required in a development plan.

Often planning gain agreements simply involved payment of money for local planning authorities to carry out the work themselves. The range and extent of offering of planning gain caused concern and the government first responded to these concerns by the issue of Circular 16!91, in 1991 and updated this circular in 1997.

Circular 1/97 clearly states that planning *"obligations'* (replacing the pejorative term *"gain"*), should relate fairly and be reasonably necessary for a development to go ahead. Without that obligation (gain) the development should not go ahead. Examples could include adequate access, parking, open space, social, educational recreational, sporting or other community provision where the need arises directly as a result of the development. Items of planning gain should be identified in development plans.

The circular also offers the opportunity for developers to propose *"unilateral undertakings"* which are legal commitments, the same as a section 106 Agreement, but where there is no need for the agreement of a local planning authority. These are mainly used at appeal stage, when the appeal is allowed.

The equivalent of section 106 in Scotland is section 50 of the **Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1972.** The relevant circular is No.22, 1984. There is no equivalent of unilateral undertakings in Scotland although it seems that in principle, developers could use the common law to the same effect.

Nevertheless, it is often a matter of judgement as to the extent and nature of the burden a particular development will have on a locality. Furthermore, the opportunities for combating the *"burden"* vary with each development proposal.

There is, therefore, a continuing tension in this area and it is unlikely that this will disappear. The local planning authority and developer relationship is one which is inherently adversarial.

8. Planning in Wales

8.1 The role of the planning system and the release of land

Unlike many other parts of the UK, until recently there has been an absence of contemporary regional planning guidance which has meant that there have been no overall regional or sub-regional targets for house building. Migration assumptions and household projections were the province of the eight counties which ceased to exist in April 1996. This function transferred to the National Assembly for Wales from May 1999 when it was established and first met.

The Welsh Office responded to pressure for regional guidance by issuing a single document entitled **Planning Policy Guidance** which is intended to replace all extant PPGs and to provide limited regional and sub-regional planning guidance. However, as far as land release is concerned, the guidance merely aggregates housing allocations derived from current structure plans.

As at late 2000, none of the 22 unitary authorities created by local government reorganisation in 1996 have adopted unitary development plans in place, although several have reached the deposit stage. The Welsh Planning Policy Guidance establishes the requirement for local planning authorities to ensure that sufficient land is available or will become available to provide a 5 year supply of land against the general objectives, scale and location of development provided for in the development plan. It also stipulates that land must be genuinely available.

A common theme within emerging Unitary Development Plans is the inclusion of a policy which sets out the authority's intention to negotiate for an element of affordable housing within the more substantial housing sites. Many of the rural authorities have included policies relating to the exceptional release of land for affordable rural housing. The National Assembly for Wales maintains a close interest in the development of these policies and others which could impact upon the delivery of the approved development programme.

8.2 Development control/the need for planning permission

Unitary Development Plans, together with Welsh Office circulars and PPGs, provide the policy context for development control. Historically, Welsh Office policy guidance differed only marginally, if at all, from that issued by the DoE, but in recent years the pattern of simultaneous release has been abandoned and a number of important DETR circulars, including PPG13, have not been issued in Wales. To an extent, this has been remedied within the new all embracing PPG recently issued for consultation, although this largely takes the form of a précis of English PPGs.

The **General Development Orders and Use Classes Orders**, which deal with procedural aspects of development control and the need for planning permission, are applicable equally to England and Wales.

8.3 Regulatory constraints

Development by housing associations registered with the National Assembly for Wales (NAW) is regulated both by documentation (**Development Quality Requirements; Grant Procedures; Circulars**) and by regular audit of performance/ compliance. NAW Circular 16/93 governs the size and mix of new developments, advising that new schemes should generally not exceed 50/60 dwellings except in areas of very high housing need. Larger schemes are encouraged to incorporate mixed tenure in order to achieve social integration and should avoid adding to existing concentrations of social housing. The circular prohibits the development of any scheme which would provide more than 150 units for rent.

NAW Circular 14/92 prohibits associations from pursuing "contrived" package deals. These occur where a development package is offered by a builder who has yet to obtain ownership or control of the land. Analysis of such schemes indicates that they provide lesser value for money. Associations are, therefore, encouraged to compete for land themselves so that competitive tendering can take place for the works contract.

Associations who wish to undertake development themselves are required to obtain Approved Development Body (ADB) status from the National Assembly for Wales. Comprehensive selection criteria were applied when this concept was introduced and some ADBs now act as agents for the non-ADBs.

8.4 Negotiating for land/site assembly

With the supply of local authority land drying up, associations generally compete with the private sector for much of the land which becomes available. Within some parts of South Wales, the scale of housing need and the National Assembly for Wales' investment programme is such that a very large percentage of an authority's agreed five year land supply would need to be acquired if current programme levels were to be maintained.

As part of the overall land strategy, the NAW has introduced specific initiatives to assist associations with land assembly:

- funding for option agreements and associated consultants' fees (Circular 4/95). This enables associations to target land at an early stage and to promote it for housing development through the planning process. It is also a means whereby some of the technical problems relating to 'brownfield' sites can be resolved prior to a full commitment being made to land purchase;
- a service level agreement with the Land Authority for Wales (LAW). This provides an enhanced role for LAW in assembling land on behalf of associations. In addition to their **Compulsory Purchase Order** (**CPO**) powers, LAW have the ability to 'cleanse' title on land, including the removal of restrictive covenants, and to acquire land where ownership cannot be established (Circular 3/95).

Other initiatives are currently being considered, including the prospect of providing additional support for the investigation and development of brownfield sites.

8.5 Participation in Town Planning

The NAW's role in planning and development is still developing. At this early stage, it can broadly be described as providing national policy and guidance on planning which allows unitary authorities to implement planning policies locally.

8.6 Sustainable development

Planning Policy Guidance for Wales defines sustainable development as that which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The guidance sets out four broad objectives:

- maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment;
- social progress which recognises the needs of everyone;
- effective protection of the environment; and
- prudent use of natural resources.

The guidance also states a willingness for the government to take precautionary action in cases where environmental damage might result from the use of dangerous materials or the spread of pollutants, even where scientific knowledge is inconclusive. Local planning authorities are also instructed to have local Biodiversity Action Plans in place by 2000.

Summary

1. **In this first section, we have looked at history of planning, why it seemed necessary to introduce planning controls, and how they developed.**
2. **We also reviewed the historical context of planning control, why it was introduced, and how it developed.**
3. **We then looked at planning policies for housing and the government's policies for promoting and controlling housing development. We considered land availability and some case studies from appeals against refusal to grant planning permission.**
4. **The next section examined how planning policies are implemented and some of the general factors that are likely to influence planning decisions on housing.**
5. **Having considered general matters, we then looked at site specific matters and saw what issues planners are likely to consider on specific sites.**
6. **Finally in this section, we considered the concept of planning gain and the problems there have been in implementing it.**

Self Test 1

1. *Consider how the current development plan system has had to alter from the 1947 system to make it more relevant to the needs of modern society.*

2. *Emerging Local Plans/Unitary Development Plans. Imagine you are a planning consultant advising a major housing builder who wants to develop a site on the edge of an urban area, abutting open countryside, which is zoned for recreation and open space in an emerging local plan. Is it worthwhile submitting a planning application? What main issues should you consider? (Please look at the next question before replying).*

3. *What are the specific issues you should consider in relation to site development? (This question extends your answer to Question 2). Read the Answer to Question 2 and seek to extend your list of issues to be considered, to give your client the best possible advice on the likely outcome of a planning application.*

4. *Can you list the site specific problems that might concern developers when trying to obtain planning permission for housing on a particular site?*

Now turn to the Answers at the end of the Block.

B. Local and Regional Structure Plan

1. The Role of Development Plans

The purpose of the planning system is to regulate the development and use of land in the public interest. Therefore, planning permission is required for the development of land (this is known as *development control*) and local authorities are responsible for preparing *development plans* which set out policies and proposals on future land-use and development within their areas. The relationship between the statutory development plan and planning decisions was strengthened by the **Town and Country Planning Act 1990**, which gave greater primacy to policies and proposals within statutory development plans when making planning decisions.

The importance of development plans in applying and using planning policies characterises what is known as a 'plan-led' system. The recently revised national planning policy emphasises that development plans are now at the heart of the planning framework (PPG1, paragraph 2) and are the most effective way of reconciling demand for development and the protection of the environment (PPG1, paragraph 39).

2. Types of Development Plan in England and Wales

The statutory development plan for an area is often comprised of more than one document. In most non-metropolitan (shire) areas, there is a hierarchy of plans, consisting of:

- a **structure plan**, usually produced by county councils and including strategic (county-wide) policies;
- a **district local plan** covering the whole district which identifies actual sites for different land-uses and includes detailed policies to guide day-to-day development control decisions; and
- separate **minerals and waste local plans** which cover whole counties and are also produced by county councils

In metropolitan areas (and in Wales) there is only one plan which is known as the:

- **unitary development plan (UDP)** which includes all land-use planning topics including minerals and waste and is divided into two parts; the first includes strategic policies (equating to the structure plan in non-metropolitan areas), while the second contains more detailed policies and proposals (equating to the local plan in non-metropolitan areas).

One further complication is that since local government re-organisation in 1996, the simple split between different development plan regimes in metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas has been changed in some non-metropolitan areas. The DETR's PPG 12 Development Plans (December 1999) gives a full list of which authorities are affected and how.

2.1 The historical context to Development Plans

Structure Plans were first introduced in the 1960s as part of a new 'two-tier' development plan system. This two-tier system was designed to introduce more flexibility and reduce unnecessary delays in the preparation of development plans. Previous to this, local authorities used to prepare one lengthy and detailed plan which was a mixture of policy and land use allocations and which required Ministerial approval before it came into force.

By contrast, the new two-tier system separated out strategic policies from detailed ones. Structure plans were now to focus on strategic issues and would be mandatory, still requiring central approval. However, detailed policies and land use allocations were now to be included in local plans, which were to be discretionary and not requiring central approval. The aim was to concentrate Ministerial time on important strategic policies and to delegate local issues to the local planning authorities.

Proposals to abolish structure plans were put forward by the government in the late 1980s in a White Paper entitled *The Future of Development Plans* (DoE, 1989). Despite this and despite the changes resulting from the most recent rounds of local government re-organisation (including a move to a unitary plan system in Wales), structure plans have continued as part of a two-tier development plan framework in virtually all non-metropolitan areas of England. Complete coverage of structure plans was finally achieved in the early 1980s and many counties are now involved with further reviews.

2.2 Current Structure Plan/ UDP Part I Format

The main purposes of structure plans and UDP Part I plans are:

- to provide the strategic policy framework for planning and development control locally;
- to ensure that the provision for development is realistic and consistent with national and regional policy; and
- to secure consistency between local plans for neighbouring areas.

Structure plans should also:

> *'provide a statement of the overall strategy for development and the use of land in the county, indicating how the balance between development and conservation has been struck, and how development will be served by transport and other infrastructure'.*
>
> (PPG12, paragraph 5.9).

Information in Structure Plans and Part I of UDPs normally includes the following topics which are of direct or general relevance to housing development:

- housing, including figures for additional housing requirements in each district, and targets for development on previously developed sites;
- green belts;
- conservation and improvement of the natural and built environment;
- the economy of area, including major industrial, business, retail and other employment-generating and wealth-creating development;
- a transport and land use strategy and the provision of strategic transport facilities including, highways, railways, and other infrastructure requirements.

Structure plans should make provision for development for a period of at least 15 years from the base date of the plan. They also need to be regularly reviewed to keep them up to date and relevant. Government advice recommends that plans should be revised every five years, but local authorities are given discretion in the review cycle.

2.3 Current structure of Local Plans

The local plan, or in the case of a UDP Part II, sets out the local planning authority's detailed policies and specific proposals for the development and use of land which will guide its day-to-day planning decisions.

The policies contained in local plans are of two broad types. That is, those which:

- set out the criteria which will be used to judge whether planning applications should be allowed; and
- those related to specific sites.

Local plans tend to be cast over a shorter time period than structure plans/UDP Part I plans, in keeping with their more detailed and specific nature. This time period is often around five years.

3. The Role of Development Control in England and Wales

Local authorities control development through the determination of planning applications, as guided by the development policies they have set out in the Local Plan/UDP Part II. **The Town and Country Planning Act 1990** requires that a local planning authority:

> *'...shall have regard to the provisions of the development plan, so far as material to the application, and to any other material considerations'.*

There is, therefore, a hierarchy in establishing development control which is as follows:

- Is what is proposed a 'development' under planning law?
- How does it fit with development plan policies?
- Are there other 'material considerations'?

Whether or not it is a 'development' can often be established from consulting defined statutory planning **Use Classes** which define types of developments, e.g. residential, light industrial, retail, etc.

The development plan is, therefore, the prime consideration in the determination of specific planning applications. Prior to the **Planning Act 1990**, it had equal weight with other planning considerations, such as site specific matters. If a site is allocated for housing in a plan, then the principle of development cannot easily be challenged in the determination of a planning application. Planning applications are largely determined by committees of elected councillors acting on the advice of council officers.

If a planning authority wished to grant a planning application which is a '*departure*' from a development plan policy, then the approval of the Secretary of State (or the National Assembly for Wales) must be sought. In certain major departure cases, the Secretary of State may 'call in' the application for determination.

An applicant who is refused may appeal to the Secretary of State (or the National Assembly for Wales) and even to the High Court if it is felt there is scope for questioning a decision on the basis of a legal technicality. Appeals can also be made after submission

against non-determination of planning applications by planning authorities. This facility is allowed to resolve difficult schemes where the local planning authority cannot, for whatever reasons, reach a decision in the statutory period laid down of 8 weeks.

4. Scotland

In April 1996, local government in Scotland was reformed and a new system of unitary local authorities was set up all across the country. Until March 1996, regional councils and the unitary islands councils were responsible for structure plans. Since the new unitary authorities have come into being, Scotland is divided into 32 structure plan areas. Eleven of the areas coincide with the boundaries of the new unitary councils, but the others consist of groupings of two or more authorities. In the cases where the structure planning area is shared between councils, responsibility for planning rests with a joint committee.

At present, local plans are the responsibility of Islands Councils and District Councils, except in the Borders, Highland and Dumfries and Galloway regions where the region holds all planning functions. From April 1996, unitary authorities were responsible for local plans. One local plan may be prepared to cover all of the council's area or there may be several local plans covering smaller areas within the jurisdiction. Local authorities may also publish subject plans, which deal with particular issues. For example, in Glasgow, the Forth and Clyde Canal which runs across the north of the city has its own subject plan which crosses several local plan areas.

Unitary development plans don't exist in Scotland and there are no national parks.
District and Island Councils deal with development control, unless plans are called in by the Regional Council or the Secretary of State.

Scotland works within a 'plan-led' system just as England and Wales do, although the governing legislation is the **Planning and Compensation Act 1991** (the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 does not apply to Scotland).

Although the development plan is of foremost importance in Scotland, there is no need to get the Scottish Minister for the Environment's permission if there is a departure from the plan. There are, however, special requirements for giving notice with respect to such developments. There are also notification requirements relating to some types and sizes of developments. Important departures from plans and large-scale developments may be called-in by the Regional Council and then by the Scottish Minister for the Environment.

5. Regional Development Plans

5.1 Regional Planning Bodies (RPBs)

We considered the issue of regional planning guidance and regional planning bodies (RPBs) in Section A of this Block. We return briefly to them again here.

This is a new and evolving area of planning policy and practice and so it is difficult to pin it down precisely. However, the key things to remember are that there will now be a tier of regional planning policy, as well as local and county wide plans. The bodies responsible for this regional planning are known as RPBs and they have, in the past, largely consisted of regional forums of local authorities.

This is now changing. Regional planning for London will be the responsibility of the new Greater London Authority. Regional Chambers have been designated by the Secretary of State in all the English regions outside London under the **Regional Development Agencies Act 1998**. In several of these regions, Regional Chambers will be delegated the role of regional planning. In order to be designated, a Chamber will have to satisfy a number of broad criteria set out by Government, including that the business and voluntary sectors should comprise no less than 30% of the Chamber. There will also be 'observers' of the Chambers such as the Environment Agency.

5.2 Regional Development Plans/Strategies

The main purpose of Regional Development Plans is to provide a regional spatial strategy within which local authority development plans and local transport plans can be prepared. It should provide a broad development strategy for the region over a fifteen to twenty year period. It should also set out the scale and distribution of provision for:

- new housing and priorities for the environment;
- transport;
- infrastructure;
- economic development;
- agriculture, minerals and waste treatment and disposal.

The area of regional planning is one that continues to develop and change, as the way that the regions are organised develops. This is an area of emerging practice which may well change quickly over the coming years as debates around devolution (especially in England) continue.

Summary

1. **In this section, we began by looking at the development plan system and the role of development plans in a 'plan-led' system.**
2. **We then examined the different types of development plans in England and Wales, including the structure plan, district local plan and Unitary development plan. In a separate but related section, we looked at the system of development plans in Scotland.**
3. **We then turned to the historical context of the development plan system, including the introduction of a 2-tier system in the 1960s which separated out the strategic and detailed aspects of development plans.**
4. **The current format of structure plans and UDP Part I plans was then considered, including their purpose and what they cover. We also looked at the same issues with regard to local plans and UDP Part II plans.**
5. **Next we examined development control — what it is and how it is implemented by local planning authorities.**
6. **We then looked at the fairly recent introduction of Regional Development Bodies and Regional Development Plans/Strategies and considered their role in dealing with spatial planning issues such as transport and economic development which cut across local planning authority areas.**

C. Inter-agency Strategies

1. Introduction

In this section, we look at the development motives and perspectives of local authorities, RSLs and private developers to understand what impact these actually have on housing development. We then go on to explore the inter-agency strategies and partnerships which result from these housing providers working together. The regeneration of housing areas through partnership approaches rounds the section off.

2. The Motives of Different Developers

2.1 Who is the developer?

Does it matter what type of organisation the developer is? For example, are the rules the same for housing association developers and private developers? Did the rules for housing associations change after the Housing Act 1988 introduced the concepts of private finance, risk sharing and the retention of development surpluses?

Activity 6

Imagine a typical inner city cleared site. Assume that the owner is a private housing developer which has a choice of developing the site itself or selling the land. In the current economic climate, the options for this owner might be either:

a) building housing for private sale to owner occupiers; or,
b) building housing for private renting; or
c) building housing to sell to a housing association, for it to subsequently rent or sell; or
d) selling the site to a housing association, which will then build social housing for rent or sale; or
e) selling the site to the local council for it to develop for social housing.

Now let us consider the question: What do you think are likely to be the ***motives*** *of each of the possible owners in the above alternatives, a) -e)? In other words, why and how do they want to develop the site? What factors will influence their decision on whether or not and how to develop? Try and answer this question in some detail. Also, can you think of any other options for the owner?*

Continued overpage

Time allocation: 30 minutes

2.2 Developers' motives

As a start to considering the motives of the land owner, you may have come up with the answers:

a) the private developer will be motivated by making a profit on the deal;

b) ditto;

c) ditto;

d) the housing association will be motivated by a commitment to providing housing for need;

e) the local authority will be motivated by a commitment to providing housing for need.

Another option for the owner, if he can afford to have capital tied up, could be to hold onto the site and neither develop it or sell it, but wait for better times, when land prices or the housing market pick up again.

If your answer is no more elaborate than this, stop here and think about the issues some more.

Don't forget that these are organisations which are staffed by real people who will be making these development decisions. Their motives may well be quite complex. How might the state of the market affect their decisions? They might be making the same choices on other sites elsewhere and doing some crystal ball gazing into the future of housing development. Why might they choose one or another of the above options? Go back and develop the above motives in more detail.

Let us consider each of the participants in turn in more detail:

Private developers' motives

Profit is certainly the starting point for their motives. There are probably two financial issues to consider here:

- surpluses which allow the firm to have some working capital to carry on trading; and
- profit, which is money repaid to investors who may have put their capital (money) into the company.

We live in a market economy and companies must make adequate profit to repay their investors, otherwise obviously the investors will invest their money in some other business offering a better rate of return on the investment.

Therefore, the key questions for the private developer are likely to be around the affordability of the housing to the target client group, and profitability. Both of these are likely to be decided by the state of the market.

A buoyant market for owner occupation

If the private housing for sale market is buoyant, can the developer develop the land and build some housing which it can sell to individual buyers for enough money to cover the cost of the land, the cost of building the housing, the overheads and return a profit? (In the housing booms of the 1970s and 1980s, this was quite often the situation).

A buoyant market for private renting

If the private housing for rent market is buoyant, the developer could use the housing for private renting, but this does raise the issue of who is going to manage this housing. Would it be the same company, i.e. does it have a housing management subsidiary, or would it enter a management agreement with another company which will carry out the management? How does it calculate the profitability of private renting? (Before the start of the First World War in 1914, private renting like this was profitable, but it has not been since and there has been very little such development recently).

A depressed market for owner occupation and private renting

If the developer thinks the private housing market is depressed such that, at the moment, it can't develop profitably for private sale or for private rent, then can it build the houses for someone else who can use them, sell them on completion and return probably a lesser profit. At least this way, the developer can keep its building staff employed. (In the housing market depression of the early 1990s, many private developers developed in this way, sometimes involving some quite complex partnerships between private developer, local councils and housing associations).

A depressed housing market overall

If the developer thinks the whole housing market is so depressed that, at the moment, nobody could afford to develop the land for housing, it might have to make its building staff redundant. The question is then, can it sell the land to someone else who can develop it in some other way, and can it make a profit on the sale of the land?

The key question here obviously will be how much did it pay for the land in the first place? This is usually a problem because if the land price has risen, it is usually because of a general buoyancy in the economy, in which case, the first option above is likely to be

the most attractive. In a depression, land prices fall and it is only possible to sell land at a loss.

Housing association motives

Unlike the private developer, profit is unlikely to be an issue for a housing association for two reasons. Firstly, most housing associations develop for rent, and profit on sale is not an issue. Secondly, the state of the market is only an issue insofar as it affects land and building contract tender prices.

Charitable status

As you are probably aware, most housing associations are charities. Charities are not allowed by law to make a profit, although they are allowed to (and will need to) make surpluses which they can use for working capital and reinvest in the business. Non-charitable housing associations can and do carry out various forms of housing for sale, and can and do make profits. For some non-charitable housing associations, development is necessary to replace housing sold under the *"Right to Buy"* legislation.

Philanthropic aims

Most housing associations have some kind of philanthropic aim regarding housing for people in some kind of housing need. There are some that were set up at the turn of the century to cater for specific groups, e.g. the Durham Aged Mineworkers Housing Association is self explanatory. Other, perhaps better known, examples are the Guinness Trust and the Peabody Trust. A whole generation of modern housing associations came into being under the wing of "SHELTER", the housing pressure group for homeless people. Some housing associations cater for people with special needs, like the elderly, (e.g. Anchor and Johnnie Johnson Housing Association).

Employment

Another motive might be creating local employment. Some housing associations will have this as a specified policy aim and may well have policies to encourage the employment of local building contractors or local people by a contractor.

Financial reasons

Surprisingly, development might be necessary to avoid financial embarrassment, just as it is for private builders, but for different reasons. In the past, housing associations used to find it easier to make development surpluses. These surpluses were often used to cross-subsidise other activities like housing management. Stopping development would compromise this cross-subsidy.

(When the Housing Act 1988 introduced mixed funding and higher rents and the risk of lower building standards, several housing associations decided to stop developing but found they could not afford to do so).

Empire building

Finally, let us not forget that, just like private developers and local councils, housing associations can employ some powerful and determined staff who can carry an organisation along with them and who have private motives for encouraging development - empire building, self aggrandisement and career advancement. These can be motives for an organisation developing housing, perhaps in situations where it might have been better not to.

Housing management

In the case of building for rent, especially where the developer is also the housing manager, development can be seen as just the preliminary for management questions. Will the standards and specification be satisfactory? Will the housing be easy to manage and maintain? Will the design help or hinder the creation of a stable community? Affordability will be a key issue, but this is likely to be the question of whether the rents are affordable to the target tenant groups.

Local Councils' motives

One of the options above might have been for the developer to sell the land to the local council to build housing on. After the election of the Conservative government in 1979, this became less and less likely, since that government's policy was to prevent further council building and policy measures were introduced which achieved this and, in fact, under the current Labour government it is much the same. However, local councils still carry out improvement programmes and many would like to build new housing if they could. Why do they want to develop housing? As with housing associations, profit is not likely to figure as an issue.

Statutory duties

For one thing, unlike the other developers considered above, local authorities have a statutory duty to house certain types of homeless people in certain defined categories of need. Therefore, many councils would like to build housing to house these people.

Philanthropic aims

Like housing associations, many councils have a philanthropic reason for developing housing. Councillors often believe that providing rented housing for local people is one of their key reasons for existing, notwithstanding recent government policy. Also, building housing is one of the ways of creating employment for local people.

Local Politics

Finally, since local councils are political as well administrative organisations, political issues are involved.

Labour councillors often feel that council tenants are more likely to vote Labour than owner occupiers, and that developing affordable, local rented housing is one way of retaining their vote in the local area. (This is hardly surprising given that Conservative politicians share the same assumptions about the voting intentions of owner occupiers and council tenants. One of the Conservative government's stated aims in introducing the Right to Buy for council tenants was to persuade former Labour voters to vote Conservative.)

Conservative councils have had similar problems, including the case of Westminster Council's *"gerrymandering"* of local housing tenure to ensure owner occupiers bought local authority owned properties in marginal local wards.

2.3 Are builder's motives important?

Having considered the motives of developers, we can now see that different developers can have very different motives for wanting to develop. But moving on from the question of who will own the housing and what it will be used for, does it matter who **builds** the housing? For example, in the building of social housing, does it make a difference if the grant goes to a housing association or a private builder?

This is a controversial issue and to resolve it needs careful consideration of the evidence. An interesting comparison could be made with other areas of public activity where an internal market has been introduced and where services have been privatised. Examples include the provision of health care, water, education, prison service and energy, where sometimes not just the ownership, but the service delivery was privatised by the Conservative governments of the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Activity 7

What are likely to be the differences in approach and practice in housing recessions and housing booms between builders who are:

a) *private builders - building/renovating housing for a client as a commercial activity, depending on the creation of profit to continue, or*

b) *local authority or housing association builders - building/renovating housing as a part of that organisation's core activity of providing social housing.*

Time allocation: 15 minutes

2.4 The operation of builders in different organisations

The points you may have come up with are discussed below. The answer also develops some of the issues. Don't worry if your answers are different, since the points below depend to some extent on a knowledge of how the building market works, which you may not have.

Private builders

The builder building only as a commercial activity will be mainly concerned with the price the client will pay for the particular specification. This builder is likely to be in competition with other similar builders for the same work, so activities which add to cost, (like training, employment and trade union rights, health and safety, etc.) may be restricted.

In a recession, it is a client's market. The builder is likely to tender very competitively for work, since there is very little around. Profit margins and prices are likely to be low. Builders may price at no profit, just to maintain turnover. Builders will be keen to set up partnership deals with clients which tie the client into an agreed programme over a period of time or number of contracts. If the builder has a land bank, it might offer this as part of a deal. Building labour is likely to seek secure employment with a social housing provider. If the market is not profitable enough, the builder's parent company may just decide to do something else. This can be very awkward for the builder's partners. See for example Figure C4 overpage.

In a boom, it is the contractor's market. This builder will be less concerned about winning particular tenders, since there is plenty of work elsewhere. (Tender prices are likely to be higher, as are profits). Social housing clients who are likely to be limited by capital cost limits issued before the price rises started may find it difficult to obtain cheap enough tenders and may need to cut standards to keep costs within price limits. (During the 1970s building boom, some social housing clients found it impossible to get a builder to agree to price a job, let alone get a good price).

Building labour is likely to be more interested in pay (which will be higher in the private sector) than security.

3. Partnerships

3.1 Introduction

The growth of housing organisations working in partnership has become an increasing trend. There are, predominantly, two driving forces behind this change.

The first was the Housing Act 1988 which enabled the Housing Corporation to reduce the Housing Association Grant (now known as Social Housing Grant) element of new schemes and promote its replacement by an element of private funding. Also the Act introduced an element of competition between housing associations for scarce resources based on achieving better value for money. Both have pushed housing associations to look at innovative ways of working with private developers.

The second factor was the government's intention that local authorities would become enablers rather than providers of housing. This was set out in the 1987 White Paper: *'Housing; The Government's Proposals'*, which declared that the government:

> *" ... will encourage local authorities to change and develop their housing role. Provision of housing by local authorities as landlords should gradually be diminished, and alternative forms of tenure and tenant choice should increase ... Local authorities should increasingly see themselves as enablers, who ensure that everyone in their area is adequately housed, but not necessarily by them".*

As we have seen earlier, both the Government Regional Offices and the Housing Corporation Regional Offices pay attention to the enabling role when making discretionary decisions on capital funding. Local authorities that demonstrate partnership working are favoured by larger slice of the cake, both in terms of Housing Investment Programme funding and other top-sliced programmes such as the Single Regeneration Budget (although, of course, at the expense of other local authorities since the 'cake' is only of fixed size).

3.2 Local Authority Led Partnerships

According to Garnett, "True partnership involves working together to produce a result that could not have been achieved by either party working apart." (Garnett David, Housing Finance CIH, 2000).

Local authorities use their own resources to improve their properties, but are also expected to work in partnership with other agencies towards property improvement and/or redevelopment. Some of the ways they do this are listed below:

Local authority support for the private sector

This includes providing information and advice to private landlords, owner occupiers and potential investors, as well as financial help to improve dwellings and promote access to owner occupation.

Local authority social housing grant

This does not compete with Housing Corporation Housing Association Grant. The procedures are similar, and it can only go to property or land owned by a registered social landlord. It is available for all the same scheme types as Social Housing Grant. It forms part of the local authority Housing Investment Programme bid, but is administered by the Housing Corporation, rather than the DETR.

The private finance initiative

This is an initiative designed to involve the private sector in financing, building and maintaining public services (such as building or improving housing or managing and maintaining it or all of these things). It is meant to match public need with private provision. All PFI projects differ but in the most common model the local authority retains:

- a long term interest in the land
- a degree of managerial control over the assets through performance-related payments

whilst the private sector partner takes the commercial risk and general managerial responsibility . There is limited or no capital funding required by the authority in PFI schemes.

Regenerating local authority properties

Increasingly, partnerships are becoming complex entities involving many different statutory, voluntary, private sector and community organisations and groups which are focused on rebuilding the physical and social fabric of communities. Partnerships often include:

- local authority housing and planning departments;
- social services;
- the education authority and local school;
- the health authority;
- the employment service and benefits agency; along with
- registered social landlords;
- voluntary agencies representing specific interests such as older or younger people;
- agencies providing support and care;
- tenant and community groups;
- and local businesses.

We explore regeneration partnerships in more depth below.

4. The Concept of Neighbourhood

4.1 Introduction

Before considering regeneration schemes, we turn to the concept of 'neighbourhood', which is the context within which regeneration partnerships operate. The neighbourhood is a local physical unit which provides certain things for the residents of the housing which form it.

4.2 What do neighbourhoods provide?

The things that neighbourhoods provide are of two main kinds:

(a) Local life and interaction

Neighbourhoods provide an arena for social life and social interaction. The concept of neighbourhood is intimately linked to ideas about neighbourliness, sense of community and of local identity and 'belonging'.

(b) Services

Neighbourhoods are also a unit for the provision of local services to the residents. One characteristic of a neighbourhood, as opposed to the smaller units we have talked about, is that it will normally contain non-housing uses and activities even within a residential neighbourhood. These will include schools, shops, leisure facilities, churches, clubs and other voluntary organisations. It might also be appropriate to include within the 'services' that a neighbourhood provides less concrete qualities such as 'safety' and 'accessibility'.

4.3 Neighbourhood and Community

One of the most important planning and design principles in post-war Britain, in relation to residential neighbourhoods, is what is usually referred to as the **'community neighbourhood concept'**. The term 'community' is widely used, but has many meanings. In fact, 'community neighbourhood' has changed its meaning over time.

The original source of the idea is usually taken to be the work of the American architect Clarence Perry who, in the inter-war years, proposed designs for new residential areas which he suggested would provide an efficient basis for the provision of local services. His design incorporated six principles (Perry 1939):

(a) The population of the area should be such as to support one primary school, a population of about 5,000.

(b) The area should have clear boundaries such as major roads.

(c) The area should contain open space within it.

(d) As far as possible, the catchment areas of local educational and social institutions should be co-terminous with the boundaries of the area.

(e) Local shops should be located on the major roads at the perimeter, servicing adjacent community-neighbourhoods.

(f) The area should have an internal circulation system for pedestrians.

The emphasis in this original version of the idea was a well-defined unit providing key local services for the conventional family and a safe, primarily pedestrian environment (in response to the growing impact of large-scale car ownership). It did not concern the nature and quality of social relationships within the neighbourhood.

The classless community

The idea of the community-neighbourhood was taken up in Britain after the Second World War by the newly formed Ministry of Town and Country Planning, having been suggested as a basis for planning new communities by the Dudley Report: '*The Design of Dwellings*' in 1944. It was also used by the most noted of the early post-war town planners such as Patrick Abercrombie and Lewis Keeble, particularly in relation to the planning of the first generation of New Towns.

There were certain crucial differences from Perry's original concept.

- The population was to be 10,000 rather than 5,000.
- Shops as well as social and educational facilities were to be located at the centre.
- The community-neighbourhood unit would be surrounded by open space, forming a buffer between it and adjacent areas.

In general, these changes emphasised the self-containment and separation of each community-neighbourhood. To a much greater extent than in the model proposed by Perry, the community-neighbourhood was to be a clearly defined, even relatively isolated, physical unit.

The major difference in the post-war British version, though, was a far more explicit social content. Perry's original proposals emphasised the unit as an efficient basis for the provision of local services, rather than as a basis for the formation of a community.

The British version was far more directly concerned with creating areas with a high level of community spirit and participation. An important element of this more explicit social content was the idea of 'social mix'. It was proposed that each community-neighbourhood should include a range of housing which would accommodate all sections of society and that all classes would live together within the same community. This can be seen as part of the spirit of post-war reconstruction, the deeply-felt need to continue the sense of solidarity of the war, and to move away from the class divisions and inequalities of the pre-war years. One expression of this was the desire for the classes to live together in the same community.

Neighbourhood and social mix

The first generation of British New Towns arising from the New Towns Act 1946 were the places where the social ideals of the community neighbourhood as envisaged in the Dudley Report could be most nearly fulfilled. There were two basic reasons for this:

- The New Towns involved the construction of whole new residential neighbourhoods 'from scratch'
- In these first generation New Towns virtually all of the housing, in theory for all sections of the community, was built by the New Town Development Corporation as housing to rent. This provided the possibility for building socially-mixed neighbourhoods.

However, British housing in the post-war years, especially in the 1950s, moved away from the ideals expressed in the New Towns. In particular, when building for owner occupation took off in the 1950s, the housing system quickly moved to a dual system of provision. The private sector built housing for sale to the relatively affluent. The local authority sector built housing for rent for the less well-off. Each tended to build in separate neighbourhoods, so the outward expansion of urban areas took the form of a patchwork of new residential neighbourhoods of different tenure and social status. Clearly, this made the ideal of creating socially-mixed neighbourhoods unrealistic in most post-war residential development.

Neighbourhood and community spirit

As we saw, the version of the community neighbourhood in the Dudley Report emphasised the physical separation and self-containment of each community-neighbourhood unit. This was closely linked to the social objective of encouraging a high degree of social interaction within the neighbourhood, and generating a high level of community spirit and sense of identity.

(a) Community and scale

In general, sociologists have been somewhat critical of this aspect of the community-neighbourhood concept. One criticism is that a unit of the suggested size - a neighbourhood of about 10,000 people - is unlikely to provide an appropriate unit of social interaction. It is suggested that informal friendship and neighbour relationships are likely to operate mostly on a more localised scale, within immediately-surrounding houses and streets. On the other hand, more formal participation in voluntary organisations is likely to take place at a larger scale, within larger districts or at the level of the whole town. This criticism is supported by research by Henry and Cox (1970) on the Scottish New Town of East Kilbride, built on classical community-neighbourhood lines. Their research confirmed, for example, that most informal friendship and neighbour contacts took place within areas much smaller than the community-neighbourhood.

(b) Village versus city

It has been suggested (e.g. Dennis 1968) that the community-neighbourhood reflects the inability of planners to deal with the complexities of the city. Instead, an attempt is made to sub-divide the city into 'village-sized' components. This may be seen as part of a strong tradition of anti-urbanism in sociology and planning in Britain. In 19th century Britain, a whole range of influences, from the Sanitary Reform Movement of Edwin Chadwick, to the Arts and Craft Movement of William Morris, expressed a distaste for and fear of the industrial city, contrasting this with an idealised view of village life. One reflection of this was the creation by industrialists of 'model villages' such as Bourneville built by the Cadburys in Birmingham, Saltaire by Titus Salt near Bradford, and New Earswick by the Rowntrees in York. The aim of these villages was not only to provide better, more healthy living conditions, but also to remove workers from what were seen as the social evils of city life, and to replace this with what was assumed to be the order and stability of traditional village life. It is suggested, in the post-war years also, that the ideal of creating a world of social solidarity and community led to the use of the rural village as a model for the creation of new urban neighbourhoods.

The social assumptions behind the community -neighbourhood concept do not appear to be well founded on the realities of social life, whether that be the ideal of mixing of classes, or the creation of friendship and community spirit. In general, these explicit social objectives did not survive the idealism of the immediately post-war years. However, the community-neighbourhood unit principle continued to be applied for more pragmatic reasons.

4.4 Neighbourhood and Services

Neighbourhood and traffic

If the social content of the idea of neighbourhood is based on dubious assumptions, is the idea still valid as an efficient basis for the design of new communities and the provision of services to them? The concept took on a new life in the late 1960s through the ideas of highway planners.

(a) In Britain, the most influential example was Buchanan's 'Traffic in Towns' (Buchanan 1963). This suggested that the need to accommodate increasing traffic could best be met by creating a pattern for towns and cities as a cellular structure. Large-scale high-speed roads would divide up the urban area into self-contained residential units with an internal pedestrian circulation system. Thus, in a sense, the community-neighbourhood unit was reborn as a pedestrian cell within a highway network. This very much echoed Perry's concern (see above) with designing neighbourhoods to accommodate car traffic.

(b) This pattern is most clearly seen in New Towns, this time in the 'second generation' of New Towns of the 1960s, such as Washington and Milton Keynes. These display very clearly the 'cellular structure': residential neighbourhoods are divided by open space, within which are set motorway-style highways.

(c) It is a pattern also seen in some of the large-scale peripheral local authority housing estates of that period.

(d) Even in existing cities, the building of urban motorways and dual carriageways, and traffic management schemes to concentrate traffic on major routes, has had the effect, since the 1960s, of dividing the city into relatively isolated cells.

Neighbourhood and local service provision

(a) The New Towns

The community-neighbourhoods of the 1960s continued to be planned around provision of local services, again echoing the original concerns of Perry. This was, perhaps, less evident in the neighbourhoods built as extensions to existing towns. But in the New Towns, local shopping, education and community facilities were designed into the structure of neighbourhood units, with 'higher-level' services such as administrative offices and larger and more specialist shops in the town centre.

(b) Centralisation versus community services

In recent times, though, problems have arisen in the use of the community-neighbourhood as a basis for the provision of local services. The trend is to centralise many facilities and services into a smaller number of larger units. For example, there is a concentration of shopping facilities into supermarkets and hypermarkets, of G.P.s into health centres, the closure of small schools, of local pubs etc.

If the traditional rural village is the inspiration for the community neighbourhood, as suggested above, then the current problems of retaining services in rural villages indicates the increasing unreality of the neighbourhood unit as a basis for local services.

Neighbourhood and the impact of mobility

(a) Changing communities

The problem of maintaining local facilities, whether in a neighbourhood within a town or city, or within a rural village, is not only the result of change and concentration in the provision of services. It is partly a result of the higher general level of mobility in society. However, this increased mobility does not apply to everyone. We now have a society where, in any area, there are likely to be people with very different levels of mobility, with very different lifestyles and 'horizons'. These differences arise not only from class, but also from age and life-cycle differences. They occur within, as well as between, families. In this situation, some people in an area may be very dependent on local shops, local leisure facilities, local friendships. This may apply to the elderly, and to parents with young children. On the other hand, many others may have the mobility to choose services, opportunities and social contacts over a very wide area and have little interest in local services or the local community.

(b) Networks, not neighbourhoods

Increasingly, it is necessary to look at patterns of relationships and social ties, and of the use of services, not in terms of area-based communities or neighbourhoods, involving all the population within an area, but in terms of networks. Each family, indeed each individual, will have their own network of social relationships and services usage. There will be huge variations between the different people in any neighbourhood in the physical extent and range of these networks, and variations in the extent to which they involve the neighbourhood itself.

(c) The problem for planners

The problem posed for planners and designers of neighbourhoods and their facilities is how to provide an adequate level of services, and perhaps also of social life, for all the population in a situation

of great variations in mobility. The problems now found in rural villages of maintaining local services and providing for the less mobile in those villages suggests that the answer does not lie in trying to create self-contained 'village-style' community-neighbourhoods in towns and cities. Instead, it seems to make most sense to accept the complexity of modern life, and to look at the specific special needs of the different groups and categories of people within the local population.

Self Test 2

1. *Briefly outline influential ways of thinking about "neighbourhood".*

2. *What social changes have altered planners' views of neighbourhood communities?*

Now turn to the Answers at the end of the Block.

5. Regeneration partnerships

5.1 Government-led Regeneration Programmes

Following on from the discussion about neighbourhood and community, regeneration is a holistic approach to improving and redeveloping areas which are subject to multiple disadvantage, including poor housing, lack of employment and training opportunities, high crime and vandalism and/or fear of these, poor local facilities and services (community centres, schools, GP surgeries/hospitals) and lack of choice. The DETR's Annual Report for 1999 reported that nearly 14,000 homes had been built or improved through regeneration programmes. This is in addition to other gains including job creation, land reclamation and business start-ups Below, we will briefly review the main regeneration programmes to get a sense of what they cover and how much expenditure they involve.

The New Deal for Communities

The New Deal for Communities was launched by the Prime Minister in September 1998 in tandem with the Social Exclusion Unit's report on a national strategy for neighbourhood renewal. The main themes of the New Deal for Communities are:

- joining up investment in buildings with investment in people
- improving employment prospects for local people
- improving neighbourhood management and local service delivery

During the period 2001-2002, the DETR allocated a spend of £450 million, a quadrupling of its expenditure for the first year of the programme in 1999. Neighbourhoods of between 1,000 and 4,000 households are being targeted and improvements to the built environment (including housing), economy and local services are expected to be delivered through partnerships formed by local people, community and voluntary organisations, public agencies, local authorities and businesses.

The Single Regeneration Budget

The Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) was established in 1994, replacing and amalgamating 20 different budgets, including City Challenge and Estate Action, previously managed across various government departments. The aims of the SRB are to use partnership involving public, private and community organisations in order to:

- improve employment, education and skills
- address social exclusion
- improve and protect the environment, including housing
- support local economies and businesses
- improve community safety

Administration of the SRB has now altered, being delivered (since 1999) at regional level by the Regional Development Agencies in England and, in London, by the London Development Agency. The most recent round (round 6) involves grants of over £900 million to the English regions. Under rounds 1-6 in total, over 900 schemes have been funded worth over £5.5 billion over 7 years. The DETR estimates that these schemes will attract a further £10 billion in private sector investment which will help attract European funding.

However, the SRB is not without its problems, as Ray, a local authority housing manager, explains:

> 'It absorbs the major housing refurbishment budgets - including Estate Action which will disappear. At the same time the commitment to future housing projects cannot be guaranteed because of the competitive bidding process. So it is feared that resources for housing will in fact diminish quire considerably.
>
> The Single Regeneration Budget will be distributed according to competition but all local authorities can bid. This may lead to resources being less well targeted towards inner city areas or most problematic estates. Local authorities will be less well equipped to keep pace with worsening housing conditions, which will initially make the estates harder to manage, but at the same time will increase pressure for alternative management providers.'

The Special Grants Programme

The Special Grants Programme is open to voluntary organisations in England who can contribute to the regeneration work being carried out by local partnerships being funded mainly through the New Deal for Communities and the SRB. Its aims pretty well mirror those of the SRB and New Deal for Communities programmes, providing £1.5 million to voluntary organisations in 2001-2002.

English Partnerships

The focus of the English Partnerships scheme is much wider than housing regeneration alone, including job creation, inward investment and environmental improvement through the reclamation and development of vacant, derelict or contaminated land. The Regional Development Agencies mentioned earlier took over the running of the English Partnerships Programme from April 1999.

HATs

There are currently 6 Housing Action Trusts or HATs which were set up to regenerate local authority housing estates in London, Birmingham, Liverpool and North Hull. Since 1991, HATs have provided 2,322 new and 2,335 renovated homes with £566 million pounds of public investment. The scheme has also been targeted on training and access to employment for local people.

European Regional Development Fund

The European Regional Development Fund or ERDF is a programme targeted on promoting development of the poorest regions within the European Union, including areas worst affected by industrial decline. The Single Regeneration Budget provides an important source of match funding for ERDF projects.

City Challenge

By 1998, 30 different City Challenge partnerships had completed their 5 year programmes to improve and regenerate both the built environment and local economies on a sustainable basis. 13,277 dwellings were built or improved under this programme by 1998, drawing in over £900 million in private investment to increase the impact of the public expenditure.

Estate Action

The Estate Action Programme is now finished, funding only schemes which were approved in 1994-95 and earlier to help local authorities improve unpopular housing estates. During its lifetime, Estate Action spent over £500 million and included the refurbishment of over 37,000 existing homes and the development of nearly 2,300 new homes.

5.2 How Effective Have Regeneration Partnerships Really Been?

As you can see, the regeneration programmes outlined above have been large spenders of public and private money and have involved large and complex programmes for improving and regenerating not only homes but whole areas and local economies over many years. There has been growing concern about how

effective these regeneration schemes have actually been and whether they have made any lasting and sustainable improvements that live on once the programmes are completed.

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation has undertaken some research in this area (JRF Findings, May 2000) and their view is that:

> *'An enduring need for urban regeneration despite thirty years of regeneration activity raises the question of whether we are organising ourselves as a society sufficiently to achieve regeneration over the next thirty. Although there has been an explosion in the 1990's in the use of partnership as a means to regeneration, not enough is known about why some partnerships are effective and others are not.'*

The research undertaken by the JRF indicates that truly successful regeneration partnerships need to include the following elements:

- local leadership and practical, long term vision for the area (in other words, what everyone agrees the area should look like and be like in 5 and 10 years);
- involvement of key partners including the health trusts, the Employment Service, the Benefits Agency, the police and the local business community;
- budgets for community capacity building from the start, formal community plans and measurement of success in terms of community skill's and residents' views.

The research also highlights other issues which are important to successful regeneration partnerships but admits these are outside the control of the partners themselves. These issues include the modernisation of local government (and especially the promotion of local democracy and neighbourhood initiatives within a council decentralisation programme), a more effective regional redevelopment framework of RDAs and a more co-ordinated and effective national policy.

There is likely to remain a focus on regeneration programmes for some time to come, as this type of housing development continues to grow as a proportion of the Approved Development Programme (ADP) of the Housing Corporation. In fact, the Housing Corporation's target is that 65% of the total ADP should be for regeneration schemes. The reality is that in 1999/2000 82% of the total ADP approvals for England were for regeneration schemes, a figure that far exceeds the Housing Corporation's own target.

Summary

1. **In this section we have looked at inter-agency strategies, beginning with the motives and perspectives of different development agencies.**
2. **We saw that the motives of private developers are dominated by profit and on an understanding of their particular market for housing, as well as the state of the market overall.**
3. **The motives of developers providing social housing were seen to be governed by meeting needs, including the need for affordable housing, although there is an increasing awareness that local authorities and registered social landlords need to understand their markets too.**
4. **We then went on to look at partnerships and how they came to prominence following the 1988 Housing Act.**
5. **We also considered what is meant by neighbourhood and community and how these concepts have developed in terms of the design and development of housing in Britain.**
6. **Finally, we considered local regeneration partnerships, including the main government programmes for regeneration and whether they have been judged to be effective in achieving their goals.**

D. Housing Needs Surveys

1. Introduction

This section takes a closer look at housing need as a concept and how to apply housing need information.

2. What is Housing Need?

It is important from the outset to understand that there is no adequate, single definition of housing need. Perceptions of need will vary, both between different housing organisations - as you will discover below - and at different periods of time. It will also vary between different societies. Let's see if we can find out why that should be the case.

J. B. Cullingworth, in his book *Essays on Housing Policy: the British Scene* (1979) describes the concept of housing need as follows:

> *"The "need" for housing, as with the "need" for health services, or roads, or recreational facilities, is dependent upon the awareness, recognition and definition of "problems": these in turn are dependent upon the standards of "adequacy" adopted and the factors which are accepted as being relevant to them. All these constantly change: as one "problem is met, another emerges. A "need' 'is a socially accepted aspiration, and the faster that one is met the faster do new aspirations arise." (p.31)*

Now let's try to pick out the key points from that passage, and identify the implications for the concept of housing need:

- **Housing "needs" arise from our definitions of housing "problems".**
- **How we define problems depends on what we think of as "adequate".**
- **What we think of as adequate changes over time.**
- **As a result of these altered standards of adequacy, we will identify new housing problems.**
- **These "new" problems will mean new "needs" can be identified.**

2.1 Wants and needs

This gives us insights into why there is no single definition of "need". At any one time, in any society, the concept of a "need" is simply a reflection of a "socially accepted aspiration". It is *not*, therefore, the same thing as a "want". I might want a bigger or better house, but unless my want, coincidentally reflects society's current "standards of adequacy", I do not "need" it.

2.2 Changes in society's expectations

Socially determined standards covering all aspects of life and not merely housing have shifted very rapidly over time, especially during the 20th century. This is, perhaps, most readily understood if we think of some examples of household goods which are commonplace today, such as televisions and refrigerators. In the 1950s, few households aspired to the ownership of such items: now, well over 90% of homes have these one-time luxuries. They have come to be seen as essentials, and so are now viewed as household needs.

We can identify similar changes in our ideas about housing needs. Today, overcrowding is a widely recognised problem, indicating housing need. But this was not always the case. In the first decades of the 1900s, when average family size was much higher than it is today, it was commonplace for several members of a working class household to share a bedroom. Looking back further, to the mid-19th century, often several *families* had to share a dwelling. Britain's expanding industries had attracted many new workers to urban areas, which placed considerable pressure on the limited urban housing stock. As a result, rents rose rapidly. This stimulated some new building; but in the absence of proper building controls, much was of poor quality. In any event, construction could not keep pace with the expansion of the urban population. As a result, more and more families had to be accommodated in existing homes. Rising rents, in any case, forced many tenants to sub-let. Town dwellings became progressively more overcrowded, often with an entire family occupying each room in a dwelling!

Today, such levels of overcrowding would be considered wholly unacceptable - and a clear indication of housing need. But back in the Victorian era, the main concern was with the *public health* implications of these housing conditions. In the absence of adequate water and sewerage services, epidemics of typhoid and cholera became fairly commonplace - made worse, of course, by the overcrowded conditions in which many people lived. Thus, the initial government response to this problem was not intended to meet a housing need, but rather to meet a public health need.

2.3 State involvement in housing conditions

The **Public Health Act of 1848** saw the beginnings of state involvement, in what would nowadays be viewed as "housing conditions". The **Labouring Classes' Lodging Houses Act**, which followed in 1851, was the first legislation to permit local authorities to *provide* housing; but the fact that it was extensively ignored by them is a clear indication of contemporary views of housing need!

A few eminent Victorians were, however, genuinely appalled by such housing conditions. The first charitable housing organisations (forerunners of housing associations) were established around this time, by wealthy capitalist benefactors such as Peabody, (Thinness, and Rothschild. Octavia Hill pioneered a "social work" dimension to housing provision, which is viewed by some as the forerunner of modern day housing management. But it was not until the **"Addison" Act of 1919** which introduced central government subsidies to council housing, that council housing really began on any scale.

So, we can see that our ideas about housing problems - and hence, what constitutes housing need - have changed quite dramatically since the last century. But how have our perceptions of housing "problems" - and hence, housing need - changed over more recent, years?

Read the following passage, written by a colleague about his childhood experiences of housing in the 1950s. This describes the sort of conditions which were fairly commonplace for working class families at that time. As you read the passage, we want you to identify any aspects of his housing provision which you think might be viewed as a "problem" today. When you have finished reaching the passage you should note these problems in the space provided below.

> *"As a young child, I think that I was reasonably fortunate. My parents were both of working class origins, but both were employed in skilled occupations. By the standards of the time, our household income must have been well above the average. I was an only child, in a two income household, and I am quite sure that, to many of my friends, we must have seemed extremely well off. It seems quite incredible now, but at the time, the amenities offered by our home seemed to be considered to be quite good. We had a 'nice home at the "superior" end of the privately rented, working class accommodation readily available at the time.*

Our outside toilet, at the end of the yard, was an extremely inhospitable place to a small child, particularly on dark, winter nights, when the long walk down the very black path seemed interminable. Infested by spiders - as well as other creeping horrors - it was lit by a tiny, hanging oil lamp during the coldest months, as much to prevent the cistern freezing as to provide lighting. It cast eerie, flickering shadows on the walls, virtually guaranteeing that, in my terror, I would emerge (at full gallop) with wet pants. Even worse, the wretched thing always seemed to conspire to run out of oil just after I had entered the chamber, ensuring that, in my haste, the toilet pan was frequently missed altogether. As you can imagine, this made me extremely popular with my mother, who had the unenviable task of cleaning the horror.

Inside the house, we fared little better. The only source of heating was the single coal fire in the living room, which seemed to take hours to emit any warmth - despite being lit by my father as soon as he arose. Later, we acquired the fabulous luxury of an electric fire, which meant we could achieve some immediate respite from the bitter cold on first waking, before the coal fire got going. This was only ever a temporary relief however, as its use was carefully monitored, due to something seemingly quite horrendous called "electricity bills". ('I remember wondering just what form this particular horror took.)

In the icy bedroom, the nightly ritual of "filling the hot water bottles was essential, if sleep were to be possible in beds which felt habitually damp through coldness. In the morning, I recall bracing myself in the warmth of my bed, for the lightening spring with which I attempted daily to reach my clothing: however, no matter how speedily I leapt forth, I was always frozen stiff before even the underwear had been fastened. Looking back, I am surprised that I did not do permanent damage to my teeth during the excessive "chattering" which then ensued.

There was not even the respite of a nice warm bath, or even basin, of hot water in the mornings. Although we were fortunate to have a "back boiler" to the fire which ('so long as the fire was lit) permitted some water to be heated, this had always cooled down before morning. On the occasional "luxury" morning, a kettle of water would be boiled from which to fill the wash basin; but usually; it was a case of a quick splash in an icy bowl. Baths were

a once weekly luxury - though the degree of luxury depended on whether one was the first to use the water ('ah, bliss!), or the last! One bathful had to suffice for everyone, including my Grandmother, and by the end, it would be (at best) lukewarm arid extremely "scummy".

All was not bleak, however. We did have the luxury of what seemed to be viewed as "a nice modern gas stove"; which meant that the kitchen range no longer had to be lit before cooking could commence. We had hot breakfasts - essential when we were so chilled by the painful process of dressing each morning! - and could roast potatoes or toast (as well as our legs) in front of the hot fire on winter evenings.

How things have changed!

Central heating - or at the very least, instant heating appliances - inside toilets, refrigerators (we had then had what seemed to be essentially a draughty cupboard, called the larder, carpets (we had linoleum, with the luxury of an odd rug), running hot water and daily showers, sink units amid melamine work surfaces, built-in cupboards ... all of that seemed the stuff of fairy tales when I was a child!"

Activity 8

It will be clear from the passage that judged by the standards of the time, the writer's home was perfectly adequate. But by today's standards, a number of aspects of the provision would seem highly inadequate. Make a note of these 'problems' below:

Time allocation: 5 minutes

Your list provides an indication of how some of' our ideas about "needs" have been changing over the last 40 years.

Changed perceptions of what is "adequate" have altered our perceptions of "problems". One of the major reasons for this has been the improvement in average household incomes. For example, increased levels of income have meant that we have been able to improve the average standard of housing amenities. As a result, society's expectations of what *ought* to be provided have been changing. A good example of one such amenity is central heating, which is now very much considered to be the norm (almost 90% of households in 1996, compared to only 37% of households in 1972). As a result, central heating has been installed in most social housing. This also demonstrates how improved housing standards contribute to the overall *quality* of our lives, improving our "standard of living".

But to return to the contrasts between now and the 1950s, let's see how our identification of the housing "problems" in the passage compares to yours. This is the list which we compiled as we read through the passage:

- A poor heating system (no means of heating any rooms other than living room).
- An inadequate hot water supply.
- An outside toilet (may be shared?).
- Inadequate food storage and preparation facilities.
- Possibly insufficient bedrooms? (We aren't told bow many rooms the house has.)
- An elderly person - who may desire her own accommodation?

These suggestions of possible problems are by no means definitive. You may well have identified many others depending on how generously you view current aspirations for housing provision! What is important is that you have been able to recognise at least *some* of our changing perceptions of housing problems, and so understand that concepts of need change. Indeed, new "needs" have emerged over the past few years, as we shall see when we examine current definitions.

This means that need is a***relative*** concept: it is judged***in relation to*** a standard which society fixes, but which may change over time. This also explains why other societies may view housing need in entirely different terms: they have simply set different standards. What we view as a need in Britain may well be viewed as a luxury

- or even, entirely irrelevant! - in another country. This is partly determined by levels of income, but also by other factors such as environmental conditions: we "need" glass windows, to keep out bad weather and yet permit the entry of light. In warm, dry conditions, glass windows might well be a disadvantage, preventing the entry of cooling breezes and keeping heat in!

So, let's now return to housing problems in Britain, and see how we might use our list (from Activity 1) to go on to make generalisations about "types" of housing needs. Can we begin to *classify* these needs, to group them together, by identifying some common features?

3. Classifying Needs

Our perception of needs arise from the identification of a variety of different problems. This means that we can classify needs in a number of ways, because different sorts of problems will result in different sorts of needs.

But first of all, why might we wish to classify needs?

A housing organisation may have hundreds, or indeed, thousands, of customers. It may have to deal with similar numbers of new applications each year, from potential customers. From all of these individual pieces of information, it has to be able to come to decisions about the needs of its customers and how best to meet them. Clearly, some way of making*generalisations* about customer needs is required. This will enable it to determine, for example, the extent of the need for dwellings suitable for the needs of elderly people, or for young people. The alternative would be to deal with each customer entirely separately, which means planning for provision on an individual basis. This would be an enormous waste of the organisation's resources!

We want you now to consider how you might classify the needs of the family described in the previous passage: how can their housing problems be categorised?

Activity 9

In Activity 8 you made a list of the highly specific problems of the family as viewed by today's ideas of housing problems. We shall assume, for the purposes of this activity, that there are insufficient bedrooms, and that the grandmother, whilst unable to live wholly independently, would prefer to have her own accommodation, which would permit some independence.

How might we ***generalise*** *about the* ***sorts*** *of problem we have identified?*

As we have indicated, there are many potential ways that we could choose to classify these problems. Let's start with one commonly used classification, relating to the first problem in the list. The family has a poor heating system.. What kind of problem is this?

Heating is one of a range of items which is considered to be an amenity of the dwelling, so that problem could be classified as "lack of basic amenities ".

Now, in the space below, try to define the kind of problem represented by the other items on the list: under what "general" heading would you place the other problems?

Specific problem	***Classification of "type" of problem***
poor heating	*lack of basic amenity*
lack of hot water	
outside toilet	
poor food preparation/storage facilities	
insufficient bedrooms	
elderly person	

Time allocation: 5 minutes

We have, quite intentionally, left you to make your own decisions about classifying the above problems. This will help you to understand that there are very many different possibilities, none of which are necessarily "right" or "wrong". We will now go on to examine one possible classification - but this could be quite different from your list. You should compare our list to your own, and think about which classification(s) *you* think are most useful, in the sense of helping you to make generalisations about the sorts of housing problems which we have.

- The first four - heating, hot water, toilet and kitchen facilities - all relate to the amenities offered by the dwelling. So we would classify all of these problems as ones arising from a **lack of basic amenities**.
- The fifth item, lack of bedrooms, indicates **overcrowding**: it is likely that we would consider that too many people have to share a room.
- The last item, the elderly person, is an example of' what is commonly classified as **special needs**: a need arising from the personal needs of the individual, and the inability of' their current housing circumstances to meet that need.

Incidentally, this "special need" is a good example of how social changes have influenced our perceptions of problems, and hence needs. Forty years ago, dwellings designed specifically for older people were virtually unknown, except for a few rare examples usually provided by employers for their long serving (and very fortunate) retired employees. In the 1950s, older people were generally considered to be the responsibility of their families, and were accommodated with them. Indeed, the children may, initially, have been accommodated in the parental home, since "living in" was commonplace, particularly in the early years of marriage.

Let's turn now to another family's housing circumstances, to see if we can classify their particular housing needs.

Activity 10

Read the description which follows, and try to identify and then classify the problems which result in the household having housing needs.

> *John Crisp has just been released from prison, after serving two years for burglary. His wife, Cilla, and their two children are currently living with her parents, as a result of being evicted from their previous house due to rent arrears. The accommodation is very cramped: she has to share a bedroom with the children, and her parents occupy the only other bedroom. The parents are, in any case, unwilling to permit John to live with them, because they haven't wished to associate with him since his prison sentence. This has caused a number of family arguments, because Cilla would like herself and the children to be reunited with their father.*
>
> *John has been able to find accommodation in a hostel for homeless people, but this is only temporary. In any event, he would like to be with his family. He has attempted to obtain a flat to rent privately, but has not been successful: it seems that landlords are unwilling to accept an unemployed, ex-offender as a tenant.*

As in Activity 4, list the problems which you have identified below, then, try to classify them:

Specific problem	***Classification of type of problem***

Time allocation: 10 minutes

What problems were you able to identify? And how did you choose to classify them? As we stressed when we gave answers to Activity 9, there is no correct answer to the question "What constitutes a housing problem?" or "How can it best be classified?" So even if your answers are different from ours, you are not necessarily wrong. Compare the two, and think about which offers the most *useful* way to classify: after all, unless the classification is useful, there isn't much point in using it!

The problems which potentially give rise to housing need are:

- Insufficient bedrooms (as with our previous family).
- Possible breakdown in relationship (arguments with the parents).
- Family unable to obtain a home where they can live together.
- Temporary accommodation (in the hostel).
- Discrimination by landlords.
- Access problems arising from low income (since John is unemployed).

We would classify the family's housing needs as arising from:

- Overcrowding.
- Potential homelessness (both the mother, due to disagreements, and the father, due to insecure tenure).
- Family separation.
- Problems of access (clue to being an ex-offender, and having a low income).

You might also have mentioned that, as someone recently released from institutional care, John might have initial problems adjusting to normal life. For this reason, some housing organisations view ex-offenders as belonging to a special needs category, possibly benefiting from support services. Whether or not you were able to identify this classification probably depends on whether the organisation with whom you are employed recognises this particular need.

Later in this block, we shall be examining the classifications of need which are actually used by some housing organisations today, in order to compare and contrast their different ideas. You will discover that their different perceptions are partly due to the varying objectives of different organisations. Some seek to provide only for very narrowly defined categories of need, whilst others may hope to meet all needs which currently remain unmet.

However, in part, differences can also be explained by differences in the approaches taken by different housing organisations, to the issue of identifying needs. Some adopt one specific approach, while others take a wide range of approaches. The approach adopted will help to determine the sorts of needs which are then identified, because each approach will involve looking at particular aspects of houses or households. No single approach will, therefore, be capable of highlighting all types of housing need.

So what are the approaches to identifying need which we might have adopted in order to discover needs such as those we have classified above?

4. Identifying Needs

If we take as a starting point the example of the family whose needs we initially attempted to classify in Activity 3, you will remember that we first identified a **lack of amenities** as a problem. What was the approach we adopted in doing this here? It clearly involved looking at the **condition** of the dwelling, looking at the features of the house which might present problems for its occupants.

We decided also that housing need arose from **overcrowding**. What; approach might permit this sort of need to be identified? What, specifically, would we need to look at, in order to find this problem? And what about **special needs**?

At this point, before we make possible suggestions, we want you to think about possible approaches that **you** think would be appropriate, to identify the needs we have already classified above.

Activity 11

Note below your ideas of any approaches which would assist these needs to be identified:

Need	***Possible approach***
lack of amenities	*house condition surveys*
overcrowding	
special needs (e.g. elderly, young single, disabled)	

Time allocation: 5 minutes

Before we go on to examine the sorts of approaches which are currently adopted, we should emphasise that these do not necessarily succeed in identifying all needs. The list of ideas which you have compiled above may well include some approaches which are not mentioned below - but this does not mean that you are wrong! It may be that there are practical difficulties in adopting a particular approach, or it may be too expensive to pursue. But that would not mean that the approach is necessarily invalid.

A number of the main methods of assessing housing needs are identified by the **National Housing Forum**, in its report (prepared by Pat Niner) *Housing Needs in the 1990s* published by the National Federation of Housing Associations in May 1989).

The report confirms that:

> *"Housing needs are both complex and difficult to measure. They depend on definitions and assumptions which may not be shared by everyone. There can be no definitive, single answer to questions about the extent and nature of housing need, either now or in the future. However, the process of thinking about and assessing needs is an essential element in any housing strategy*
>
> (page (v))

The report goes on to examine four different ways of assessing housing needs, and the sorts of needs which these approaches may help to identify. These are:

- **House condition**
- **Numbers of households**
- **Suitability of housing**
- **Access to housing**

4.1 House condition

As we have already seen, the condition of a house may present problems for its occupiers. This approach is therefore concerned with assessing the extent of the physical problem of houses in poor condition, in order that the extent of needs which arise from this can be assessed. Since it clearly involves examining the physical condition and features of dwellings, it should, therefore, identify homes **lacking amenities**.

4.2 Numbers of households

This approach involves counting numbers of households which want housing, including those which currently do not occupy separate dwellings. Total household numbers can then be compared with dwelling numbers so that numerical housing needs can be assessed.

4.3 Suitability of housing

This encompasses a wide variety of personal characteristics or circumstances, as well as factors related to the house itself (e.g. size), which might mean that the current home is unsuited to the needs of the household (or a family member). This approach involves, therefore, examining a wide range of influences on suitability, by a number of different methods. Homes which are **overcrowded** will be identified, as well as households with **special needs** which are not being met by the current home.

4.4 Access to housing

There may be sufficient homes of a suitable quality, but if for some reason households are denied access to these homes, they will remain in housing need. This approach is, therefore, concerned with identifying the types of difficulties which might prevent people gaining access to a suitable home, and with assessing the extent of the problem.

From these broad descriptions of the different approaches, you should now be able to identify some types of housing need which each might help us to identify.

Activity 12

Taking each of the approaches in turn, identify some ***types*** *of housing need, which you think they might help to identify. This is, in essence, the reverse of Activity 6. We have completed one need which can be found from each approach, and before you read on, you should try to add other types of need.*

Approach	***Possible needs identified (add your ideas)***
house condition	*lack of amenities*
numbers of households	*overcrowding*
suitability of housing	*disabled person*
access to housing	*homelessness*

Time allocation: 10 minutes

What other needs did you add?

There are a number of possibilities, but here are some ideas of the sorts of needs which each approach might help to identify:

(i) **house condition** - obviously, unfit homes and those lacking basic amenities

(ii) **numbers of households** - apart from overcrowding arising from shared homes, this might also help to identify the potential numbers of homeless households, and "concealed" households. If data is also collected on household size, then this will generate information about types of dwellings needed.

(iii) **suitability** - apart from disabled people, this will generate information about a whole range of special needs, such as medical and social problems, and the needs of some elderly persons. It will also indicate overcrowding and under-occupation.

(iv) **access** - apart from homeless people, we might discover that some special needs groups, such as disabled persons, cannot find suitable accommodation. Some households without special needs may also have access problems, such as young, single people. There will also be concealed households, living in with others.

Let's pause for a moment, to check your understanding of the ideas which have been developed so far. You should now attempt the following self test , and if there are any questions which you feel you cannot answer, you should look back to the appropriate point in the block, to try to find the answer for yourself. You can then check your responses against the answers at the end of the block.

Self Test 3

1. *For what reasons have we chosen to use the terms "customers" and "services"?*

2. *Why does the concept of "housing needs" change over time?*

3. *Why is it important that we attempt to classify housing needs?*

4. *What broad approaches to identifying needs have we identified?*

Now turn to the Answers at the end of the Block.

You must, by now, be wondering how these approaches to identifying needs are actually put into practice. What specific methods are used, as part of these different approaches? Let's take a closer look at some examples.

5. Approaches to Identifying Needs

5.1 House condition

We have already determined that while the actual conditions which we perceive as a "problem" might change over time (or between different societies), the idea that need can result from the condition of a house is more universally applicable. This approach will, therefore, always be a valuable one.

We have already identified above some types of needs which arise from poor house condition. According to the National Housing Forum's report, *Housing Needs in the 1990s* (1989), there are two ways in which house condition creates housing needs:

- Unfit homes are, technically, not suitable to meet housing needs, and so need urgent replacement (or repair). The numbers of unfit homes should, therefore, be added to the numbers of households currently identified as needing accommodation to give a more accurate picture of total needs.
- Unfit homes reduce the quality of life of their occupants since they fall below society's standards of adequacy.

So how exactly do we go about assessing house condition? This is done by undertaking house condition surveys.

(i) House condition survey

Individual housing organisations should, routinely, undertake house condition surveys of their own stock in order to assist them to plan for maintenance and repair requirements. We shall be examining this type of survey in some detail in the **Housing Development** module of the course. However, if the extent of housing needs arising from poor house condition is to be assessed, we clearly need to have an overall "picture' of house condition in the UK.

The most extensive attempts to apply this approach are the house condition surveys of the **Department of the Environment**, the **Scottish Office** and the **Welsh Office**. The first survey was undertaken in 1967. The latest surveys were undertaken in 1992 in Scotland, 1996 in England and Northern Ireland, and 1994 in Wales.

A sample of homes which are representative of all dwellings is surveyed, and detailed information about the condition of each is obtained. This also provides an opportunity to collect data about the ages and types of dwellings.

Activity 13

Examine the table below, which shows the age distribution of the housing stock in Scotland, England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Note that Northern Ireland uses slightly different classifications.

Table 1: Age Distribution of Housing Stock, %
(from most recent House Condition Surveys)

	Scotland	England	Wales	N.Ireland
Pre-1871	2.6	6.2	20.5	21.0
1871-1890	7.8	7.9	20.5	21.0
1891-1918	14.6	12.1	16.3	21.0
1919-1944	16.1	19.9	12.8	11.0
1945-1970	35.1	31.5	28.9	23.0 (to 1964)
Post-1970	23.7	22.4	21.4	28.0 (1965-1980)
				17.0 (post-1980)

Identify:

(a) the country with the oldest homes

(b) the country with the youngest homes

Time allocation: 10 minutes

You can see from the table that *Wales* has the oldest housing stock, with 20.5% pre-1890, and a further 16.3% 1891-1918 - a total of 36.8% dating from pre-World War 1! England's stock is second oldest, with 26.2% pre-1919.

The youngest stock is in *Northern Ireland* with 68% of its homes built since World War II. Scotland has the second youngest profile, with 58.8% post-1945.

In view of these differing age profiles, where might you anticipate that you will find properties in poorest condition?

In general, the worst house condition is to be found in the oldest stock, so we might anticipate that housing in Wales will have most problems. So, why don't we simply compare the results of the house conditions surveys, to find out how conditions compare between the countries of the UK?

The main problem is that definitions of "unfitness" are different in each country. So the results from one country are not directly comparable with another. In addition, definitions of 'unfitness' change over time, so the results of different surveys in any one country may not even be comparable!

As an example, lets examine how the "fitness standard" changed in England, between the 1986 and 1996 surveys:

Table 2: Comparison of the old and new fitness standards in England

Old standard (1985 Housing Act)	New standard (1989 Local Government and Housing Act)
Assessment	**Assessment**
Premises shall be deemed unfit for human habitation if and only if, they are so far defective in one or more of the matters below that they are not reasonably suitable for occupation in that condition	A dwelling-house is fit for human habitation unless in the opinion of the local housing authority it fails to meet one or more of the requirements below and by reason of that failure is not reasonably suitable for occupation
Matters included in the standard - repair - stability - freedom from damp	Requirement of the standard - it is free from serious disrepair; - it is structurally stable; - it is free from dampness prejudicial to health of the occupants (if any)
- internal arrangements (natural lighting (ventilation (water supply	- it has adequate provision for lighting, heating and ventilation; - it has an adequate piped supply of wholesome water;
- drainage	- it has an effective system for the draining of foul, waste and surface water
- sanitary conveniences	- it has suitably located WC for exclusive use of occupants; - it has for the exclusive use of the occupants (if any) a suitably located bath or shower and wash-hand basin, each of which is provided with a satisfactory supply of hot and cold water.
- facilities for the preparation and cooking of food and for the disposal of waste water	- there are satisfactory facilities in the dwelling home for the preparation and cooking of food, including a sink with a satisfactory supply of hot and cold water.

In Scotland, the latest fitness standard is defined by the **Housing (Scotland) Act 1987**. An unfit property is said to be *Below the Tolerable Standard* (BTS). The 1992 survey indicated that, by this definition, 4.7% of the total stock was BTS, the most common cause of unfitness being dampness. Over half of BTS dwellings were constructed pre-1919, and the problem was found to be worst in the private rented sector.

Indeed, although we may not be able to make direct comparisons between countries' surveys, we find in all of them that this is a recurrent theme: it is old properties, and properties in the private rented sector, which have the greatest problems of unfitness.

Activity 14

Compare the results of the 1991 Housing Condition Survey in Northern. Ireland with that in England in 1996 from the table below:

Table 3: House condition by tenure, Northern Ireland 1991 and England 1996

	% unfit in	
	N.Ireland	England
Owner occupied	8.5	5.4
Private rented	27.9	15.1
Public rented	2.0	6.8
Housing association	2.1	3.9
All dwellings (incl. vacant)	8.8	7.2

What similarities and what differences are there?

Time allocation: 10 minutes

As you can see, the private rented sector in both has the worst problems of unfitness, though this is worst in Northern Ireland. The owner occupied sector in Northern Ireland also has higher levels of unfitness, with very few problems in the public and housing association sectors. In contrast, social housing in England has a greater proportion of unfit dwellings than the owner occupied sector overall, Northern Ireland has slightly higher proportions of unfit dwellings (8.8%) than England (7.2%).

In 1994, 7.2% of Welsh dwellings were found to be unfit - but remember that the Welsh definition is also different! As you have discovered, Wales has a particularly high proportion of old properties, and it also has relatively large proportions of elderly owner occupiers who, by virtue of low average incomes, are often unable to afford adequate levels of repair.

Poor house condition is also associated with other low income groups (the unemployed and young people), often to be found in the private rented sector. Ethnic minorities are also more likely to be in housing need as a result of poor house condition. We shall return to this point later in the module, when we examine the necessity for social housing providers to adequately monitor applications from ethnic minorities.

Now let's turn to the second approach identified above, and examine the specific methods adopted as part of this.

5.2 Numbers of households

There are a number of different methods used to assess numbers of households in need of housing. We shall examine a selection of these different approaches below.

(i) Local authority waiting lists

A common starting point is local authority waiting lists, because these will contain information about the current housing circumstances of those households which have applied for local authority housing.

This information is given, for example, in the Housing Strategy Statements submitted by English local authorities as part of their HIP submission for central government approval for capital spending on housing.

Research for what was then the DoE in 1988 *Queuing for Housing: A Study of Council Housing Waiting Lists* found that only 40% to 46% of applicants on waiting lists were still at the address that they had registered, and still waiting for housing, at the time of the survey.

This does not, however, mean that we can assume that actual housing need is less than half of the numbers registered on waiting lists. Can you think of reasons why the actual numbers of concealed and sharing households might be much higher than this?

Activity 15

Try to identify reasons for thinking that there are more concealed households than those still correctly registered with local authorities.

Note your ideas here:

Time allocation: 5 minutes

There are at least two reasons for thinking that the numbers "correctly registered" with a local authority will understate the real extent of concealed households:

- People may have moved to equally unsatisfactory housing, and so still be in housing need, but may have forgotten to notify the local authority of the change of address.
- Not all households in housing need register with a local authority, for a variety of reasons.

They may believe that they will not qualify for local authority housing. For example, young single households are not usually eligible, and highly mobile households may not meet the "residence qualifications" demanded by many local authorities. We shall be examining this in more detail later in the block when we look at which types of households different housing organisations provide housing for.

The results of different attempts to research into this issue suggest that waiting lists reflect *perhaps less than one quarter* of all concealed and sharing households. This suggests that using local authority waiting lists to assess the extent of numbers in housing provide has limited value!

A number of housing associations also have waiting lists. It is likely however that many of these applicants register with more than one association, as well as possibly with their local authority, so we cannot simply total the numbers on waiting lists, to gain an estimate of total numerical housing need. It is impossible to allow for this potential "double counting" with any accuracy.

So, what other approaches might we take, to identifying the numbers of concealed households?

(ii) Social survey

There are a number of national surveys we can consult such as the **Census**. This is a government survey which questions all households on a variety of issues every 10 years. It includes details of household composition and housing circumstances, but it can provide only general indications of the current numbers of households which may want houses. We can identify some concealed and sharing households from this information, but this does not indicate how many of them are unhappy with the situation: a number may not wish to be living separately. We need, therefore, to be able to *ask* these concealed or sharing households whether they *actively* wish to be housed separately.

One example of this approach is research by the **London Research Centre**, which attempted to assess more accurately the numbers of households which actively wished to become separately housed in London. (However, since these detailed surveys are relatively expensive activities, they have not, as yet, become commonplace.) As long as ten years ago, they reported that numbers of "true" potential households in London — those which would definitely wish to form separate households — approach 250,000.

If we are to have an accurate picture of numbers of households in current need of housing, there is unquestionably a case for the wider use of specific social surveys of this kind. However, data collected in the Census is highly valuable for assessing likely population (demographic) changes, and this enables some estimation of how household numbers are likely to change in the future. These are called **household projections**.

(iii) Household projections

These projections are estimates of likely future household numbers and composition. They are based on **demographic data** (about changes in the size and structure of the population), collected in the Census. These data include birth and death rates and details about the composition of the population (age profiles, gender balance). The likely future numbers (and sizes) of households can then be estimated, which is useful if we are to plan adequately to meet future needs.

Projections for the year 2001 suggest, for example, that the numbers of one person households will increase by 39%. This means that they will be a *higher proportion* of all households. As a result, the proportions of married couple households will fall, from a current 60% of all households, to 52%.

What does this imply about the types of dwelling which social housing organisations should be providing to meet future needs?

Clearly, there will be a growing need for smaller-sized accommodation, more suited to the needs of small households, with less need for "family" dwellings. This problem may require rather more innovative approaches from housing organisations than in the past; for example, the conversion of larger dwellings into a number of smaller ones may become more usual.

Before we move on to examining other approaches to identifying needs, you should first test your understanding of the approaches we have looked at so far. Complete the following self test, and check back if you find that you are unable to answer any of the questions.

Self Test 4

1. (a) *What sort of information do house condition surveys provide?*

   (b) *What type of need would this identify?*

2. *What needs might be found by examining local authority waiting lists?*

3. *We cannot assume that all concealed households necessarily want to occupy a separate dwelling. What approach might help to identify the numbers who do want their own dwelling?*

4. *Demographic data is useful because it permits household projections to be made. What information, about housing needs do these give us?*

Now turn to the Answers at the end of the Block.

Now, let's move on to identify approaches which enable us to assess how suitable the accommodation is, for the needs of the household.

5.3 Suitability of housing

This approach requires that we assess how well households and houses are "matched" in order to discover if there are problems of overcrowding, as well as to identify some special housing needs.

If for example, the home is overcrowded, we would expect to identify too few rooms for the numbers in the household. In other words, we need to examine information about household size compared to dwelling size, or **dwelling occupancy**.

(i) Dwelling occupancy

There is no regular survey specifically of dwelling occupancy. Information is however collected from a variety of sources, including the **Census** (undertaken every decade), and the annual **General Household Survey**.

The simplest measure of overcrowding relates simply to "number of persons per room . Up to the 1971 Census, overcrowding was defined as occupancy of more than one and a half persons per room. This was reduced to over one per room in 1981.

A more sophisticated measure of overcrowding uses the "bedroom standard", which was devised by the government **Social Survey**. This allows one bedroom for each of the following:

- married couple;
- adult aged 21 or over;
- two persons of the same sex, either both aged 10-20, or one 10-20 and the other under 10;
- two children under 10;
- one remaining "unpaired" person or child (under 21).

Using this definition, according to the General Household Survey 1991 (HMSO), only 3% of households fell below the bedroom standard in 1991. In contrast, no less than 68% were above the standard - 30% by two or more bedrooms.

What does this last piece of information tell us?

It implies that a much more serious problem than overcrowding is **under-occupation**. This reflects the growth in the numbers of smaller households, together with the rise in the proportion of elderly households in the UK - both of which you identified in the first module of the course.

It is among elderly households in particular that we find the greatest problems of under-occupation in local authority housing. Under-occupation is worst, however, in the owner occupied sector. 88% of homes owned outright are one or more rooms above standard, with 73% of those with a mortgage.

By examining dwelling occupancy, we have now been able to identify a new "need" - that of households under-occupying their homes. If we combine this fact with the information provided by the household projections (discussed above), we can see that the problem of dwellings being too large for their occupying households is likely to be increasing.

You might feel that this is not a need, because there is clearly plenty of room in the house. Indeed, you might even argue that this is actually a desirable housing feature! But, if you stop to think about this further, you should be able to see that there are good reasons for arguing that this might well be a "problem" for the households concerned.

Activity 16

Think about the problems that might arise for a small household, typically one or two elderly people, or a young single person, occupying a large dwelling. List these problems below:

Time allocation: 5 minutes

You should have been able to identify a number of possible problems for under-occupying households. These are some suggestions of ours, but you may well have thought of other, equally valid, possibilities.

When compared to a dwelling of a size matching the size of the household,

- the home will cost much more to heat - or, if rooms are shut off, there is a risk that they may become damp and/or their condition deteriorate;
- the costs - and work - of decoration, both internal and external, will be higher;
- it will take much more time and effort to keep clean;
- the costs of repair and general upkeep will be higher;
- furnishing and replacement costs will be higher - for example, a larger area of carpets, more pairs of curtains, more furniture (if the house is not to look bare);
- property taxes may be higher - for example, the Council Tax relates size of payment to the value of the property, which is likely to be higher for larger dwellings.

Dwelling occupancy was able to give us information about overcrowding and under-occupation but what of other ways in which housing may be unsuited to the needs of its occupants? How might we discover the extent - and nature - of this problem? Here, we return to methods which we have already identified in a different context: **surveys and research**.

(ii) Surveys and research

We saw that surveys can be useful in helping to assess numbers of households, but the information may also provide insights into particular problems that arise from unsuitable homes. We have already discovered that elderly people have needs which arise from poor condition and under-occupation. **The General Household Survey 1986** provided information about physical difficulties faced by elderly people (e.g. problems with stairs). Other recent research has provided information about the housing needs of physically and mentally handicapped people, up to 835,000 of whom are living in unsuitable accommodation.

Highly specific problems arise for some special needs groups. They may require services in addition to that of housing: either social or health services. They include drugs and/or alcohol abusers, AIDS sufferers, various institutionalised people (including ex-offenders or ex hospital patients) and those who have

been long term homeless. These needs require that housing providers liaise with the other social service providers if suitable facilities are to be made available to these groups.

Other social service providers are also valuable sources of information about special needs - both their extent and the nature of their particular requirements - which the housing organisation may be able to draw on. Indeed, for many special needs, the housing organisation will have to co-ordinate its efforts with those of the other service providers if the customer is to be housed satisfactorily.

One further approach to identifying the extent of problems of suitability is to use the information collected by housing organisations, when they compile local authority or housing association waiting lists.

(iii) Local authority/housing association waiting lists

Waiting lists can provide some information, not only about numbers of households who have registered, but also about those whose homes are currently under-occupied or overcrowded. These lists are kept by all local authorities, and also by many housing associations, as we have already seen. However, there may well be further useful data relating to the special needs of those families on the list. Data is also collected on the requirements of family members with special mental, physical, or medical needs.

However, it must be remembered that this information is subject to the same limitations as when it is used to assess broad numbers in need: it relates only to those who have registered with the local authority or housing association. As you have already discovered, there will be many who have not, because they perceive that the organisation will be unable or unwilling to offer suitable accommodation. On the other hand, there will also be multi-applications: many applicants will register with more than one association, as well as possibly with the local authority, so we cannot simply add all special needs on the lists together to reach a "total" of different needs.

We come now to the last approach which we identified, that of examining access to housing.

5.4 Access to housing

There is some concern that for various reasons, growing numbers of households are unable to gain access to suitable housing. Sufficient homes may be available and maybe of suitable quality in terms of size and condition, but these households are unable to

obtain one. Since the causes of a failure to gain access are numerous, it is apparent that no single approach will provide an adequate assessment of the extent of this problem. We shall examine some of the specific approaches which have been adopted below.

(i) Local authority homelessness acceptances

Local authorities have a statutory duty to house certain **priority groups** that is, by law they must provide accommodation for two years for some homeless households. These include families with children (or a pregnant member), and vulnerable groups (such as the disabled, elderly or chronically ill), who have not *intentionally* made themselves homeless.

We can, therefore, examine local authority data on homelessness acceptances in order to discover the extent of "official" homelessness. This problem was growing until the 1996 Housing Act; since then, the number of acceptances has declined, although it has picked up somewhat more recently..

The table below illustrates acceptances in England, as an example, and shows the effect of the 1996 legislation.

Table 4: Homelessness acceptances in England.

	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
England	127,630	118,490	117,490	113,590	102,410	104,490	104,770

Information about the immediate causes of homelessness is also collected by local authorities. In 1997 in England, for example, the following causes were recorded by the DETR:

Figure 1: Causes of homelessness in England, 1999

Households accepted as homeless by local authorities: by main reason for loss of last settled home, 1999

Reason	Percentage
Relatives/friends no longer able or willing to provide accommodation	28%
Relationship breakdown - violent	17%
Relationship breakdown - other	7%
Mortgage arrears	5%
Rent arrears	3%
End of assured shorthold tenancy	14%
Loss of other rented or tied housing	8%
Other	18%

(Source: DETR.)

A majority (27%) was due to a breakdown in relationships.

- Arrears - of mortgage or rent - caused 8%.
- Tenancy loss due to causes other than arrears accounted for - 18%.

15% were homeless because relatives or friends could no longer provide accommodation.

It should be borne in mind, however, that these represent only the immediate causes of homelessness: there may well have been a whole chain of events leading up to this final factor. As an example, a family made homeless as a result of arguments with relatives with whom they were living, may initially have lost a home through other causes, such as rent arrears.

Local authority data on homelessness acceptances offers, therefore, a reasonable source of information about these accepted priority homeless groups. There are, however, large numbers of groups who will not appear in these figures.

We now want you to think about which groups these might be, who comprise the "unofficial" homeless.

Activity 17

Identify categories of homeless households who are unlikely to enter the 'official" homelessness figures, and give reasons why you think they may remain "hidden".

Think about which groups are excluded from the priority definitions and which groups may, for other reasons, fail to register as homeless.

Note your ideas below:

Time allocation: 5 minutes

We have identified a number of reasons why households may not, appear in the official figures, or accepted priority homeless. Check these with your own ideas.

- They may have approached a local authority, but not be in priority need. This would include single and childless households to whom the local authority has a duty only to offer "advice and assistance".
- They may have been deemed "intentionally" homeless. Since there is room for some discretion in the interpretation of this - for example, does a failure to pay rent, leading to eviction, constitute an intention to be made homeless? - it is not easy to make comparisons between different local authorities. Some will be more "generous" in their interpretation than others.
- Many households in the non-priority groups will not approach a local authority at all, since they are aware that they will not qualify for housing.

It is clear, then, that sources other than local authorities are required, if we are to attempt to assess the full extent of need arising from homelessness with any degree of accuracy.

(ii) Research on homelessness

A very wide variety of different voluntary groups, housing organisations and academic institutions are involved into research into homelessness. They often focus on specific groups or locations. We have, for example, already identified the research undertaken by the **London Research Centre**, when we were considering numbers of households in housing need.

However, the diversity of these different sources creates problems in simply assembling the data collected by these different, approaches. **The Inquiry into British Housing Information Notes (3)**, 1990, argued:

> *"In a situation, where no one body is charged with responsibility for single homeless people, and where a great variety of voluntary bodies are involved, many dealing with particular client groups, comprehensive figures are often little more than guesses."*

It went on to cite estimates collected from recent research efforts, and all quoted in *Homelessness in Britain* by John Greve with Elizabeth Currie (1990):

(a) Hidden homeless (sleeping rough, squatting, in bed and breakfast hotels and in hostels) in England and Wales in 1986: 175,600 - 79,600

(b) Young persons homeless in Scotland in 1989: 7,000 - 9,000

(c) Single homeless in London, 1989: 64,500 - 78,000

(d) Single homeless, on the margins on homelessness in temporary accommodation and potentially homeless in London, 1989 (a breakdown by the National Federation of Housing Associations):

- overcrowded and unwillingly living in other people's households 74,000
- in hostels: 11,000 - 12,000
- in short life housing: 10,000 - 12,000
- squatting: 19,000 +
- in B & B hotels: 4,000 - 5,000
- sleeping rough: up to 3,000

Homelessness among non-priority groups - single and childless - seems to be rising, particularly affecting young people. This is for a number of reasons:

(a) increased rates of family breakdown;

(b) high rates of youth unemployment;

(c) lower rates of Income Support, for the under 25s (with 16 to 18 year olds excluded).

Clearly, then, low levels of income are a key factor which result in some groups being effectively excluded from access to housing. Households particularly likely to belong to these low income groups include single parent families (largely headed by women), unemployed people and members of some ethnic minority groups.

Since being able to afford housing is a key factor in gaining access to it, another approach is to try to determine how "affordable" housing is for different groups.

(iii) Affordability

During the second half of the 1980s and in the late 1990s, we witnessed substantial increases in house prices. This resulted in owner occupation becoming less accessible to new entrants (first time buyers). Increases in salaries would have at least to keep pace with the price rises if levels of affordability were to remain the same.

Rising prices, which reduce accessibility to new entrants, have major implications for the entire owner occupied sector. Reduced demand from first time buyers means fewer lower priced homes can be sold. This has a knock on effect for all parts of the market for home ownership. If existing owners of lower priced homes cannot sell, they cannot "trade up" to higher priced homes. Hence, the more expensive homes do not sell either. Ultimately, then, a price **boom** can lead to a subsequent **slump** in house prices, as demand is severely reduced. We saw this effect very clearly in the early 1990s.

The importance of this for housing managers lies in the fact that the alternatives to owner occupation are the rented tenures. This means that if owner occupation is becoming less affordable, the demand for rented accommodation is likely to rise. It will also cause some delay in new household formation - i.e. people will delay setting up new households, by remaining for longer with their parents for example.

How can we assess how affordable owner occupation is?

One broad approach is to examine the relationship between average house prices and average earnings. This entails calculating house prices as a proportion of earnings or, more exactly, the ratio of house prices to earnings.

Houses are most easily affordable when they are cheapest relative to incomes. This means, therefore, that the lowest, priced homes are available when the ratio is at its lowest, since this means that house prices are the lowest multiple of average earnings.

We examine data relating to house price:earnings ratios in detail in the **Housing Finance and Financial Skills** Unit. However, as a result of falling house prices, you should note that the ratio has recently been falling, so houses are becoming more 'affordable' (to purchase).

It will be apparent that house price/earnings ratios are a very 'blunt' instrument for assessing affordability, because they are so generalised.

What, then, are the alternative approaches, which might help us to assess affordability?

A more sensitive approach is to undertake specific research based on different areas. Recent efforts have attempted to assess the affordability of both house prices and rents in order to determine the proportions of households with potential access problems.

One example is *Bridging the Affordability Gap* (1990) by Glen Bramley.

From data on regional earnings, house prices and rents, he attempted to assess the affordability of different types of house for new households (defined as those with a head aged under 30 years), in different regions of the UK both in the housing association rented tenure and in owner occupation.

In the owner occupied sector, the criterion used for "affordability" was the building society's own "proportion of income" lending rules: up to three times income for single people, for example.

The results indicated that:

- A one bedroomed home (of 440 square feet) could be afforded by 67% of new households in the North West, compared to 59% in the West Midlands, 53% in the South West, and only 34% in Greater London. Clearly, therefore, there are fewer problems of affordability of owner occupation in the north of England than in the south.
- Three bedroomed homes (785 square feet) are, as we might anticipate, even less affordable - by 38% of new households in the North West, 25% in the West Midlands, 16% in the South West, and only 9% in Greater London.

For housing association rents arising from "mixed funding" - which you learned about in the earlier Housing Finance Unit - he used two measures of affordability: the **National Housing Federation's figure** of a maximum rent of 20% of net income and the **Housing Corporation's preference** for around 33%. At the present time, there is no consensus on what constitutes an affordable rent, as a proportion of income.

- If rents are affordable only up to 20% of net income, then they can be afforded by around 6000 of new households, in almost all regions.
- If rents are affordable at 33% of net incomes, they can be afforded by around 80% of new households (with small regional variations).

The National Housing Federation also reported its findings on the affordability of rents, in *Paying for Rented Housing* (1990). They concluded that:

> *"a norm for affordable rents should lie somewhere in the range of 15-25 per cent of net income of tenants."*

A rather different approach was adopted by Paul Askew and John Brookes ("Rental Trends in England and Wales", *Housing Review*, Jan/Feb 1993).

They examined changes over time in -

(a) rent levels charged by local authorities, housing associations and the private rented sector;

(b) the retail price index - a measure of inflation;

(c) family income, by tenure type.

They found that between 1975 and 1989;

- local authority rents increased in real terms (i.e. after allowing for inflation) by 50%;
- private rented sector rents increased by 26%;
- housing association rents increased by 12%.

Over the same period, the proportion of tenants in the lowest income groups had been rising.

Activity 18

Can you identify any reasons why proportions of tenants in the lowest income groups rose between 1975 and 1989?

(Hint: what policies might help to account for this?)

Time allocation: 5 minutes

The most obvious reason why there are *relatively* more poor households in rented tenures is the rise in owner occupation, especially via Right to Buy. This has had the effect of encouraging higher income households - those most able to afford to buy - into owner occupation and out of renting. Those remaining in rented housing will generally be those on lower incomes and, increasingly, without paid employment.

In 1997, the average male earnings in England were (gross) £315.00 per week. Local authority average rents for the same year were 13% of this figure, Housing Association assured rents were 16.3% of the average male gross wage.

In 1987, the average Local Authority rent in England was £17.20. In 1997, this figure was £40.98. The Housing Association sector average fair rent in 1987 in England was £22.86. In 1997 it had risen to about £51.00. (In 1997 the difference between a fair and assured rent was less than ten pence).

We have seen a rise of more than 100% in public sector rents between 1987 and 1997.

It is evident, then, that problems of affordability are affecting rising numbers of households in rented tenures.

We have now examined, in some detail, a number of different approaches to identifying housing needs. Can you remember what these were?

Before we move on, you should test your understanding of the approaches we have just examined, by completing the self test, below. Should you find that you have difficulty with any of the questions, you should re-read the appropriate pages before proceeding any further with the block.

Self Test 5

1. *What needs will be found by examining data about dwelling occupancy?*

2. *For what reasons can we argue that "under-occupation" suggests housing need?*

3. *How might we discover the numbers of households with "special needs"?*

4. *What are our main sources of information about homelessness?*

5. *Which types of households are most likely to be homeless?*

Now turn to the Answers at the end of the Block.

Activity 19

We are now going to draw together the information about housing needs, which these different approaches have identified. What needs have they enabled us to discover?

List below all the housing needs which you became aware of as a result of reading about these different approaches.

Don't spend very long on this: just mentally skip through the approaches and try to identify any needs which emerged.

Time allocation: 5 minutes

So, what needs have we discovered?

If we take each of the approaches in turn:

(i) The house condition surveys enabled us to find out about the numbers of houses in poor condition or unfit for habitation. We were therefore able to identify needs which arose from the poor quality of the current dwelling. Additionally, the surveys would indicate homes lacking basic amenities, so we could assess the extent of this need. (Do you remember that this was the first need which we identified for our 1950s family, back in Activity 4?)

These surveys also indicated that particular parts of the UK, and particular areas, were more likely to have housing needs arising from poor house condition. So you may have noted, in your list above, that housing needs related to condition seem to be greater in Wales than in England and in rural areas more than urban. They are also more likely to affect households with low incomes such as the elderly and single parent households and some ethnic minorities.

(ii) The number of households in need as a result of sharing another households home, **concealed** or **sharing households**, can be identified, to a limited extent, from local authority and housing association waiting lists.

However, many will fail to register, so that specific research is required fully to assess numbers in need of a separate dwelling.

(iii) Household projections enable us to see how the numbers of households requiring dwellings are changing. We saw that the housing needs of small households, including single and elderly people, are likely to be increasing.

(iv) Housing need arising from under-occupation and overcrowding was discovered by examining dwelling occupancy.

(v) A range of special needs can be found by survey research which examines the personal circumstances or individuals. These include the needs of physically or mentally handicapped people those of the elderly who may have needs related to qualitative aspects of their home such as problems with stairs or who may require assistance, e.g. from a warden, and the needs of people with medical problems. Very many other special needs were also identified, which may need support services in addition to housing: these include people leaving institutions or care, drug/ alcohol abusers, AIDS victims and the long term homeless.

(vi) Need arising from homelessness is growing, as we discovered from local authority acceptances of households in priority need and from research on non priority groups. This also highlighted "potentially homeless" groups who are in insecure tenure such as hostels, hotels, etc. Problems of affording or gaining access to housing are acute for some groups: these are commonly recognised by considering length of time in housing need. (A household which has been in housing need for a long period of time clearly has access problems.)

Later in the Block, we shall be examining which of these many needs are identified - and prioritised - by different housing organisations because this has clear implications for the sorts of housing which they will be providing. We intend, in this way, to build up a "picture" of what services are provided for which customers.

Later in the Block you will also discover that we have not yet been able to identify all the housing needs which are currently recognised by housing organisations. (You might like to think about what these "missing" needs might be!) This is largely a reflection of the fact referred to earlier that there are no agreed methods of identifying needs so we can never be certain that some needs have not been overlooked.

Summary

1. **Housing need is a relative concept, being determined by rising social expectations and standards of adequacy.**
2. **There is no universally accepted method of classifying needs. However, one favoured approach involves establishing categories of needs deriving from issues such as lack of amenities, overcrowding and special needs arising from personal circumstances.**
3. **There are four main approaches to identifying needs, as suggested by the National Housing Forum's report Housing Needs in the 1990s. These are:**
   - **house condition**
   - **numbers of households**
   - **suitability of housing**
   - **access to housing**

E. Use of Housing Need Data

1. Introduction

Development decisions are dependent on tenure. For instance, private developers must make some assessment of how successful they feel they will be in selling or renting property after it is built or refurbished. Therefore, in considering how housing providers decide whether there is a need for demand for additional housing, we need to take a tenure based approach.

In the past, there has been a basic difference between social housing and private housing in terms of development, such that:

- development decisions for social housing (i.e. that developed by local authorities and registered social landlords) tended to be based on an assessment of need (and to a certain extent) affordability; whereas
- development decisions for private housing have tended to be based on an assessment of the market and market niches (of which affordability is a consideration).

However, this has begun to change in many areas of the country (with perhaps London and the South East being the exceptions) as social housing providers have increasingly been affected by changing demand, resulting in instances where they have been unable to let even brand new housing. Social housing providers have therefore become increasingly aware of the need to understand their 'market' and to make development decisions which are based on this understanding, rather than simply on waiting list numbers

2. Social Trends

At a strategic level, developers must take notice of national, social and demographic trends. An individual developer working on a single site or property may not be very concerned with national trends, and may be rather more interested in regional or local trends. However, the headquarters of a large private developer or large housing association or local authority is likely to take some notice of national social trends, so, therefore, let us briefly examine some of the key current trends.

These trends can be gleaned from a number of government publications, including Census reports, "*Social Trends*", "*Regional Trends*", and "*Household Surveys*" (All published by HMSO).

2.1 Households

The trend is towards more, smaller households overall because of:

- people having fewer children;
- people having children later in life;
- more marriages and co-habitation arrangements ending in divorce and separation;
- an increasing number of single elderly people; and
- more people living alone.

Government projections suggest that between 1991 and 2016 the number of households will increase by 4.1 million. The projected growth varies by region, e.g. 12.6% in Merseyside to 28.6% in the South East. This growth would imply the need for an extra five million homes, or 200,000 new homes a year - a level of growth that has not been seen since the late 1980s.

Simultaneously, the proportion of traditional one family households with children has been declining. In 1961, 2% of households comprised lone parent with dependent children. This had risen to 7% in 1998-99.

2.2 Employment

The traditional labour patterns are changing, with fewer full-time jobs and more part-time ones. Less permanent work, and more temporary.

In 1997 there were 4.4 million people under the age of 25 in the civilian labour force in Great Britain, a decrease of a million since 1986. It is projected that this trend will continue perhaps by a further half million by 2006.

Women in Britain have become increasingly economically active and this is projected to continue. By 2006, women will make up 46% of the civilian labour force.

2.3 Incomes

There are strong regional differences in incomes, as well as the obvious social class ones.

In 1999, the highest earnings were concentrated in the south east of England, in particular Greater London, where average weekly earnings were close to £450.00. By comparison, wages in Wales and Scotland were lower, with seven out of the eight Welsh counties and six out of nine Scottish regions having average earnings below £320 per week.

The incomes of retired people are also very different. More recently retired pensioners receive a far higher income from all sources than other pensioners, in particular occupational pensions, investment income and employment earnings. Other pensioners rely more on social security benefits.

2.4 Car Ownership

Car ownership is continually increasing, but with little regional differences. In 1998, seven out of ten British households had at lest one car.

However, car ownership on the poorest housing association and local authority estates is very low, sometimes as low as 10%.

2.5 Population Trends

The British population is becoming increasingly older.

The 1991 census included some 11.6 million people aged 60 and over in Great Britain, 21% of the population. This increase was mainly due to a large rise in those aged 75 and over. There was especially an increase in those aged 85 and over of whom there were 50% more in 1991 than 10 years previously. The Office for National Statistics recorded 14.6 million people in the UK who were aged 75 and over in 1998.

2.6 Cultural trends

Although not so easily quantifiable, cultural trends are also worth considering. For example, the rise of 'Yuppie' ("young, upwardly mobile, professionals") housing in inner cities in the 1980s and 1990s and the earlier patterns of gentrification can't be understood by socio-economic and demographic variables alone.

3. Assessing Need for Social Housing Developers

3.1 Perceptions of need

Some of the problems of assessing need can be illustrated in the following case study.

Housing association development in a northern English city

This case study concerns a site sold approximately eight years ago by a northern English Labour local authority to a locally based housing association for development of 60 housing units for rent. The two organisations differed in their perception of the type of housing needed on the site.

The local authority wanted predominantly flats for the elderly, which it said reflected its perception of need. A local councillor (since retired), said that he did not want a "black ghetto" in his ward. The Director of Housing said that it was well known that Asian people preferred to buy.

The housing association (which was predominantly staffed by white employees) was aware that there was a local black community, mainly of Asian people, and felt that their housing needs were not being addressed. The housing association staff also felt that their housing association itself suffered from institutional racism and this site was an opportunity to address that by developing larger family housing for the ethnic minority community.

How was it that the two organisations had different perceptions of local need?

Activity 20

Although the above case study is based on an example a few years old, similar situations still occur.

Why do you think the two organisations might have had such different perceptions of need? How far might local politics have been involved? How might they have determined local need in a more objective way.

Time allocation: 15 minutes

3.2 Case study problems in housing needs assessment

For the first part of the question your answer might identify that the two housing organisations were collecting information from different sources. The local authority probably had a borough-wide housing waiting list, the housing association may have been collecting information much more locally for its waiting list, given the new local development due to come on stream.

The local political context may have involved individual racism, but it may also have been the perception of Labour councillors in the past that local rented housing was their "*fiefdom*" and that making housing allocations to local people was a way of securing votes locally. (In some areas, local politicians have misused their role in making allocations of council housing to local people. Politicians have perceived it as a way of guaranteeing local gratitude and voting support. When housing association new build replaced local authority, such politicians wanted to continue making allocations in the same old way).

As far as resolving the different perceptions of need, the obvious answer would have been to carry out a local survey to discover the extent of the housing problems, the housing needs and aspirations of the local black community. (This survey was in fact carried out).

It may have occurred to you to wonder how it was that a predominantly white housing association took it upon itself to assess the needs of the black community and make development decisions on their behalf. In fact, the Housing Corporation recognised this problem nationally and set up a national policy of supporting and developing local black housing associations.

3.3 Housing needs and housing needs assessment

Local housing authorities have a statutory responsibility to assess housing needs in their districts as required in the **Housing Act 1985**, section 8, (and in the **Housing (Scotland) Act, 1987**):

> *"Every local housing authority shall consider housing conditions in their district and the needs of the district with respect to the provision of further accommodation."*

Also, the **Housing Investment Programme** (**HIP**), and the **Housing Strategies and Operational Plans** in Wales and **Housing Plans** in Scotland, encourage local authorities to assess needs objectively and comprehensively.

Historically, local authorities have tended not to consult with other agencies over the content of the HIP strategy or equivalent. However, since the local authority enabling role has been emphasised, and with the government's insistence on the development of housing partnerships as a requirement for investment, local authorities were forced to begin to develop relationships with other agencies involved in housing provision.

Local authority waiting lists

Formerly, the most common source of housing need information was the local authority housing waiting list. Quite apart from data recording and coding errors, local authority waiting lists became less reliable as a measure of housing need because:

- people in housing need were less inclined to register with the council when they saw no new building going on;
- waiting lists started to silt up due to low turnover;
- details held became increasingly out of date;
- some local authority's allocations policies restricted the type of people registering, e.g. a local "connection" was sometimes required, restricting recent immigrants from registering. Certain types of people were not eligible, e.g. young, single people;
- some sections of the community, e.g. Asian people, were unaware of the role of council housing; and
- people not seeking rented accommodation or not wanting council accommodation did not register.

Comprehensive strategy

Local authorities now consult with a number of organisations and other departments to develop a comprehensive strategy to meet housing need in its area. Examples of organisations now regularly consulted include:

- their own local planning department;
- the social services department;
- health authorities;
- housing associations;
- voluntary organisations; and
- house builders and estate agents.

Of course, rehousing needs are only one aspect of the housing needs assessment. Authorities also need to consider availability and condition of existing stock as part of the equation.

- How many homes are already available?
- How many vacant properties are there?
- What is the extent of under-occupation?
- What is the turnover rate?
- In what condition is the housing stock and in particular, what is the degree of unfitness?

These questions will be partly answerable with reference to census data and council tax records (number of homes; number of empty homes; under-occupation) and from the authorities' own property records and those of housing associations and building societies and estate agents' turnover rates.) The condition of the housing stock may well require the commissioning of a stock condition survey unless this process has already been established and is regularly updated.

3.4 Housing needs surveys

Nowadays, most local authorities also carry out a housing needs survey. Housing needs surveys require:

- a well designed questionnaire; and
- a sample size and structure which maximises the reliability of results.

The questionnaire

The nature of the questionnaire will depend on whether the survey is to be conducted by post or by personal interview. The former has the benefit of relative inexpense, the latter of increased accuracy, providing it is properly controlled (i.e. conducted by properly trained and briefed interviewers.) In either case, questions should be clear and presented in a logical sequence; the questionnaire should be relatively short and confidentiality of responses should be ensured.

The sample

The sample survey is conducted using a random sample of households, selected from the best available list of all current households in the area. Often this will be the council tax register.

Housing needs surveys generally seek to establish information which is not consistently or accurately available from other sources. They are therefore likely to concentrate on information on special needs, suitability of the accommodation currently occupied, housing costs and incomes and intent to move. It is also useful to collect information from respondents about family and

friends currently living outside the district but who would like to return if there were suitable accommodation available at a price they could afford.

Drawbacks

There are two significant drawbacks of housing needs surveys:

- they require a considerable investment of resources -whether this be time of existing staff or money to pay consultants' fees; and
- they provide only a snapshot of the area's housing need: unless updated on a fairly frequent basis, they become increasingly unreliable as an indicator of need as time passes and the circumstances of the households surveyed change.

3.5 Housing needs indicators

In making investment decisions for social housing organisations, funding bodies like the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions and the Housing Corporation rely to some extent on "objective" indicators of need, like the **Generalised Needs Index** and **Housing Needs Indicator**.

These measurements are important because of their apparent potential to assess need, and hence investment priorities. At the same time, there are many dangers associated with the use of indices and indicators. Some of these relate to technical issues such as data gathering, entering, coding, etc., but the key one concerns objectivity. Care must be taken in the application of indices, in choosing the correct index for the intended use, in calculating the relative weighting of different factors and in weighing the advantages and disadvantages.

Activity 21

If you were allocating housing investment funding in a specific area based on an assessment of local need, what are the sort of indicators that you might include?

List some of the factors that you would want to measure and say whether they should have a high, medium or low weighting, and why. One example is given. Try and add at least six more:

Indicators

Example 1
Number of elderly people in unsatisfactory accommodation, who need sheltered accommodation.

This might be a medium weighting, because although the house might be in disrepair, the tenants are not homeless, rents are likely to be covered by housing benefit and no children are involved.

Time allocation: 30 minutes

Needs indicators in England and Wales

Let us consider the background to the two main needs indicators. As previously explained two indicators are used to calculate how council and housing association resources should be distributed. The **Generalised Needs Index** was devised by what was then the Department of the Environment to help to distribute **Housing Investment Programme** (**HIP**) allocations to local authorities.

The **Housing Needs Indicator** (**HNI**) was developed by the Housing Corporation and what was then the National Federation of Housing Associations in 1985 to assist with the allocation of funds to housing associations. It was based on the Generalised Needs Index and is reviewed periodically (the most recent review process began in 1994).

The indicators that you have specified perhaps included homelessness, overcrowding, disability and maybe a factor for community care. The indicators designed by the DETR for the Generalised Needs Index are listed on Table Dl, below, with their share weightings:

Table DI

General Needs Index factor	% Share (Weighting)
Part 1. New Provision	
homelessness	20
temporary accommodation	5
overcrowding	4
full household dwelling balance	3
marginal household dwelling balance	4
elderly needs	3
disabled needs	3
access to owner occupation	3
Sub-total	45
Part 2. Local authority renovation - stock condition	50
Part 3. Private sector renovation	
private sector housing stock condition.	3
defective dwellings	2
Sub-total	5
Grand total	100

The nine indicators designed by the DETR for the Housing Needs Indicator are listed in Table D2, below, with their share weightings:

Table D2

Housing Needs Indicator factor	% Share (Weighting)
full household dwelling balance (overcrowded households)	8
shared/concealed households	8
severely overcrowded households	17
homelessness	14
access to owner occupation (households with affordability problems)	4
elderly in need of very sheltered accommodation	14
disabled in need of specialised accommodation	4
private sector housing stock condition.	27
numbers in temporary accommodation	4
Total	100

The National Housing Federation seeks to achieve the following objectives in respect of the HNI:

- an appropriate balance between factors reflecting housing shortage and stock condition;
- to maintain homelessness as a measure of housing need and to seek a measure separating "family" from "single" homelessness;
- to maintain the concept of stress area enhancement (SAE) as a reflection of the existence of multiple deprivation in local communities to which housing programmes can be addressed; and
- to secure better measures of the need for supported and special needs housing, including for older people.

Interpretation

How the interpretation of how this can be achieved in terms of the indicators is less clear cut. For example, the way that the ODPM (formerly the DETR) interpret the indicators of overcrowding is the average number of persons per room and the number of bedrooms available, together with the composition of the household.

Thus, the definition of the bedroom used on government surveys is that there should be one bedroom for each:

- couple living together;
- other person aged 21 or over;
- pair of adolescents aged 10-20 of the same sex;
- pair of children aged under 10; and
- unpaired child or adolescent.

The **Association of Metropolitan Authorities** (**AMA**) and the **Association of District Councils** (**ADC**) together with the NHF have long argued that homelessness should be given greater importance as an indicator.

The government has hitherto resisted such pressures and continues to do so. This can and does have implications for housing investment regionally and can divert resources to some areas and away from others. For example, large urban conurbations in the midlands and the north tend to lose investment whereas London and some rural locations tend to gain.

Changes to GNI and HNI

Following the 1994 review, the then Department of the Environment made proposals for some significant changes. The relative weights of the shared/hidden households were reduced and the overcrowded and severely overcrowded household indicators increased to produce a different balance.

Among other changes were:

- the inclusion on the demand side of the need to replace council stock;
- households with affordability problems, covering the private sector; and
- housing association major repairs and re-improvement resources are to be top sliced and ring-fenced with their own indicator (HASCI) for distribution.

The weighting for each indices is given in Table D3 below.

Table D3

Proposed Generalised Needs Index	%
New provision indicator, (being the above eight factors)	30%
Local authority stock condition indicator	60%
Private sector stock condition indicator	10%
+ stress area enhancement, cost compensation, and damping	
Housing Needs Indices	%
New provision indicator (With deductions of: resources for "Repairs to housing associations" existing stock and distribution of these by HASCI	75%
private stock condition indicator	25%
+ stress area enhancement, cost compensation, and damping	
New Provision Indicator Demand Measures	
Involuntary shares/hidden households	25%
Overcrowded households	20%
Severely overcrowded households	20%
Households in worst unfit private sector	10%
Elderly in need of very sheltered accommodation	5%
Disabled in need of specialist accommodation	5%
Households with affordability problems	10%
Need for replacement of local authority stock	5%
Supply Measures	
local authority/housing association vacant dwellings	
local authority/housing association under-occupied dwellings	

The effect of the above proposals had the result of shifting resources to London, away from the industrial cities, with the district councils staying neutral.

Assessing need and demand in Wales

Housing association developments

The key role in assessing need and establishing priority lies with the local authority. The documents outlining these are the **Housing Strategy and Operational Plan** and the **Social Care Plan** - as in England essentially.

The NAW has established close liaison with LAs in Wales. Each year profiles of each district are agreed - Local Authority Strategy and Priorities - which are circulated to associations at the time of

the annual bid round. They bring together published information and summarise current priorities and need by client group and location. They also provide update information on local plans and current development agreements. In addition to these inputs the profiles contain NAW's housing need analysis of the 1991 Census data.

To take the census analysis further, NAW uses a census atlas of housing need for each district in Wales which was produced by its predecessor, HFW. These take housing variables from the census data to produce detailed indices of district need which are also placed within the larger Welsh context.

Finally, NAW has signed formal **Strategic Housing Agreements** with Welsh LAs to formalise liaison and monitor progress against specific strategic objectives.

Needs Indicators in Scotland

These kinds of indicators have not been used in Scotland, either by the Scottish Office or Scottish Homes and its predecessor. However, Scottish Homes has developed a method of examining housing needs and demands which it calls **Local Housing Systems Analysis**. This is a detailed appraisal of data and indicators relating to a local area. It is fed into the District Plans of each of the seven Scottish Homes Districts. The District Plans are meant to be a coherent statement of local priorities and an agenda for action at the local level. Local authorities continue to make their own assessment of needs. Since 1994 Scottish Homes and local authorities have meet on an annual basis to examine local needs.

Case Study

The way that changes are made to Needs Indicators can be quite revealing, as the case study over the page shows:

Access to owner occupation as an English Housing Needs Indicator

Ian, an English housing association development manager, explained the background to this factor.

"This factor was only introduced into the Housing Needs Indicator in 1990, following a 1989 review. Before that, access to owner occupation had not been considered a housing need and there had been no mention of it in the HNI.

The research work to identify it was commissioned by the Association of District Councils (ADC), which was concerned that, because of the boom in house prices, families in district council areas were not able to afford local low cost housing. At the time, the ADC was a Conservative controlled body, and the areas in question were predominantly districts in the midlands and south of England.

The research did show an affordability problem, and the new indicator was included.

Now, obviously, if a new indicator is put in, some other indicator must have its weighting reduced. The main loser was the local authority stock indicator, which predominantly was of benefit to the northern English industrial cities. They were represented by the Association of Metropolitan Authorities, which at that time was a Labour controlled body.

So the net effect of all this, was to shift resources from the housing associations in the northern cities to the housing associations working in the shire districts, and from Labour authorities to Conservative ones.

I was at the National Federation of Housing Associations annual Development Conference, when the research results were announced. One of the questions asked about the research was whether anyone had checked if there was a correlation between the areas benefiting from the shift of resources and the location of marginal Conservative Parliamentary seats!"

The point of this case study is not to say that access to owner occupations is not a valid indicator, but that changes to all such so-called "objective" indicators have resource and political implications.

4. Assessing Demand for Private Developers

4.1 Marketing

Marketing originated in the USA, based on the need to compete for market share. Its emphasis is on the customers' needs, rather than the producers'. It perceives "*selling*" as an aspect of an organisation's marketing rather the extension of the productive function. The differences between selling and marketing are shown in Table D4 below.

Table D4

Selling	Marketing
Emphasis on product or service	Emphasis on customer
Volume focused	Profitability focused
Short term	Long term
Aggressive	Organisational approach

The failure of many British producers to consider marketing is often blamed for the decline of traditional British manufacturers, e.g. motor cars and motor bikes. How does marketing apply to housing?

4.2 Marketing housing

Private developers try to a greater or lesser extent to develop a **Marketing Information System**. This means that they try to integrate all the information from market research and apply it to particular developments to assess marketability.

The problem is that the housing market is unpredictable and a new build development conceived now in the current market is unlikely to produce completed houses until another one to two years have elapsed, by which time the market may have changed completely. Therefore developers use market research to obtain as much information about the local market as possible.

The marketing of new private houses affects the process of development and the product fundamentally. The process and product are also fundamentally linked to cash flow requirements. These factors can result in some unexpected designs and practices.

For example:

- the development of sites arranged around show houses, not around the most logical or economical physical approach;
- there can be presumptions against terraced houses and flats because they can't be sold until all are finished;
- building in small tranches of dwellings so that there are not too many houses awaiting sale at once; and
- contracting arrangements geared up to the stop-go requirements of selling.

Market research

Small local builders may well rely on what is jokingly referred to in the trade as their "GUT" feeling (GUT = "*General Understanding of the Trade*"!) Larger developers will have a more systematic approach. Their sources are likely to be:

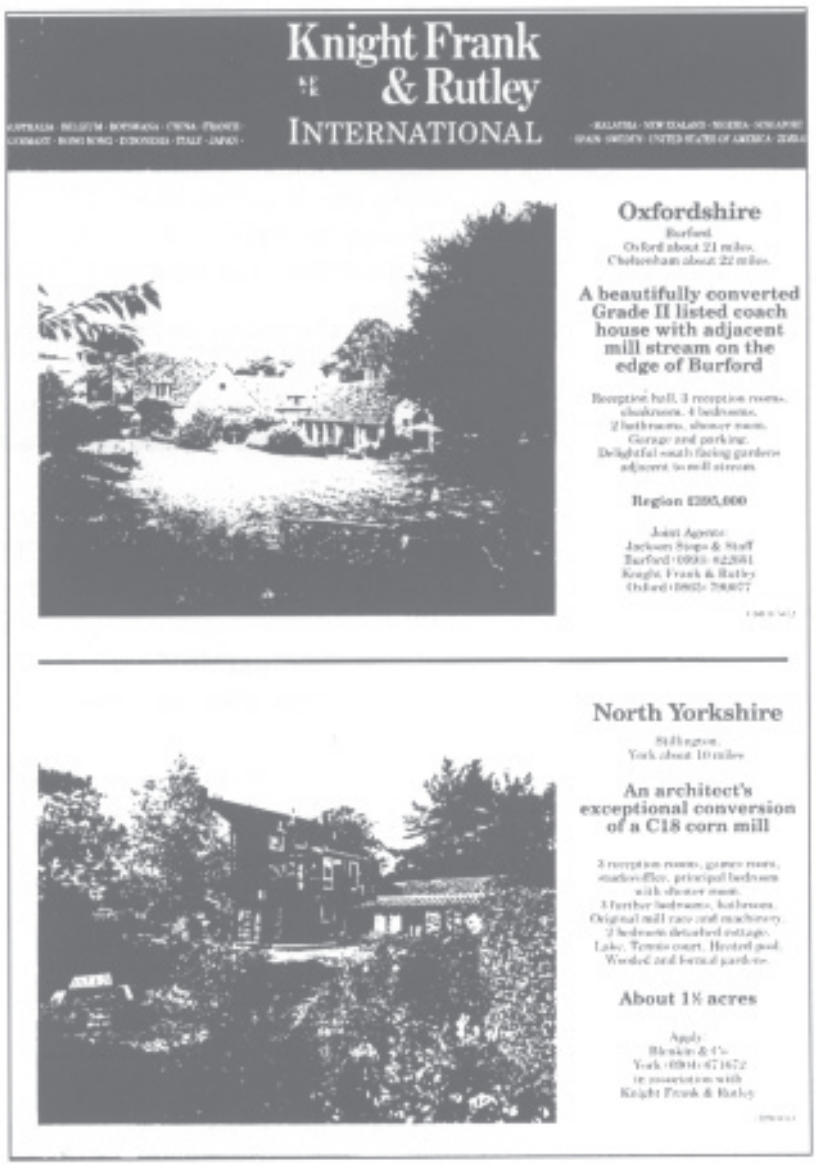
- the social trends we have already looked at;
- local information from national databases, e.g. the number of local house sales;
- local knowledge - the views of local estate agents, building societies, etc. The local type of housing, the local second hand housing market;
- "comparable" - meaning the current market prices in the area, gleaned from local agents, newspapers, etc.;
- the views of local authority staff - unitary development plan, local or district plan;
- local surveys - both visual and in some cases, local household or street surveys; and
- competitors - are their developer competitors active in the local market?

Before the housing market slump of the early 1990s, private developers were tending to move away from "*buyer needs*" to "*buyer wants*". In other words, being less concerned about price competition, and more concerned about their perceived **quality, service and image**, and their approach to the market. Britain is a very stratified and segmented society, compared to many other developed countries. This means that issues of market segmentation and niches are very important in the British private housing sector.

4.3 Market segmentation

Below are three different examples of the marketing of housing. See Figure 2 below, and Figures 3 and 4 over the page:

Figure 2

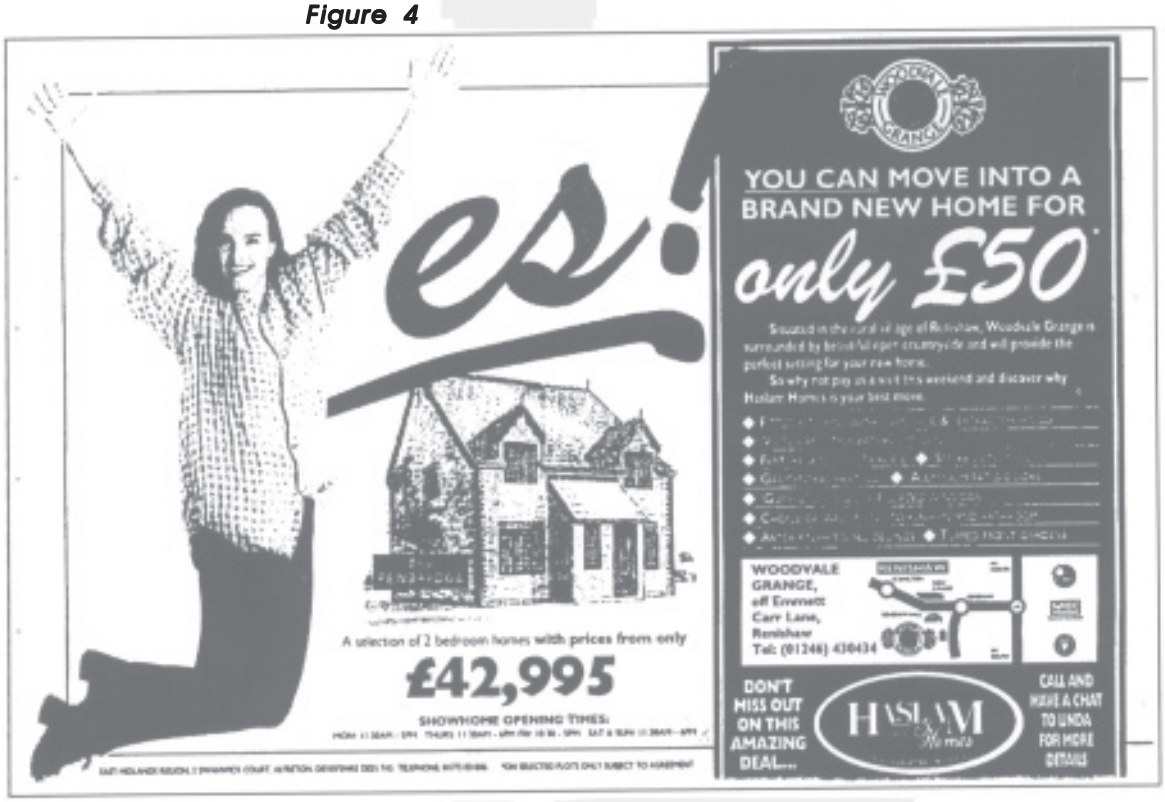


(Source: *Estates Gazette*.)

Figure 3

(Source: *Sheffield Property Guide.*)

Figure 4



(Source: *Sheffield Property Guide.*)

Marketing involves breaking the market into niches or segments. Market segmentation is about identifying the segment of the market for a product. There are five issues:

- the right product;
- the right place to market it;
- the right price;
- the right promotion; and
- the right timing.

The above three examples reflect the upper, middle and lower ranges of the market. How are the different segments marketed?

Activity 21

Look at the previous three examples of marketing for owner occupied housing. Try dividing the market into three segments: upper, middle and lower.

List what you think might be the characteristics of the housing in each segment. What image do you think the marketing executives might want to create?

Think how each might be marketed, in terms of which national newspapers and magazines might be used, and any "special features or special offers".

Upper

Middle

Lower

Time allocation: 30 minutes

4.4 Market segments in housing

Less sophisticated private developers might classify the market as lower, middle or upper. The housing characteristics of such categories are:

Upper market segment

- 3-4 bedroom houses over 92 sq.m. (1000 sq.ft.);
- bungalows over 84 sq.m. (900 sq.ft.). Invariably detached, often with double garage;
- luxury flats and apartments; and
- density 4-8 per acre. Higher for flats.

The image the seller would like to create is of up-market exclusivity, i.e. not many other people will have this sort of house. The purchaser will be surrounded by other people with the same income.

Typical advertisements at the very top end of the range would be magazines which appeal to the snob value, e.g. "*The Lady*", "*Tatler*", "*Country Life*", "*Homes and Gardens*". Such housing may well not be advertised in newspapers at all.

Middle market segment

- 2-3 bedroom houses, 74-92 sq.m. (800-1000 sq.ft.);
- bungalows 65-84 sq.m. (700-900 sq.ft.);
- mainly detached and semi detached; and
- density 10-12 per acre.

The image the seller would like to create is probably of practicability and respectability in a good area, e.g. couples with children "*trading up*". The houses are sensible, have gardens and garages. They are a secure investment and most purchasers are likely to stay there for a while. The purchaser will be surrounded by other people in the same situation.

Typical advertisements will be in "sensible" broadsheet newspapers and the local press.

Lower market segment

- 1-2 and small 3 bedroom houses up to 800 sq.ft (74 sq.m.);
- bungalows up to 65 sq.m. (700 sq.ft.);
- mainly semi-detached, linked or terraced;
- small flats up to 65 sq.m. (700 sq.ft.); and
- normal density, 12 - 14 per acre, higher for flats.

The image the seller would like to create is of good value for money and investment potential, since most purchasers will be intending to "trade up" later to something better. Absence of children and the elderly may be a selling feature.

Typical advertisements would be in tabloid newspapers and local papers.

A slightly more sophisticated market sub-division might come up with the following categories:

- young single people, especially flats;
- young couple - "Staffer Homes";
- "Grey Purse"/Retirement Homes;
- mid Range/Growing Family Homes;
- Executive Homes; and
- Home Workers/Telecommunication Villages.

4.5 New Homes

The main area of private sector housing development is new house building. Why do many people prefer or want new homes, rather than older ones?

Activity 22

Why might people prefer or want to buy new homes, rather than older ones? (Why might you? If you have bought a new home, why did you?). Can you list at least six reasons. More if possible? One example is given below.

Reasons

1. *They are prestigious and unsullied. "Perfect." No money is required for improvements.*

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

Time allocation: 10 minutes

4.6 New Houses

Advantages

If you have bought such a house, you may be familiar with the list below. The perceived advantages of new houses are:

- they are prestigious and unsullied. "Perfect." No money is required for improvements;
- you can move straight in;
- there are low maintenance costs, the house usually comes with guarantees, (e.g. a National House Builders Council. NHBC. 10 year warranty);
- the house usually has a higher specification than older housing, e.g. heating systems, double glazing;
- there is no chain", in other words you don't have to wait for an existing occupier to buy another house, (and possible for other buyers further down the chain), before you can move in to this one;
- there are often special finance deals, either on a mortgage, or free valuation, conveyancing, etc.;
- new houses have a higher level of insulation and energy efficiency; and
- new houses may have more imaginative designs.

Disadvantages

However, there are disadvantages in buying a new house. The most common are:

- new houses are often too small;
- they can have a high density on site;
- gardens are often small, front gardens especially lack demarcation and privacy. Landscaping detail can be poor;
- there can be poor finishes;
- sometimes there is a lack of individual character. They may need more features. Certain styles have become unpopular e.g. fake Tudor styles are now disliked.

Summary

1. **The first part of this section looked at some of the relevant national social trends of concern to developers and where to look for these trends.**
2. **The second part reviewed how you might assess needs for social housing organisations and the problems of using "objective" indices like the Generalised Needs Index and Housing Needs Indicator.**
3. **We then examined how private developers assess demand for their housing and how the private market is broken up into different segments.**

Self Test 6

1. *How would you summarise the main trends in household size, employment, incomes, car ownership and population?*

2. *What are the two main requirements of a local authority housing needs survey and the two main drawbacks?*

3. *What are the nine factors currently comprising the Housing Needs Indicator?*

4. *What are the perceived advantages and disadvantages of new private sector houses?*

Now turn to the Answers at the end of the Block.

Summary

1. **The first section, we looked at how developers know which land to use for development. The section examined the planning system and how land is released. It identified the different types of development plans and gave examples of case studies.**
2. **The second section reviewed the historical development of housing and put it into its social, economic, historical and political context. The section looked at other contextual information, such as the architects' visions.**
3. **The third section developed work from the previous two to examine what type of development is realistically possible today. We looked at some of the current controls and policies and which historical housing types are relevant to housing development today.**
4. **The fourth section developed the first three further by looking at how you assess need or demand for housing proposals. We examined how need is assessed in the social housing sector. We looked at how demand is assessed and how housing is marketed in the private sector.**

Answers

Self Test 1

1. There is a more broadly-based integrated planning framework, involving national and regional guidance, prepared by central government, forming a guide for the preparation of strategic conceptual plans (i.e. structure plans and unitary development plans). These plans are, in turn, a context for more focused, detailed local plans.

   This contrasts with the old development plan system, based on the 1947 Act, which was a single tier planning framework primarily, concerned with the arrangement of land-uses and with limited consideration of the wider aspects of planning policies such as housing supply and demand, fostering economic development, relationship of land-uses to transport provision.

   The new system has a more effective system of public participation, allowing public involvement at different stages in plan preparation. The public are now, explicitly, part of the plan-making process.

2. At what stage is the emerging local plan in the statutory process? If it has not undergone public participation or the results of such an exercise are contrary to the proposed allocation or unclear, then there is a reasonable basis for an application.

   Is the local plan likely to be adopted, before a decision is made on the application? If the plan is close to adoption then an application would be pointless and the way forward is to advise your client to participate in the local plan process, if there is still an opportunity, and await the outcome of the plan, which should be the overriding verdict on the site.

   Alternatively, you need to estimate the length of time the plan may take for determination and make a judgement on the timetable for determination of an application. It is possible to appeal against non-determination of an application 8 weeks after its submission. The appeal would take on average between 3 and 5 months to resolve.

   Is there a clear need for extra housing laid to that shown on the emerging plan. A housing land availability exercise may need to be done, taking into account supply and demand.

   Is there a planning application history either on the site or in the vicinity which may have set a precedent for future decision-making?

3. Your answer should address the following issues:

Land availability

Examine local plan and the land availability study, if one exists, to assess whether there is a genuine 5 year supply of housing land. This is the foundation upon which you may be able to undermine the local planning authority's housing strategy.

You should focus on the following issues:

- Annual Building Rates - How do they relate to those proposed in the residual method of calculating housing land supply? If higher, then, it may be basis of calling the local planning authority's housing land supply to question, depending on how much allocated land, remains undeveloped
- Are the local planning authority allocated sites realistically developable? If there are development constraints on any, this could be used to probe the local planning authority's strategy.

How physically intrusive is the development?

Does the site intrude into open countryside? Are there land forms or surrounding development which, would form a natural boundary to the scheme and help to mitigate the physical intrusion of the development, into the countryside? Consideration of the possibility of screen tree-planting may be worthwhile.

Quality and Use of Open/Recreation Space

What is the quality of the land? Does it condition prevent its full use either for passive or active recreation? Has a study been done by the local planning authority of open/recreation space or on a comparable site in the locality which could have set a precedent for allowing the development?

There may be further factors to take into account relating to the specific nature of the site or its surroundings. If the land is of poor quality or under-used there may be scope to question the allocation in the local plan.

It may also be worth investigating if your client can provide/ acquire any land in the vicinity of the site to offer as replacement open space.

Planning Obligations

Are there any justifiable planning obligations which your client may be expected to fulfil and can these be met either financially or physically? e.g. affordable housing, infrastructure provision.

4. The site specific matters that might concern developers are:
   - overriding technical problems;
   - ecological protection;
   - pollution factors;
   - noise;
   - hazardous uses;
   - smells from sewage works;
   - drainage and sewerage; and
   - highways.

Self Test 2

1. At different times, planners and theorists have thought of neighbourhood in terms of:
   - provision of services and community facilities;
   - an area of social interaction, relationships, and community spirit;
   - a pedestrian enclave safe from traffic.
2. The trend towards centralising of social provisions, such as schools, health care and shopping, makes the village community less viable. In addition, increased mobility for some, and different levels of mobility in a population, make the work of planners more complex.

Self Test 3

1. The term "customer" emphasises that there is an ongoing relationship between the service provider and the purchaser (or renter). Other terms have negative connotations, implying dependency, "favours", or a transient relationship. "Customer" also emphasises that the successful provision of a service requires that it meets customer requirements: customers matter!

   This *customer-orientated* approach has resulted in housing providers offering services which extend beyond the mere "provision" of housing. Furthermore, some course members are employed in housing organisations which are not direct providers of housing. Nevertheless, all of the activities of housing organisations are concerned with offering services of one kind or another, so this is an appropriate "catch all" term.

2. Our ideas about standards of adequacy change over time. This is partly because *what is possible* (e.g. sanitation) develops over time, but is primarily due to rising incomes making higher standards more affordable. As standards of adequacy change, so our views of what constitutes a *housing problem* change. Needs arise from the perceived existence of housing problems.
3. We must classify needs in order to be able to generalise about what is needed. Without some method of classification, we would have to consider each specific need as a unique problem, which would make planning to meet needs almost impossible!
4. We identified four main approaches to identifying needs. These involved looking at:
   (a) house condition;
   (b) numbers of households;
   (c) the suitability of housing;
   (d) access to housing.

Self Test 4

1. (a) House condition surveys reveal detailed information about the physical condition of dwellings, in all tenures. This tells us if they lack basic amenities, are in disrepair, or are actually unfit for habitation.
   (b) We can, therefore, discover the extent of need arising from homes in poor condition.
2. Local authority waiting lists give some indication of numbers of households in housing need in a particular area. However, they must be viewed with caution, because some households may fail to remove themselves from the list, while others may fail ever to register.
3. Detailed social surveys are the only method by which potential households *actively* seeking separate accommodation may be identified. Other broader approaches simply indicate *possible* households, who *may* wish to obtain their own homes.
4. Household projections estimate the impact of likely population changes on the numbers and types of households. This enables us to assess how *numerical* housing need will be changing, as well as the *types of dwelling* which are likely to be required.

Self Test 5

1. Information about dwelling occupancy tells us which are *overcrowded* or *under-occupied*. This is determined by the bedroom standard. Homes below the standard are overcrowded, where those above are under-occupied.
2. Under occupation suggests housing need because it raises housing costs, in terms of both time and effort and in money terms. Higher monetary costs include property taxes, heating, decorating, furnishing, and cleaning materials. Time costs include the time to undertake some of these activities.
3. Special needs are revealed by social surveys (such as *Social Trends* and the *General Household Survey*), and specific research projects. These might be targeted to one particular special need, or may attempt to identify the full range.
4. Information about homelessness is gathered by local authorities, in so far as homeless people apply to a local authority for help. The "hidden" homeless are discovered only by specific research projects, often initated by voluntary housing agencies.
5. Households most likely to be homeless include:
   - the "official" priority homeless, generally families with children (especially single parent families, largely headed by women); and
   - the non-priority homeless. This latter group are more likely to be single people, often young, unemployed and belonging to ethnic minority groups.

Self Test 6

1. The social trends identified are:
   - Household size. More, smaller, households overall, because of people having less children, people having children later in life, more marriages and co-habitation ending in separation and an increasing number of single elderly people.
   - Employment. The traditional labour patterns are changing, with less full-time jobs and more part-time ones. Less permanent work, and more temporary with women making up more of the labour force.
   - Incomes. Regional differences in incomes, as well as the obvious social class and age ones.

- Car ownership. Car ownership is continually increasing, but with little regional differences. Car ownership on the poorest housing association and local authority estates is very low.
- Population trends. The British population is becoming increasingly older.

2. The two main requirements of a local authority housing needs survey are:
   - a well designed questionnaire, and
   - a sample size and structure which maximises the reliability of results.

   The two main drawbacks are that:
   - they require a considerable investment of resources and
   - they provide only a snapshot of the area's housing need unless updated.
3. The nine indicators currently used by the Department of the Environment for the Housing Needs Indicator are:
   - full household dwelling balance;
   - shared/concealed households;
   - overcrowded households;
   - homelessness;
   - access to owner occupation;
   - elderly in need of very sheltered accommodation;
   - disabled in need of specialised accommodation;
   - private sector stock condition; and
   - numbers in temporary accommodation.
4. The perceived advantages of new houses are:
   - they are prestigious and unsullied. "Perfect.";
   - you can move straight in;
   - there are low maintenance costs;
   - the house usually has a higher specification than older housing;
   - there is no "chain";
   - there are often special associated finance deals;
   - new houses have a higher level of insulation and energy efficiency;

- new houses may have more imaginative designs; and
- new houses appeal to women.

The most common disadvantages are:

- new houses are often too small;
- they can have a high density on site;
- gardens are often small;
- there can be poor finishes; and
- sometimes there is a lack of individual character.