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HOUSING NEEDS AND PLANNING POLICY

A Restatement of the Problems of Housing Need and 'Overspill' in England and Wales

by

J.B.CULLINGWORTH

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PREFACE

THIS BOOK is essentially a restatement of some of the problems which housing and planning policy will have to meet during the next two decades. It does not pretend to put forward any new facts or theories. Its purpose is simply to bring together information from a wide range of sources and to summarize the scale and character of the problems.

It is, unfortunately, impossible to make the book completely up-to-date. At the time of writing (January 1960) the latest detailed population figures available were those for 1958. Much of the evidence presented to the Royal Commission on Local Government in Greater London had not been published. The first report of the Local Government Commission had not appeared. The Local Employment Bill was still passing through Parliament. Even more important, the First Review of the County of London Development Plan was only at the draft stage. The London County Council kindly gave the author access to much of the material which will be included in this Review, but, since some of it was in process of being revised, it was not possible to make all the desirable alterations in the text. The paper by A.G.Powell on 'The Recent Development of Greater London' had also not been published but Mr. Powell kindly made a copy available to me in advance of publication. This paper contains a great deal of hitherto unavailable information, and forms the basis of most of the present author's analysis of employment in the London Region.

The number of people to whom I am indebted is very large. I have received much assistance from officials of Government Departments, New Town Development Corporations and Local Authorities all over the country. Of necessity these must remain anonymous, but my gratitude is thereby none the less. My debt to my wife must be recorded: without her aid in correcting and typing innumerable drafts, and in wrestling with a mass of figures, this book could not have been written. I also wish to acknowledge with sincere thanks the financial aid granted to me by the Joseph

Rowntree Memorial Trust. It was their help which enabled this study to be undertaken.

Finally, I acknowledge with thanks permission received from the Controller of H.M. Stationery Office and the London County Council for extensive use of official publications; and from the publishers for permission to quote from Lloyd Rodwin, The British New Towns Policy (Copyright 1956 Harvard University Press), L..Grebler, D.M.Blank and L..Winnick, Capital Formation in Residential Real Estate (Copyright 1956, Princeton University Press), D.M.Potter, People of Plenty (Copyright 1954, University of Chicago Press), and L. Winnick, American Housing and Its Use (Copyright 1957, John Wiley and Sons, Inc.). The maps are based on parts of Ordnance Survey Sheets with the sanction of the Director General, Ordnance Survey, and were drawn by Miss E.A. Lowcock.

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March 1960.

INTRODUCTION

HUMAN NEEDS are not susceptible to straightforward statistical measurement. 'Target' estimates of need are perforce based on assumptions which, in an era of change, seldom prove valid. In no field is this more clearly seen than in housing. The variables are numerous: population size and structure, the general standard of living, the distribution of incomes, the real value of old-age pensions, the cost of construction and the prevailing rate of interest, rents and subsidy policy; and so on.

As in many social services, there is a widespread confusion between need and demand. Need refers to inadequacy of existing provision when compared with a socially acceptable norm. It takes no account of price.* If it is thought that a family containing two children should have a three-bedroomed house the fact that such a family cannot afford the required rent is irrelevant as far as need is concerned. Demand, on the other hand, gives price the pride of place in the equation. A family may 'need' a larger dwelling but be unable or unwilling to pay the ruling price: in such a case no demand exists.

This is, of course, obvious. What is not so obvious is the actual relationship between need and demand in present-day conditions when large numbers of houses are either subsidized or rent controlled. The economists would have us believe that these two artificial elements in the housing situation have so interfered with the normal market as to exaggerate the housing shortage to an enormous extent. It is argued that the abolition of rent control would go a long way towards solving the housing shortage and would certainly make 'some of the most expensive parts of the current building programme unnecessary'. [43, 18] †

* 'Need' is independent not only of prices but also of income and consumer preferences, i.e. all three of the major demand variables. The relationship between these variables is at present being studied by a team of research workers at the London School of Economics and the Universities of Manchester and Nottingham.

† Figures refer to entries in the Bibliography on page 205.

Such arguments rest on the assumption that the present quantitative housing problem is primarily one that could be solved by redistribution: what is needed is a policy which would encourage small households under-occupying large houses to move into small houses, thus vacating their accommodation for the benefit of larger overcrowded households. Indeed, this was one of the main arguments put forward by the Government in support of the 1957 Rent Act.

A study of the available statistics and an appraisal of current social trends suggests that these essays in applied economics give a totally inadequate and misleading picture of the housing situation. The argument put forward in this book is that the rising standard of living which this country has experienced since the First World War, together with socio-demographic changes, has profoundly affected both the need and the demand for housing. Current Development Plans have not taken this increased need into account, and since it is not merely a temporary phenomenon, it follows that the future housing requirements of England and Wales will bear little relation to the assumptions on which housing and planning policy is based. To anticipate later chapters, if there is substance in this argument then the policy of restricting urban growth is in grave danger. The machinery for the dispersal of population and employment from the conurbations is already deficient; in a comparatively short space of time it will be ludicrously inadequate.

Such is the main thesis of this book. It is argued that the changes that are taking place in the structure of the population will of themselves lead to a need for a larger number of houses, and that the rising standard of living will bring about an increasing demand for more and better housing. The presentation of these arguments is preceded by a review of the sources which must be used in assessing housing conditions and a discussion of the difficulties which have to be overcome in defining the basic concepts.

PART ONE

Housing Needs

I

SOURCES AND DEFINITIONS

*The Available Statistics**

THE 1% Sample Tables and Housing Report of the 1951 Census provide a wealth of information on housing conditions. Besides figures of the number of households and dwellings by size, details are given of household composition (age, sex, family relationships, etc.), the number of rooms occupied, and the possession of certain 'household arrangements' such as piped water supply, water-closet, and fixed bath. Of particular value are the Sample Tables showing how many households contain married sons and daughters, grandparents, lodgers, etc.

It is these statistics which must form the basis of any assessment of the housing problem. They can be supplemented by the Housing Returns published quarterly by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government. These give details of new building, grant-aided conversions and improvements, and slum clearance. Finally, population changes are recorded by the Registrar General in the annual Statistical Reviews.

The Problem of Definition

The measurement of social phenomena is beset with many difficulties of definition. These difficulties arise not only with obviously elusive concepts such as poverty[188] and health[185] but also with apparently straightforward phenomena such as hospital beds,[183]

* For a fuller discussion of housing statistics and their limitations see the author's paper on 'The Measurement of Housing Need'.[23]

and the amount of unemployment.[189],[190] In the sphere of housing the two basic concepts are those of the family and the house—or, to use the accepted and more meaningful terms, the household and the dwelling. The inherent problems involved in defining these in a useful way are the source of much confusion over the size and character of the housing shortage. As with hospital beds, the amount of the existing provision 'depends' to some extent on the way in which the terms are defined. And just as the need for more jobs 'depends' to some unknown extent on the amount of 'hidden unemployment' so the need for more dwellings depends on the number of 'hidden' or 'potential' household units.

(a) Households. For the purpose of measuring housing needs it is necessary to know how many households there are and how many require separate accommodation. But households can be identified only in relation to the dwellings they occupy, and at a time when there is a housing shortage many persons who require separate accommodation may be involuntarily living as members of other households. How are these household units to be identified? Is a household consisting of a married couple and the parents of the wife to be counted as one or two units? Is a single person lodging with a household to be counted as a separate unit or as part of the main household? How are three students or business men sharing a flat to be counted?*

The Census attempts to overcome these difficulties by defining a household as 'a single person living alone or a group of individuals voluntarily *[sic]* living together under a single menage in the sense of sharing the same living-room or eating at the same table'. This definition is in substance the same as that employed in all previous Censuses in this country—though the term 'family' was used until 1951. The attributes of 'the same living-room' and 'the same table' are fundamental, and it is difficult to see what superior criteria could be used. As was pointed out in the 1831 Census:

'That part of the first Question which requires the number of Families, is even more difficult of definition than that regarding the Houses in which they live. The degree of connection between the head of the family and the

* And since we are not concerned with what the Census terms 'non-private households'—those living in institutions, hotels, etc.—how is the line to be drawn between private households containing a number of lodgers and non-private households of the small boarding-house type?

Inmates or lodgers who reside under the same roof is too various for description in an Act of Parliament. When the Overseers or Schoolmasters have expressed a doubt upon this subject, reply has been made "that those who use the same Kitchen and board together are to be deemed members of the same 'family'". But even then remains the Question whether a single person inhabiting a house solely, or lodging but not boarding in another Man's House, is to be deemed a Family? This admits only of an unsatisfactory reply, "that it cannot be otherwise". And by this negative paralogism, is decided in the affirmative.'[1]

With the increasing break-up of three-generation households into two separate units the implications of this definition become more and more important. At a time when it was common for a young married couple to live with relatives—whose expectancy of life was far shorter than it is today—it was unlikely that housing needs would be masked to any significant extent. But today grandparents live to become great-grandparents, and 'sharing with relatives' is considered to be a hardship. The political promise of 'a separate dwelling for every family which desires to have one'[41] involves the provision of two or even three dwellings for every one that would have been required fifty years ago. The definition presents no difficulties only when applied to the 'average family' of husband, wife, and two children. But what does 'voluntarily living together' mean when applied to a group consisting of husband, wife, two children, two grandparents, a married brother, and an apparently unrelated person, all sharing a living-room and 'eating at the same table'? It may be that this household would divide into two, three, or even four units if alternative accommodation were available. In short, the number of Census households is determined to some extent by the number of available dwellings, and therefore gives little or no indication of the 'need' for dwellings.

It is possible, however, to make an estimate of the number of 'suppressed' households from the 1% Sample Tables, since these show how many households contain 'family nuclei' (married couples with or without children and lone parents accompanied by children), 'ancestors' (parent of the head of household or of his wife), unmarried brothers and sisters, and so on. The tabulations cannot of themselves show how many of these actually prefer to live separately. As Fiske[29] puts it 'the Census was not an inquiry into emotions or intentions'. Nevertheless they do allow an informed estimate to be made.

(b) Dwellings. Similar, though not so formidable, problems arise in the definition of a dwelling. Here we are concerned with the differentiation of buildings into separate parts which form self-contained units of accommodation. The clumsiness of this statement points to the difficulty. Detached, semi-detached, and terraced two-storey houses and self-contained flats originally built as such present no problem: they are easily identifiable as separate dwellings. But there are considerable numbers of large old houses, built for the needs of a former generation, which have been converted or adapted with varying degrees of success to meet present-day requirements. The wide range of variations in these conversions makes it impossible to construct a definition of 'separateness' which could be used in a Census. The Housing Report of the 1951 Census underlines the problem:

'It is easy to construct a definition of a structurally separate dwelling for the usual type of family house or flat originally constructed as such, but it is difficult to devise a form of words to cover every type of converted building in such a way as to provide, in a simple classification, a measure of the different degrees of separation which one dwelling may have from another; on the justifiable grounds of simplicity the boundaries are inevitably made to appear more sharply defined than they really are'.

The Census term dwelling 'means a structurally separate dwelling and generally comprises any room or suite of rooms intended or used for habitation by persons living in private households having separate access to the street or to a common landing or staircase to which the public has access'.* The basic attribute is thus separate access to the street. But as Ford and Thomas† have pointed out, 'those dwellings which are entirely separate except for this one requirement…would be classified as shared dwellings. It is likely that a large number of these shared dwellings are, for practical purposes, separate, or if not entirely so, of such a spaciousness and of such a

* Caravans, houseboats, etc. were treated as dwellings if occupied on Census night but not otherwise. In 1951 these totalled 31,535 and formed 0.25% of all dwellings.

† P.Ford and C.J.Thomas, *Housing Targets—The Third Report of the Southampton Survey,*[30] p. 53.

Howe and Jones maintain that it is reasonable to assume that a quarter of the 'sharing' in Great Britain as revealed by the Census, is spurious. G.Howe and C. Jones, *Houses to Let,*[32] pp. 22–23.

degree of privacy as to render them suitable for habitation for some years to come'. This is undoubtedly true, yet how is 'spaciousness' to be measured? The Census itself gives no information as to the size of rooms. This could be obtained only by *ad hoc* studies. All that can be done with national figures is to recognize that in certain areas (particularly Central London) the Census material understates the number of 'dwellings'. Any allowance made for this must necessarily be arbitrary and open to argument.

Qualitative Aspects

An even more baffling problem is that of measuring the quality of housing. The Census is of little use here. It analyses households according to whether they possess or share a fixed bath, a piped water supply, a kitchen sink, a water-closet and a cooking stove,* but it gives no information on whether or not a house is unhealthy, damp, or in disrepair. For such information entirely different, and completely unrelated, statistics have to be used, viz. the Slum Clearance Returns made by local authorities under the Housing Repairs and Rents Act, 1954†. These contain estimates made by the individual local authorities (numbering about 1,450 in England and Wales) of the number of houses in their areas which they consider to be 'unfit for human habitation', and the number they propose to demolish or to 'retain for temporary accommodation' during a period of five years. As might be expected, it has been found to be extremely difficult in practice to devise a yardstick for

* The question relating to these arrangements 'has proved a difficult one for heads of households to answer and there is evidence to suggest that on occasion genuine misunderstanding gave rise to misstatement'. (Housing Report,[5], p. xclx; See also General Report[7] pp. 56–58). This illustrates a fundamental difficulty: the more refined and elaborate are the definitions used, the more difficult it becomes for them to be understood and applied by the persons completing the census schedule, and the more unreliable are the resulting census tabulations. It would have been possible to give the enumerator the responsibility of answering this question, but this would have involved 'a costly increase in the load of work which he was required to do in addition to his main job of delivering schedules to households and collecting them when completed'. (Housing Report, loc. cit.) Such problems are inherent in any attempt to measure the quality of housing.

† *Slum Clearance (England and Wales)*,[38]. A number of authorities did not submit their proposals in time for inclusion in this document. The amended total figures are given in the Report of the Ministry of Housing and Local Government for 1955 (Cmd. 9876), page 109, Table IE.

the qualities which make a house unfit. The Housing Repairs and Rents Act, 1954, lists a number of matters which should be *taken into consideration* (e.g. repair, stability, freedom from damp), but a house is to be deemed unfit only if 'it is so far defective in one or more of the said matters that it is not *reasonably* suitable for occupation in that condition'.* This can only be a matter of judgement. Further, the estimates 'represent the best conclusions which local authorities have been able to reach in the light of their local circumstances. There is a considerable variation in the information on which they are based'. Finally, these estimates relate only to houses which are so unfit that they should be demolished; no figures are available of the number of houses which are in an only slightly better condition and which need extensive repairs. †

Such is the nature of the available statistics. It is apparent that any estimate of need based on them must make certain assumptions concerning either their reliability or their meaning—and in some cases, both.

* Housing Repairs and Rents Act, 1954, Section 9(1), now re-enacted as Section 4(1) of the Housing Act, 1957. Clancey maintains that while this definition gives great scope for flexibility it has 'on present evidence produced an even wider divergence in opinion than ever existed before'. J.Clancey, 'The Housing Repairs and Rents Act, 1954'[21]. The definition was based on the Report of the Standards of Fitness for Habitation Sub-Committee of the Central Housing Advisory Committee, 1946.[34]

† See also pages 51–52 below.

II

HOUSEHOLD FORMATION, 1931–1951

AT THE DATE of the 1951 Census there were, in England and Wales, 13,117,868 households and 12,389,448 dwellings. The Census thus identified a quantitative housing need of 728,420 dwellings. But since, as has already been pointed out, the number of households is to some unknown extent determined by the number of available dwellings, this does not represent a realistic assessment of the housing shortage. The most important element in the modern housing situation is the rate of 'household formation'. The extent to which this can affect the need for dwellings is strikingly illustrated by the changes which took place between 1931 and 1951. During this period the population increased by 9.5%, but the increase in households was 28.2%, and the increase in dwellings was 31.8%. Expressed in a different way, the number of households per 1,000 of the population increased from 256 in 1931 to 300 in 1951. In static and declining areas the change was even more remarkable. In the South-East Lancashire Conurbation, for example, where the population remained virtually stationary in size during these years, the number of households increased by 22.2%—an increase almost as great as the increase in dwellings: 23%. In the declining area of Bolton a population decrease of 5.7% was accompanied by an increase in households of 15.1% and in dwellings of 15.2%.

It follows from these figures that the average density of occupation fell considerably during these twenty years. In fact the national decrease was over 10%: from 0.83 persons per room in 1931 to 0.74 in 1951. This represents a great improvement in the

TABLE 1: Percentage Changes in Population, Households and Dwellings, 1931–1951

	% Change 1931–1951			*Households per 1,000 Population*		*Dwellings per 1,000 Population*	
	Population	*Households*	*Dwellings*	*1931*	*1951*	*1931*	*1951*
England and Wales	+ 9·5	+ 28·2	+ 31·8	256	300	235	283
S.E. Lancashire Conurbation	− 0·2	+ 22·2	+ 23·0	259	316	252	311
Bolton C. B.	− 5·7	+ 15·1	+ 15·2	269	329	268	327

overall situation. Nevertheless, it is important to realize precisely what this change means. First it should be noted that these density ratios are averages and thus hide the very great variation in the conditions of households of different sizes. Thus though the average density in 1951 was 0.74 persons per room, for one-person households it was 0.30 and for households of ten or more persons it was 1.90. The density increases steadily with increasing size of household. But even between households of the same size there are wide variations. For example, two-person households lived at an average density of 0.49 persons per room—roughly two rooms per person or four rooms per household. Yet the proportion actually occupying four rooms was only 28.2%; 2.4% occupied one room, 29.6% occupied two or three rooms and 39.8% occupied five rooms or more. There was a similar wide distribution for each size of household. The prevalence of 'under-occupation' which is the subject of much controversy (and which will be further discussed below) greatly reduces the average density of the smaller households. In 1951 just over a million households in England and Wales (8.2% of the total) occupied four or more rooms in excess of persons (i.e. one person occupying five or more rooms, two persons occupying six or more rooms, and so on).

A comparison of the density ratios for households of different sizes in 1931 and 1951 gives a completely different picture from the comparison of overall averages given above.

TABLE 2: Persons per Room by Size of Household, England and Wales, 1931 and 1951

Persons in Household	*Persons per Room*	
	1931	*1951*
1	0·33	0·30
2	0·48	0·49
3	0·67	0·69
4	0·85	0·87
5	1·03	1·03
6–7	1·27	1·25
8–9	1·58	1·57
10 and over	1·67	1·90
All sizes—crude ratio	0·83	0·74
—standardized ratio*	0·73	0·74

As can be seen from Table 2 there has been very little change in the average density of occupation for most household sizes. Indeed for the largest households—those of ten or more persons—there has been a significant increase in average density. Households of two, three, and four persons have experienced slight increases in average density and households of one, six—seven, and eight—nine persons have experienced slight decreases.

If the 1931 persons per room ratios for each size of household are weighted by the corresponding proportion of the population in households of that size in 1951, the 1931 average ratio is 0.73. In other words had the percentage distribution of households in 1931 been the same as in 1951 then the average ratio would have been lower than that obtaining in 1951.

This shows that the reduction in the crude ratio from 0.83 to 0.74 was largely attributable to the change in the size distribution of households. During the period 1931 to 1951 there was a fall in the average size of household from 3.72 to 3.19 persons. The percentage size distribution of households in 1931 and 1951 is shown below.

This change is not peculiar to the period 1931–1951. It is the

* The standardized ratio for 1931 is obtained by weighting persons per room ratios for each size of household by the corresponding proportion of the population in households of that size in 1951.

TABLE 3: Size Distribution of Households, England and Wales, 1931 and 1951

Persons in Household	*Percentage Distribution of Households*	
	1931	*1951*
1	6·7	10·7
2	21·9	27·7
3	24·1	25·3
4	19·4	19·0
5	12·4	9·6
6	7·3	4·3
7	4·1	1·9
8–9	3·2	1·2
10 and over	0·9	0·3
	100·0	100·0
Average Household Size	3·72 persons	3·19 persons

continuation of a trend which began at the end of the nineteenth century. During the major part of that century the average household size remained fairly stable at about 4.5 persons. During the twentieth century it fell rapidly to 4.14 persons in 1921, 3.72 in 1931 and 3.19 in 1951.

Further, the fall in the overall density of occupation together with the stability of the density for households of each size in the period 1931 to 1951 was also noted in the period 1921 to 1931. The Housing Report of the 1931 Census commented that the latter was 'in no way commensurate' with the former. The overall decline:

'is to be explained rather by the wide variation in density which has always existed between families of different sizes, a large increase in the numbers of the small and less densely housed families combined with a reduction in the numbers of large and worse housed families producing a reduction in the overall density without any necessary change in the individual size categories at all'.

To summarize, the overall improvement in housing conditions has been mainly due to a large increase in the number of household units occupying separate dwellings. Though households of any particular

size have not on average achieved higher standards, the increase in the number of small households living at low densities has effected a considerable improvement in the overall situation.

It is, however, misleading to consider 'the overall situation' as if it were static. The 32% increase in dwellings between 1931 and 1951 does not represent a simple improvement on the 1931 situation: it represents the partial fulfilment of needs which increased markedly during these two decades. In a time of rapid demographic and socio-economic changes the need for housing can increase at a remarkable rate. Every estimate of housing need may during the inter-war years proved totally inadequate. The theory that the building of houses by private enterprise would allow a 'filtering up' of poorer families into the houses vacated by the ascendant middle-classes was never fully justified. Instead, what largely happened was a remarkable proliferation of small household units.

Though this is not an historical treatise it is necessary to analyse these changes in some detail in order to assess how far similar changes are taking place today and how far they are likely to affect future housing needs.

Changes in Population Structure

The increase in total population during the years 1931 to 1951 amounted to 9.5%. This represents a decennial rate of 4.7%—a rate smaller than for any other period in the last 150 years.* Households increased at a rate three times as great as this. It is obvious, therefore, that changes in the total size of the population were of less importance than changes in population structure.† The biggest change was in age-distribution. Apart from an increase in the 0–4 age group (caused by the increase in the birth rate during the 'forties) this change consisted of a decrease in the younger, and an increase in the older

* See Census 1951, *General Report,* Chapter III.

† During the period from 1861 to 1891 the decennial rate of population increase was greater than that of households. In the periods 1891–1901 and 1901–1911 households increased at a higher rate, and between 1911 and 1921 the increase in households was twice that of the increase in population. In the decennium 1921 to 1931, the increase in households was three times as great as the increase in population (i.e. the same as during the period 1931–1951), though this was thought to be due in part of the 'abnormal character of the 1921 private family situation'. See Census 1931, *Housing Report,*[2] Chapter 5. The actual figures were:

age groups. In short, the 1951 population was 'older' than the 1931 population. As is shown in Table 4, the largest increase was in the 65 and over group. This age group formed 7.4% of the population in 1931 but 11% in 1951. Smaller increases took place in the older working-age groups.

TABLE 4: Changes in Age Structure, England and Wales, 1931–1951

Age Group	% Distribution 1931	% Distribution 1951	Population 1931 ('000)	Population 1951 ('000)	Change 1931–1951 No. ('000)	Change 1931–1951 %
0–4	7·5	8·5	2,990	3,718	+ 728	+ 24·3
5–14	16·4	13·7	6,530	5,974	− 556	− 8·5
15–29	25·7	20·4	10,286	8,911	− 1,375	− 13·4
30–44	21·3	22·3	8,522	9,767	+ 1,245	+ 14·6
45–64	21·7	24·1	8,661	10,563	+ 1,901	+ 21·9
65 and over	7·4	11·0	2,963	4,825	+ 1,863	+ 62·9
Total	100·0	100·0	39,952	43,758	+ 3,806	+ 9·5

An increase in the proportion of older people will, of itself, tend to increase the number of households in a given population since the rate of household formation increases directly with age.* A simple calculation illustrates the importance of this.

* Except where an increase in the proportion of old people is due entirely to a reduction in the number of children. In such a case there would only be an increase in the *proportion* of households to total population, not an increase in the absolute number.

	% Increase in Total Population	% Increase in Households
1861–1871	13·2	12·4
1871–1881	14·4	11·6
1881–1891	11·6	8·8
1891–1901	12·2	14·8
1901–1911	10·9	13·8
1911–1921	4·9	10·0
1921–1931	5·5	17·1
1931–1951	9·5	28·2

From the Census Tables it is possible to work out a 'headship rate' for three broad age groups. A headship rate is the number of households divided by the population. For example, there were 15,313,000 people in the age group 15 to 39 and 3,431,000 of these were heads of households. Dividing the former by the latter a headship rate of 22.4% is obtained. The rates for the age groups 40 to 59, and 60 and over were 48.5 and 56.9. If these rates are now applied to the 1931 population a figure is obtained of the number of households which could have been expected had headship rates remained stable during the twentyyear period. The calculation is set out in Table 5. With 1951 headship rates, 10,934,000 households could have been 'expected' in 1931; the actual number was 10,233,000, or 701,000 less. Expressed in a different way, with 1951 headship rates an increase of 2,184,000 households could have been expected during the period 1931 to 1951; the actual increase was 2,885,000. Unfortunately it is

TABLE 5: 1951 Headship Rates Applied to Three Broad Age Groups of the 1931 Population

	1951			*1931*	
Age Group	*Population ('000)*	*Households ('000)*	*Headship Rate*	*Population ('000)*	*Expected Households on 1951 Headship Rates ('000)*
0–14	9,692	–	–	9,520	–
15–39	15,313	3,431	22·4	16,144	3,616
40–59	11,785	5,721	48·5	9,668	4,689
60 and over	6,968	3,966	56·9	4,621	2,629
TOTAL	43,758	13,118	–	39,953	10,934

	Hypothetical	*Actual*	*Difference between Hypothetical and Actual*
Number of households in 1931	10,934,000	10,233,000	701,000
Increase in households 1931–1951	2,184,000	2,885,000	701,000

not possible with the available statistics to calculate the *actual* 'age-specific headship rates' for 1931. Further the age groups are very

broad and some statistical error is to be expected on this account. Nevertheless, the calculation suggests that of the 2,885,000 increase in households during the period 1931 to 1951, 2,184,000 can be attributed solely to the change in age distribution. This leaves an increase of 701,000 still to be explained. The common explanation is that the rise in the standard of living has itself led to a greater demand for dwellings from relatives and single people who, in a less prosperous era, would have been content to form parts of other households. Though this is probably true to some extent, a further examination of the Census material suggests that it has been of minor importance. Much more important has been the remarkable increase in the popularity of marriage. In 1951 48% of women aged 20–24 were married compared with just under 26% in 1931. Of females of all ages 41.3% were married in 1931 and 48.7% in 1951. The Registrar General summed up the position in the 1951 Statistical Review: 'more women are marrying, and they are marrying at younger ages'. To the extent that this increase in the married has taken place among single people who did not previously constitute separate one-person households, it will have been responsible for some part of the increase in the total number of households. By recasting the headship rates previously given it is possible to assess how important a factor in household formation this was. The calculation has been made by the Registrar General in the 1951 Census Housing Report, an extract from which is given in Table 6 .

This more detailed breakdown is more informative than the one previously given. It shows how household formation in 1951 varied between different classes of the population—78.8% of married males aged 15–39 were enumerated as heads of households, compared with 97.3% of those aged 60 and over. Of widowed and divorced females aged 60 and over, 67.9% were heads of households, compared with only 46.7% of single females in the same age group.

By applying the 1951 headship rates to the 1931 population a hypothetical figure of 10,265,000 households is obtained. Direct comparisons with the actual 1931 households can be made only for total numbers, and the comparison is affected by a slight difference between the 1931 and 1951 definitions of households.* Nevertheless, since the actual number of households in 1931 was 10,233,000 it seems reasonable to conclude, as does the Registrar General, that

TABLE 6: 1951 Headship Rates by Age, Sex, and Marital-Condition Applied to the 1931 Population

	1951			*1931*	
Class of Population	*Population ('000)*	*Households ('000)*	*Headship Rates*	*Population ('000)*	*Expected Households on 1951 Headship Rates ('000)*
Married males					
15–39	4,043	3,187	78·8	3,307	2,606
40–59	4,907	4,726	96·3	3,818	3,677
60 and over	2,090	2,034	97·3	1,387	1,350
Single, widowed, and divorced (both sexes) aged 15–39	6,696	244	3·64	9,104	332
Widowed and divorced:					
males 40–59	180	122	67·8	212	144
60 and over	585	372	63·7	475	302
females 40–59	596	463	77·6	607	471
60 and over	1,720	1,169	67·9	1,091	741
Single:					
males 40–59	529	142	26·9	492	133
60 and over	237	92	38·8	188	73
females 40–59	922	268	29·1	861	250
60 and over	640	299	46·7	397	186
Total Households		13,118			10,265

'the proportion of heads of private households, in the classes of population identified in the 1951 classification by composition, may well have been very similar in 1931 and 1951'. In short, the increase in households between these years can be explained almost entirely by changes in population size and structure. The difference of 32,000 between the actual and hypothetical 1931 households will represent the small amount of 'extra' household formation attributable to other factors.

* In the 1951 Census there was a slight change in the definition of a boarding-house 'which brought into the private household category certain households which would not have been classified as private households on the 1921 and 1931 definition'. Census 1951, Housing Report, pp. xxi–xxii; See also page xvi.

American Comparisons

Nevertheless, these figures cannot be accepted without reservation. The Census Report maintains that though 'it is possible that larger proportions for some classes counterbalanced smaller proportions for others…the comparison, supported by general knowledge of housing conditions, suggests no very large changes in this respect in this period'. There is no way of checking this, but the far more detailed Census Reports relating to the United States support the conclusion. Table 7 below shows the changes in age structure and age-specific headship rates for the United States for the years 1950 and 1890*

TABLE 7: Age Distribution and Age-Specific Headship Rates, United States, 1890 and 1950

Age Group	*1890*		*1950*	
	Percentage Age Distribution	*Headship Rate*	*Percentage Age Distribution*	*Headship Rate*
Under 25	56·0	1·8	41·5	3·2
25–29	8·9	27·3	8·1	33·3
30–34	7·3	38·5	7·6	40·2
35–39	6·2	45·1	7·5	43·7
40–44	5·1	47·9	6·8	46·4
45–49	4·4	51·6	6·0	48·7
50–54	3·7	53·4	5·5	50·4
55–59	2·7	56·0	4·8	52·3
60 and over	6·2	51·8	12·2	53·0

International comparisons are, of course, dangerous, but in the absence of alternative English information, it is suggestive, to say the least, that headship rates in the United States should be so strikingly similar in the years 1890 and 1950. Winnick interprets these figures as being conclusive proof that the changed age structure of the United States population, rather than a change in consumer

* N.Shilling, 'Net Household Formation—A Demographic Analysis', unpublished master's essay, Columbia University, 1955. Quoted in L.Winnick, *American Housing and Its Use,*[50] page 81.

behaviour, has been the main factor in raising the proportion of households to total population:

'If the 1950 population had the same age distribution as prevailed in 1890 and only age-specific headship rates had changed, we would have found a 1950 population of 150.7 million living in 32.1 million households (inclusive of quasi-households), or an average household size of 4.69 as compared to 4.96 in 1890. If, however, age-specific headship rates had remained perfectly constant, the altered age distribution would have led to 41.5 million households in 1950, only 1 million less than the actual 1950 total, resulting in an average household size of 3.63. In other words, behavioural changes on the part of consumers could have accounted for a decline in household size of merely 5% while their aging would have caused a decline of 27%, or about five-sixths of the overall drop in household size.'

Of particular interest is the fact that these comparative figures span sixty years—sixty years in which the standard of living increased enormously. It strongly suggests that, as far as *quantitative* needs are concerned, the age-specific headship concept provides an invaluable and reliable means of estimating future requirements.*

The fact that the headship rates for the age groups up to 34 increased, whereas those for the age groups 35 to 59 declined, is attributable to the increase in the proportion of married people:

'For the young an increased tendency towards marriage means relatively more independent households, since the unmarried young live primarily with their parents. On the other hand, a large proportion of the middle-aged who are unmarried (single, widowed, divorced, or separated) maintain independent establishments.† If this group shows an increased tendency towards marriage, the result is frequently a merger of two separate households and a reduction in the headship rates. This is true particularly when the additional marriages are associated with declining death rates, which create fewer widows and widowers, since in two out of three cases the widowed (aged 45 to 54) maintain independent establishments'.

* This suggestion is heavily qualified in the following two chapters.

† Reference to Table 6 shows that English experience is the same for the widowed and divorced (who had headship rates of: males, 67.8; females, 77.6) but not for single persons (headship rates: males, 26.9; females, 29.1). No information is collated on separated persons.

This points to the superiority of the age-specific, marital condition headship rate, which automatically takes account of changes in the incidence of marriage, widowhood, etc.

This short analysis of the socio-demographic changes which took place in the period 1931 to 1951 provides a background against which the 1951 housing situation should be viewed. Nevertheless, the implications of the analysis are questionable. When dealing with social needs nothing is more dangerous than to assume that a given situation is 'normal'. Though some fairly convincing evidence suggests a strong underlying stability in headship rates, it cannot be assumed that this is a reliable pointer to changes that have taken place since 1951 or are likely to take place in the future. This would be a reasonable assumption only if the 1951 situation is regarded in some way as a 'normal' one. That such an assumption cannot be reasonably held is apparent when the housing conditions of 1951 are analysed.

III

THE 1951 HOUSING SITUATION

IN THIS CHAPTER the main elements in the 1951 housing situation are analysed, and an attempt is made to estimate the size and character of the housing shortage at this date. It must be stressed again, however, that the concepts of the household and the dwelling are elusive ones. To an unknown extent the number of households is a reflection of the number of dwellings, and both are affected by economic conditions, social aspirations and the pattern of consumer preferences.

I: HOUSEHOLDS REQUIRING DWELLINGS

Clearly, the total number of Census-enumerated households is not necessarily the same as the number of households requiring separate dwellings. On the one hand there are enumerated households who have no "need" for a separate dwelling, and on the other, there are those groups of persons who, though wishing to form separate households in separate dwellings, were not identified as households in the Census. In this section an attempt is made to assess the importance of these two factors.

(a) Census-enumerated households To calculate the number of dwellings required by Census-enumerated households an assumption has to be made as to the proportion who do not wish to maintain separate establishments. It will be remembered that the Census defines a household as 'a single person living alone or a

group of individuals voluntarily living together under a single menage in the sense of sharing the same livingroom, or eating at the same table'. On this definition a distinction is made between boarders and lodgers:

> 'A boarder living with a family in the sense of sharing the same living-room or eating at the same table was treated as part of the accommodating household. But a single lodger or a group of lodgers having or sharing separate accommodation to themselves should have been enumerated on separate schedules, and was thus treated as a separate household, distinct from the main occupying household of the dwelling, whether or not they relied on the latter for incidental service in the matter of room cleaning, food preparation, etc.'

There is no way of ascertaining from the Census tables the number of lodger-households. Even if this were known it would not be possible to calculate how many of them did not require separate dwellings. Nevertheless, as the 1931 Census Housing Report pointed out 'It is natural that there should be a class of small families representing, quite apart from any who prefer a solitary form of existence, those persons who are obliged by reason of their employment to live as lodgers at a distance from their natural families'.

A special study of sharing households reported in the 1951 Census Housing Report suggests that 'an appreciable amount of sharing of dwellings is by pairs of households of which one contains a married son or daughter of the head of the other'. Though it is possible that some of the younger households actually preferred to live in the same dwelling as their parents it is reasonable to suppose that the majority required separate dwellings. However, nearly a quarter of the 1.9 million sharing households contained only one person. Among these there may have been a significant number who had no wish to occupy a separate dwelling.

The matter is further complicated by the difficulties discussed in Chapter I concerning the definition of a dwelling. Some dwellings which were enumerated as being shared may in fact have provided a 'reasonable' standard of privacy and amenity. Evidence to support this can be adduced from the Census tables but it is extremely difficult to quantify realistically. It is, however, interesting to note that (on certain assumptions) nearly three-quarters of sharing households occupied sufficient rooms to allow

a living-room for each household, a bedroom for each married couple and for each pair of children, and a bedroom each for other persons.[5]

On the other hand it is reasonable to suggest that much sharing is in fact involuntary occupation of socially obsolete large dwellings. At a time when there is a housing shortage many households have to make do with what is available. A comparison of the size distribution of households and dwellings shows that though there is an overall shortage of dwellings there is a 'surplus' of the larger types.* As a temporary expedient such dwellings serve a useful function in providing accommodation for more than one household. But is contrary to all recent experience to expect that households will be satisfied with inferior accommodation for any length of time.† As Block has argued the quest for privacy is an important element in the housing situation.‡ Privacy cannot always be obtained in a semi-converted Victorian dwelling.

Yet such an argument skates over many pitfalls. It is not without reason that the Registrar General notes that: 'The sharing

* See Table 11, page 36 below.

† Cf. A Block, *Estimating Housing Needs,*[17] page 45; 'Dwellings are demographically unsuitable if their size is too small or too large for the households occupying them. Households living in dwellings (or parts of dwellings) too small for them attract attention as being overcrowded.... On the other hand, households which are too small for the dwellings available to them are prevented, through their very inability to find suitable accommodation, from coming into being.'

‡ Cf. D.M.Potter, *People of Plenty,*[186] (Phoenix Books edition, p. 195): 'It may also be argued that abundance has provided a characteristic mode of housing for the infant and that this mode further emphasizes his separateness as an individual. In societies of scarcity, dwelling units are few and hard to come by, with the result that high proportions of newly married young people make their homes in the parental menage, thus forming part of an 'extended' family, as it is called. Moreover, scarcity provides a low ratio of rooms to individuals, with the consequence that whole families may expect as a matter of course to have but one room for sleeping, where children will go to bed in intimate propinquity to their parents. But abundance prescribes a different régime. By making it economically possible for newly married couples to maintain separate households of their own, it has almost destroyed the extended family as an institution in America and has ordained that the child shall be reared in a 'nuclear' family, so called, where his only intimate associates are his parents and siblings, with even the latter far fewer now than in families of the past.'

Interpreting American census data, Winnick concludes that privacy is regarded as more important than space: 'Retrenchments in budgets cause families indeed to economize on housing expenses, but this is accomplished by reductions in space standards rather than through the total abandonment of privacy implied in doubling up.' L.Winnick, op. cit., p. 55.

of a dwelling by two or more households is one of the most difficult concepts to translate into precise terms'. Nevertheless, the problem cannot be circumvented since it would be unrealistic to assume that all Census-enumerated households required separate dwellings.

Of necessity a somewhat arbitrary assumption must be made. And owing to the nature of the available statistics it does not appear that a complicated formula would be any more realistic than a simple one.* For the purpose of the following calculation it is assumed that three-quarters of sharing households require separate accommodation.

On this assumption the number of households requiring separate dwellings in 1951 was:

Non-sharing households	11,246,000
Sharing households (75% of total)	1,404,000
	12,650,000

(b) 'Potential' Households. A 'potential' household is a group of persons, which though not enumerated as a household in the 1951 Census, would have become a household had suitable accommodation been available. Any estimate of the size of this submerged stratum of households is bound to be subjective.

Primary Family Unit and Composite Households

The Census 1951, 1% Sample Tables give a detailed analysis of the composition of private households. The enumerated members of each household (excluding visitors) were classified in the following categories 'intended to represent a rough grading in successive degrees of household affinity or cohesiveness, stemming from the head as follows:

* Fiske in his estimate of housing needs, makes the assumption that all sharing households of two or more persons and 25% of sharing one-person households require separate dwellings. This is equivalent to 82.8% of all sharing households.

In the United Nations report on The European Housing Situation (United Nations, Geneva, 1956) it is assumed that among one-person sharing households in Great Britain all those occupying one room, and one half of the remainder ?'would prefer to continue' sharing. Using figures for England and Wales this would mean that about 290,000 one-person sharing households did not require separate dwellings. This works out at about 15% of all sharing households compared with 25% assumed in the author's calculation.

1. HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD
2. SPOUSE OF HEAD.
3. DESIGNATED CHILDREN OF THE HOUSEHOLD, comprising all the children of the head or head's spouse, *whatever their age,* with the exception of such as were married, or if widowed or divorced were accompanied by children of their own. Children *under age 16* of the following types are also included amongst the designated children in the occasional circumstances in which such were found, viz:
  (i) brothers or sisters of head or head's spouse,
  (ii) children apparently without any parent present,
  (iii) children of resident domestic servants.
4. NEAR RELATIVES OF HEAD OR HEAD'S SPOUSE, comprising (i) ancestors (all types) and (ii) brothers or sisters aged 16 or over, with the exception of such as were married, or if widowed or divorced were accompanied by children of their own.
5. RESIDENT DOMESTIC SERVANTS.
6. THE REMAINDER, comprising all persons enumerated in the household other than those assigned to grades 1 to 5; whether kin to the head or not and including those of near kinship specifically excepted from grades 3 and 4'.

In the main analysis households were divided into two groups: Primary Family Unit (P.F.U.), households consisting solely of persons classified within the affinity gradings 1 to 5; and Composite households, which contained a Remainder section in addition to the P.F.U.

Remainder Sections

As can be inferred from a study of the above schedule Remainder Sections included:
(i) Married children, brothers and sisters of the head or the head's spouse,
(ii) Widowed and divorced children, brothers and sisters of the head or the head's spouse who were accompanied by children of their own.
(iii) Relatives other than parents, brothers, sisters, and children of the head or the head's spouse.
(iv) Non-related persons.
Some of the persons included in the Remainders will be boarders and therefore 'not necessarily an unstable element in household

composition'. Nevertheless, 'such fissionable elements as are present will tend to be more prominent here.'* In order to throw some light on these 'fissionable elements' the Census makes an attempt 'to isolate and identify sub-groups within remainders representing family nuclei, many of which could be regarded as units, which would prefer separate dwelling facilities of their own, were such available within their resources.'

Family Nuclei

The following groups were identified as Family Nuclei (F.N.):

1. A married couple and their child (ren) if any (excluding from the latter any that are married or are accompanied by children of their own).
2. A lone parent (married, widowed, or divorced) provided that he or she is accompanied by child (ren) as in 1, in which case the parent and child (ren) constitute the F.N.

Under this definition the minimum number of persons identified as a F.N. is two. It should also be noted that married ancestors, whether of the head or the head's spouse, are not identified as F.N.—they are counted as parts of P.F.U.s.†

* But, as already pointed out, 'the census record provides no direct evidence as to how or which households would, in fact, wish to divide if opportunity were available, still less as to how many owe their present make-up to the housing shortage'.

† It may be helpful if some illustrations are given of this classification.

Illustration I

Married couple (the husband being the head of the household), one child aged 14, one married son aged 20 with wife, and an unrelated person.

This would be a composite household consisting of a P.F.U. (married couple and one child aged 14) and a Remainder (married son aged 20 with wife and unrelated person). Within the Remainder a F.N. would be identified consisting of the married child aged 20 and his wife.

Illustration II

Married couple (the husband being the head of the household), unmarried brother, married sister with her husband and two children aged 18 and 24.

Again this would be a composite household, which would consist of a P.F.U. (married couple and unmarried brother) and a Remainder (married sister with her husband and children). The whole of the Remainder would be identified as a F.N.

Illustration III

Married couple (the husband being the head of the household), three unmarried children aged 16, 19, and 23; husband's mother and father; divorced brother not accompanied by any children; one domestic servant.

This would be a P.F.U. household.

The main analysis revealed that of 13,043,500 households,* 11,241,600 (86%) were of the P.F.U. type and 1,801,900 had a remainder in addition to the P.F.U. section.

The majority of the P.F.U. households were of a simple type, consisting solely of married, widowed, or divorced persons together with their children (if any) and single persons living alone. Only 863,400 (7.7%) had relatives living with them. Relatives numbered 549,900 unmarried brothers and sisters of the head of household,† 60,800 ancestors in married pairs and 402,000 ancestors not in married pairs‡—a total of 1,012,700.

By definition every composite household contains a P.F.U. section. A slightly smaller proportion (6.4%) of these had unmarried brothers and sisters and ancestors living with them, but, again, by definition, all had a remainder section. These remainder sections contained 901,000 family nuclei.

Table 8 below summarizes and supplements these figures.

The proportion of potential households is likely to have been the greatest among the 901,000 family nuclei. Nevertheless, some of the 1,147,800 'near relatives' and the more elderly among the 4,421,200 unmarried children in the P.F.U.s may have required separate dwellings. As Fiske puts it:

'The brothers and sisters of the head of the house, who are not married themselves and have no dependents, may not all be content to lodge with a brother; the middle-aged married couples living with married children may find it rather trying; the grown-up children of the house may not be contemplating marriage but may still be itching to "emancipate" themselves and set up on their own.'

It is, however, difficult to know on what basis to assess the number of potential households in these groups. It seems preferable—and certainly simpler—to assume that the number of family nuclei represented the probable number of potential households in all groups. The family nuclei who preferred to remain under the parental roof may well have been counterbalanced in numbers by those sub-groups in the P.F.U.s who wished to separate. In the absence of further

* The figure of 13,043,500 is obtained by multiplying the 1% Sample figure of 130,435 by 100. Since it is based on a sample it differs from the total enumerated number of 13,117,868 given in the Housing Report.

† All references to relationships to head of household refer to the head or the spouse of the head.

‡ Much of the detailed information is given for Great Britain only. It is assumed that the percentage distribution for Great Britain is applicable to England and Wales.

TABLE 8: Analysis of Household Composition, England and Wales 1951*

	P. F. U. Households	*Composite Households*	*All Households*
P.F.U. Sections	11,241,600	1,801,900	13,043,500
P.F.U.s containing:			
1 near relative	734,300	99,500	833,800
2 or more near relatives	129,100	16,500	145,600
Number of unmarried children aged 16 or over in P.F.U.s	3,817,400	603,800	4,421,200
Near Relatives	1,012,700	135,100	1,147,800
1. Unmarried brothers and sisters	549,900	82,400	632,300
2. Ancestors in pairs	60,800	5,800	66,600
3. Ancestors not in pairs	402,000	46,900	448,900
Remainder Sections			
Total persons in Remainders			3,515,500
Remainders containing Family Nuclei			873,800
Number of Family Nuclei			901,000
Persons in Family Nuclei			2,396,300
Remainder Sections After Excluding Family Nuclei			
Total number of persons			1,119,200
1. Unrelated boarders			786,700
2. Related boarders			332,500

information this cannot, of course, be substantiated, but it is interesting to observe that the 'potential' need of 901,000 which the assumption gives agrees very closely with the more refined and complicated estimates which have been made.†

On the asssumptions outlined the number of households requiring separate dwellings in 1951 was:

* Based on Tables VI. 2, 3 and 6 of the 1% Sample Tables. Domestic Servants are excluded. Some of the figures have been converted from Great Britain data and are therefore subject to some error.

† See, for example, W.G.Fiske, 'Housing Needs',[29] and G.Howe and C.Jones, *Houses To Let,*[32]. Using 'reasonable' assumptions, Fiske estimated the number of 'frustrated households' to be 846,064; Howe and Jones's estimate was one million for Great Britain—roughly 907,000 for England and Wales.

The United Nations report (op. cit.) assumes that 86% of family nuclei and 10% of unrelated boarders 'would prefer to have their own dwellings'. For England and Wales these proportions give a 'potential' need of 858,000—somewhat smaller than the author's estimate of 901,000.

Census-enumerated Households		
Non-sharing	**11,246,000**	**12,650,000**
Sharing (75% of total)	**1,404,000**	
'*Potential*' *Households*		
Family Nuclei		**901,000**
		13,551,000

II: THE AVAILABLE DWELLINGS

The difficulties involved in using Census figures of 'structurally separate dwellings' have already been discussed in Chapter I where it was suggested that there may well have been an understatement of the number of 'reasonably' separate units of accommodation. An attempt must now be made to estimate this understatement.

To repeat, the basic attribute of a Census-enumerated dwelling is separate access to the street. Thus a large Victorian house let off as 'flats' but having only one front door would probably have been counted as one dwelling. A study of the Census data reveals that a considerable proportion of sharing households lived in such properties.* Nevertheless, 65% of the dwellings occupied by more than one household contained only six or less rooms; 54% contained five or six rooms. But another factor to be taken into consideration is the size of the sharing households—80.5% of these consisted of three or less persons (compared with 63.7% of all households). As already indicated † nearly three-quarters of sharing households occupied sufficient rooms to allow a living-room for each household, a bedroom for each married couple and for each pair of children, and a bedroom each for other persons. Yet, as argued above,‡ many of the 'unconverted divided'

* Owing to the inadequacies of the statistics it is not possible to calculate this directly. Nevertheless indirect evidence is available in the County Reports and the *Report on Greater London and Five Other Conurbations*.[6] The Housing Report contains a table which shows that 35% of the occupied dwellings containing two or more households consisted of seven or more rooms, (p. lxxxi). The difficulties involved in this type of calculation are set out on pp. xx-xxi of Census 1951, *County of London Report*.[4]

† See pages 22–23 above.

‡ Page 23.

dwellings are socially obsolete, and though it may be that a significant number of Londoners are prepared to put up with inferior accommodation in order to obtain the benefits of living in the centre, the same is unlikely to be the case in other cities. Despite the elusiveness of the concept of sharing, the evidence strongly suggests a secular decline in its incidence,* and, given the continued increase in the standard of living, it seems highly probable that this trend will continue.

Having regard to all these considerations, and the fact that the Census information relating to the incidence of sharing of large dwellings is not 'a reliable indicator of the extent of improvement of the quality of existing accommodation which might be effected by conversions of inadequately adapted dwellings into structurally sub-divided units', it is obvious that any estimate of the number of 'reasonably separate' dwellings not enumerated in the Census, or of dwellings which might be suitable for conversion, is bound to be highly suspect. Furthermore, such an estimate would require to be offset to some extent by dwellings 'which are "structurally separate" according to the Census definition (i.e. having separate access to a landing or staircase to which the public have access) but which are really quite unsatisfactory as separate accommodation'.[29] Here we are dealing with qualitative aspects which are best considered separately.

Nevertheless, a reasonable approach is suggested by a study of the Census tabulations of the possession of certain household arrangements—piped water, cooking stove, kitchen sink, water-closet and fixed bath. The number and proportion of households having exclusive use, sharing, and entirely without these arrangements is set out in Table 9.

For the immediate purpose the most interesting fact revealed by these figures is that 10% of sharing households (184,072) had exclusive use of all five arrangements. It would, therefore, be reasonable to suppose that, on a conservative estimate, 10% of the occupations of sharing households formed adequately separate dwellings. But given the housing conditions of 1951 this may be too high a standard to take—41% of non-sharinghouseholds failed to achieve it. Even including the somewhat

* Census 1951, Housing Report, p. lxxx. Cf. p. lxxxiv where it is suggested that the replacement of residential by non-residential building and use in the central areas is likely to reduce the volume and proportion of dwellings of obsolete size.

TABLE 9: Sharing and Non-sharing Households by Availability of Certain Household Arrangements, England and Wales, 1951

	Households Not Sharing Dwellings		*Households Sharing Dwellings*	
	Number	%	*Number*	%
Total Households	11,244,599	100	1,871,923	100
PIPED WATER				
Exclusive use	9,898,897	88	692,252	37
Sharing	649,744	6	1,136,260	61
Entirely without	695,958	6	43,411	2
COOKING STOVE				
Exclusive use	10,944,460	97	1,170,867	63
Sharing	84,954	1	621,887	33
Entirely without	215,185	2	79,169	4
KITCHEN SINK				
Exclusive use	10,456,039	93	981,853	52
Sharing	119,718	1	722,459	39
Entirely without	668,842	6	167,611	9
WATER CLOSET				
Exclusive use	9,709,461	86	615,215	33
Sharing	531,175	5	1,223,460	65
Entirely without	1,003,963	9	33,248	2
FIXED BATH				
Exclusive use	6,994,610	62	268,312	14
Sharing	142,332	1	860,904	46
Entirely without	4,107,657	37	742,707	40
ALL FIVE ARRANGEMENTS				
Exclusive use	6,621,008	59	184,072	10
Sharing or entirely without fixed bath but having exclusive use of the other four arrangements	2,347,128	21	209,369	11

lower standard of 'sharing or entirely without fixed bath but having exclusive use of the other four arrangements' 20% of non-sharing households were inadequately served. The proportion for sharing households was 79%. The surprisingly high proportion of non-sharing households without these amenities may in part be due to the enumeration of dwellings as 'structurally separate' when on a subjective

standard they could be regarded as shared. But an examination of the Census material suggests that date of erection is more important.

Reviewing the evidence as a whole, it seems advisable to make estimates of the number of 'adequate units of accommodation' in shared dwellings on alternative assumptions.*

The first (Assumption A) will regard household occupations containing all the five arrangements as being adequate; the second (Assumption B) will include additionally those which had all except exclusive use of a fixed bath. These give 184,072 and 393,441 adequate shared units.

Unfortunately the information relating to the possession of these arrangements is recorded only for households and not for dwellings.† Since some shared dwellings contain more than two households a simple division of the number of adequately accommodated shared households by two would give an overestimate of the extra number of adequate units of accommodation. However, the total number of shared dwellings can easily be calculated, as can the average number of households per shared dwelling.‡ This works out at 2.25. Thus the number of additional 'adequate units of accommodation' in shared dwellings was 73,629 on Assumption A (184,072÷2.25) and 174,863 on Assumption B (393,441÷2.25). The total number of Census

* C.J.Thomas, using a similar approach, suggests that possession of all five arrangements is too stringent a test to apply to household occupations in shared dwellings. He identifies among these occupations a group of 'tolerably' separate occupations. 'This group will include the effectively separate occupations—those with exclusive use of the five arrangements—and they are taken to constitute the same proportion of the groups of tolerably separate dwellings as do the household occupations in single household dwellings with exclusive use of these arrangements to all single household dwellings.' The calculation was made for each Region separately so as to allow for regional variations. The aggregation of the regional figures gave a total of 369,990 tolerably separate household occupations in shared dwellings. On the assumption (which is queried below) that these households were accommodated two to a dwelling 'it may be possible to augment the number of structurally separate dwellings by half the number of "tolerably" separate dwellings', i.e. 184,995.46

† For a discussion of this see Census 1951, *Housing Report,* Ch VIII.

‡The number of sharing households was 1,871,923 and the number of al households was 13,117,868 (*Housing Report,* Table 2). The number of unshared dwellings is the difference between these two figures, viz. 11,245,945. Total occupied dwellings (ibid, Table I) numbered 12,079,712. Hence the number of shared dwellings was 833,767. Dividing the number of sharing households (1,871,923) by the number of shared dwellings (833,767) an average number of households per shared dwelling of 2.25 is obtained.

enumerated dwellings was 12,389,448. The total number of structurally separate or adequate dwellings in 1951 was therefore 12,463,077 on the first assumption and 12,564,311 on the second.*

Vacancy Rates

One further factor must be considered before this analysis is complete. At any one point of time a proportion of dwellings must be vacant if mobility is to be achieved. As the 1931 Census *Housing Report* pointed out, vacant dwellings represent a

> 'surplus or reserve stock which…not only facilitates the physical operations attending the numerous house movings continuously taking place in all areas in response to changes in family requirements, but must also be an important factor in the maintenance of reasonable stability in the matter of prices and rents which is necessary if changes are to take place freely'.

There now arises the problem of assessing what vacancy rate should be regarded as desirable or 'normal'. At the date of the Census, 171,457 furnished dwellings and 138,279 unfurnished dwellings were enumerated as vacant. This gives a vacancy rate of 2.5%. Obviously, furnished dwellings from which the occupants were temporarily absent should be counted as occupied. The Registrar General gives the opinion that 'it is reasonable to assume that the majority of vacant furnished dwellings were tenanted and only temporarily unoccupied'. If all these are excluded the vacancy rate was only 1.1%. The only previous Census years for which broadly comparable information is available are 1931 and 1901 when the rates were 1.7% and 3.9% respectively.† The 1951 rate was therefore the lowest on record and it seems reasonable to regard it as abnormal. This may be agreed but any estimate of a 'normal'

* Cf. United Nations, *The European Housing Situation,* 1956, p. 41, where an estimate of 'dwellings' in *Great Britain* is made: 'If account is taken of such houses (i.e. those which provide reasonable privacy for two or more households) with seven or more rooms and with at least three rooms per household, and if a number of deductions are made for special circumstances, it may be estimated that at least 200,000 dwellings more than were registered by the census provide reasonable privacy.' When these figures are converted for England and Wales they are very similar to the estimate made on Assumption B above.

† For a discussion of rates for other years see Census 1931, *Housing Report,* Chapter 3.

rate is bound to be open to argument. Indeed it could be maintained that the concept is an entirely theoretical one.* But once again, for the purpose of making an estimate of needs, some figure must be used. Reviewing such evidence as exists it would appear not unreasonable to regard a vacancy rate of 3% as a desirable minimum.† On this assumption the number of 'available' dwellings in 1951 would have been 12,017,765.‡ But basing the vacancy rate on the number of dwellings as calculated in the previous section it would have been 12,089,185 on Assumption A and 12,187,382 on Assumption B; or using rounded figures, 12,089,000 and 12,187,000.

III: THE HOUSING SHORTAGE IN 1951

We are now in a position to assess the size of the quantitative shortage in 1951. The number of households requiring dwellings has been estimated at 13,551,000 and the number of 'available' dwellings at either 12,089,000 or 12,187,000. The shortage was therefore of 1,462,000 or 1,364,000. These figures, of course, have an appearance of exactitude which is quite spurious. Having regard to all the factors discussed it seems reasonable to suggest that the shortage was in the region of 1,400,000.§

It is, however, insufficient to consider solely the size of the shortage: its character must also be taken into account. The importance of this is forcibly shown when total persons are compared with total rooms. At the date of the 1951 Census there were 41.8 million persons in private households occupying 56.9 million rooms. There were, therefore, sufficient rooms to accommodate everyone at a standard

* See G.H.Beyer, *Housing*: A Factual Analysis,[16] page 74.

† For further discussions of vacancy rates see references quoted in the preceding footnotes and L.Winnick, op. cit.[50], p. 5; D.L.Wickens, *Residential Real Estate,*[48] p. 55; E.M. and R.M.Fisher, *Urban Real Estate,*[28] pp. 188–195; M.J.Elsas, *Housing Before the War and After,*[26] pp. 21–23.

‡	
Total occupied and vacant dwellings	12,389,448
Allow 3% vacancies	371,683
Total 'Available' Dwellings	12,017,765

§ Cf. United Nations, *The European Housing Situation,* 1956, p. 41, where it is estimated that the housing shortage in *Great Britain* in 1951 was 1.6 million.

considerably higher than that of one room per person. Yet 26% of the private household population were living at a standard below this. At the other extreme 22% of households had three or more rooms in excess of persons.* Table 10 below summarizes the position in 1951 in terms of rooms in relation to persons by size of household occupation.†

TABLE 10: Rooms in Relation to Persons by Size of Household Occupation, England and Wales, 1951

Households occupying rooms in relation to persons as follows:

		No. of rooms in excess of persons being					*No. of persons in excess of rooms being*		
		4 and over	3	2	1	0	1	2	3 and over
Percentage	100·0	8·2	13·2	20·8	23·1	18·7	9·4	3·9	2·5

Prima facie these figures would appear to support the economists' arguments concerning rent control: if market forces were allowed to operate there would be a redistribution of households: those under-occupying large dwellings would change places with those overcrowding small dwellings. But this argument takes no account of the comparative size distributions of households and dwellings. As can be seen from Table 11 there is a great shortage of small dwellings. In 1951, there were over five million one- and two-person households, but less than two million dwellings of three rooms or less. In short, the possibilities of redistribution are much smaller than the statistics of underoccupation suggest. ‡

* i.e. one person occupying four or more rooms, two persons occupying five or more rooms, and so on.

† This and subsequent tables relate to Census-enumerated households and thus do not take separate account of the 901,000 potential households estimated earlier within this chapter to be in need of separate dwellings.

‡ The study referred to in footnote * on page xi suggests that the incidence of under-occupation is greater among owner-occupiers than among rent-controlled private tenants.

TABLE 11: Size Distribution of Dwellings and Households, England and Wales, 1951

Households		*Dwellings*	
No. of persons per household	*No. of households*	*No. of rooms per dwelling*	*No. of dwellings*
1	1,403,000	1	103,000
2	3,627,000	2	484,000
3	3,312,000	3	1,396,000
4	2,491,000	4	3,485,000
5	1,259,000	5	4,348,000
6 or more	1,025,000	6 or more	2,573,000
Total	13,117,000		12,389,000

The reason for this situation is simply that the size distribution of households has changed far more rapidly than that of dwellings. Changes in household size up to 1951 have already been summarized. To repeat: during the major part of the nineteenth century average household size remained stable at about 4.5 persons, but by 1921 it had fallen to 4.14; a further decline took place during the following years, to 3.72 in 1931 and 3.19 in 1951.

The percentage size distribution of households in 1931 and 1951 has been set out in Table 3 (page 12). Table 12 shows the size distribution in numbers together with the changes during the period.

TABLE 12: Size Distribution of Households, England and Wales, 1931 and 1951

Persons per Household	*1931*	*1951*	*Change 1931–1951 Number*	*%*
1	688,702	1,403,349	+ 714,647	+ 103·8
2	2,239,817	3,627,051	+ 1,387,234	+ 61·9
3	2,459,879	3,312,184	+ 852,305	+ 34·6
4	1,980,533	2,491,193	+ 510,660	+ 25·8
5	1,271,474	1,259,351	− 12,123	− 1·0
6 or more	1,592,734	1,024,740	− 567,994	− 35·7
All Households	10,233,139	13,117,868	+ 2,884,729	+ 28·2

In numbers the largest increase took place among twoperson households; the largest percentage increase was for oneperson households.

Changes in the size distribution of dwellings were far less violent. As can be seen in Table 13, dwellings of one and two rooms together increased by 37.6. The largest increase both in numbers and in percentages was for five-room dwellings. The table reflects the concentration of inter-war building on fourand five-room dwellings.

TABLE 13: Size Distribution of Dwellings, England and Wales, 1931 and 1951

No. of rooms per dwelling*	1931	*1951*	*Change 1931–1951 Number*	*Change 1931–1951 %*
1–2	427,314	587,892	+ 160,578	+ 37·6
3	1,016,782	1,395,922	+ 379,140	+ 37·3
4	2,382,800	3,484,616	+ 1,101,816	+ 46·2
5	2,562,913	4,347,557	+ 1,784,644	+ 69·6
6 or more	3,009,726	2,573,461	− 436,265	− 14·5
All Dwellings	9,399,535	12,389,448	+ 2,989,913	+ 31·8

There is no need to labour the point further. Whatever standard is adopted† the character of the 1951 housing situation required a large increase in small dwellings. Were all family nuclei to be separately accommodated the need would have been even greater.

Conclusions

The analysis presented in this chapter shows that the 1951 housing situation was characterized by a severe shortage of separate dwellings. On the assumptions outlined this is estimated at about 1,400,000. A

* Owing to the small numbers involved it is misleading to give separate figures for one-room dwellings. The actual figures are:

	1931	1951	*Change No.*	1931–1951 %
1-room dwellings	43,753	103,485	+59,732	+136.5
2-room dwellings	383,561	484,407	+100,846	+26.3

† The Housing Report of the 1951 Census contains a far more elaborate analysis which gives a very similar picture. (*Housing Report*, pp. lxxi–lxxix.)

comparison of the size distribution of dwellings and households reveals that the largest overall shortage was of small dwellings.

It follows that the 1951 situation can be regarded as 'normal' only if a housing shortage is likewise accepted as 'normal'. Whatever view is taken of the reasonableness of the assumptions made in the calculation it is obvious that there were considerable possibilities for further household formation *among the existing population* at the date of the 1951 Census. To the extent that the housing shortage prevented this formation, the apparent stability of headship rates during the period 1931 to 1951 is misleading.*

This must, of course, be a matter of some conjecture. Nevertheless it is significant that Winnick, in his study of American Census material, maintains that:

> 'it is quite possible that headship rates for all age groups will increase in the future. The 1950 housing market was far from normal and the doubling-up rate, though equal to that of 1940, was possibly high in view of the business prosperity of that year. Indeed, the drop in the doubling-up rate since 1950 indicates that some further rise in adult headship rates has already occurred.'

Owing to the paucity of English statistics no direct evidence can be marshalled to show whether experience in this country has been similar. Such direct evidence as is available is analysed in the first part of the next chapter.

* It may be that the number of households in 1931 was 'depressed' by current economic conditions.

IV

HOUSEHOLD FORMATION 1951–1978

HOUSEHOLD FORMATION 1951–1957

IN ORDER TO assess the housing needs of the future it is necessary to attempt to determine whether household formation will continue at the rate apparently experienced during the years 1931 to 1951 or whether it will actually increase. The Registrar-General, who is not noted for making rash assumptions, evidently thought it reasonable to assume an increase in headship rates for married males under 40 when making projections of households for the years 1955, 1965, and 1975. This was done in order 'to allow for greater separation of family nuclei as a result of the post-censal expansion of building programme'. At the date of the 1951 Census the headship rate for married males aged 15–39 was 78.8. The hypothetical rates used for 1955, 1965, and 1975 were 80, 85, and 90. The Table below shows the effect of these hypothetical increases in headship rates. Had there been a 90% headship rate among these young married males in 1951, the total number of households would have been 13,570,000, i.e. 452,000 more than were actually enumerated.

The question arises as to how far these projections are reasonable. No direct evidence on this will be possible until the publication of the 1961 Census Reports. It is, however, possible to measure overall changes by comparing changes in total population and its age, sex, and marital-condition distribution with the increase in dwellings.

During the period April 1951 to June 1957 there was a population

TABLE 14: Number of Households in the 1951 Population of England and Wales on Actual and Hypothetical Headship Rates

Class of Population	*Headship Rate*		*No. of Households*	*(in thousands)*		
Married Males aged 15–39	Actual 1951	(78·8)	3,187			
	Hypothetical 1955	(80·0)		3,234		
	Hypothetical 1965	(85·0)			3,436	
	Hypothetical 1975	(90·0)				3,639
All other Classes:	Actual 1951		9,931	9,931	9,931	9,931
Total Households			13,118	13,165	13,367	13,570

increase of 1,097,000.* Table 15 shows the age, sex, and marital-condition distribution of the 1957 total population and the number of 'expected' households according to 1951 headship rates.

Had there been no increase in headship rates between 1951 and 1957 there would have been 13,724,000 households at the latter date, i.e. an increase of 606,000.

During the same period there was a net increase in dwellings of about 1,533,000,† making a total for England and Wales of 13,922,000. This increase in dwellings was sufficient to house all the hypothetical 606,000 extra households together with all the Census-

* This is the increase in the *total* population, i.e. the civilian population of all types plus members of H.M. Forces belonging to England and Wales and serving overseas but excluding the Forces of other countries temporarily in England and Wales. The total population differs from the Census-enumerated population which consists of all persons actually in the country. The *total* population at the date of the Census was 43,946,000 whereas the Census-enumerated population was 43,758,000. The analysis of age, sex, and marital-condition distribution and headship rates given in the Census *Housing Report* is based on total population. The estimated total population in June 1957 was 45,043,000.

† The increase is estimated as follows:

New permanent dwellings (1.4.51 to 30.6.57)	1,618,176
Conversions and adaptions (1.4.51 to 31.12.55)	20,232
Housing Act conversions (1.1.56 to 30.6.57)	4,375
Repair of unoccupied war-damaged houses (1.4.51 to 31.12.55)	2,856
Caravans (estimated)	25,000
GROSS INCREASE	1,670,639
Dwellings demolished or closed (1.4.51 to 30.6.57)	138,000
	1,532,639

TABLE 15: Age, Sex, and Marital-condition Distribution of the 1951 and 1957 Populations, together with 1951 Headship Rates and Households and the Number of 'Expected' Households in 1957

Class Of Population	*Estimated Total Population* *1951* ('000)	*Estimated Total Population* *1957* ('000)	*1951 Headship Rates*	*No. of Households in 1951* ('000)	*'Expected' Households in 1957* ('000)
Married males					
15–39	4,043	4,068	78·8	3,187	3,206
40–59	4,907	5,251	96·3	4,726	5,057
60 and over	2,090	2,260	97·3	2,034	2,199
Single, widowed and divorced (both sexes) aged 15–39	6,696	6,044	3·64	244	220
Widowed and divorced:					
males 40–59	180	189	67·8	122	128
60 and over	585	562	63.7	372	358
females 40–59	596	592	77·6	463	459
60 and over	1,720	1,926	67·9	1,169	1,308
Single:					
males 40–59	529	540	26·9	142	145
60 and over	237	238	38·8	92	92
females 40–59	922	795	29.1	268	231
60 and over	640	688	46·7	299	321
Total Households				13,118	13,724

enumerated sharing households and still leave an 'excess' of 198,000 dwellings. Assuming no significant increase in the number of vacant dwellings the conclusion must be that headship rates have, in fact, increased. It is not possible to measure how much headship rates for individual age, sex, and marital-condition groups have increased, but an increase in the rate for married males aged 15–39 from 78.8% to 83.6% is consistent with the figures. (Such a change would have increased the number of households to 13,919,000, and resulted in an excess of dwellings over households of only 3,000.) Since it is unlikely that sharing (in the Census meaning of the term) has been abolished the increase must, in fact, have been greater.

There are no figures available of houses converted to non-residential uses. Neither are there any figures of demolitions and conversions carried out under non-Housing Act powers or privately. These factors are excluded from the estimate. The estimate for the increase in caravans is based on Sir Arton Wilson's report, *Caravans as Homes*.[15]

TABLE 16: Households and Dwellings, 1951 and 1957

	1951	*1957 Assumption A*	*1957 Assumption B*
Households	13,117,868	13,724,000	13,919,000
Dwellings	12,389,448	13,922,000	13,922,000
Deficiency or excess of dwellings	− 728,420	+ 198,000	+ 3,000

Assumption A: 1951 headship rates unchanged in 1957.
Assumption B: 1957 headship rate for married males aged 15–39 = 83·6% (compared with 78·8% in 1951); Other headship rates unchanged.

Though there is an element of spurious accuracy in these figures they strongly suggest that headship rates are, in fact, increasing. Furthermore, the increase appears so far to have been more rapid than implied in the Registrar-General's hypothetical projections.*

FUTURE HOUSEHOLD FORMATION

The hypothetical calculations of future households prepared by the Registrar-General were based on population projections prepared in 1955. These projections were made on assumptions which, though reasonable at that date, have since required revision. In particular, recent marriage and fertility experience has necessitated an upward modification of estimated future births. So remarkable have been these changes that revisions of the projections have had to be made each year since 1955.[12] In the latest available projection (1958 Revision) the annual births for 1959–63 number 725,000; for 1964–73, 740,000; rising gradually to 790,000 in 1997 and thereafter. By comparison the 1955 estimate gave annual births averaging 630,000 for 1956–1980, and 600,000 for 1981–1995. Thus, while the 1955 projection gave a total population of 46,364,000 in 1975 and 46,328,000 in 1995, the 1958 revision gives 48,993,000 in 1978 and 52,023,000 in 1998.

According to the revised projections the population of England and Wales will increase by 3,749,000 by 1978 and 6,779,000 by

* Alternatively, there may have been an increase in the headship rates for other groups than married males aged 15–39.

TABLE 17: Population Projections, England and Wales (Actual 1958 Population: 45,244,000)

	1955 Projection		*1958 Projection*	
Assumed births:	1st 25 years:	630,000	1st 5 years:	725,000
	Following 15 years:	600,000	Following 10 years:	740,000
			Following 25 years rising to	790,000
Total Population:	1960	45,168,000		–
	1963	–		46,197,000
	1975	46,364,000		–
	1978	–		48,993,000
	1995	46,328,000		–
	1998	–		52,023,000

1998. The question now arises: what is the implication of these estimates for future household formation? With the techniques discussed above it is possible to calculate the number of households that can reasonably be expected if these projections prove accurate.

The population projections published by the Registrar-General include an age and sex breakdown. They do not, however, provide any information as to the future marital-condition distribution of the population. For this the tables contained in the Report by the Government Actuary on the First Quinquennial Review of the National Insurance Scheme[8] have to be used. Unfortunately, these relate to Great Britain. In the absence of separate figures for England and Wales the following calculation is perforce based on Great Britain rates. It is thus assumed that the proportion of each age and sex group which is single, married, or widowed and divorced will be the same for England and Wales as for Great Britain.

One further assumption has to be made in using these Tables. The estimates are for the year 1979, whereas the Registrar-General's nearest population estimate is for 1978.

Some loss in accuracy is inevitable on these two counts, but it is thought that the basis is sufficient to allow reasonable calculations of future household formation to be made.

Four projections have been prepared. The first (Hypothesis

A) assumes that no increase in 1951 headship rates will take place. Though such stability is unlikely on present experience the calculation is interesting in that it shows that population growth and age, sex and marital-condition changes will of themselves have the effect of increasing the number of households by 1,734,000 (13%) to 14,852,000 during the period 1951 to 1978.

Hypothesis B assumes that headship rates for married males aged 15–39 will increase from 78.8% in 1951 to 90% in 1978. This is the hypothesis used by the Registrar-General. It gives 15,318,000 households in 1978—an increase of 2,200,000, or 17%

Hypothesis C assumes that all the family nuclei recorded in the 1951 Census will form separate households and that the resultant increase in headship rates will be maintained. Unfortunately there are no available figures showing the ages of widowed or divorced heads of family nuclei and it is therefore necessary to collapse some of the categories. The effect of giving the status of household to these family nuclei is to increase headship rates for married males from 78.8% to 95.9% for those aged 15–39, from 96.3% to 99.1% for those aged 40–59, and from 97.3% to 98% for those aged over 60. The increase for the non-married is very small—from 26.2% to 26.7%. This is only in part due to the fact that the number of family nuclei in this class is comparatively small: it is also partly the result of relating widowed or divorced heads of family nuclei to a class which contains a very large number of single persons. Indeed the number of *non-married* households in 1978 is lower on hypothesis C than it is on hypotheses A and B.* Thus the total increase in households on hypothesis C is an understatement. Nevertheless, even with this understatement, it gives 15,689,000 households in 1978, i.e. an increase of 2,571,000 or 20% over the 1951 figure. If a breakdown of the non-married group were possible the hypothesis would probably give a total of 15,800,000 households in 1978.

Finally, hypothesis D envisages a position in which all married males form separate households; headship rates for the non-married groups are assumed to be the same as in 1951. This gives an increase of 2,894,000 households (22%) during the years 1951 to 1978 with

* Hypothesis C—3,452,000; Hypothesis A and B—3,494,000.

TABLE 18: Estimates of the Number of Households in 1978 on Various Hypotheses

Class of Population	*Estimated Total Population 1978* ('000)	*Hypothesis A* 1951 headship rates	*Hypothesis A* No. of households in 1978 ('000)	*Hypothesis B* R.G.'s hypothetical headship rates	*Hypothesis B* No. of households in 1978 ('000)	*Hypothesis C* 1951 headship rates for households and family nuclei combined	*Hypothesis C* No. of households in 1978 ('000)	*Hypothesis D* 100% headship rates for all married males; 1951 headship rates for non-married groups	*Hypothesis D* No. of households in 1978 ('000)
Married males aged									
15–39	4,165	78·8	3,282	90·0	3,748	95·9	3,994	100·0	4,165
40–59	5,150	96·3	4,959	96·3	4,959	99·1	5,104	100·0	5,150
60 and over	3,203	97·3	3,117	97·3	3,117	98·0	3,139	100·0	3,203
Single, widowed and divorced (both sexes)									
aged 15–39	7,394	3·64	269	3·64	269			3·64	269
Widowed and divorced:									
males aged 40–59	163	67·8	111	67·8	111			67·8	111
60 and over	654	63·7	417	63·7	417			63·7	417
females aged 40–59	512	77·6	397	77·6	397	All Non-Married		77·6	397
60 and over	2,411	67·9	1,637	67·9	1,637	26·7	3,452	67·9	1,637
Single:									
males aged 40–59	437	26·9	118	26·9	118			26·9	118
60 and over	296	38·8	115	38·8	115			38·8	115
females aged 40–59	377	29·1	110	29·1	110			29·1	110
60 and over	686	46·7	320	46·7	320			46·7	320
Total households in 1978			14,852		15,318		15,689		16,012
Increase in households:									
1951–1978 Number			1,734		2,200		2,571		2,894
Per cent			13%		17%		20%		22%

a total of 16,012,000 at the latter date. Though a 100% headship rate for married males may be thought unlikely, the calculation takes no account of any increase in the rate for the non-married groups. It is not beyond the bounds of probability that events will show a shortfall for the former group more than offset by an increase for the latter.

Whatever allowance is made for the statistical shortcomings of this calculation it is apparent that a very great increase in the number of households can be expected during the next two decades.* It is important to note that the greater part of this increase will take place even if future births are smaller than assumed. This is simply because the estimate is based on the population aged 15 or over. Thus births taking place between 1964 and 1978 do not figure in the calculation.

QUANTITATIVE HOUSING NEEDS 1958–1978

Still confining the discussion to quantitative aspects of the housing situation, the analysis which has so far been given enables an estimate to be made of the likely need for dwellings up to 1978. The four hypothetical projections of households are summarized in Table 19 below.

TABLE 19: Hypothetical Projections of Households in 1978

	Number ('*000*)	*Increase 1951 to 1978* *Number* ('*000*)	*%*	*Number of households per 1,000 Population*
No. of households in 1951	13,118			300
No. of households in 1978 on:				
Hypothesis A	14,852	1,734	13	303
Hypothesis B	15,318	2,200	17	313
Hypothesis C	15,689	2,571	20	320
Hypothesis D	16,012	2,894	22	327

* An international comparison is useful here: projections prepared by the U.S. Bureau of the Census give an increase in households of 30.5% during the period 1954 to 1975. See also ref. 7a, p. 182; ref. 31 Chapter XVII and references quoted therein.

To convert the estimates of households into estimates of dwellings needed, it is necessary to subtract a figure for voluntary sharing and to add a figure to allow for vacancies.

In calculating the number of 1951 households requiring dwellings it was arbitrarily assumed that 25% of sharing households did not need separate accommodation. This represents 3.45% of the total number of actual and 'potential' households at this date. Applying the same percentage to the hypothetical 1978 households, the number requiring separate dwellings will be 14,338,000, 14,788,000, 15,146,000 or 15,458,000. Adding 3% for vacancies the total need for dwellings in 1978 will be 14,768,000, 15,232,000, 15,600,000 or 15,922,000. The calculations are summarized in Table 20.

TABLE 20: Dwellings Needed in 1978 on Four Hypotheses

Hypothesis	*No. of Households* ('000)	*No. of Households Requiring Separate Dwellings* ('000)	*3% Allowance for Vacancies* ('000)	*Total Dwellings Needed* ('000)
A	14,852	14,338	430	14,768
B	15,318	14,788	444	15,232
C	15,689	15,146	454	15,600
D	16,012	15,458	464	15,922

The number of structurally separate or 'adequate' dwellings in 1951 has been estimated, on two different assumptions, at 12,463,077 or 12,564,311.* Between the date of the Census and June 1958,

* See Chapter 3, page 33.

† June 1958 has been taken so as to give a twenty-year period for the calculation. Between April 1951 and June 1958 the net increase in dwellings was as follows:

New permanent dwellings (1.4.51 to 30.6.58)	1,866,806
Conversions and adaptions (1.4.51 to 31.12.55)	20,232
Housing Act conversions (1.1.56 to 30.6.58)	7,335
Repair of unoccupied war-damaged houses (1.4.51 to 31.12.55)	2,856
Caravans (estimated)	25,000
GROSS INCREASE	1,922,229
Dwellings demolished or closed (1.4.51 to 30.6.58)	189,000
NET INCREASE	1,733,229

See also footnote on pages 40–41.

there was a net addition of about 1,733,000 dwellings.† It can be assumed, therefore, that there were about 14,250,000 dwellings available in June 1958. Thus the number of additional dwellings required by 1978 is 518,000, 982,000, 1,350,000, or 1,672,000. Some of these could be provided by conversions of large, socially obsolete dwellings. Though an allowance for 'adequate units of accommodation' in shared dwellings has already been made,* there were, in 1951, 301,943 unshared dwellings containing eight or more rooms and another 8,085 vacant dwellings of the same size. Though there is no way of ascertaining what proportion of these were suitable for conversion, it seems reasonable to assume that a significant number were. It is also probable that a proportion of smaller-size dwellings could be converted; there were, for example, 378,935 unshared or vacant seven-roomed dwellings. Grant-aided conversions are increasing year by year: they numbered 2,805 in 1956, 2,980 in 1957 and 3,452 in 1958.† Despite the inadequacy of the available data it seems that 200,000 extra dwellings might be provided by conversions.

On this assumption the number of additional dwellings required during the period 1958 to 1978 is 318,000 on hypothesis A, 782,000 on hypothesis B, 1,150,000 on hypothesis C, and 1,472,000 on hypothesis D.

The quantitative shortage of dwellings is, however, only one aspect of the housing situation. Of increasing importance is the quality of existing dwellings. In the following chapter a very rough estimate is made of the size of the problem of replacing obsolete dwellings.

* See pages 32–33.

† There are no figures for non-grant-aided conversions.

V

THE PROBLEM OF REPLACEMENT

INFORMATION on the stock of houses* in this country is meagre. Only very broad estimates can be given. Using the calculations made by Elsas† of the age of houses in 1945 it seems likely that 2,300,000 houses still standing in 1958 were built before 1851, a further 4,700,000 were built before the first war and 7,100,000 were built since then.

* The term 'house' is used in distinction to the more precise 'dwelling'. It includes flats built as such, but not 'flats' in converted or semi-converted houses.

† M.J.Elsas, *Housing and the Family,*[27] Section II. Other sources used were the Ministry of Health Annual Reports; Housing Returns; and statement given as a Written Answer in the House of Commons Debates, 11th March 1946, (Col. 162). Owing to the nature of the statistics the table cannot claim to a high degree of accuracy. The White Paper, *Houses: The Next Step*[36] stated that of the 13½ million houses in Great Britain, 2¼ million were 100 years old or more; a further 1¾ million were more than 75 years old; and a further ¾ million were over 65 years old. If these figures are used as a basis for calculation the age of dwellings in England and Wales in 1958 was:

	Number	%
Pre 1853	2,000,000	14·2
1853–1877	1,600,000	11·3
1878–1887	700,000	5·0
1888–1918	2,700,000	19·1
1919–1958	7,100,000	50·4
	14,100,000	100·0

A further estimate, based on 'information supplied by the authorities in the United Kingdom', is given in United Nations, *The European Housing Situation:* 'Of the 12 million dwellings in England and Wales in 1951, it can be estimated that about 2.5 million were over 100 years old, and 3.75 million (almost one-third) were over seventy years old.'

No attempt is made here to reconcile these different estimates. Within the inevitable wide margin of error they are broadly comparable.

TABLE 21: Age of Houses in England and Wales, 1958
(including 185,000 houses demolished since 1953)

Date of Erection	*Number*	%
Pre 1851	2,300,000	16·3
1851–1880	1,900,000	13·5
1881–1918	2,800,000	19·85
1919–1945	4,300,000	30·5
1946–1958	2,800,000	19·85
	14,100,000	100·0

Age, of course, is by no means an infallible guide to condition. But it is difficult to believe that the 4,200,000 houses which were built before 1881 are acceptable on present-day standards. And there is a presumption that many of the 2,300,000 pre-1851 houses are beyond reasonable repair up to modern standards. They are socially if not physically obsolete and would be forthwith demolished as 'slums' or included in clearance or 'comprehensive development' areas on account of their 'bad-layout' or 'obsolete development', were this economically possible. As the 1953 White Paper put it: 'these are striking figures; they are a measure of the problem before us.'* [36]

341,000 houses were demolished in the slum clearance programme which began in 1930. By 1938, demolitions were running at the rate of 90,000 a year. Had it not been for the war, over a million of these old houses would have been demolished by 1951. The virtual cessation of house building during the Second World War involved an accumulation of quantitative need which could not be quickly satisfied. Slum clearance had to be postponed. The limited building programme was almost entirely devoted to providing new houses † until 1954. Even repairs were not to be undertaken if they necessitated 'substantial calls' on building

* Cf. United Nations, *The European Housing Situation,* 1956, p. 41: 'Although almost all these houses are of brick, this fact (i.e. the large proportion of old houses) brings out one of the main problems in the United Kingdom housing situation.'

† Excepting repairs to war-damaged properties.

‡ Ministry of Health, Circular 61/47, 'Standards of Fitness': 'Because of the need to concentrate on the erection of new houses for families without a separate home of their own, as much as possible of the labour and materials available for housing purposes it will not be practicable to require the execution of works to

resources.‡ In effect, therefore, not only was there a postponement of slum clearance but also an enforced neglect of existing houses for over fourteen years. As far as twentieth-century houses were concerned this was unfortunate, but for older houses the results must have been virtually fatal.

This, of course, is conjecture, though a tour of the central areas of our nineteenth-century towns should abate some scepticism. More reliable as an indication of what *is* to be done (rather than what requires to be done) are the slum-clearance proposals of local authorities. 853,076 houses are estimated to be unfit and of these, local authorities propose, within five years, to demolish 377,878 and to patch up a further 88,282 for use as temporary accommodation. It is beyond question that this is a gross underestimate of the problem. Though some authorities, such as Manchester and Liverpool, have included *all* the unfit houses in their estimate, others have lowered their sights to what can be achieved within, say, twenty years. To those who know Lancashire there is something odd in the fact that though 43% 0f the houses in Liverpool are estimated to be unfit the proportion in Manchester is 33%; in Oldham 26%; in Salford 24%; in Bolton 10% and in Stretford 0.5%. It is true that Liverpool and Manchester have appalling conditions but they are not so markedly different in proportion to those in some of the other towns, Much of this must again be conjecture, though it is not without good reason that the Ministry state that there is 'considerable variation in the information on which (the estimates) are based'. An example of what this may mean in practice can be given. Salford's estimate of 12,026 unfit houses is in fact their twenty-year clearance programme. It 'includes only the areas in immediate need of redevelopment and excludes many obsolete residential areas in which redevelopment would be carried out if it were practicable'. When these houses have been cleared 'there will still be standing in Salford more than 10,000 houses of pre-1890 date, of obsolete layout and only fair-to-poor condition'.[138] Were these houses in Bournemouth (which has 0.2% unfit houses) or Beckenham, Kent

existing houses which would make substantial calls on these resources or, save in exceptional circumstances, to set in motion procedure for the demolition of unfit houses which would involve the provision of new houses for persons who would be displaced from those houses.' This advice was not withdrawn until March 1954. (Ministry of Housing and Local Government, Circular 30/54, 'Slum Clearance.')

(which has none) they would undoubtedly have been included in the statistics.

Perhaps the most sobering reflection is that though over seven million houses have been built since 1919 only 600,000 have been demolished.*

Continuing Obsolescence

Quite apart from the existing slum problem is that of continuing obsolescence. If the total stock of houses in 1958 is taken to be 14.1 million and the average 'life' of a house 100 years, an average annual replacement rate of 141,000 (i.e. 1%) is required. A century is most probably too long for the normal type of house, particularly in view of advances in the standard of living and additions to the range of domestic 'essentials'. (It is already difficult to fit a sink-unit, washing-machine and refrigerator in a 'modern' kitchen.) Future changes in domestic heating† may render houses socially obsolete before their physical life is ended. Garage space is a further factor which will become increasingly important.

In this context it is interesting to note the remarks made by the Inter-Departmental Committee on Rent Restriction in 1937:

> 'The improvement in the standard of the type of house now being built for the working classes and the general appreciation of the benefits of this better type, coinciding with a period of comparative prosperity, have resulted in the wholesale demand for a post-war house with modern amenities which is the outstanding feature of the present housing situation. This change of outlook has led to a demand for new houses which has no relation either to shortage or the needs (arising from a shortage of satisfactory dwellings of the right type), and which may well result in a number of old houses being put out of use as obsolete which will falsify all previous estimates.'

Continuing obsolescence should not be confused with the existing slum-clearance problem. Rather, the slum problem should be viewed as a backlog to be dealt with before continuing obsolescence can be

* Apart from houses demolished privately or under road-widening schemes, etc., for which no figures are available.

† In the United States 62.2% of occupied urban dwelling units had central heating at the date of the 1950 Census. ([14] Table 12.)

tackled. Even if two million slum houses were replaced immediately there would still remain the problem of gradually replacing the remaining 86%. At a 1% annual replacement rate this would involve the building of 121,000 houses a year.

The Size of the Problem

The imagination boggles at the size of the problem. Quite obviously it will be impossible to cope with it as quickly as modern standards require. Yet with a rising standard of living more and more families can be expected to refuse to tolerate inferior conditions. They will join the 'flight of the suburbs' or the 'drift to the south',* creating ever-increasing problems both in the areas to which they move and those which they leave.

The clearance programme, of course, is only now gathering momentum. But even if local authorities achieve the rate of progress implied in their five-year proposals—an unlikely event†—less than 80,000 houses a year will be dealt with. At this rate the problems of the slums and continuing obsolescence will grow steadily worse. As already indicated, an annual replacement rate of 121,000 is necessary merely to offset 'depreciation'.

A desirable rate of demolition would probably be of the order of 200,000 houses a year. This would enable all pre-1877 houses to be demolished by 1978.‡ Yet it may be questioned whether demolition at this rate would be possible. The problem is not solely one of physical resources, but also of the administrative and social aspects involved—quite apart from the question as to whether local authorities are financially (and technically) able to deal with redevelopment at the tempo implied. The issues involved are too

* It is not suggested that this phenomenon is to be explained solely in terms of housing conditions. Obviously employment is a vital factor. Nevertheless, it is suggested that employment has, in the past, helped to tie people to the north. Once this tie is broken why should not the younger and more adventuresome seek the superior physical conditions of the south?

† 377,878 houses in five years gives an annual average of 75,576. The number actually demolished or closed in 1958 was 55,273.

‡ This is, of course, merely a simple calculation which is useful for illustrative purposes. Quite apart from the fact that some of these very old houses might quite possibly be given a new lease of life by extensive modernization, the geographical distribution of slum property is so uneven that, even at this rate, many pre-1877 houses, particularly in the north, would still be standing in 1978.

complex for treatment in a relatively straightforward statistical exercise. But it is fairly obvious on present indications that a 'desirable' rate of demolition is unattainable. An extensive programme of modernization is called for. Whether this is to take the form of the Conservative Party's 'Operation Rescue'* or the Labour Party's 'municipalization' is a question which it is not possible to discuss adequately in this book. The author's opinion, for what it is worth, is that subsidized improvements may meet the problem of the 'middle-aged' houses, but for the older ones the only alternative to clearance is municipalization.† To some extent this is recognized in the Conservative Government's provision for 'deferred demolition'. Under the Housing Repairs and Rents Act, 1954,‡ local authorities can acquire houses which are, or can be, 'rendered capable of providing accommodation of a standard which is adequate for the time being,' and improve them as necessary. Though the procedure and the standard of adequacy may require amendment, this seems to be the appropriate approach.§

It will now be clear to the reader that the author feels unable to make a statistical assessment of the slum-clearance problem which would be either realistic or useful. The estimate of 850,000 formulated by local authorities is certainly a minimum. How many more should be demolished is largely dependent on the standards adopted and the speed at which these 850,000 can be cleared. For the present it will be assumed that 100,000 dwellings a year will be required for replacement purposes. This is only 10,000 a year more than was achieved by the out-break of the Second World War.

* This was the title of a popular pamphlet which summarized the White Paper, *Houses—The Next Step,* 1953.

† Or some similar method, e.g. ownership and management by a Housing Commission or a housing society.

‡ Now re-enacted in the Housing Act, 1957.

§ Cf. the *Report of the Departmental Committee on Housing,*[25] 1933, (p. 11): 'We believe in the principles of private property and private ownership, but we feel strongly that private ownership, if it is to be retained in the class of property which we are considering (i.e. non-slum dwellings) must be efficient and conscientious and cease to be, what it too often is, an illegitimate gamble on the inactivity of the local authority. Many private owners keep their property in excellent repair and discharge fully the modern obligations of ownership. On the other hand, there are, as we have pointed out, many who for a variety of reasons do not. We think that the time has come when this latter class of owner should be replaced by a public or quasi-public authority.'

The approach adopted in this chapter is an inadequate one. The assumption that age is correlated with condition is very simple and questionable.* Alternative estimates could be made on the basis of the Census tabulations of household arrangements,† but in view of the paucity of the data and the fact that practical possibilities are so much smaller than any estimate of need is likely to be, it does not seem worth while carrying the analysis any further. However, one final point can be made. Slum clearance is not the only reason for demolishing houses: residential sites are often required for schools, roads, and a wide range of other uses. Such demolitions can assume large proportions: 10,500 dwellings were 'lost by other redevelopment' in London during the years 1951 to 1956, compared with 7,500 cleared as slums. Though many of these may have warranted demolition because of their condition, there is a presumption that some of them were 'fit' houses. An estimate of replacement needs should take this factor into account.

* Many of the houses built in the first half of the nineteenth century may well be in better condition than those built later.

† See Chapter III, page 31.

VI

CONCLUSION: HOUSING NEEDS 1958–1978

THE VARIOUS estimates can now be brought together. In Chapter IV it was shown that with stable headship rates the number of households may increase by 1.7 million, from 13.1 million in 1951 to 14.8 million in 1978. If the rate rises, as it seems to have done between 1951 and 1957, the increase may be as great as 2.9 million. Not all households require separate dwellings, and the need for additional dwellings to meet this increase will therefore be somewhat smaller. Since, with an increasing standard of living, it seems reasonable to assume that headship rates will increase, it would appear desirable to posit 16 million households in 1978.* It has been estimated that in June 1958 there were 14¼ million dwellings and that a further 200,000 might be provided by conversions. Allowing for 3% vacancies the need for additional new dwellings between 1958 and 1978 may amount to about 1½ million. An average rate of 75,000 dwellings a year would be sufficient for this purpose. Additionally 100,000 are required as a minimum for replacements. Thus an average annual programme of 175,000 dwellings may be necessary to meet the needs of this twenty-year period.

This is considerably less than the rate which has been achieved during the last few years. There are, however, good reasons for believing that the estimates of requirements given in this analysis are too low. Migration, for example, 'may considerably modify the picture.'[47] Within each Region of the country there is a steady

* i.e. Hypothesis D on page 44 above.

TABLE 22: New Houses Built in England and Wales 1946 to 1958

Year	*No. of Houses Completed*
1946	51,090
1947	127,541
1948	206,405
1949	171,780
1950	172,360
1951	171,903
1952	208,975
1953	279,231
1954	308,952
1955	283,326
1956	268,724
1957	268,653
1958	241,525

movement away from the older areas, particularly those having comparatively unfavourable climatic conditions. Over the country as a whole the north is losing population to the south.* So far as housing is concerned these factors have not yet had any deleterious effects in the northern areas. Indeed the migration from the administrative areas of the major cities has actually eased the housing problems facing the municipalities. One shudders at the thought of the problem which would today face Salford if its population were not 164,000, but 234,000—as it was in 1921. But if the trend continues, as it shows every sign of doing, there will come a time when these areas will be faced with a surplus of housing. And before this stage is reached there may be a tendency for older houses to become socially obsolete at a rate greater than the average.† The rapidly increasing spread of the urban way of life with its accompanying rural depopulation will have similar effects. So far, these localized population decreases have been 'offset' by the rapid increase in households, but the position may well alter radically in the not too distant future. To the extent that this creates pockets of

* See Chapter VIII.

† Or more accurately, greater than the average for towns with similar proportions of old dwellings.

surplus housing, the number of additional dwellings required nationally will be the greater.

Furthermore, while the aim of providing 'a separate dwelling for every family which desires to have one'[41] may be unattainable for large numbers of the population, an increasing proportion may have two! A week-end cottage or bungalow by the sea is an attainable aspiration as yet confined to the highest income groups, but with an increasing standard of living it may well spread down the income scale. In 1950, over one million dwellings in the United States (forming over 2% of all dwellings) were 'seasonable dwelling units in non-farm areas'. To quote Grebler, Blank and Winnick:

'…the traditional notion of a maximum of one dwelling unit per non-farm household may need to be revised if per capita real income continues to advance in the long run. As consumption standards rise it is not at all unreasonable to expect a sharply increasing number of families and other households to have more than one dwelling unit for their use. The summer or week-end home has become increasingly popular among higher-income groups, particularly families residing in large metropolitan areas, and the number of tourist cabins and seasonal cottages for rent has increased rapidly. According to the Housing Censuses of 1940 and 1950, the number of seasonal dwelling units in non-farm areas that were vacant at the time of enumeration rose from 593,652 to 1,097,000 between these dates. The growing emphasis on leisure and recreation in an advanced urban society will probably further increase these types of facilities.'[31]

Again, the increasing trend away from institutional accommodation may be an important factor for future housing needs. The study made by Abel-Smith and Titmuss showed how great was the proportion of elderly non-married persons in hospitals.* Though doubtless some of these had relatives who might be prepared to look after them, it is probable that large numbers had not. With the increasing emphasis on domicilary care, not only for the physically and mentally ill, but also for those whose only 'ailment'

* B.Abel-Smith and R.M.Titmuss, *The Cost of the National Health Service in England and Wales,* Appendix H, 'The Hospital Population'. In mental deficiency hospitals, for example, the population was made up almost entirely of single people. (The study was based on a special tabulation by the General Register Office of the 1951 Census schedules for all hospitals and certain other specified institutions in England and Wales.)

is old age, even more dwellings than has been estimated may be required.*

These are intangibles, though none the less significant for that. Ignoring slum-clearance needs it may be that over two million new dwellings will be required during the next twenty years. Taking replacements into account the figure may be over four million. This is only 200,000 dwellings a year—a total well within the capacity of the building industry, and indeed, considerably less than recent achievements. But the problem of *where* the new dwellings are to be built is a formidable one. Even if it is assumed (as it cannot be) that all replacements are built on cleared sites, the two million *additional* dwellings are almost equivalent to the number of existing dwellings in the Greater London Conurbation in 1951. This gives a very rough indication of the size of the planning problem in the next two decades.

Many avenues have been insufficiently explored in this analysis. But the purpose of the book is not to give an exhaustive commentary on housing needs, but to show the implications of present trends for planning policy. Critics may query the assumptions and suggest that some of the estimates are too high, yet the *scale* of future needs is unlikely to be questioned. Only twenty-five years have passed since 'the ideal of a separate house for each family' was ridiculed.† Such a standard is now the aim of social policy. By the time it is achieved the accepted standards may be very much higher. But even if the estimates prove too high it is obvious that the scale of the housing problem is much greater than was assumed ten years ago. With no increase in headship rates the number of households in 1978 may be

* The literature on this subject is large. For a recent example of modern thinking see the paper by J.J.Pinchin, 'The Welfare Provisions of the National Assistance Act, 1948,' and discussion following.[44] The planners' philosopher-king, Lewis Mumford, has described the problem in these terms: 'The problem of housing the old is only one part of the larger problem of restoring old people to a position of dignity and use, giving them opportunities to replace those that family dispersal and death have broken, and giving them functions and duties that draw on their precious life experience and put it to new uses…To normalize old age, we must restore the old to the community'; L.Mumford, 'Housing for Older People'.[42]

Two reports on housing for the disabled are *Interim Report of the Committee on Housing and Accommodation for the Disabled,* 1955 and *The Disabled at Home,* 1956, both published by the Central Council for the Care of Cripples.

† See A.Block, *Estimating Housing Needs,*[17] page 1.

13% greater than in 1951. This is larger than the number of 1951 households in the Manchester, Birmingham, and Tyneside Conurbations.

The implications of these changes for planning policy form the subject of the second half of this book.

PART TWO

Planning Policy

INTRODUCTION

IT IS NO PART of the purpose of this book to present a history of town planning. Nor can a comprehensive analysis of contemporary planning problems be attempted. The object is more modest: it is to discuss *where* the houses that will be needed in the next twenty years should be built. Yet this is not a simple matter: it raises problems which cannot be isolated from those of the distribution of industry, of transport, of agriculture, of the comparative costs (financial, economic, and social) of building houses and flats, of the planning machinery, of the structure of local government, and a host of others. Some of these issues involve questions which are essentially 'political', i.e. they have no simple solution which will satisfy all legitimate claims: the 'right' answer is a matter of judgement, of weighing conflicting claims and deciding which are on balance most important. Some are complex matters on which inadequate research has been undertaken. In many cases it is easier to raise questions than it is to answer them. Of necessity, therefore, the following discussion does not provide a blueprint for future policy; rather does it assemble the facts of the present situation and outline some of the major planning problems of the immediate future.

VII

POST-WAR PLANNING POLICY

The Background

IN THE ENTHUSIASM of the immediate post-war years great ideals permeated the planning field. An 'abrupt change in the whole climate of public opinion towards planning'[86] had been wrought by the bombing. There was a 'passionate determination' to rebuild the war-destroyed towns. Rebuilding was to form part of a national land use plan:

> 'Provision for the right use of land, in accordance with a considered policy, is an essential requirement of the Government's programme of post-war reconstruction. New houses, whether of permanent or emergency construction; the new layout of areas devastated by enemy action or blighted by reason of age or bad living conditions; the new schools which will be required under the Education Bill now before Parliament; the balanced distribution of industry which the Government's recently published proposals for maintaining active employment envisage; the requirements of sound nutrition and of a healthy and well-balanced agriculture; the preservation of land for national parks and forests, and the assurance to the people of enjoyment of the sea and countryside in times of leisure; a new and safer highway system better adapted to modern industrial and other needs; the proper provision of airfields—all these related parts of a single reconstruction programme involve the use of land, and it is essential that their various claims on land should be so harmonized as to ensure for the people of this country the greatest possible measure of individual well-being and national prosperity.'[83]

These were fine words. And they were not empty: they expressed widely-held views reached 'after long disquiet and inquiry concerning the Special Areas, the drift of people and new industry to the south-east, the squalid sprawl of inter-war building, and the spread of

blighted districts in larger cities'.[114] The foundations of policy had been laid in a trilogy of reports: those of the Barlow Commission on the Distribution of the Industrial Population,[94] the Scott Committee of Land Utilization in Rural Areas[61] and the Uthwatt Committee on Compensation and Betterment.[67] Detailed surveys and regional plans were prepared for London, South Wales, Lancashire, Cheshire, the West Midlands, and numerous other areas. These plans had a common leitmotive: large cities should no longer be allowed to continue their unchecked sprawl over the countryside. The explosive forces generated by the desire for better living and working conditions should no longer be allowed to run riot. 'Overspill' should be steered into new and expanded towns which could provide the conditions people wanted—without the disadvantages inherent in suburban sprawl.

In essence these were the views of the Barlow Commission: 'the disadvantages in many, if not in most of the great industrial concentrations, alike on the strategical, the social, and the economic side, do constitute serious handicaps and even in some respects dangers to the nation's life and development, and we are of opinion that definite action should be taken by the Government towards remedying them.' It was, of course, realized that the endorsed policy of overspill (or dispersal as it was then called) would remain an unfulfilled pious hope if control were not exercised over industrial location. Unless industry could be steered to the new overspill areas they would become mere dormitory towns. And if the amount of industry in the conurbations was not reduced, any overspill policy was doomed to failure. But this was part of a wider problem. The growth of modern towns is essentially the consequence of industrial expansion* in the same way as decay is of industrial stagnation and decline. The concentration of industrial development in a limited number of areas involves a decline else where. Sir Malcolm Stewart, the Commissioner for the Special Areas (whose pungent reports were largely instrumental in persuading the Government to appoint the Barlow Commission),

* This is true historically but, as was pointed out in the Barlow Report: 'As the workshop industries in the centre become replaced by factories on the outskirts, commercial and business houses and administrative offices increase and multiply at the centre and use even more intensively the space formerly used industrially' (paragraph 188). It is from a failure to recognize the importance of this that many of our present problems stem. See below, pages 97, et seq.

realized this when he recommended that an embargo should be placed on new factory construction in the Greater London Area. In the thirties London attracted a disproportionate share of new industrial development and, in consequence, 'diverted' industry (and population) from other areas—among which Sir Malcolm included the 'Special Areas'. But, as Neville Chamberlain (when Chancellor of the Exchequer) pointed out, if new factories were prohibited in London it did not follow that they would immediately spring up in South Wales or West Cumberland. In short, the problems of the expanding conurbations and the declining areas are part of a still wider problem—that of the location of industry throughout the country.

It was for these reasons that the Barlow Commission recommended, and the Government accepted, that the 'objectives of national action' should be:

1. 'Continued and further redevelopment of congested urban areas where necessary.
2. Decentralization or dispersal, both of industries and industrial population, from such areas.
3. Encouragement of a reasonable balance of industrial development, so far as possible, throughout the various divisions or regions of Great Britain, coupled with appropriate diversification of industry in each division or region throughout the country.'[94]

These aims, together with the restriction of conurbation growth formed the basis of post-war policy.

The Legislative Framework

The machinery for carrying out this policy was provided in the main by the Town and Country Planning and New Towns Acts, and later by the Town Development Act.

The Town and Country Planning Acts of 1943 and 1947* brought almost all development under control by making it subject to planning permission. But planning was to be no longer merely a regulative function. 'Development Plans' had to be prepared for every area in the country. These show the main land use allocations, 'which towns and villages are suitable for

* The Town and Country Planning (Interim Development) Act 1943 was a stop-gap measure which was repealed by the 1947 Act.

expansion, and which can best be kept to their present size; the direction in which a city will expand; the area to be preserved as an agricultural Green Belt';[84] and so on. In accordance with the wider conception of planning, powers were transferred from district councils to county councils. The smallest planning units thereby became the counties and county boroughs. (This reduced the number of local planning authorities from 1,441 to 145). Co-ordination of local plans is effected by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government (previously the Ministry of Town and Country Planning) which is responsible for approving all plans—with or without amendment.

The Act also gave the Board of Trade the responsibility for securing a 'proper distribution of industry' throughout the country. This had been largely anticipated by the Distribution of Industry Act 1945 and by administrative action under emergency legislation. Under the 1945 Act industrialists were required to notify the Board of Trade if they intended to erect a building exceeding 10,000 square feet in area. (This was later reduced to 5,000 square feet). Through the system of building licences the Board could not only effectively prevent an industrialist from building a factory in one area: it could also provide a real incentive for him to build it somewhere else. The 1947 Act provided for permanent control over location: new industrial building projects exceeding 5,000 square feet in area now required the Board's certification that the development would be consistent with the proper distribution of industry. This permanent control was—and still is—essentially negative, though more positive control by building licences remained for a number of years.

The Board also has power to attract industries to Development Areas by giving loans and grants, or by erecting factories itself. The Distribution of Industry (Industrial Finance) Act 1958 extended the power to give loans and grants to all firms—whether 'industrial' or not—erecting premises in specified places of high unemployment. More recently, both the 1945 and Acts have been repealed and replaced by the 1960 Local Employment Act. Under this Act the powers to give financial assistance are considerably extended.*

The most spectacular of the post-war planning policies was undoubtedly that of building new towns. The arguments in favour of new towns were simple and overwhelming. The large cities had grown too large: improved housing conditions had been obtained at unwarranted social and economic cost. Yet the need for more houses had not abated and further large-scale peripheral expansion could not be countenanced. The only alternative was long-distance dispersal. Some of this could go to expanded small towns, but the scale of the problem was too great to be dealt with solely by this means. Further, it was obvious that the local government machinery was not suited to undertake town building on the scale required. New towns built by government-sponsored public corporations and financed by the Exchequer were the only answer.

The New Towns Act of 1946 provides for the setting up of Development Corporations to plan and create new towns wherever the Minister is satisfied 'that it is expedient in the national interest' to do so. The corporations have powers 'to acquire, hold, manage, and dispose of land and other property, to carry out building and other operations, to provide water, electricity, gas, sewerage, and other services, to carry on any business or undertaking in or for the purposes of the new town, and generally to do anything necessary or expedient for the purposes of the new town or for the purposes incidental thereto'. The necessary capital is provided by the Treasury.

The New Towns Act was the first instalment of the overspill plan:† the second was to be an Act to facilitate town expansion by local authorities. This, however, was deferred until the immediate post-war housing shortage had been met. It was co ntrary to the political facts of life to expect local authorities to build houses for families from other areas while they still had severe housing problems of their own. It was, therefore, not until 1952 that the Town Development Act was passed.

The essential difference between the New Towns Act and the Town Development Act is apparent from their full titles. The New Towns Act is 'an Act to provide for the creation of new towns by

* At the time of writing the Bill is passing through Parliament and is, therefore, subject to amendment.

† Strictly speaking the London County Council 'quasi-satellites' discussed in the next chapter came first. However, these are better regarded as a stop-gap measure which was necessary before the main part of the plan could be brought into operation.

means of development corporations'; the Town Development Act is 'an Act to encourage town development in country districts for the relief of congestion or overpopulation elsewhere'. The former set up special agencies to deal with a problem which was by implication beyond the competence of local authorities. The latter did precisely the opposite: it provided 'encouragement' to local authorities to meet the overspill problem themselves 'by agreement and co-operation'.* As Mr. Macmillan (then Minister of Housing) stressed, 'the purpose of the Bill is that large cities wishing to provide for their surplus population shall do so by orderly and friendly arrangements with neighbouring authorities...it is our purpose that all these arrangements should be reached by friendly negotiation and not imposed by arbitrary power'. Such financial help was to be provided as would be 'necessary to get the job going'. At the present time this consists of a housing subsidy of £24 per year for sixty years and a 50% grant towards the cost of main sewerage, sewage-works and water-works required for the development. The Act also empowers an exporting authority to make contributions to the 'receiving authority'. In practice, although it is of doubtful equity, exporting authorities wishing to participate in a scheme, must make an annual contribution for ten years of £8 per dwelling provided.†

County Councils have power under the Local Government Act of 1948 to make contributions towards expenses incurred by county districts, and in practice, those which welcome overspill within their administrative area do render some kind of financial assistance.

Actual development can be undertaken by the receiving authority itself; or by the exporting authority acting either as an agent for the receiving authority or on its own account; or by the county council in whose area the receiving authority is situated.

Tenants can be selected either from the housing list of the exporting authority or by means of an industrial selection scheme. In the latter

* This and the following quotations are from the second reading debates in the House of Commons. (Hansard, Vol. 496, Col. 725 et seq.)

† In London the provisions are rather more complex. Since only about 50% of the families who move to expanded towns from London are on the local authorities' waiting lists, the Minister has agreed that the contribution should be reduced to £4: a further subsidy of £4 is paid by the Exchequer. (See M.H.L.G. Circular 33/56, *Housing Subsidies Act,* 1956; and J.B.Cullingworth, 'Some Administrative Problems of Planned Overspill'.[63])

case only families who secure employment in the receiving area are eligible for rehousing there.

Town development is very widely defined, as:

> 'development in a county district (or partly in one such district and partly in another) which will have the effect, and is undertaken primarily for the purpose, of providing accommodation for residential purposes (with or without accommodation for the carrying on of industrial or other activities, and with all appropriate public services, facilities for public worship, recreation and amenity, and other requirements) the provision whereof will relieve congestion or over-population elsewhere'.*

This rather long description of the Act serves to show how flexible its provisions are.† Since town development is undertaken by local authorities with widely different problems and of varying size and wealth this flexibility is essential.

* Town Development Act, 1952, Section 1(1).

† However, the Act does not provide for the expansion of a county borough, even though (as is suggested in the final chapter) this may in some cases be preferable to expanding a very small town from, say, a population of 5,000 to one of 10,000. The exclusion of county boroughs also results in the peculiar situation that the Municipal Boroughs of Swindon (population 80,000) and Luton (120,000) can take advantage of the Act, whereas Canterbury (30,000) and Northampton (100,000) can not.

VIII

THE GREATER LONDON PLAN

(a) Policy. The Greater London Plan covered the whole of the Counties of London, Surrey, Middlesex, and Hertfordshire, parts of Kent and Essex, and smaller parts of Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, and Bedfordshire—an area of 2,600 square miles, extending about thirty miles from the centre of London. The area was divided for planning purposes into four concentric rings.* The innermost, Inner London, comprised the County of London and the adjoining densely built-up areas. This, of course, was the area most deficient in good housing, adequate parks, and roads. To provide these an overspill of over a million people was necessary. The second ring, that containing mainly pre-war suburbs was to remain fairly stable in population, but the surrounding Green Belt Ring was to accommodate 300,000 of the overspill population from Inner London. Development there would ideally have been restricted to the controlled 'infilling' and 'rounding off' of existing settlements, but the need for immediate post-war housing sites was so urgent that several 'quasi-satellite' housing estates had to be allowed. It was proposed that these should be limited to a population of 125,000 The fourth ring, the Outer Country Ring, was to accommodate the majority of the remaining overspill, either in New Towns or expansions of existing towns. The Plan also envisaged overspill to places even farther afield such as Bletchley, Aylesbury, Basingstoke, and Newbury. About 500,000 people were to be accommodated in the New Towns and 400,000 in expanded towns. Of the latter, 100,000 were to be dispersed wholly outside the

* A list of the constituent authorities is given in an Appendix.

1. THE FOUR RINGS OF THE GREATER LONDON PLAN

Metropolitan influence.* The basic assumption of the Plan was that the population of the Region would not materially increase above the 1938 figure of ten million. It was, however, appreciated that, by the nature of the problem, no exact and final figures could be laid down for the ultimate population of the various areas.

* This summary is based on the account given in the Ministry of Housing and Local Government *Annual Report for 1956,* (Cmnd. 193, page 61). For further details see P.Abercrombie, *Greater London Plan,* 1944, Chapter 3; Memorandum by the Ministry of Town and Country Planning on the *Report of the Advisory Committee for London Regional Planning* (H.M.S.O. 1947); and *Report on Planning in the London Region* (Town Planning Institute, 1956).

London undoubtedly constituted the biggest problem not only by the very size of the required dispersal, but also because, unlike other Regions, it was necessary to restrain its total growth. If London continued to act as a magnet attracting population and industry from other Regions, planned dispersal would only increase the very problems it was designed to alleviate.

In line with the Barlow Report, the Government stressed that

> 'in the long-term, success in restraining the growth of population in the Region will depend upon the planning and development of the country as a whole, and the restriction of building to the limits imposed by the agreed Plans for London must be coupled with the increase of opportunity for employment in the provincial cities and with a proportionate decrease in the London area'.[85]

Overspill of population had therefore to be accompanied by overspill of employment. The employment potentialities of Greater London exceeded that which was required for a population of ten million. Not only was a redistribution of employment required *within* the Region, but a 'proportion of...manufacturing industry...Government offices, commerce, and service industries will need to be decentralized'[85] beyond the metropolitan influence, and, of course, no new industrial development was to be allowed (save in the most exceptional circumstances) in the Inner and Suburban Rings.

(b) Administration. Such were the broad objectives of the Greater London Plan. But, as Abercrombie stressed: 'the outlines of the Plan may be sketched by one mind: further, these outlines may be firmly held in place and continuously applied by a central office: but the infilling of the whole will be the work of elected local authorities, combining in suitable groups for this purpose.' When the Plan was prepared there were 131 separate planning authorities in the area.* This excessive fragmentation was regarded by Abercrombie as being inimical to comprehensive planning in an area which had so much in common. Furthermore, in his view, a mere reduction in the number of planning

* There were 143 separate local authorities, excluding the County Councils. All these were empowered to prepare a planning scheme. In 1944, 22 authorities had combined to form ten joint executive committees: there were, therefore, 131 planning authorities.

authorities would be insufficient to produce the desired results. 'The importance of the area, and the vastness of its problems, postulate more radical treatment. It would appear desirable to create an authority over the area as a whole (or an area approximating to it) to exercise some of the ministerial powers of planning and to supervise the detailed planning in the area.' His proposal was for a Greater London Planning Board with power not only to prevent the wrong use of land but 'with constructive duties and powers to produce physical changes in the area, both immediately and over a long period of time'. Though there would be preparation of local plans by smaller units (Joint Executive Committees), these would be subject to the approval of the Planning Board within the framework of a Regional Master Plan approved by the Ministry. The Planning Board was to comprise a small number of 'eminent men of affairs' and a technical and administrative staff. The smaller units would be composed of representatives of the constituent authorities advised by a competent planning officer.

Abercrombie considered it important that the Board should have executive powers. It was to be charged with:

'carrying out over the whole Region such work as, for instance, that of a Regional Open Spaces Board or Park Authority (dealing with the Green Belt among other open spaces), a Housing Corporation (possibly as a branch of a National Housing Corporation) which would secure the necessary housing and construct the new satellites, an Industrial Controller, dealing with questions of location of industry and development of trading estates, and a Regional Cleansing Department, which would co-ordinate methods of cleansing and also of refuse disposal. There would be room also for a Population Adviser, who would survey the processes of population growth and decay over the various parts of the area, and, correlating these with the needs of industry, would, working through the Joint Executive Committees, stimulate or restrain population movements accordingly. The Board would also have to be in intimate relationship with such bodies as the London Passenger Transport Board (probably with enlarged powers to extend over a wider area and to deal with goods as well as passengers), the Port of London Authority, and other statutory undertakers'.*

In line with sound English tradition, the Government's reaction to

* See also the *Barlow Minority Report* signed by Abercrombie, H.H.Elvin, and Mrs. Hichens.

this was to set up a committee to advise on 'the appropriate machinery for securing concerted action in the implementation of a Regional Plan for London as a whole'. But almost at once planning powers were transferred from the smaller authorities to the County Councils:* this reduced the number of planning authorities in the Greater London Plan to twelve,† It thus seemed that Abercrombie's warning of the inadequacy of a mere reduction in the number of units was to be ignored. But the London Planning Administration Committee (The Clement Davies Committee)[77] felt that the position was unaltered. The change brought about by the 1947 Act concerned only the preparation of plans and the exercise of planning control. The small local authorities and the statutory undertakers still retained powers of development. Apart from the 9 County Councils and the 3 County Borough Councils, the Region contained the Common Council of the City of London, 28 Metropolitan Borough Councils, 51 Borough Councils, 62 Urban District Councils, 27 Rural District Councils, 71 Water Undertakers, 6 Joint Sewerage Boards, 6 Catchment Boards, 4 Electricity Boards, 4 Gas Boards (after 1st May 1949), the Port of London Authority and the British Transport Commission—a total of 274. The Committee thus reasoned that 'the problem of securing concerted action over a large number of districts remains the same'. Furthermore, the 1947 Act gave the Minister power to establish by order a joint planning board covering the areas, or parts of the areas, of two or more local planning authorities.‡ In drafting the legislation, therefore, the Government apparently envisaged the possibility that in some areas larger planning units would be desirable.

In the view of the Clement Davies Committee, planning was still thought of largely in terms of preparing plans which could, in the main, be automatically implemented by development control. This reflected an inadequate appreciation of what the actual carrying out of a plan entailed. The inter-relation of the

* By the Town and Country Planning Act, 1947. See above, p. 68.

† The County Councils of Bedfordshire, Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Essex, Hertfordshire, Kent, London, Middlesex, and Surrey; and the County Borough Councils of Croydon, East Ham, and West Ham.

‡Town and Country Planning Act, 1947, Section 4(2). Unless all the constituent authorities agree to the setting up of the board, the Minister is required to hold a public inquiry; the order is subject to a negative resolution of Parliament.

problems of the area required positive measures of co-ordination which could not be achieved by Government Departments. Their role was essentially supervisory and quasi-judicial 'They can direct; they can control; but they cannot secure that positive concerted action which is necessary to "produce the physical changes" by which alone, as Sir Patrick Abercrombie said, a plan can be carried into effect.'

The Committee's conclusion was that the existing machinery would not work: 'if the Plan for the Region is to be carried through, some kind of regional authority, possessing powers of direction and of finance in addition to powers of supervision, must be established.' But such an authority would affect the whole of local government both within and adjoining the Region. The situation demanded consideration of many factors outside the Committee's terms of reference. What was required was the setting up of a Local Government Commission to investigate these wider issues. Nevertheless some interim measure was required. On this the Committee split: while the majority (six members) proposed a Joint Advisory Committee, a minority (three members) were convinced that the only hope of ensuring the effective planning and development of the Region during the transitional period lay in the setting up of a joint planning board.

No action on these proposals was taken until 1959 when the Royal Commission on Local Government in Greater London was appointed. (At the time of writing this Commission is still receiving evidence.) Thus post-war planning policy in the Greater London Plan Region has been in the hands of nine County Councils and three County Borough Councils. Publiclysponsored development, of course, has been shared with the very much larger number of smaller local authorities and statutory bodies.

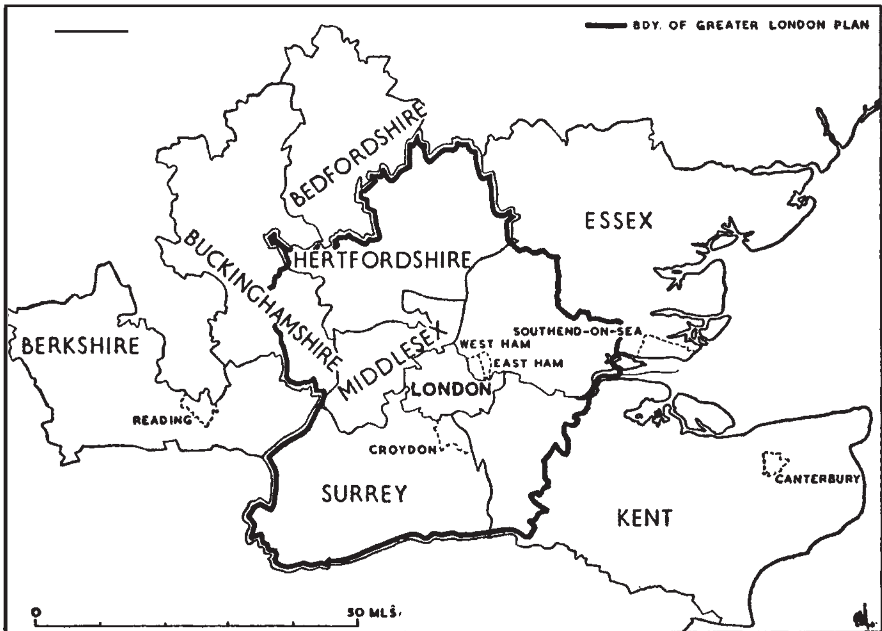
THE DEVELOPMENT PLANS

The Greater London Plan, together with the County of London and City of London Plans provided 'a comprehensive basis for the planning and re-shaping of the whole of the Greater London area'. But, though endorsed by the Government, these Plans were

essentially a statement of aims: they established a framework within which the statutory plans required by the 1947 Act could be prepared. As we have seen, despite the strong words of Abercrombie and the Clement Davies Committee, these have been prepared by the twelve constituent County and County Borough Councils. There are, therefore, twelve statutory development plans for the area defined as the Greater London Region in the Abercrombie Plan, five of which relate to areas lying mainly or partly outside the Region. Apart from the complications attendant on this last factor, to attempt to deal with all these plans would be a task of considerable magnitude which would strain the patience of the reader and unduly lengthen the book. Furthermore, when one tries to assess the changes that have taken place since the ´plans were prepared the nature of the available statistics presents intractable problems. It is often extremely difficult, and in some cases impossible, to obtain figures for the relevant parts of the five counties which straddle the boundaries of the Region.

Another difficulty arises from the fact that the 'Greater London Planning Region', as defined by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, excludes those parts of Bedfordshire and Berkshire and some parts of Buckinghamshire which were within Abercrombie's region. It therefore contains ten, instead of twelve, planning authorities. To complicate the matter still further, the term 'Greater London' is officially used for purposes of government statistics for an area much smaller than that of the Abercrombie Region, namely the area of the Metropolitan Police District. This roughly comprises all authorities (including the County of London) lying within fifteen miles of Charing Cross and is very similar to (though not identical with) the area defined by the Registrar-General as the Greater London Conurbation.

It is very doubtful whether anyone without access to unpublished material (much of which is jealously guarded by Government Departments) could make sufficient sense of the complicated jig-saw to present a clear picture. Fortunately, the aims of the author's analysis can be achieved without spending much time trying to overcome these difficulties, though inevitably some of the data are confusing. The term 'Greater London Planning Region' will be used to apply to the official planning area, and the term 'Abercrombie Region' to the slightly larger



2. LOCAL PLANNING AUTHORITIES IN AND AROUND THE GREATER LONDON PLANNING REGION

area covered by the original Greater London Plan. A list of the constituent local authorities is given in an Appendix.

Though all the ten Development Plans for the Greater London Planning Region were formulated within the 'Abercrombie framework' they contain many variations. Though these are often mere changes of detail some of them represent a considerable departure from Abercrombie's proposals. There are several very good reasons for this.* In the first place they were prepared after a closer and more detailed study than Abercrombie was able to make. Secondly, unlike the advisory plans, they were limited to proposals likely to be carried out within a period of twenty years (1951–1971): they thus represent only the first part of a long-term plan. Finally, they were prepared several years after the advisory plans and therefore were able to take into

* See Town Planning Institute, *Report on Planning in the London Region* (Chapter IV), and the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, Annual Report for 1956 (Chapter V) on which much of this account is based.

account more recent changes. In particular, though the Abercrombie Plan was based on the then reasonable assumption that there would be no natural increase of population, by 1947 it was apparent that there would, in fact, be a considerable increase. Projections prepared by the Registrar-General suggested that the increased birth rate would add a population of several hundred thousand to the Region by 1971. As a result the population targets assumed for the Development Plans were much higher than the Greater London Plan proposals. The only exception was the County of London where extensive areas of low-density housing, zoned for higher densities, could not be redeveloped in the Plan period (i.e. 1951 to 1971). It was therefore expected that the 1971 population would be lower than the ultimate.* As can be seen from Table 23, other areas in the Region were expected to increase substantially by 1971.

It should not be inferred from this that the Abercrombie Plan was abandoned. As already pointed out, the Development Plan proposals cover the comparatively short period of twenty years. The achievement of an ultimate population is of necessity a long-term objective. In the initial stages (e.g. when virgin sites are developed) population may increase above the level which is considered desirable in the long run. This cannot be prevented. Planning authorities can only affect a given situation marginally in the short-run. The 1971 population forecasts in the Development Plans do not represent targets towards the achievement of which policy is directed. On the contrary the 'target' may be much lower. The case of Middlesex is illustrative. The Planning Authority estimated that the optimum population was 2,023,000, but 'so many buildings in the County are comparatively new that their redevelopment is too far off to be predictable, so that a realistic calculation must usually accept those buildings as they are'.† The calculation suggested that the population would not fall below 2,241,550 by 1971.

* There is a problem here which so far has received little attention: will it be possible to increase the post-1971 population of the County without increasing the population of the Region?

† County of Middlesex, *Development Plan,* 1951, Report of the Survey, page 40. The Report points out that: 'A town planning authority cannot prevent families from increasing or people from moving into full houses. Indeed a town planning authority is very restricted in what it can do to people. What it can do and should

TABLE 23: Target Population Figures for Local Planning Authority Areas in the London Region (as at 1954)*

	1951 Census Population (i)	*G.L. Plan Ultimate Target Population (ii)*	*Development Plans Forecasts for 1971 (iii)*	*Percentage Difference Between (ii) & (iii) (iv)*
County of London	3,347,982	3,326,000	3,150,000	− 5·3
Middlesex	2,269,315	1,972,750	2,241,550	+ 13·6
Hertfordshire	609,775	793,150	886,615	+ 11·8
Inner Essex	1,163,844	1,216,750	1,351,300	+ 11·1
East Ham	120,836	97,750	111,150	+ 13·7
West Ham	170,993	161,100	165,000	+ 2·4
Inner Kent	672,096	618,450	752,660	+ 21·7
Surrey	1,352,613	1,295,700	1,426,010	+ 10·0
Croydon	249,870	215,600	266,136	+ 23·4
Bucks (Part)	173,644	194,150	224,520	+ 15·6
Total	10,130,968	9,891,400	10,574,941	+ 6·9

* Based on Town Planning Institute, *Report on Planning in the London Region,* page 15, Table 1. It is not clear whether this 'London Region' is identical with the Greater London Planning Region. Comparison with Table 24, which is taken from a different source, shows a slight difference in the total 1951 Census population. But see also footnote to Table 24.

Nevertheless, the target is two million and land use is being planned accordingly.

However, this is by no means the only reason for the large difference between the Greater London Plan targets and the Development Plan forecasts. The Hertfordshire Plan, for example, proposes a number of encroachments on the Green Belt; 'some of these are merely detailed adjustments of a roughly drawn line, but others appear to have been made in response to the demand for housing land.'[109] Increases above the Greater London Plan targets

do is to control building and land use.... The proper idea of a target population is not so much to ordain how many people there shall be, as to indicate what quantity of building and land use should be planned. Thus the important thing about a target population is that it tells us how much of each kind of development to provide. So long as there is an overall shortage of buildings they may remain overcrowded. But if every development plan in the country works on sound targets then when the shortage is relieved the population can reassort itself with good conditions everywhere.' (Op. cit., page 38.)

for Metropolitan Surrey were proposed partly because of 'the greater scope found for infilling of vacant plots, particularly in the outlying districts, which were revealed by the detailed Survey of 1949'.[139] Other factors were the additional dwellings likely to be provided by the conversion of large houses into flats and by 'rounding off' existing development where public services existed.* A similar situation existed in Kent.

The effect of all these changes on the policy of the four rings is shown in Table 24. These figures differ slightly from those given in Table 23 as they are taken from a different source.

TABLE 24: Target Population Figures for the Greater London Planning Region (as at 1956)†

	1938 Estimated Population (i)	*1951 Census Population (ii)*	*G. L. Plan Target Population (iii)*	*Development Plans—1971 Forecast (iv)*	*Percentage Difference between (iii) and (iv) (v)*
Inner London					
County of London	4,063,000	3,345,000‡	3,326,000	3,150,000	− 5·3
Remainder	1,911,000	1,778,000	1,392,000	1,697,000	+ 21·9
Suburban Areas	2,366,000	2,674,000	2,399,000	2,749,000	+ 14·6
Green Belt Areas	977,000	1,302,000	1,288,000	1,567,000	+ 21·7
Rest of Region	833,000	1,004,000	1,377,000	1,410,000	+ 2·4
Total	10,150,000	10,103,000	9,782,000	10,573,000	+ 8·1

It is difficult to believe that the 8% difference between the Greater London Plan target and the Development Plans 1971 forecast is entirely due to the different periods to which they relate or to the

* It was estimated that in Metropolitan Surrey about 1,800 additional dwellings would be provided by conversions.[139] Cf. the evidence of the Surrey County Council to the Royal Commission on Local Government in Greater London: 'Surrey had a number of unfinished estates on its suburban fringe when it made its plan, land which really had no other future but for building, and towns further out such as Guildford, Reigate, Woking and so on had obvious room for expansion. There could be no doubt that in the Greater London area the demand would be there for people to move in, and Surrey looked at it from that point of view, bearing in mind, of course, the Government's statement in support of the Abercrombie plan, that the home counties could assume that by and large the employment situation in the centre which gives rise to it all would at least be contained.' (Minutes of Evidence, 43rd Day, page 1841).

† Figures taken from M.H.L.G. Annual Report, 1956, page 74.

‡ Reference to the 1951 Census statistics for the County of London shows that, for this area at least, these figures are not taken from the Census. It seems probable that they are estimates of civilian population for mid–1951.

effects of minor 'infilling' and 'rounding -off'. It seems more likely that the Abercrombie policy of reducing the total population of the Region has been replaced by one which accepts a significant increase.

THE POLICY IN OPERATION

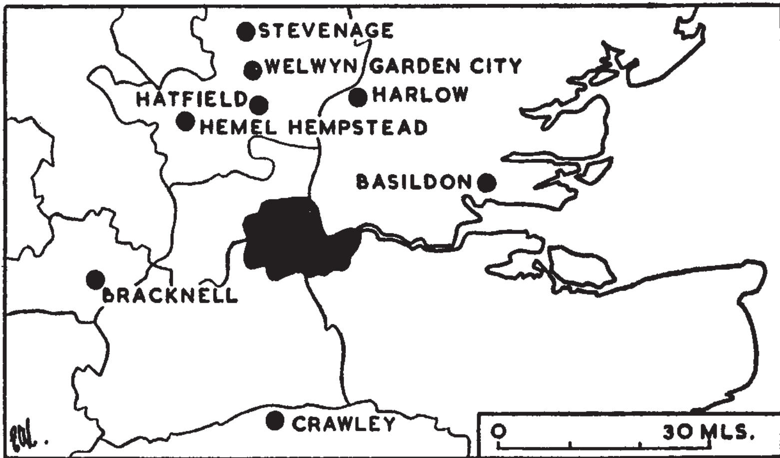
Though it has seemed logical to deal with the Development Plans before describing the policy in operation, it must be stressed that these Plans were not completed until after 1950; the first was not approved until June 1954, and it took four more years before all ten had been approved. (The last was Hertfordshire which was approved in December 1958.) The fact that these Plans took account of factors which became important after the date of the Greater London Plan is therefore not a matter of mere detail. Nor should it be thought that policy was in a state of suspended animation prior to the approval (or submission) of the Plans. Indeed the result of the policy that was operated during the immediate post-war years was one of the two most significant factors that had to be taken into account by the draughtsmen of the Plans (the other being the totally unexpected large natural increase). The failure of the Central Government to adhere to the principles of the Abercrombie Plan during this period forced several local planning authorities to plan for larger increases in population than had originally been envisaged.

Publicly-sponsored Overspill

To recapitulate, the Greater London Plan proposed the overspill of over one million people from Inner London, of which some 300,000 were to be housed in the Green Belt Ring (125,000 in quasi-satellites and the remainder by infilling and rounding off of existing towns), 500,000 in New Towns, 300,000 in expanded towns in the London Region, and 100,000 in expanded towns farther afield.

The quasi-satellites* were regarded as regrettable but necessary to meet short-term needs which could not wait for the new andexpanded towns to get under way. But, since the expanded town

* These include Oxhey (near Watford), Debden (Loughton), and Harold Hill (Romford).



3. THE LONDON NEW TOWNS

legislation did not materialize until 1952, hopes were centred on the new towns. By June 1948 eight sites for new towns had been approved—Stevenage, Crawley, Hemel Hempstead, Harlow, Hatfield, Welwyn Garden City, Basildon, and Bracknell. But progress was very much slower than had been anticipated. Stevenage, the first town to be designated, quickly became engulfed in local controversy (largely as a result of over-enthusiasm and lack of public relations on the part of the Ministry),* and led to a High Court case in which a decision was given in favour of the local objectors. Though this was reversed by the House of Lords, a valuable year had been lost and some of the ardour of the central government administrators dampened. (Would it be completely wide of the mark to suggest that the memory of the unhappy start of Stevenage is still very much alive and provides one of the reasons for the lack of enthusiasm for further new towns by later Governments?)

* The Minister of Town and Country Planning, Mr. L.Silkin, did not help matters when he declared at a public meeting in Stevenage that the project was to go ahead whether the local inhabitants wanted it or not. At one time the station signs bore the name 'Silkingrad'. A somewhat melodramatic account of the history of this new town is to be found in H.Orlans, *Stevenage—A Sociological Study of a New Town*.[90]

Stevenage was an inauspicious start. Though the designation of the other seven new towns was better handled, it was soon apparent that the rapid progress hoped for was not to be realized. Lloyd Rodwin in his study of *The British New Towns Policy*[93] attributes the delay to the lack of any special 'resource allocation'.

'Once a policy of building new towns was adopted, some basic questions had to be faced if the ministry's decisions were not to appear embarrassingly haphazard. One of the most important was the proportion of the nation's resources to be devoted to new towns. Although the minister had *carte blanche* to create an indefinite number of new towns, financial support had to be secured from Parliament, and sooner or later the scale of the programme was bound to become a matter of controversy. The onset of Britain's grim post-war economic crisis only underscored the urgency of this issue and heavily weighted the short-term considerations. Every proposal for capital investment had to be judged by its contribution to dollarearning and dollar-saving projects. The stark question was whether the payback from the new towns then and in the next few years compared favourably with other possibilities, such as retooling, industrial expansion, new industries, shipbuilding, research, allocation of more land for agriculture, and the like. This hard, inescapable choice was disheartening for the new towns advocates, but there were few protests. The gravity of the situation was understood; and however sound the development of new towns may have been considered in the long run, no one doubted that many years had to elapse before the programme could pay dividends.'

Self[97] makes the same point: 'At no time in the post-war period did the Government give the new towns any special priority; they had to take their place in the queue with local authorities for housing allocations and with other claimants for scarce resources and labour.'

This argument rests too much on the published annual reports of the New Town Development Corporations. In a very real sense these are used by the Corporations as a means for making complaints. Though many of the complaints would appear to be justified, a balanced account must seek other sources of information. What seems to have received insufficient attention is the fact that land acquisition, the formulation of plans, the preliminary site works and the preparatory work on the provision of services for development of new town character is of necessity a

lengthy process. A new town cannot begin to yield tangible physical results for several years. This was not sufficiently appreciated at the commencement of the new towns programme, and as a result, exaggerated hopes were entertained as to the rate at which the new towns could provide houses.

Nevertheless, there is no doubt that a brake was put on new town development—in the same way as it was applied to housing generally. Although it could be (and was) argued that the new towns should have no special claims on resources, such a policy had inherent dangers of a far-reaching nature. That these were appreciated by the Government is evident from the White Paper on *Capital Investment in1948:*[58]

> The purpose of the new towns 'is to ensure that the surplus population is rehoused at a distance from the overcrowded, over-large cities, and that Green Belts are maintained around these cities. Already the Government have reluctantly had to agree to the location in London's Green Belt of a number of big housing estates for over 100,000 people, and if the New Towns beyond the Belt cannot be got ready to take houses and factories when more new building is possible, this outward expansion of London may well continue'.

But, since the housing programme was being strictly controlled, the problem was not thought to be immediately urgent Fortunately, only a small labour force was required for the preliminary work in the new towns. It was hoped that during the first half of 1949 a start could be made on houses and factories 'if the general state of the building programme makes that feasible'. But in 1949 it was still considered necessary to

> 'exercise restraint over capital expenditure…and to give preference to increases of capacity designed to overcome shortages of basic materials, to projects which were likely to increase exports to, or save imports from, hard currency countries on a substantial scale, to the promotion of technical developments and practices, and to proposals which would yield marked and immediate reductions in costs'.[59]

The priority given to short-term needs inevitably meant that the new town programme could not be accelerated. Only gradually did the new towns get into their stride. Up to December 1950 only 451 houses had been completed. In 1951 the figure rose to 2,119. Thereafter progress was rapid: completions numbered 4,640 in 1952, 6,554 in1953 and 9,678 in 1957. In 1958 the figure fell to

6,124, mainly because Crawley was reaching the end of its building-up stage.*

TABLE 25: Housing Progress in the London New Towns

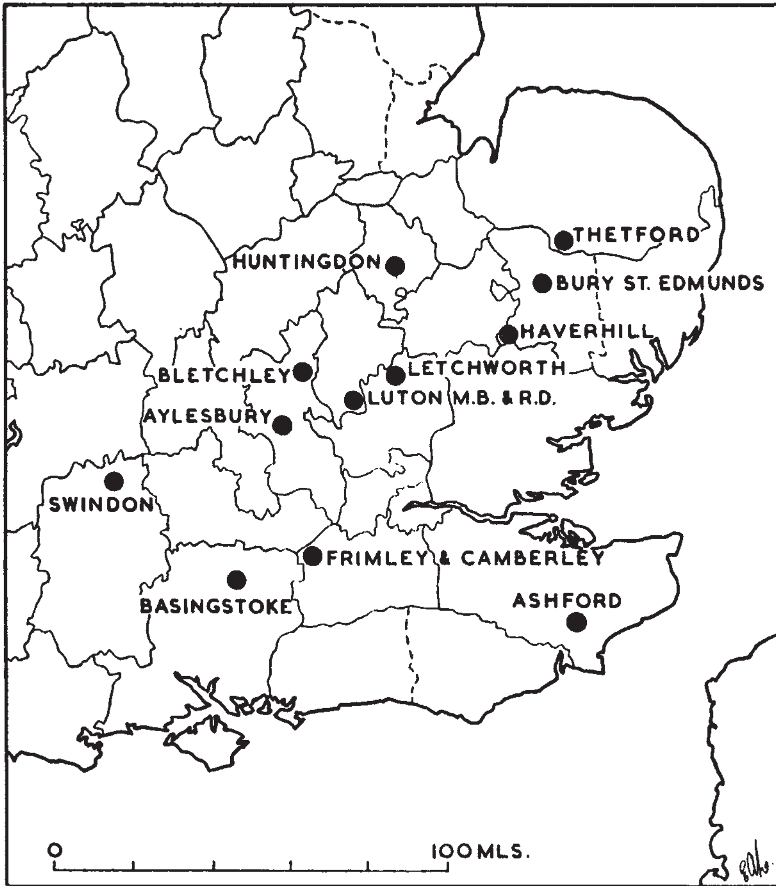
	Dwellings Completed									
	Up to 31.12.50	*1951*	*1952*	*1953*	*1954*	*1955*	*1956*	*1957*	*1958*	*Total*
Basildon	–	82	515	509	684	1,288	1,316	1,369	1,258	7,021
Bracknell	–	25	167	140	502	491	586	594	849	3,354
Crawley	138	442	875	1,070	1,778	1,408	1,921	2,804	584	11,020
Harlow	116	517	1,079	1,661	1,970	1,440	1,501	1,990	1,157	11,431
Hatfield	–	51	168	457	432	148	653	344	105	2,358
Hemel Hempstead	152	664	769	1,459	969	870	1,330	943	607	7,763
Stevenage	29	231	776	806	1,163	1,143	1,214	1,081	1,179	7,622
Welwyn Garden City	16	107	291	452	640	762	482	553	385	3,688
Total	451	2,119	4,640	6,554	8,138	7,550	9,003	9,678	6,124	54,257

TABLE 26: London New Towns—Population Proposals

	1947 Population	*Original Population Proposals*		*Present Population Proposals*		*Population at 31st December 1959 (Estimated)*
		Total	*Expansion (ii) — (i)*	*Total*	*Expansion (iv) — (i)*	
	(i)	*(ii)*	*(iii)*	*(iv)*	*(v)*	*(vi)*
Basildon	25,000	50,000	25,000	100,000	75,000	52,000
Bracknell	5,000	25,000	20,000	25,000	20,000	17,700
Crawley	10,000	50,000	40,000	56,000	46,000	51,200
Harlow	4,500	60,000	55,500	80,000	75,500	48,700
Hatfield	8,500	25,000	16,500	25,000	16,500	18,000
Hemel Hempstead	21,000	60,000	39,000	60,000	39,000	51,000
Stevenage	7,000	60,000	53,000	60,000	53,000	38,000
Welwyn Garden City	18,500	36,500	18,000	50,000	31,500	32,000
All New Towns	99,500	366,500	267,000	456,000	356,500	308,600

In the context of the regional problem this spurt came too late. The pressure of housing needs, increased as it was by the high birth rate and the high rate of household formation, could not be restrained. Provision had to be made somewhere, and intrusions into the Green

* Work in Hatfield was held up pending negotiations over the housing of natural population increase. See New Town Development Corporations *Annual Reports* for 1958–1959, House of Commons Paper No. 315, 1959, p. 442.



4. THE LONDON EXPANDED TOWNS

Belt inevitably became more and more difficult to restrain. Furthermore, the acceleration of new town development was not only too late: it was also quite inadequate by itself. The original proposals were for an intake of 267,000 people; although this has now been increased to 356,500, the total provision is still 150,000 less than that envisaged in the Abercrombie Plan. Though, following the Town Development Act of 1952, it was hoped that there would be a considerable migration to expanded towns, the tangible results to date are ridiculously small. By December 1958 only 4,176 houses had been provided, mainly in Swindon and Bletchley.

TABLE 27: Expanded Towns for London Overspill*

Receiving Authority	*Number of Dwellings to be Built*	*Number Built or under Construction December 1958*
Ashford U.D.	4,250	
Aylesbury M.B.	3,000	
Basingstoke M.B.	3,500	
Bletchley U.D.	3,000	885
Bury St. Edmunds M.B.	1,500	
Haverhill U.D.	1,400	100
Huntingdon M.B.	1,000	
Letchworth U.D.	1,750	
Luton M.B.	1,000	64
Luton R.D.	1,400	154
Swindon M.B.	6,000	2,902
Thetford M.B.	1,500	46
Frimley and Camberley U.D.	1,200	25
Total	30,500	4,176

Making an allowance for families who have moved into the new and expanded towns from outside the London Region† it seems that, up to the end of 1958, publicly-sponsored overspill has amounted to about 150,000 people—about 140,000 in the new towns and 10,000 in expanded towns. A further 100,000 have moved to the London County Council quasi-satellite estates. Thus total publicly-sponsored overspill has been about 250,000. This is rather less than the natural increase in population which has taken place in Inner London since 1946.‡ Thus the contribution which has been made by existing schemes, though appreciable, is totally inadequate.

In the national political situation of the early post-war period it

* In all cases except Frimley and Camberley the exporting authority is the London County Council. Ten Metropolitan Surrey authorities are co-operating in the Frimley and Camberley scheme.

† Figures are hard to come by, but up to June 1958, 79% of dwellings let in the new towns were occupied by families from Greater London. The proportion in Swindon at March 1959 was 80%; in Bletchley at June 1959 it was 71%.

‡ Of equal, if not greater, importance than natural increase is the rate of household formation. The London County Council, in their *First Review of the County Development Plan,* have made a revised estimate of overspill for the period 1956 to 1972 which includes an allowance for 'the net increase in households'. This gives an overspill of 460,000–80,000 more than originally estimated for the whole of the twenty-year Development Plan period.

seemed reasonable to assume that migration of population from London would be predominantly 'planned' or 'publicly-sponsored' overspill. Private housebuilding at this time was strictly controlled and formed only a small part of the total programme. In any case, it was the intention to plan for the movement of people from Inner London 'as part of an organized scheme, with accompanying industry and to properly prepared reception areas'.[116] Hence, except for 'the filling up of vacant frontages, large-scale speculative building on speculatively chosen sites' was no longer to be allowed. Nevertheless, Abercrombie allowed for an ultimate 'sporadic movement' of some quarter of a million people,* and, after the relaxation of building controls in the early 1950'S,† the movement of people to new privately-built houses began to assume large proportions.‡ It is necessary, therefore, to estimate the size of this private movement and to ascertain how far it has mitigated (or aggravated) the planning problems of the London Region.

Private Migration

The only way of estimating private migration is to subtract from the total movement the amount of publicly-sponsored overspill. Unfortunately, movements of population are difficult to trace with any degree of precision. The only reliable and comprehensive information is that provided by the Census, which is now nine years out of date. The mid-year figures published by the Registrar-General are estimates of the *home* population. This consists of the civilian population plus members of the Armed Forces whether drawn from other parts of this country or from abroad, merchant seamen in home waters, and visitors from abroad. It excludes English Armed Forces, merchant seamen and visitors who are abroad. The home population of local areas

* This allowance for 'sporadic movement' was additional to the estimate of 'planned dispersal'.

† Private enterprise housebuilding was freed from licensing control in 1954.

‡ This 'private' movement is usually termed voluntary migration. This is misleading in that it suggests that 'planned overspill' is equivalent to a compulsory movement. The difference is solely one of the building agency. Private movement, however, is not generally accompanied by an equivalent movement of employment, whereas planned overspill is. See the discussion in the London County Council's *First Review of the County Development Plan,* page 18.

can, therefore, be significantly affected not merely by migration but also by movements of military personnel and the excess of demobilization over call-up. This is quite apart from the difficulties occasioned by boundary changes and inaccuracies in the data (which tend to increase during the later part of an inter-censal period). Thus, though the information on natural increase is fairly reliable, the balance of population change cannot be attributed solely to migration. The use of civilian population statistics would be more revealing, but these are not generally available, and even when access to them is granted, publication is prohibited.* Comparison over a period of time is further complicated by the fact that the nature of the published statistics has changed: the 1938 statistics refer to resident population, whereas those for 1946 refer to civilian population and those for 1950 and later years refer to home population.

Despite these difficulties the figures are sufficiently reliable and comparable to show broad trends.

In 1938, Inner London contained 5,974,000 people. The war and its aftermath greatly reduced this number, but the 1946 population of 4,813,000 rapidly increased in the early post-war years, reaching a peak of 5,141,000 in 1952. Since then there has been a steady decline, and the 1958 population was 4,932,000. The return of evacuees and demobilization make detailed analysis of the changes in the immediate post-war period difficult, but between 1951 and 1958 the overall change has been due to a natural increase of 135,000 and an outward migration† of 340,000. In short, migration from Inner London is now considerably greater than natural increase.

The Suburban Ring, which the Greater London Plan proposed should remain stable in population, increased from 2,366,000 in 1938 to 2,563,000 in 1946 and 2,708,000 in 1950. Since then there has been a gradual decline, reaching 2,670,000 in 1958.

* Government Departments also keep statistics of the excess of demobilization over call-up, but, for a reason which is not clear, these cannot be made available to the research worker. Since the excess of demobilization over call-up varies in different areas the matter can be one of some importance. This is particularly so in the London Region.

† For reasons given above, the term 'balance' is more accurate than Migration'. Nevertheless, it is assumed that, in dealing with large areas, 'balance' is equivalent to migration. The validity of this assumption cannot be established with the available statistics.

Between June 1951 and June 1958, the area gained 46,000 by natural increase and lost 60,000 by migration—a net decrease of 14,000.

These figures, of course, relate only to net changes. There is a very much larger gross movement which, unfortunately, is not documented.* Nevertheless, the available figures show that the net loss by migration from the Inner and Suburban Rings is about 55,000 a year.†

During these seven years publicly-sponsored overspill has probably amounted to less than 250,000. Thus the net private movement has totalled at least 150,000.‡

While the Inner and Suburban Rings have been losing population, the Green Belt and Outer Country Rings have been gaining. The Green Belt Ring increased in population from 1,146,000 in 1946 to 1,322,000 in 1951 and 1,554,000 in 1958. In the Outer Country Ring the increase was from 923,000 in 1946 to 1,008,000 in 1951

* Some interesting figures are given in the Report of the Survey for the Middlesex *Development Plan* (page 36). In the calendar year 1948 there was a net migration from the county amounting to 6,589. This was the balance resulting from a gross inward migration of 256,949 and a gross outward migration of 263,538. In 1949 the figures were 7,394; 233,857 and 241,251 respectively.

† The Ministry of Housing and Local Government, using unpublished statistics and a slightly different area, have estimated the net migration at about 60,000 a year between 1951 and 1958; See A.G.Powell, 'The Recent Development of Greater London'.[91]

‡ The L.G.C. Development Plan assumed that all the estimated 145,000 overspill during the years 1951 to 1956 would be publicly-sponsored. 'In fact there was a net outward migration of 153,000 persons during that period; about a quarter of this was *private* migration.' (*L.C.C. First Review of the County Development Plan,* Volume I, page 19). The following table, taken from the same source, shows how the private element grew in importance over this period.

Annual Net Outward Migration from County of London 1951–1958

Period (mid-year to mid-year) a	*Net outward Migration* b	*Net publicly-sponsored outward migration* c	*Per cent of b* d	*Net private outward migration (b-c)* e	*Per cent of b* f
1951–1952	9,000	26,000	–	–17,000	–
1952–1953	28,000	28,000	100	–	–
1953–1954	37,000	25,000	68	12,000	32
1954–1955	42,000	19,000	45	23,000	55
1955–1956	37,000	15,000	41	22,000	59
1956–1957	41,000	15,000	36	26,000	64
1957–1958	47,000	17,000	36	30,000	64
	241,000	145,000	60	96,000	40
Annual Average	35,000	21,000	–	14,000	–

TABLE 28: Population Changes in the Inner and Suburban Rings of the Greater London Planning Region, 1938–1958

	Resident Population 1938	*Civilian Population 1946*	*Home Population 1951*	*Home Population 1958*
Inner London				
County of London	4,063,000	3,109,000	3,358,000	3,225,000
Rest of Inner London	1,911,000	1,704,000	1,779,000	1,707,000
Total Inner London	5,974,000	4,813,000	5,137,000	4,932,000
Suburban Ring	2,366,000	2,563,000	2,684,000	2,670,000
Total Built-up Areas	8,340,000	7,376,000	7,821,000	7,602,000

	*Change in Home Population 1951–1958**		
	Natural Increase	*Migration*	*Total Change*
Inner London			
County of London	96,291	− 229,291	− 133,000
Rest of Inner London	38,962	− 111,192	− 72,230
Total Inner London	135,253	− 340,483	− 205,230
Suburban Ring	46,247	− 59,827	− 13,580
Total Built-Up Areas	181,500	− 400,310	− 218,810

and 1,259,000 in 1958. The two Rings gained over 480,000 people between 1951 and 1958. Nearly a quarter of this can be accounted for by natural increase. Thus immigration has totalled about 365,000. On the assumption that publicly-sponsored overspill has amounted to 250,000, private movement into the Green Belt and Outer Country Rings has been about 115,000.

In summary, the figures show that overspill from the built-up areas of London is continuing in spite of the inadequacy of planned overspill provision. Figures for the County of London show that, in this area at least, overspill is increasingly taking the form of private migration.†

The Present Situation in the Greater London Planning Region

Figures for the whole of the G.L.P. Region are summarized in Table 30. A column showing the preliminary figures for 1959 is included.†

* Annual estimates of home population refer to June of each year, whereas statistics of births and deaths refer to calendar years. In calculating natural increase from 1951 to 1958 it has been necessary to take births and deaths in the calendar years 1952 to 1958 and to relate these to the mid-year population. This method assumes that the natural increase from July to December 1958 was the same as in the period July to December 1951. In fact the natural increase was rather greater in the latter period. The error does not significantly affect the general picture.

† See footnote (‡) on page 92.

TABLE 29: Population Changes in the Green Belt and Outer Country Rings of the Greater London Planning Region 1938–1958

	Resident Population 1938	*Civilian Population 1946*	*Home Population 1951*	*Home Population 1958*
Green Belt Ring	977,000	1,146,000	1,322,000	1,554,000
Outer Country Ring	833,000	923,000	1,008,000	1,259,000
Total	1,810,000	2,069,000	2,330,000	2,813,000

	*Change in Home Population 1951–1958**		
	Natural Increase	*Migration*	*Total Change*
Green Belt Ring	63,858	+ 168,342	+ 232,200
Outer Country Ring	54,233	+ 196,683	+ 250,916
Total	118,091	+ 365,025	+ 483,116

The population of the Region in 1959 was 10,458,000. This is an increase of 308,000 over the 1938 figure and 676,000 more than the Greater London Plan target. More significantly, it is only 115,000 short of the Development Plans 1971 forecast: this is equivalent to less than three years' natural increase.

Viewed in relation to the aims of the Greater London Plan the figures prima facie suggest:

1. In spite of an unexpectedly large natural increase, the population of the built-up area of Inner and Suburban London is declining. Indeed, the Suburban Ring is already less densely populated than the 1971 forecast and is steadily falling towards the Greater London Plan target. In Inner London the population is still some 55,000 greater than the 1971 forecast, but the rate of decline is far more rapid than in the Suburban Ring. Thus the aim of reducing population congestion in these two Rings is being realized. A significant, and increasing, part of the decline is attribute to private migration.‡

2. In the Green Belt Ring the population was 609,000 greater in 1959 than in 1938, and 298,000 in excess of the Greater London Plan target. Despite the enlarged provision made by the Development Plans, this 1959 population was 19,000 greater than the 1971

* See footnote to Table 28.

† The 1959 figures have been taken from the *Annual Estimates of the Population of England and Wales and of Local Authority Areas,* 1959. This publication appears at least a year before the Annual Statistical Review.

‡ In spite of the decline, the overspill problem in the County of London during the years 1956 to 1972 is now estimated to be greater than the original estimate for the whole of the twenty-year plan period. See footnote (‡) on p. 89 above.

forecast. If the Green Belt Ring continues to increase in population at the present rate, it will have a 1971 population of two million—433,000 greater than the forecast.

3. The Outer Country Ring had a 1959 population of 1,299,000. This was 78,000 less than the Greater London Plan target and 111,000 less than the 1971 forecast. There is, therefore, still a considerable amount of reception capacity. Nevertheless the rate of growth is increasing. Between 1938 and 1946 the average annual total population increase was about 12,500; between 1946 and 1951 it was 17,000; and between 1951 and 1959 it was 36,000. During the last three years it has been 42,000; if this rate were to continue the 1971 forecast would be exceeded by 1962.

4. The population of the Greater London Planning Region as a whole increased by 308,000 between 1938 and 1959, and at the later date was 115,000 below the 1971 forecast. In view of the very large natural increase (which totalled 517,000 between 1946 and 1956)* this rate of growth is much lower than would have been achieved had pre-war experience been repeated. In the eight years 1931 to 1939 the Region gained about half a million people from other parts of the country. By contrast there was no net migration into the area during the seven years 1951 to 1958. Indeed, during this period there was a net outward migration amounting to some 35,000. Though the figure is small, particularly in relation to the inevitable margin of error, it suggests that there has been some net movement out of the Region. It certainly suggests that the aim of restricting the growth of population in the Region has been achieved.

This conclusion cannot be accepted without qualification, but before discussing population changes in any more detail, it is useful to turn to changes in employment.

EMPLOYMENT

It was an essential feature of the Greater London Plan that employment in the Region should not increase. Indeed, there was to be a dispersal of some employment beyond the metro-politan influence. The dearth of relevant statistics is such that no complete

* See M.H.L.G. *Annual Report for* 1956, Cmnd. 193, page 74.

TABLE 30: Population Changes and Targets in the Greater London Planning Region

	Resident Population 1938	*Civilian Population 1946*	*Home Population 1951*	*Home Population 1958*	*Home Population 1959*	*G.L. Plan Target Population*	*Development Plans 1971 Forecast*
Inner London	5,974,000	4,813,000	5,137,000	4,932,000	4,902,000	4,718,000	4,847,000
Suburban Ring	2,366,000	2,563,000	2,684,000	2,670,000	2,671,000	2,399,000	2,749,000
Green Belt Ring	977,000	1,146,000	1,322,000	1,554,000	1,586,000	1,288,000	1,567,000
Outer Country Ring	833,000	923,000	1,008,000	1,259,000	1,299,000	1,377,000	1,410,000
G.L.P. Region	10,150,000	9,445,000	10,151,000	10,415,000	10,458,000	9,782,000	10,573,000

	*Change in Home Population 1951–1958**		
	Natural Increase	*Migration*	*Total Change*
Inner London	135,253	− 340,483	− 205,230
Suburban Ring	46,247	− 59,827	− 13,580
Green Belt Ring	63,858	+ 168,342	+ 232,200
Outer Country Ring	54,233	+ 196,683	+ 250,916
G.L.P. Region	299,591	− 35,285	+ 264,306

* See footnote to Table 28.

account of post-war changes can be attempted. Nevertheless, some significant conclusions emerge from such data as are available.

Between 1952 and 1958 the total working population of England and Wales increased by 978,000 or 5%. Of this increase 40% took place within an area some forty to fifty miles from the centre of London; 21% took place within the built-up area of the London conurbation and 12% was concentrated in the central nine square miles.[91]

TABLE 31: Increase in Total Working Population in the London Area as a Proportion of the National Increase, 1952–1958

	Increase in Total Working Population	*Increase as % of National Increase*
England and Wales	978,000	100
Within 40–50 miles from centre of London	400,000	40
Built-up area of the London Conurbation	205,000	21
Central London	117,000	12

It is difficult to reconcile these facts with the declared policy of restraining industrial growth in the London area. However, we know that 'statistics suggest that additional employment in the London Conurbation arising from schemes requiring a Board of Trade certificate account for less than 20% of the total annual increase in the London labour force', and we are assured that 'most of this could not reasonably be moved elsewhere'. Indeed 'the operation of industrial controls by the Board of Trade in the London area is almost as tight as public opinion in a democratic society is prepared to accept. A marginal percentage of the additional floor space approved by the Board and the planning authorities could conceivably have been forced out of London by a slightly more stringent policy, but it could never be a significant amount'.*

* A.G.Powell, *The Recent Development of Greater London*[91]. Detailed statistics are not generally available, nor is any detailed information on the administration of Industrial Development Certificate control. Powell's judgement cannot therefore be substantiated or questioned by an outsider.

This would suggest that the increase in employment has stemmed largely from growth which is not subject to control by the Board of Trade—the expansion of existing firms either in expansions of less than 5,000 square feet or in existing structures. But of greater importance has been the spate of new office building. Indeed during the period 1954 to 1957 factory employment in the County of London fell by over 18,000.* Again statistics are difficult to come by, but some relevant information is provided by a survey carried out by the London County Council in 1956. In the central area† between 1948 and 1955

'planning consents were given to new office buildings and the conversions of existing premises to office use which would provide about 42,000,000 square feet of new office accommodation. Of this accommodation over 14,500,000 square feet had been provided by 31st January 1956, nearly 10,000,000 square feet in new buildings was in course of erection, and the construction of about 17,500,000 square feet had not yet been commenced'.‡

TABLE 32: Additional Office Floor Space in the Central Area of London Allowed by Planning Permissions given mid–1948 to 31st December 1955§ (in thousands of square feet)

	New Buildings	*Change of use*	*Total*
Total Approved 1948–1955	35,629	6,094	41,723
Completed 31.1.56	8,334	6,094	14,428
Being erected, 31.1.56	9,877	–	9,877
Approved but not commenced 31.1.56	17,418	–	17,418

* London County Council Planning Committee *Report*.[177] This decline represents 'an average reduction of one per cent per year, the percentage reduction being greatest in the central boroughs'. See also *First Review of the L.C.C. Development Plan,* Volume I, Chapter 5.

† Comprising the City of London, Holborn, almost the whole of Westminster and Finsbury, the southern part of St. Marylebone and St. Paneras, and small parts of Bermondsey, Chelsea, Lambeth, Shoreditch, Southwark and Stepney.

‡ Revised figures collected for the First Review of the County Development Plan show that the total office floor space approved between 1948 and 1955 was 33 million square feet, not 42 million. The total for the period 1948 to 1958 was 44 million square feet.

§ Based on table given in London County Council Minutes, 17th July 1956. The figure for new buildings excludes minor schemes in the City of London; these are included in the figure for change of use.

Allowing 150 square feet of office space per person the total office accommodation approved will be occupied by about 278,000 office workers. This, of course, does not represent a net increase since some of the extra space provided will be used to provide better working conditions. It is thought by the L.C.C. that the 27,295,000 square feet approved but either not completed or not started might provide for a net increase of 150,000 office workers (with a gross increase of 182,000). The total number of office workers in the central area in 1956 was estimated at between 550,000 and 600,000. Thus approvals already given will increase the number by between twenty and twenty-five per cent. Using the same assumptions for the period 1948 to 1956, there has been an increase in office employment in structures approved by the planning authority of about 79,000. In fact, the total increase (i.e. including employment in existing structures) in the central area has probably been greater. The L.C.C. suggest that during recent years it has averaged at least 15,000. Powell, though stressing the inadequacy of the available statistics, puts it at about 20,000.*

In the Inner and Suburban Rings outside the Administrative County, there has been a considerable increase in manufacturing employment, particularly along the North Circular and Great West Roads, in Wembley, and in the Lea and Wandle Valleys.[91]

In total, employment in the Greater London Planning Region increased by 9% between 1948 and 1955 compared with a national increase of about 6%. 'London is, therefore, not only expanding as by far the greatest single centre of employment in the country, but is also increasing its share of national employment.'

This growth is by no means restricted to the built-up Inner and Suburban Rings. Industry has been provided in some of the L.C.C. quasi-satellites (Boreham Wood, Debden, Hainault, etc). Though this has mitigated the journey-to-work problem in these estates it has involved the creation of new industrial centres on the periphery of the Conurbation, †

* Both figures refer to the increase in total employment (i.e. not only office employment) but since factory employment is small and is actually declining, the figures must apply entirely to office employment.

† By the end of 1958, 2.3 million square feet of factory floor space had been provided in the quasi-satellites. The number of employees was estimated to be 10,000.[135]

In the outer areas the most outstanding growth has been in the New Towns. The fundamental conception underlying the new town policy was that population growth should be accompanied by a comparable growth in employment. Despite criticism by the London housing authorities, who expected a greater direct relief to their housing problems than they have obtained,[24,63] this policy has been adhered to and has proved highly successful. Up to December 1959, 53,000 jobs in new factories had been provided. This compares with a population increase of 209,000.* Industrial provision is generally somewhat in advance of population movements.

TABLE 33: Estimated Industrial Building and Employment in the London New Towns, 31st December 1959†

	New Industrial Buildings Completed	*Number of Employees (a)*	*Industrial Buildings Under Construction sq. ft.*	*Population Increase from Date of Designation to 31st December 1959*
Basildon	1,512,678	6,705	296,375	27,000
Bracknell	942,497	5,137	115,602	12,700
Crawley	2,258,415	9,794	61,600	41,200
Harlow	2,293,284	11,723	69,784	44,200
Hatfield	136,320	551	6,000	9,500
Hemel Hempstead	1,533,912	6,300	26,000	30,000
Stevenage	1,851,930	9,000	163,361	31,000
Welwyn Garden City	1,457,387	3,885	16,080	13,500
Total	11,986,423	53,095	754,802	209,100

(a) Prior to designation the number of employees in the new towns (excluding Basildon) was 20,000. No figures are available for Basildon. All figures in the table refer to developments taking place after the date of designation.

Industrial development in the outer areas is not restricted to planned overspill schemes:

'The widespread expansion of industry in almost every town and village of Greater London north of the Thames has promoted further conurban growth. Employment around Watford has increased by over 9,000 or 16% in six years, around St. Albans the increase is 3,800 (15%), around Romford and Hornchurch it is 7,500 (20%). Former villages, particularly those along main radial roads, have their own share of expansion in similar or even greater proportion. London Colney and Welham Green are both bursting

* Including natural increase.

† These estimates were published in *Town and Country Planning,* Vol XXVIII. No. 1, January 1960.

at the seams between Barnet and St. Albans. The paper, printing, engineering, metal, and food industries of King's Langley are creating a pressure for housing which bids well to close the gap between Watford and Hemel Hempstead.'[91]

Much of this industrial development is expansion *in situ* of modern plants which are benefiting from an expanding market for the goods they produce. In other words, there is a concentration of modern expanding industries in the south-east.

'In 1949, Eastern region had about one-half of its total insured numbers in seven industries that accounted for over 80% of the increased numbers in all industries in the country generally; on the other hand it had only about one-third of its total insured numbers in four industries that accounted for about 90% of the decreased numbers in all industries in the country generally.'[170]

Furthermore, in industries which are expanding the rate of expansion is greater in the south-east than elsewhere; and in industries which are contracting the rate of contraction is lower:

'Southern region expanded in three of the seven conspicuously-expanding industries at a rate markedly higher than in the country generally; and in three of the four conspicuously-contracting industries it lost numbers at a rate considerably lower than in the country generally.'[170]

As Powell puts it,' the modern consumer and capital goods which go to make our rising material standards of living are all too well represented among the industries in the expanding London conurbation.... These industries are housed in modern factories with modern plant, with a great market on their immediate doorstep and the greatest cargo port in Britain readily at hand to provide facilities for export to all parts of the world.'

Such is the position in and around the Greater London Planning Region. Employment has increased greatly, both in absolute terms and in relation to the rest of the country. In the central area factory employment is declining, but this is more than counterbalanced by the increase in office employment. In the Suburban Ring the traditional centres of industrial employment have grown; and in the outer areas there has been a rapid development both in long-established and in new settlements.

At the same time there has been a substantial movement of population from Inner and Suburban London to the Green Belt and Outer Rings. In the case of the new towns the population and employment growth are in balance. Elsewhere the picture is one of a maldistribution of population and employment. In general, areas which are losing population have had the largest increases in employment, whereas areas which are gaining population have not experienced an equivalent growth in employment. As Powell puts it, 'changes in employment and movements of population are not in harmony'.

The effect of the decline in the population of Inner London and the increase in office employment in the centre is, of course, a worsening of the journey-to-work problem.

The Journey to Work

Despite a greater use of private cars, the number of people travelling by public transport to work in the central area of London in the morning rush hours (7.0 a.m. to 10 a.m.) increased from 1,097,200 in 1949 to 1,148,400 in 1958.*

The daily influx in 1959 is 'probably 33% greater than in 1951 when 240,000 workers moved into the conurbation daily'.[91] The commuting area is now enormous: 'Hemel Hempstead, Romford, Watford, and Slough—even Luton, Reading, Gillingham, and Southend are closely interlinked by a daily interchange of workers and are increasingly tied to central London by the ebb and flow of a great tide of daily commuters'.

* London Transport Executive figures. The data are based on special one-day counts of traffic made during November of each year, and are thus liable to variations due to weather or other conditions not associated with general trends.

The figures for 1952 to 1958 are reproduced in the L.C.C. Review together with some date on the increase in private transport. Between 1952 and 1958 the number of people entering Central London during the morning rush hour increased as follows:

By private car: from 45,000 to 79,000 (76%)
By motor cycle: from 8,000 to 17,000 (113%)
By pedal cycle: decrease from 16,000 to 14,000 (-13%)

The total increase was therefore 41,000 or 59%. By comparison, during the same period the number of people entering by public transport increased by 27,000 or 2%.

TABLE 34: Estimated Peak Traffic Entering the Central Area of London 1949–1958

	British Railways	*London Transport Railways*	*London Transport Road Services*	*Total*
1949	348,300	461,500	287,400	1,097,200
1950	381,400	460,600	295,100	1,137,100
1951	375,500	447,900	291,400	1,114,800
1952	382,400	453,000	285,700	1,121,100
1953	373,300	450,100	281,200	1,104,600
1954	395,900	459,500	268,900	1,124,300
1955	399,900	472,300	270,600	1,142,800
1956	413,500	469,400	259,300	1,142,200
1957	425,800	460,200	258,000	1,144,000
1958	440,600	474,000	233,800	1,148,400

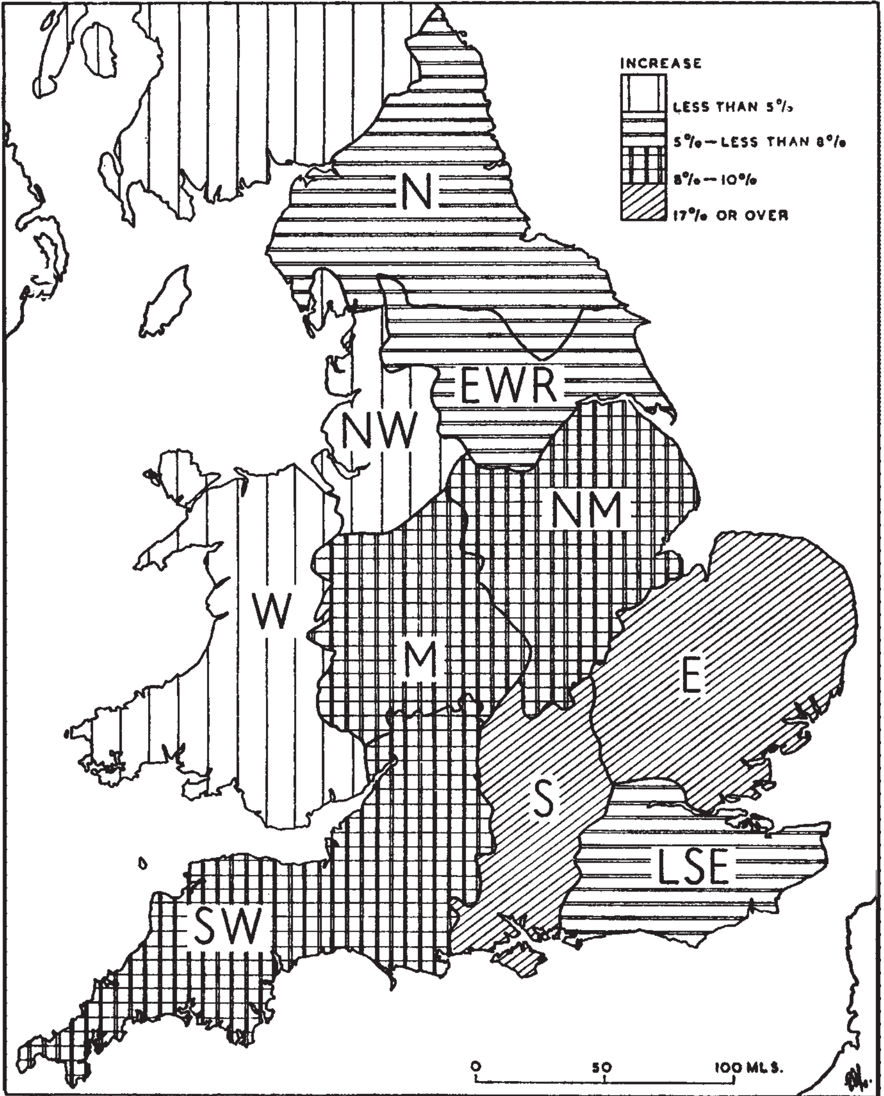
Though the most significant aspect of this journey-to-work matrix is the daily ebb and flow to and from central London, the pattern is becoming increasingly complex. The large centres of employment in the outer areas draw their labour not only from their immediate vicinities but also from suburban London and the towns and villages beyond the G.L.P. Region.

In short, the present position cannot be thought of solely in terms of a spreading out of population and employment within the boundaries of the G.L.P. Region. Rather there is a very complex extension of the 'Metropolitan Region' itself.

THE EXTENSION OF THE METROPOLITAN REGION

The boom conditions in the London Region are shared by towns on its periphery—Reading, Chelmsford, Southend, and particularly South Bedfordshire. 'These towns are increasingly drawing their labour from the fringes of the London pool; their dormitory villages are shared with London commuters.'[91]

Thus conurban growth is increasing. London is not being restrained: it is exploding over great areas of south-east England. Published employment statistics are not as useful as they might be, but the increases for the Eastern and Southern Regions are a reflection of the expansion that is taking place in the south-east corner of England.* Between 1949 and 1957† the total working population



5. REGIONAL EMPLOYMENT CHANGES, 1949–1957.

of Great Britain increased by 1,529,000 or 7.5%. The increase in the Eastern and South Regions was 18% and 17% respectively. According

* The figures for the following three regions in the south-east of England refer to the following areas:

to Powell the major part of the increase in these regions took place within forty miles of central London.

TABLE 35: Estimated Number of Employees at end-May 1949 and end-May 1957: Analysis by Region

Region	*1949*	*1957*	*Change 1949–1957*	
			Number	%
London and South-Eastern	5,109,000	5,494,000	385,000	7·5
Eastern	1,044,000	1,232,000	188,000	18·0
Southern	919,000	1,075,000	156,000	17·0
South-Western	1,049,000	1,137,000	88,000	8·4
Midland	1,949,000	2,138,000	189,000	9·7
North-Midland	1,379,000	1,501,000	122,000	8·8
East and West Ridings	1,769,000	1,869,000	100,000	5·6
North-Western	2,886,000	2,997,000	111,000	3·8
Northern	1,219,000	1,286,000	67,000	5·5
Scotland	2,087,000	2,165,000	78,000	3·7
Wales	911,000	956,000	45,000	4·9
Great Britain	20,321,000	21,850,000	1,529,000	7·5

It is apparent that the Greater London Planning Region is now too restricted to permit a realistic analysis of population and employment changes. There is now a fifth ring, beyond the Outer Country Ring, which is just as much a part of the contemporary Metropolitan Region as the Outer Country Ring was of the Abercrombie Region. This Ring, like the Green Belt and Outer Country Rings, contains large settlements which have shared the economic expansion which is characteristic of the London Region. But it has also received some of the migrants from Inner and Suburban

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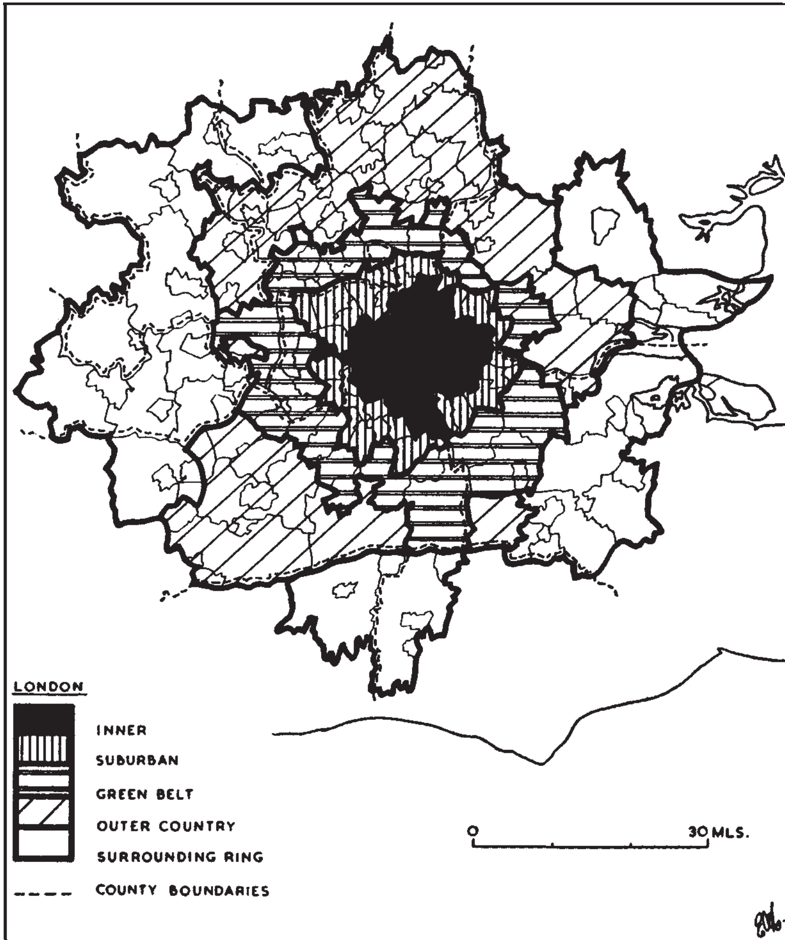
London and South-Eastern: London A.C., Kent, Middlesex, Surrey, East and West Sussex, and the Metropolitan parts of Essex and Hertfordshire.

Eastern: Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, Isle of Ely, Norfolk, East and West Suffolk, and the remaining parts of Essex and Hertfordshire.

Southern: Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Dorset, Hampshire, Isle of Wight, and Oxfordshire.

† Figures are available for 1958 (*Ministry of Labour Gazette,* June 1959, page 207), but comparison is made difficult since Dorset (excluding Poolc) has been transferred from the Southern to the South-Western Region.



6. THE GREATER LONDON PLANNING REGION AND ITS SURROUNDING RING

London, and is increasingly inter-linked with the London area by an ever-expanding army of commuters. It is difficult to draw a boundary for this Ring since the spread of the Metropolitan Region has by no means halted. It certainly includes Reading in the west and Southend in the east, Luton in the north and Burgess Hill in the south. The Ring which includes these towns* had a 1938 population of 1,263,000 and a 1959 population of 1,730,000. Between 1951 and 1958 natural increase amounted to 52,000 and inward

* The constituent local authority areas are listed in an Appendix.

TABLE 36: Population Changes in the Greater London Planning Region and its Surrounding Ring, 1938–1958

	Resident Population 1938	*Civilian Population 1946*	*Home Population 1951*	*Home Population 1958*	*Home Population 1959*
G.L.P. Region	10,150,000	9,445,000	10,151,000	10,415,000	10,458,000
Surrounding Ring	1,263,000	1,332,000	1,502,000	1,692,000	1,730,000
Total	11,413,000	10,777,000	11,653,000	12,107,000	12,188,000

	*Changes in Home Population 1951–1958**		
	Natural Increase	*Migration*	*Total Change*
G.L.P. Region	299,591	− 35,285	+ 264,306
Surrounding Ring	52,392	+ 137,577	+ 189,969
	351,983	+ 102,292	+ 454,275

* See footnote to Table 28.

migration to 137,500. The addition of this Ring to the Greater London Planning Region significantly alters the picture suggested by the statistics previously presented. The G.L.P. Region lost 35,000 people by net outward migration: the larger Region gained 102,000. Thus, this 'Metropolitan Region' is attracting population from other regions of the country. Furthermore, the migration is certainly much greater than is indicated by the foregoing analysis. This was, of necessity, confined to net changes. In fact there is a continual movement of retired people out of the Region, particularly to the coastal areas of Kent, Sussex, and Hampshire. Their place is taken by young workers migrating from the north, Wales, and Scotland. It is difficult to trace this movement with any precision or to assess how significant it is. The situation is complicated by the migration of retired people to the south coast from other regions. Nevertheless, there is some important evidence of migration in figures published by the Ministry of Labour.* These show the annual total migration into and from each Region* and the net gain or loss. Table 37 collates the net change for each year for which figures are available. Between May 1951 and May 1958,

* *Ministry of Labour Gazette, June* issue, 1953 to 1958. The figures exclude movements of workpeople who entered employment for the first time during the year (e.g. school-leavers from other Regions coming to London to take up their first jobs).

TABLE 37: Net Inter-Regional Migration of Employees, 1951–1958

	Year ending May							*Total May 1951 to May 1958*		
Region	*1952*	*1953*	*1954*	*1955*	*1956*	*1957*	*1958*	*Males*	*Females*	*Total*
London and South-Eastern, Eastern and Southern	+ 14,000	+ 26,000	+ 20,000	+ 27,000	+ 22,000	+ 33,000	+ 21,000	+ 92,000	+ 71,000	+ 163,000
South-Western	− 4,000	+ 1,000	+ 3,000	− 6,000	+ 1,000	− 1,000	+ 6,000	Nil	Nil	Nil
Midland	+ 9,000	− 1,000	+ 1,000	+ 6,000	− 4,000	− 15,000	Nil	+ 5,000	− 9,000	− 4,000
North-Midland	+ 6,000	Nil	− 5,000	Nil	+ 4,000	+ 1,000	− 2,000	+ 10,000	− 6,000	+ 4,000
East and West Ridings	− 9,000	− 6,000	Nil	− 6,000	− 5,000	+ 5,000	− 12,000	− 21,000	− 12,000	− 33,000
North-Western	− 3,000	− 10,000	− 4,000	Nil	Nil	− 5,000	− 5,000	− 18,000	− 9,000	− 27,000
Northern	− 5,000	+ 1,000	+ 1,000	− 9,000	− 1,000	− 6,000	Nil	− 13,000	− 6,000	− 19,000
Scotland	− 9,000	− 7,000	− 8,000	− 7,000	− 10,000	− 8,000	− 5,000	− 37,000	− 17,000	− 54,000
Wales	+ 1,000	− 4,000	− 8,000	− 5,000	− 7,000	− 4,000	− 3,000	− 18,000	− 12,000	− 30,000

163,000 employees moved from other Regions into the London and South-Eastern, Eastern, and Southern Regions. The figures do not show where these migrants came from, but the persistent annual net migration from Wales and all Regions north of the North-Midland Region is suggestive. Certainly the figures show that there is a net movement southwards particularly to London and its adjoining Regions.

Unfortunately the Southern Region extends to the Hampshire coast and includes the whole of Dorset and Oxfordshire. Nevertheless, considered in conjunction with the figures of increased employment within forty miles of central London, these figures appear to corroborate the view that total migration into the Metropolitan Region is much greater than the net figures indicate. Powell suggests that there is a definite migration cycle:

> 'It would appear that young workers are being drawn, into central London especially, from all parts of the country. When they marry they make an initial home broadly within the County of London. As the family grows the tendency is to move out into the suburbs and, when maximum salary is reached, possibly out into the country beyond the suburbs—followed by ultimate retirement away from London entirely.'

His conclusion is that this migration cycle provides the 'basic mechanism for the expansion of London', a mechanism which 'cannot be checked whilst the economic life of London remains as vigorous as it is today'.

* The figures, of course, do not reveal whether a change in the regional location of a job entails a change of residence. Some of the movement may mean 'no more than a change of employment from a firm on one side of the Regional border to a firm on the other side, or the removal of the firm itself to new premises, without involving any change of residence for the person concerned. This is more likely to happen where Regional boundaries run through built-up areas, and for this reason the London and South-Eastern, Eastern, and Southern Regions are treated as one Region' for the purpose of these statistics. (*Ministry of Labour Gazette,* June 1959, Vol. LXVII, page 207).

THE EXPLODING METROPOLIS

The facts of the present situation are clear. To summarize, though there has been a considerable thinning out of population in the Inner and Suburban Rings of London, this has been accompanied, not by an appropriate reduction in employment, but by a very large increase, particularly in new offices. Much of the population overspill has been housed in dormitory areas. The population of the G.L.P. Region was, in 1959, 676,000 greater than envisaged by Abercrombie, but 115,000 less than the 1971 forecast. The Region is not gaining population by net migration. However, in view of the conurban growth in the Outer Country Ring and the surrounding area, it is misleading to restrict analysis to the G.L.P. Region. Adding a fifth Ring to the G.L.P. Region belies the suggestion that London is growing solely by natural increase. Between 1951 and 1958 this larger Metropolitan Region* gained over 100,000 migrants from other parts of the country. The contention that there is substantial migration into London is strengthened by the suggestion that an (unknown) number of retired people have moved beyond the metropolitan influence. Employment in both the G.L.P. Region and the wider Metropolitan Region has increased at a rate considerably above the national average. The journey to work problem has been exacerbated by the growth of central area employment and suburban dormitory housing estates. It is also probably more complex now than it was ten years ago. The growing employment centres in the outer areas are drawing labour from a very wide area. These new centres are creating a demand for housing which is threatening the green belts which separate them from the urban mass of the London Conurbation.

Underlying much of this demand for dwellings is the increasing ratio of households to population which was discussed in Part One of this book. Together with the large natural increase this has resulted in a reduction in the capacity of the Green Belt and Outer Country Ring towns to accommodate families from Inner London. Many of these 'receiving areas' are rapidly approaching their 1971 population targets and will, in the near future, face an overspill

* See Appendix page 203.

problem of their own. The demand for land shows no sign of decreasing. On the contrary it can be expected to increase substantially. Redevelopment of the inner areas at modern standards will inevitably mean more land for housing, schools, and open spaces. The 'post-war bulge' will shortly emerge as a juvenile employment problem, necessitating further injections of industry into the Metropolitan Region. This will rapidly be followed by a demand for more housing as the juveniles become young married couples.

The increase in the population of the Green Belt, Outer Country and Surrounding Rings is of the order of 80,000 a year (including natural increase). This is equivalent to one new town every year, or to use James's even more telling phrase, 'In bits and pieces a Manchester has been added to outer London in eight years.'[71]

The Green Belt is now under severe pressure. Whether this can be resisted is the major problem facing the Home Counties. Property and land prices are soaring. The demand from speculative builders for higher densities and lower standards is increasing. But the Green Belt policy alone is merely negative: it cannot be operated without the complementary positive policy of providing alternative sites for new development. In the absence of these sites, the pressure is leap-frogging to more distant areas—particularly those on the main lines of communication to London. The electrification of further suburban and main line railways and the new road programme will serve only to intensify the problem. The outlook is bleak. The new towns programme is beginning to run down, but facilities for rapid long-distance commuting are increasing. The new electric service to the Thanet towns, for example, has been welcomed by the local authorities in the area as 'heralding a new era of prosperity for Kent—meaning more housing development and more commuters'. Similarly in Essex: 'last year leaflets were left in the coaches of the Clacton-line holiday trains urging people to move their homes to the resort and to take advantage of the new electric rail services every day.'* It is a mistake to assume that long-distance travel is restricted to the wealthy. Middle-income families are prepared to make great sacrifices

* The quotations are from Trevor Philpott's articles in the *Sunday Times* of June 7th and I4th entitled 'The Plight of the Commuter'. More recently, British Railways have extolled the attractions of Clacton—'only 100 minutes journey' from London.

in order to obtain a house with a garden; and as prices shoot up in the London suburbs the cost of the season ticket to places further afield appears less and less of an obstacle.

The outlying planning authorities are becoming more and more apprehensive (though their apprehension is not always shared by District Councils eager to attract more rateable value to their areas). The pressure is increased to the extent that population moves from other parts of the country to the expanding towns on the outskirts of the Metropolitan Region. In Berkshire:

> 'A considerable increase in population has taken place in the east and south of the County, with immigration the preponderant factor in growth. Evidence as to the source of such immigration is not conclusive, but while many no doubt originate in the Greater London area, there are indications that many other parts of the Country are involved, and that what is now occurring is a continuation of the pre-war concentration of population in the Metro-politan area, which because of the exhaustion of supplies of building land in the inner areas and the very limited opportunities for development in the Suburban and Green Belt rings of the Greater London Plan, is now settling in the outer country areas.
>
> 'A continuing demand for land for housing and for industrial and commercial undertakings has been experienced which, with the exception of the Bracknell area, can rarely be said to be clearly in conformity with the objectives of the Greater London Plan.'[128]

As the Green Belt is extended so is the area susceptible to the metropolitan influence. Hampshire is a case in point. The Hampshire coast is subject to great pressure for development not only from the three County Boroughs of Portsmouth, Southampton and Bournemouth:

> 'but also from external sources arising from restrictive measures, practised by adjoining County Councils as a result of the Metro-politan Green Belt restrictions, and the extension thereof, which now preclude substantial urban developments southwards from the outer fringes of London to the Hampshire border. This has meant that development which normally might have taken place in the Metropolitan Green Belt area, as extended, is now forced to jump it and settle in suitably located areas beyond it. The coastal belt of Hampshire is becoming increasingly popular for this purpose, owing to the apparent attraction of the coast coupled with the nearness of three major centres of population situated thereon. These three great urban centres of population are themselves overspilling into the same coastal area, and,

coupled with the influx of development originating externally, mainly from the Greater London area, the consequential building pressures being built up in southern Hampshire south of the chalk belt have assumed alarming proportions'.[132]

Much of the pressure in this area is, of course, from families wishing to retire near the sea, but the commuters are increasingly in evidence. The cost of a season ticket to London is out of the question for the majority of families, but commuting to the employment centres on the southern side of the Metro-politan Region is an attractive proposition. And as the standard of living rises it can be expected that an increasing number of middle-class people will be prepared to travel enormous distances in order to own their own homes in desirable surroundings. One has only to look across the Atlantic to see that there are great future possibilities for long-distance commuting.

A POLICY OF DEFEATISM?

'The economic background of the Barlow Report is a thing of the past and planning based on it is equally outdated. The expanding conurbation is the product of geographical and economic forces too powerful for man to reverse. He can only, within limits, direct them into convenient channels.' Such was the main conclusion drawn by Powell from his study of recent developments in Greater London. Less controversial was his plea for a new regional plan which could take account of 'current realities'. Without a regional framework the explosive forces so apparent in the Metroplitan Region are likely to gain the upper hand, destroy the Green Belt, and 'weld great new rings of urban development on to the core of the London conurbation as we know it today'.

In essence the argument is that the growth of London cannot be halted; all that can be done is to attempt to steer the inevitable development into the 'convenient' areas. The implications of this (as seen by the present author) are that the Metropolitan Region will continue to expand, drawing more and more of the younger age groups from other Regions and shedding the more affluent of its

retired families into the outer areas, particularly to the south coast; that the economic (and social?) advantages of this expansion are indisputable; and that long-distance overspill of population and employment is no longer a feasible proposition.

A discussion of these issues must be set in a national framework, but, before attempting this, it may be useful to describe in some detail the position in one of the provincial conurbations.

IX

MANCHESTER

THE PROBLEM of redeveloping the central urban areas of the Manchester Conurbation* has, for nearly forty years, been recognized as one demanding the co-operation of a multitude of local authorities. A Manchester and District Joint Planning Advisory Committee was set up in 1920 to cover not only Manchester and the immediately adjacent authorities but the whole of an area of 1,020 square miles from Rawtenstall in the north to the Staffordshire boundary in the south, and from Warrington and Billinge in the west to Tintwistle and Chapelen-le-Frith in the east. Following a report of this Committee,[122] seventeen Executive Joint Planning Committees were set up to prepare statutory schemes under the Town Planning Act, 1925, with the Advisory Committee (reconstituted as the South Lancashire and North Cheshire Advisory Planning Committee) providing a means of co-ordination. The effectiveness of this machinery was never put to the test: despite much goodwill on the part of the constituent authorities no plans appeared until 1945. In that year the City of Manchester Plan[124] and the Manchester Regional Plan[123] were published. These were followed in 1947 by the third volume of a 'trilogy of planning surveys'—the Advisory Plan for South Lancashire and North Cheshire.[125] On one point all these plans were in full agreement:*

* The misleading term 'South-East Lancashire Conurbation' is used by the Registrar-General. See Census 1951, *Report on Greater London and Five Other Conurbations,* page xvi. In 1951 about an eighth of the population of the Conurbation lived in the Cheshire part.

the redevelopment of the Manchester region was dependent on the provision of new and expanded towns. Of the 364,000 houses in the Manchester and District Region† over a half exceeded a density of twenty-four to the acre; 43% exceeded thirty to the acre and 17% exceeded forty-two to the acre. Of the 63,000 houses in the last category, 41,600 were in Manchester and 19,000 were in Salford. More land was required not only for housing development but for open space, schools, industry, and roads. Redevelopment providing 'adequate standards of density and open space provision' would result in an overspill of 217,000 people from Manchester, Salford, and Stretford, of which only 79,000 could be accommodated in the Region.

It is extremely difficult to obtain more up-to-date figures of the overspill problem in the Conurbation. However, Table 38, which is based in the main on statistics given in the Lancashire Development Plan, gives some idea of the scale of the problem as it was calculated in 1951. The 'ultimate' overspill was reckoned to be 367,500, but of this only 188,600 was proposed during the period of the Development Plans, i.e. from 1951 to 1971. These figures can be regarded as being only a very rough-and-ready approximation. Many of them have been revised downwards since 1951. Furthermore, the total does not show the overspill from the Conurbation as a whole: it only shows the overspill from the congested administrative areas within the Conurbation. Much of it is being accommodated within the boundaries of other constituent local authorities. Nevertheless, whatever allowance is made for the inadequacy of the statistics it is abundantly clear that the problem is a very real one. Furthermore, as the Manchester Regional Plan pointed out, 'while it may be possible to accommodate some part of the overspill by additions to the existing small towns, it would appear that the problem may also necessitate the bold development of one or more satellite towns.'*

* It should, however, be pointed out that R. Nicholas, the present Manchester City Surveyor, was the author of two of the plans and co-author with M.J. Hellier of the third.

† The Manchester and District Regional Planning Committee's area covered Manchester, Salford, Eccles, Middleton, Prestwich, Stretford, Swinton & Pendlebury, Audenshaw, Denton, Droylsden, Failsworth, Irlam, Urmston, and Worsley. The 1938 population of this area was 1,297,000.

The City of Manchester Plan added a note of urgency: 'only four years can be allowed to pass before the first few thousand houses are actually built in the new satellite.'

TABLE 38: The Overspill Problem in the Manchester Conurbation (1951 Calculations)

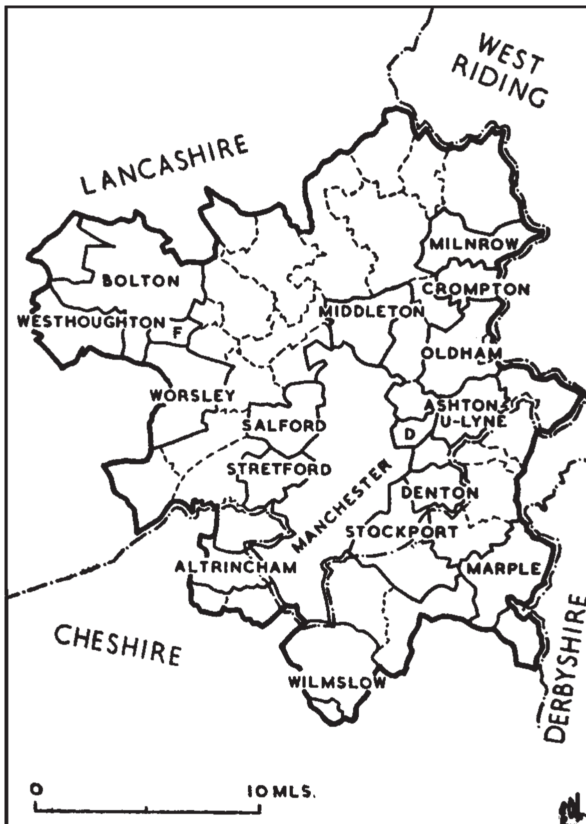
Overspilling Authority	*Ultimate Overspill*	*Proposed Overspill to 1971*
Manchester C.B.	214,500	99,500
Salford C.B.	62,000	40,000
Stockport C.B.	15,000†	15,000
Oldham C.B.	17,500	14,100
Bolton C.B.	30,000	5,000
Ashton-under-Lyne M.B.	6,000	2,000
Farnworth M.B.	5,200	980
Stretford M.B.	13,000	8,600
Droylsden U.D.	3,100	2,900
Lees U.D.	1,200	500
	367,500	188,580

OVERSPILL IN LANCASHIRE

The necessity for new towns in the Region was accepted by the Government of the day. Indeed, Lewis Silkin, when Minister of Town and Country Planning, personally asked Lancashire County Council to find sites for two or three new towns for the overspill from the Manchester and Merseyside Conurbations. Three sites were proposed in Sutton Brown's Preliminary Plan for Lancashire: at Leyland, Garstang, and Parbold (in the Rural District of Wigan), but since it was 'understood' that these would

* R.Nicholas, Manchester Regional Plan, 1945,[123] page 34. The use of the term 'satellite' was unfortunate: it implied a degree of dependency on a 'parent' city which is quite foreign to the principle underlying the post-war new towns policy. There was still at this time, some confusion as to the difference between 'new' and 'satellite' towns. It is charitable to assume that Manchester's use of the latter term was a reflection of this confusion, but others have detected more sinister implications.

† Ultimate overspill had not been agreed in 1951.



7. THE MANCHESTER CONURBATION
(F—FARNWORTH; D—DROYLSDEN)

not all be approved for the twenty-year Development Plan, only one (Parbold) was submitted formally.* When the Plan was approved, in 1956, the new town proposal was deleted, though the question of a Town Development Act scheme in the area was 'left open'. By this time, of course, the new town policy was no longer one which was looked upon with favour by the Government. Thus responsibility for tackling the overspill problem in Lancashire was placed firmly in the hands of the local authorities. It is important to appreciate just what this entails.

* The actual proposal was for Skelmersdale, a few miles to the south of Parbold.

The building of 'housing estates' is a function which local authorities have undertaken, with varying degrees of success, since at least the end of the First World War. This is a relatively straightforward job which presents no problems which local authorities are incapable of solving. But the building of new towns or the expansion of existing towns raises problems of a quite different nature. One of these outweighs all others in its importance, namely, the securing of the necessary industrial development. This is impossible, on the required scale, if the active co-operation of the Government (via the Board of Trade) is not forthcoming. But, in the context of post-war policy, the Board has had to give priority to the claims of the Development Areas—South Lancashire, North-East Lancashire and Merseyside. The needs of these areas (particularly Merseyside) have been clear and urgent, whereas the need to provide additional employment in areas which might receive overspill has been indefinite and—in the framework of a policy for dealing with unemployment—of no urgency. Had there been a veritable spate of industrialists wishing to set up in Lancashire the problem would have been much simpler. But, on the contrary, the difficulty has been in persuading sufficient industrialists to move into the Development Areas to keep unemployment down to an acceptable level.

Furthermore, the complex industrial character of the Manchester Conurbation makes the task of dispersing industry from the central areas a particularly difficult one:

'Manchester's industries employ not only its own workers but also many thousands who live outside the sub-region. In the present scheme of things many districts are to some extent Manchester's dormitories, and it is not conceivable that this relationship will be, or can be, seriously modified for some years to come. It would seem desirable that the central authority should divert as much new industry as possible away from the Manchester area and into the reception areas for overspill population and should ensure that as a general rule mobile industries displaced from the redeveloped central areas are re-sited in the semi-dormitory districts. Only so can the new development areas gradually acquire a degree of economic independence of the Manchester sub-region. The establishment of their character as self-contained communities must proceed at the relatively slow pace of industrial development. In the meantime the new development areas will for the most part stand in a satellite

relationship to the Manchester district, with the consequent heavy burden of daily travel to work.'[133]

The complex industrial web of the Manchester Conurbation needs stressing. Although it is divided for administrative purposes into fifty-two local authority areas, it is economically an inter-dependent unit. The 1,200 acre Trafford Park is one of the country's most important industrial concentrations. Its 50,000 employees travel from all parts of the Conurbation and even farther afield. Much of the industry in the Manchester area as a whole is 'heavy' (engineering, chemicals, etc.) and immobile—at least in the short run. It follows that large-scale dispersal of industry from the Conurbation cannot take place rapidly. This was recognized in Sutton Brown's Preliminary Plan for Lancashire:[118]

> 'The principle of decentralization cannot be indiscriminately applied. To disperse industry wholesale from the Manchester area, for example, might involve a drastic dislocation of the whole economy of S.E.Lancashire. The consequences of such an upheaval seem likely to be worse than the alternative of lengthening the journey to work.'

Nevertheless this was not to imply that long-distance dispersal from such places as Manchester was impossible or even undesirable. On the contrary, it underlined the necessity for a quick start to the detailed planning and actual commencement of long-distance developments:

> 'For the very fact that the pace of their progress is likely to be limited more severely by the pace of industrial dispersal than has been generally supposed makes it all the more necessary to give the furthest of them the earliest possible start, and to make sure that no other obstacle stands in the way of the fastest attainable rate of development.... If these major developments are delayed it will become impossible to prevent the pressure from land-starved county boroughs from finding an alternative outlet in the form of continuous peripheral sprawl, filling up what remains of their green belts and encroaching still farther on the best of the country's farmland.'

Lancashire's overspill plan was thus for peripheral suburban developments to which industry would be decentralized 'as part of the normal processes of change',[133] coupled with longdistance

developments whose progress would be dictated largely by the rate at which new industry could be attracted. However, there was not a great deal of 'elbow-room'. 'The total capacity of reception areas for short-distance movements is strictly limited, as most suburban areas and townships near to the main conurbation require land for their own needs and in some instances will, it is anticipated, have overspill problems of their own'.[133] On the other hand, long-distance sites could not be selected merely by looking at a map showing under-developed areas. Though the northern and western areas of Lancashire could provide 'sites offering better and more beautiful surroundings' than possible reception areas in south Lancashire, the latter were much more likely to be attractive to industry.

The Plan, in its final form, proposed sites for 86,700 persons in short-distance reception areas* and 30,000 in long-distance areas. The total planned provision up to 1971 (the end of the Plan period) was thus for an overspill of 116,700 people. The proposals are summarized in Table 39.

All except one of the short-distance reception areas are within the Manchester Conurbation, the exception being Ramsbottom which adjoins its northern boundary.

The table, of course, only shows the County's *proposals* for dealing with overspill: it does not follow that the schemes are going ahead, or even that they are likely to in the future. All the schemes depend on the willingness of the respective reception authorities to accept overspill, or on the willingness of the Ministry to use compulsory powers if they refuse. The Leyland and Chorley proposals also depend on the willingness of industry to move there.

In fact, by the end of 1959, only five schemes had been agreed, and only two had been started. As Table 40 shows, fourteen years after the end of the war, only 29,000 people have been accommodated in short-distance reception areas. The number in the long-distance schemes is nil.†

Such is the position in Lancashire. Before discussing the reasons for this virtual stalemate it is necessary to describe what has happened on the other side of the Mersey.

* The political background to these short-distance schemes is discussed in Chapter 10, page 147 et seq.

† 2,100 people have been housed at Leyland, but these have come from Preston and Wigan.

TABLE 39: Proposed Overspill Movement in S.E.Lancashire by 1971

		Short-Distance Reception Areas			*Long-Distance Reception Areas*		
Overspilling Authority	*Amount of Overspill (persons)*	*Authority*	*Amount of Reception (persons)*	*Deficiency (persons)*	*Authority*	*Amount of Reception (persons)*	*Total Deficiency (persons)*
Manchester C.B.	57,000	Middleton M.B.	14,500				
		Whitefield U.D.	5,000				
	(not	Heywood M.B.	3,400				
	including	Ramsbottom U.D.	6,400				
	42,500	Tottington U.D.	3,700				
	to	Bury C.B.	6,000				
	Cheshire)						
			39,000	18,000			
Salford C.B.	40,000	Worsley U.D.	12,000				
		Westhoughton U.D.	20,600		Leyland U.D.	23,300	
			32,600	7,400			
Stretford M.B.	8,600	Urmston U.D.	2,500	6,100			
Droylsden U.D.	2,900	Denton U.D.	2,000	900	Chorley M.B.	6,700	
Oldham C.B.	14,100	Crompton U.D.	4,500				
		Milnrow U.D.	4,100				
			8,600	5,500			
Ashton-under-Lyne M.B.	2,000	Limehurst R.D.	2,000	Nil			
Lees U.D.	500	—	Nil	500			
Total—S.E. Lancs.	125,100		86,700	38,400		30,000	8,400

TABLE 40: Reception of Overspill in Lancashire from Manchester and Salford: Position at 31st December 1959

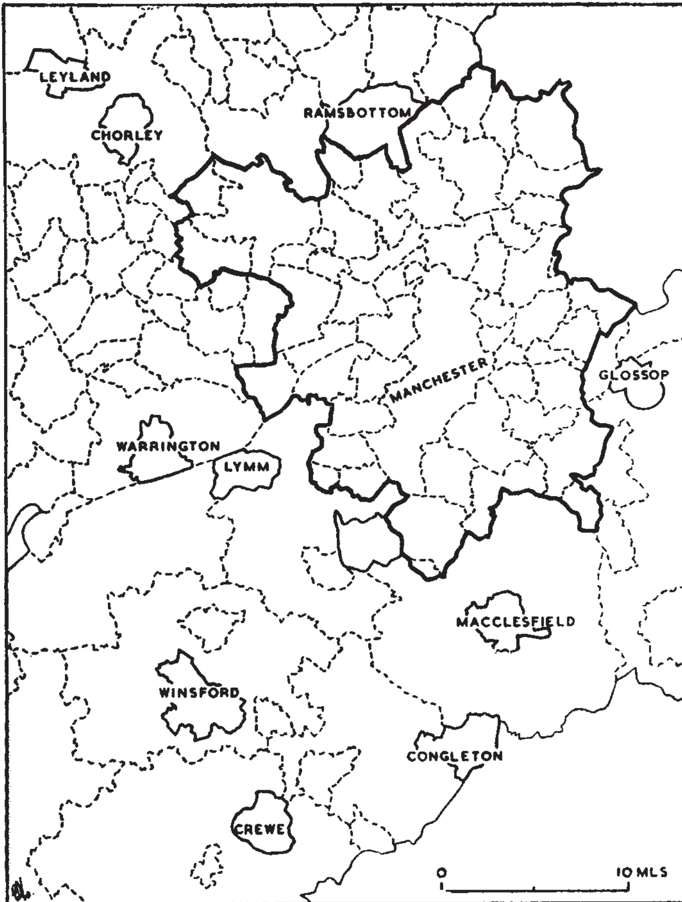
Reception Authority	*Application of Town Development Act*	*Municipal Dwellings Proposed*	*Population Intake Proposed**	*Position at 31.12.59 Dwellings Completed*	*Population Housed**
Worsley	Yes	4,505	16,750	2,685	9,935
Middleton	No	4,628	19,550	4,546	18,957
Denton	No	1,300	5,460	Not Yet Started	
Heywood	Yes	1,836	7,450	Not Yet Started	
Whitefield	Yes	1,600	7,000	Not Yet Started	
Total		13,869	56,210	7,231	28,892

OVERSPILL IN CHESHIRE

The Cheshire County Council were one of the local authorities who prepared a broad development plan for their areas in anticipation of the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act. The 'Dobson Chapman Report' was prepared during 1945 and first published in 1946.[119] This report had as one of its 'primary aims…to show how the controlled redistribution of overspill might be employed to raise the general standard of living in the County, particularly in the rural areas'. The following quotation explains this aim:

> 'Cheshire is willing and able to accommodate and adopt the industry and industrial population from (the overgrown urban areas). Such a policy is not entirely disinterested. Cheshire can well do with further industrial growth provided that the necessary precautions are taken to safeguard the primarily agricultural character of the County. This certainly does not mean the complete exclusion of industry from existing rural areas, but it does mean that the good agricultural land must not be squandered and that future industry must be properly located and development adequately controlled. The problem is by no means simple, but by the application of careful "time planning" to the physical development recommended by the present Advisory Scheme, it will be possible to provide for a comparatively rapid industrial expansion, and to use this for raising some of the smaller County towns to an optimum size in terms of population (30–50,000). It may also be employed in creating virtually new urban centres of appropriate size from suitably located small existing nuclei, thereby enabling them to offer

* Excluding natural increase.



8. MANCHESTER IN ITS REGIONAL SETTING

adequate social and other facilities for the service of their own inhabitants and those of the surrounding areas.'

Thus, Cheshire were well disposed to accepting overspill on condition that it was of benefit to the County. 'Garden city' and 'satellite town' development was rejected on the ground that no benefit would accrue:

'*Garden Cities*...should not be considered as ends in themselves, but in relation to the County as a whole. If larger populations and new industries are needed by the existing towns and villages to give

them a fuller measure of life, then new garden cities are a waste of the limited resources of both kinds which Cheshire can hope to attract.... (Further), it must be remembered that Cheshire is primarily an agricultural county and the first concern of planning must be to improve living conditions and social opportunities for the country dweller. New garden cities would contribute little or nothing to this end. A certain amount of rounding-off of existing suburbs on neighbourhood unit lines ("garden suburbs") is probably justifiable on the grounds of expediency, but such extension should be kept to the absolute minimum.'

'*Satellite Towns* ("municipally developed, semi-industrialized, one-class suburbs of the large cities") perpetuate many of the economic and sociological defects characterizing the overgrown industrial town and do nothing towards encouraging a reasonable balance of industrial development throughout Great Britain, such as is recommended by the Barlow Report. It is significant, if not finally conclusive, that in the terms of reference of the Reith Committee...it is stipulated that the new towns "should be established and developed as self-contained and balanced communities for work and living". Satellite towns on the Wythenshawe model do not come within this description, and it may be concluded that in relation to national planning policy little more will be heard of such schemes as a means of solving the problem of dispersal.'

There was nothing in this analysis to which any planner would have objected in the first flush of post-war enthusiasm. Cheshire was riding on the wave of contemporary opinion. The problems of the town and the country were complementary, and, with the new powers about to be provided, they could both be met by a policy of 'urban dispersal/rural renewal'. Expansion on the fringes of the conurbations was a thing of the past. The City of Manchester Plan[124] accepted this as a major planning principle:

'Expansion on the fringes of existing development...apart from the areas that will be absorbed by the first three years of post-war building—is not open to us, for Manchester is already hemmed in by the developments of adjoining authorities except at the extreme south, where Ringway Airport is to be extended. In any case all land on the fringes of the existing built-up area of the Manchester conurbation should be reserved as a green belt.'

The South Lancashire and North Cheshire Advisory Plan[126] stressed the 'necessity to plan for the outward movement from the Manchester and district regional area of a total of between

150,000 to 250,000 people'. This was described as 'the most pressing of the planning problems within the Advisory Area'. Among other proposals the Plan suggested that large-scale development of new town character should take place at both Mobberley and Lymm. This proposal was considered by the Ministry of Town and Country Planning and, at one time, it seemed that the new town at Mobberley would go ahead. Unfortunately it was found that a part of the site was liable to salt and peat subsidence and the Ministry therefore decided that only small-scale development was possible. Manchester sought to promote a Private Bill to obtain the powers necessary to carry out the development itself, but the project was rejected by that archaic institution, a town poll. The Lymm suggestion was successfully opposed on agricultural grounds, but an alternative site at Congleton was investigated by the Ministry. This scheme was supported by the Cheshire County Council and the Local Authority but opposed by agricultural interests. In 1951 there seemed every prospect that a new town of 60,000 would be built under the 1946 Act, but with the change in Government the scheme was dropped. Instead, the County Council and the Local Authority were advised to consider undertaking the development themselves under the Town Development Act, then passing through Parliament.

It was at this stage (1952) that the County Development Plan was published.[130] This had a realism which was in striking contrast to the Dobson Chapman Report. Though it was agreed that ideally a halt should be called to the expansion of the Manchester Conurbation it was felt that this was impossible:

'The question of the growth of the Manchester Conurbation and the closely allied question of the distribution of overspill are the two most important problems dealt with in this Development Plan. It is admittedly desirable to restrict as far as possible the growth of the Conurbation and, in consequence, to accommodate overspill population in towns distant from Manchester: it is equally desirable, on the strength of the evidence, that redevelopment in Manchester and other parts of the Conurbation should proceed at the maximum possible rate. The considered opinion of the Cheshire planning authority (and an opinion which is held to be realistic) is that the maximum rate of development may well involve at least the partial sacrifice of the principle of restricting

development around the Conurbation and of accommodating overspill in distant centres.'

Unfortunately there was one basic proposal in the plan which, though 'realistic' at the time, proved not to be so, namely, the new town at Congleton. This was to provide 13,550 houses for overspill and was 'to absorb the greater part of the industry moved from the Manchester area'. Indeed it was the only major long-distance expansion scheme that it was thought would be possible within the twenty-year period of the plan, although it was hoped that a relatively small scheme could be carried out at Macclesfield. Large-scale overspill development was proposed in the Conurbation and fringe districts.

It is not a straightforward matter to tabulate the proposals in so far as they specifically refer to planned overspill, since no clear distinction was made between publicly-sponsored and private migration. Table 41 summarizes the total provision in north Cheshire.

TABLE 41: Expected Overspill and Immigration, North Cheshire 1951–1970 (1952 Proposals)

Local Authority	*Overspill and Immigration 1951–1970 Population*	*No. of Houses to be provided 1951–1970*
(*a*) *Long-Distance Schemes*		
Congleton, Macclesfield, etc.	54,825	16,880
(*b*) *Short-Distance-Schemes*		
Altrincham, Sale, Wilmslow, etc.	31,325	9,640
Bredbury and Romiley, Marple, etc.	43,400	13,350
	129,550	39,870

It was expected that about 20,000 of these houses would be for Manchester's 'planned overspill'. Since 13,550 houses (68% of the total) were proposed for Congleton it can be seen how vital to the County Plan was the New Town.

The amount of expansion in the short-distance schemes represented the 'maximum of permissable development'. Once it had taken place no further development was to be allowed, 'whatever circumstances

arise in the future', Indeed, 'if it should prove that short-distance transfers are unnecessary, i.e. either that available building resources are less than has been estimated, or that the removal of industry from the Conurbation takes place at a rate greater than has been assumed, then it will be desirable to abandon the proposals now made for certain parts of north and north-east Cheshire, and to assume that these areas will be required to accommodate voluntary migration alone.'

A start on peripheral overspill schemes had been made in 1950. Fifteen district councils agreed to include some houses for overspill in their building programmes. These were provided under normal Housing Act powers with the rate fund contribution being paid jointly by the district council and the County Council. Tenants were sponsored by three exporting authorities: Manchester, Salford, and Stretford. But though these schemes could make a contribution it could obviously be only a limited one. The district councils had their own housing problems to meet and the amount of available land was limited.

The abandonment of the new town proposal for Congleton placed the County Plan in jeopardy. The safeguarding of the green belt on the Cheshire side of the Conurbation was dependent on at least one large long-distance scheme. The Ministry's suggestion that a Town Development Act scheme might be undertaken at Congleton was, therefore, taken up. Manchester, however, were very sceptical about it. Though they agreed to encourage population and industry to move to Congleton, and to make the necessary financial contributions, if the scheme went ahead, they 'doubted whether it would be possible to induce industrialists to move from the centres to which they were accustomed, and this doubt was strengthened by the fact that Congleton was not only outside the Manchester industrial conurbation, but was outside the sphere of influence of the Manchester Conurbation'.[179] This attitude was considered by the Cheshire Authorities as being unduly high-handed. Yet Manchester had no powers to compel industry and population to move, and Manchester's experience at Wythenshawe confirmed them in their view that this was a problem which could be tackled only at Government level. The provision of new industry at Congleton by a Development Corporation was one matter, but for Manchester itself to attempt to persuade existing industrialists to move that far was unlikely to attain any significant degree of success: 'Apart from the

textile and heavy engineering industries in Manchester, which will all have to remain in the City, the majority of the City's other industries comprise firms who are limited as to area of re-location because of their relationship with the consumer market, and in the City Council's view, those industries would prefer to remain in the Manchester Conurbation.'

The validity of this argument was not seriously questioned by Cheshire.* They, too, felt that the only real answer to Manchester's problem was a Government-sponsored new town. As this was now ruled out the only alternative was a series of Town Development Act schemes. Congleton seemed the best place for large-scale development and efforts were made to secure the backing of the Board of Trade for industrial expansion in the area. Cheshire believed that, if this were forthcoming, Congleton could make a significant contribution to Manchester's problem. Without it the scheme could not go ahead. The Board of Trade were not antagonistic to the proposal but they had to give priority to the Development Areas. Though some industrial expansion might take place in the area it seemed that it would be insufficiently rapid. Large-scale development was obviously going to be difficult. It was soon made impossible by the erection of Manchester University's radio telescope at near-by Jodrell Bank. Any expansion at Congleton was thereby limited to the provision of 4,000 houses.

Concurrently, both Manchester and Cheshire were seeking peripheral sites for overspill development either by the City or by the district councils. But the offers made by Cheshire (even when added to the available sites in Lancashire) were quite inadequate for Manchester's needs.[178] On the most optimistic assumptions, the deficiency up to 1971 was over 19,000 houses. To Manchester, there seemed only one alternative—large-scale development by the City at Mobberley and Lymm. Accordingly formal planning applications were submitted to the Cheshire County Council (as planning authority) in 1953. These were 'called in'* by the Minister and a public inquiry held. Both applications were refused:

* Though they stressed that only 6% of the city's employment capacity needed to be moved from Manchester in order to provide for the required industrial expansion of Congleton.

'In view of the agricultural quality of the land in both Mobberley and Lymm, and the importance of preserving Manchester's natural green belt, the Minister is clear that it would be wrong to allow development in either place if it can be avoided. And apart from this he agrees that Mobberley is not a good place for large-scale development. It would mean an extension of the City into what is at present open country. Further, it seems extremely doubtful whether the situation would be attractive to industry on the scale needed, and the result would certainly be, to some extent at any rate, a dormitory suburb. Moreover, while opinions differ as to the risk of subsidence from brine working and peat there must be doubt about achieving the close development at Mobberley that alone is compatible with economical use of land, and necessary if the ultimate population aimed at is to be reached. The Minister therefore has no doubt that he must refuse to allow the application relating to Mobberley.

'The question of Lymm is more difficult. The chief objection to development here is the agricultural value of the land; although there is also objection to the encroachment on the open land which at present helps to reduce the urban spread. At the same time, Lymm offers some obvious advantages for industry, and Manchester could no doubt develop here a town with a life of its own. If the Minister was satisfied that there was no alternative—or no alternative less damaging—it might be necessary to contemplate such development in spite of the disadvantages. For the people of Manchester undoubtedly need a great many new dwellings, and not all of these can be built within the limits of the existing developed area.

'But it seems to the Minister that there are alternatives. In the first place the Council should make the maximum use of land within the city in the course of redevelopment. The Minister is not satisfied that their present building plans do provide for getting the most out of redevelopment that can be got. In the second place the Minister thinks that the Council could build a great many houses on some, at any rate, of the sites referred to by the county councils of Cheshire, Lancashire, and Derbyshire; and that they could develop more intensively than is at present contemplated some of the sites already in view.'*

The general question of the density of redevelopment is discussed more fully in Chapter XI. At this point it is necessary only to outline Manchester's view. The standard adopted for

* Section 15 of the Town and Country Planning Act, 1947, gives the Minister power to 'call in' any application for planning permission and to decide upon it himself, instead of allowing the local planning authority to do so.

redevelopment in the City is that of 90 habitable rooms to the acre. At this standard 60% of accommodation can be provided in ground-floor dwellings and 40% in flats. An increase in density to 120 habitable rooms per acre would reverse these proportions, and necessitate the building of multi-storey flats. Manchester has always held the view that flat-development should be kept to the minimum. It is unpopular, uneconomic, and certainly no 'answer' to the overspill problem. When areas are redeveloped it is necessary to provide not only dwellings, but also schools, shops, parks, and a wide range of other amenities. Figures prepared by the Corporation show that if densities were increased to 120 habitable rooms per acre the number of dwellings provided in the clearance areas would be 10,400: this compares with 8,830 dwellings on the standard of 90 habitable rooms to the acre, an increase of only 1,570. * It is clear therefore that the building of more flats—whether multi-storey or not—would not obviate overspill or indeed have any appreciable effect whatever upon the extent of the overspill provision which will have to be made if the City's housing needs are to be met'.[178] Furthermore, the building of multi-storey flats would involve a large increase in public expenditure. In 1953, the capitalized value of the combined Exchequer and rate fund contributions in respect of dwellings built at a density of 120 habitable rooms per acre is shown below.†

Manchester did not agree that the sites offered by the adjoining County Councils were adequate, but there was nothing the City could do except to develop as many of them as possible.

It would be wearying to detail the later history of Manchester's overspill negotiations. Suffice it to say that by 1957 only 1,600 overspill houses had actually been built in Cheshire.* Of these 579 were for the City of Manchester and the remainder for Salford and Stretford.

Once again the City decided to apply for planning permission to develop at Lymm, and once again the application was refused.† This time the Ministry did not suggest that high densities could make any

* Letter from M.H.L.G. to Manchester City Council, 13th October 1954. The full text is given in the *British Housing and Planning Review,* Vol. 10, No. 1., January-February, 1955.

† The subsidies are for dwellings built to a density of not less than thirty and not more than forty to the acre.[178]

Developed Site Cost	*Capitalized value of Exchequer and Rate Fund Subsidy*		
	Houses	*Flats without lifts*	*Flats in high blocks with lifts*
	Per House	*Per flat*	*Per flat*
Between £2,000 and £3,000 per acre	769	1,520	1,860
Between £9,000 and £10,000 per acre	1,222	1,697	2,038

significant contribution to Manchester's problem. On the contrary,' the Minister...accepts as reasonable the average gross density which Manchester have chosen for their central areas as a whole.' On this point the old saying 'what Manchester thinks today, England thinks tomorrow' is apparently true. Nevertheless, the whole of Manchester's case was not accepted. The decision turned 'on the question whether the areas proposed by the Counties of Lancashire, Cheshire, and Derbyshire could meet the City's unsatisfied needs'. The report contained 'an impressive list of areas where local authorities are willing to receive large numbers of Manchester's overspill population together with migrating industries'. Even when all the necessary reservations had been made, 'there remain proposals which, in the Minister's opinion, collectively make up an alternative to Lymm'. Such an alternative must be welcomed since the weight of the agricultural objection to Lymm could not be questioned. That Lymm was a better proposition for Manchester than any or all of the other sites was not queried:

'The advantages of Lymm are appreciated. It offers substantial attractions for new industries; the surroundings are suitable to agreeable housing estates; and it lies near enough to Manchester to enable large

* All these were built by the Cheshire authorities without any rate fund contribution from the exporting authorities.

† See Ministry of Housing and Local Government, *Report of Inquiry into the Proposed Development of Land at Lymm for Manchester Overspill,* 1958. The inquiry was held not by a Ministry official, but by J.Ramsay Willis, Q,.C. This procedure was adopted 'because of the controversy which this matter has aroused over many years and the need to ensure that all the facts were widely understood, if the ultimate decision (whatever it might be) were to be acceptable to the many local authorities and other interested bodies and persons who may be concerned'.

numbers of people to travel to work in Manchester daily until industry can move out to provide employment on the spot, which means that the pace at which houses were erected could be related more closely to human needs and not solely to the speed at which employment could be provided. This last advantage is lacking in some of the alternative areas, notably the long-distance sites. It follows that transfer of population to these sites is likely to be more difficult, and to take longer than the transfer of population to Lymm.'

Yet 'the difficulties are not insuperable and they must be faced'. And so the long process of negotiation starts all over again.

THE POSITION IN 1959

About 37,000 people have moved from the congested areas of the Manchester Conurbation under publicly-sponsored overspill schemes. All but 1,500 of these have moved only short distances. Indeed, of the 9,700 overspill houses built since the war, all but 440 are actually within the Conurbation. This situation exists in spite of the Government's policy of 'checking the unrestricted sprawl of the built-up areas, and of safeguarding the surrounding countryside against further encroachment'.[80] Even more surprising is the fact that many of the schemes* have been approved for Government grants under the Town Development Act—an Act designed to facilitate overspill development 'at a distance from the overcrowded cities'. As Mr. Macmillan (then Minister of Housing and Local Government) stressed in the debate on the Bill, 'if towns are not allowed to swell they must be encouraged to hop.'† But the 'hop' was supposed to be an energetic one:

'It is our firm intention that the new receiving authorities shall not merely be the recipients of a dormitory population from another authority. Those who go to them are not expected to travel daily backwards and forwards across the green fringe. They are expected

* Viz. Heywood, Whitefield, and Worsley in Lancashire; and Hattersley (Hyde-Longdendale), Stalybridge, and Wilmslow in Cheshire.

† See Hansard, H.C.Debates, Vol. 496, Col. 725, et seq.

to settle and make a new life, with their industries and employment, their social activities, their churches, their chapels and clubs in the areas to which they are asked to move.'

TABLE 42: Overspill from the Congested Areas of the Manchester Conurbation up to 31st December 1959

	Development Plan Proposals		*Progress to 31st December 1959*	
	Population	*Dwellings*	*Population*	*Dwellings*
Cheshire				
Short distance	21,000	6,450	7,000	2,060
Long distance	44,000	13,550	1,500*	440*
	65,000	20,000	8,500	2,500
Lancashire				
Short distance	87,000	27,000	29,000	7,200
Long distance	30,000	9,000	Nil	Nil
	117,000	36,000	29,000	7,200
Total				
Short distance	108,000	33,450	36,000	9,260
Long distance	74,000	22,550	1,500	440
	182,000	56,000	37,500	9,700

Social surveys carried out in three of the overspill areas show a great deal of dissatisfaction with the long journey to work—70% of the earners on the Worsley estates and 63% of those in Middleton travel daily to work in Manchester and Salford.[62,144] In Macclesfield the proportion is at least 47%.[146] Such a result is only to be expected: though a certain amount of employment has been provided in some of the areas, these schemes are essentially suburban housing developments.

Furthermore, the tempo of development is inadequate. Here a distinction must be drawn between Manchester and Salford. Salford has become alarmed at its rapid decline in population and, in an attempt to 'stem the tide', is redeveloping at very high densities. Manchester has refused to do this. The peripheral overspill schemes have served to meet only the most immediate needs, and now slum clearance and redevelopment is held up by the lack of sites for

* Macclesfield has been counted as a long-distance site.

rehousing the displaced families. Between 1950 and 1955 Manchester built 2,500 dwellings a year; in 1958 it was possible to provide only 1,500.

A further determined attempt to obtain overspill sites has been made since the last Lymm decision. An agreement under the Town Development Act (for 4,300 houses) has been signed with Winsford, and two more are under negotiation—with Crewe (2,850 houses) and Macclesfield (1,250 houses). In all three cases the provision of adequate new industry is essential, and there is, of course, no guarantee that industry will, in fact, move to these towns. Short-distance proposals look more hopeful. Manchester has built nearly 1,000 houses on short-distance sites in Cheshire, and present proposals are for 4,400 more by the end of 1964, and a further 3,350 between 1964 and 1968.

In Lancashire, about 5,000 short-distance sites are available (at Denton, Heywood, and Whitefield), and a proposal to build 12,500 houses at Westhoughton has recently been approved 'in principle'.* Chorley and Leyland which were originally proposed in the Lancashire Plan and were again recommended by the Minister when rejecting the Lymm application, seem unlikely to go ahead. Manchester has always taken the view that the areas would not be attractive to Manchester people or Manchester industry, but in view of the Minister's recommendation, the City Council has asked the County whether they would be willing, in association with the two local authorities, to build houses there.

'The County Council have now replied to the effect that the success of overspill development at Leyland and Chorley depends upon sufficient industry being available at the right time to provide employment for the incoming population; that they would be adverse to the movement of population from Manchester without employment—or reasonable prospects of employment—being available and that after consultation with the Councils of the County Districts concerned they have reached the conclusion that, in the absence of any satisfactory assurances regarding industrial development, and in view of the capital expenditure which would necessarily have to be incurred by them and which might well prove to be abortive, they are unable at present to undertake a scheme under the Town

* *Manchester Guardian,* 4th November 1959. Westhoughton lies within the Manchester Conurbation, between Bolton and Wigan. It is about fifteen miles from Manchester—'within daily travel distance' according to the Lymm Report.[82]

Development Act for overspill from Manchester either at Leyland or Chorley.'[181]

Thus in the next few years it seems that the overspill provision will continue to be predominantly of a suburban character. There are few who can still hope for a new town.

Stalemate

The whole story is too long to relate. It is one of continual frustration, relieved twice only by the forlorn hope that Lymm would be approved 'next time'. In the meantime Manchester's slums remain, the Conurbation spreads* the problems of traffic congestion and the journey to work increase, and the largest urban mass outside London continues to bear all the marks of nineteenth-century boom and twentieth-century decay. The problem of redevelopment is enormous: the City of Manchester alone contains 68,000 houses† 'unfit for human habitation'. It is said that one house falls down every day, and though this may be poetic licence, it reflects the seriousness of the situation. But large-scale redevelopment cannot take place without large-scale overspill. This necessitates development of new-town character. Successive Ministries have refused to provide a new town and the local authorities have been left to grapple with the problem as best they can. Without Government backing any overspill development must be of a dormitory nature and hence within travelling distance of Manchester. There is little room in the adjoining Lancashire districts. North-west Derbyshire is similarly restricted and has

* It is only fair to add that, outside the London area, it was not possible to *define* Green Belts until the issue of Circular 42/55 in August 1955. Up to this time it was possible only to lay down the *principle* of a Green Belt and to attempt to restrict urban growth by administrative action. (See Ministry of Housing and Local Government, Circular 42/55.) However the unfortunate aspect of the position in the Manchester area is that administrative action (by way of 'planned overspill')is actually increasing urban growth.

† There is a considerable amount of controversy over the accuracy of this figure. At the last Lymm Inquiry the number given by Manchester was 62,000. Since then about 2,500 houses have been demolished or closed. A round figure of 60,000 may be taken as a rough approximation. It should not be forgotten, however, that obsolescence is a continuing process. If Manchester had no backlog of clearance it would still be necessary (at a 1% per annum replacement rate) to replace 2,000 houses a year merely to offset depreciation. (See Chapter V.)

the additional disadvantage of an unpleasant climate. (Glossop has fifty inches of rain a year: Lymm has thirty.) In north Cheshire lie the most popular of the modern suburban areas. Large areas are covered with twentieth-century development without the nineteenth-century scars so abundant on the other side of the Mersey. It contains the vast Wythenshawe estate, which met Manchester's immediate housing needs in the inter-war years. But it is this very fact which sets the scene to much of the post-war Manchester-Cheshire controversy. Manchester purchased the land at Wythenshawe and eventually spread its boundaries round it. There has been a very real fear on the part of Cheshire district councils that Manchester might do the same again. As a consequence attempts to obtain land in these districts have been interpreted as a prelude to annexation. Whether there have been any legitimate grounds for this fear is beside the point. The fear has existed and has added one more problem to those inherent in local government overspill negotiations.

The 1957 conference organized by the Town and Country Planning Association in Manchester showed how difficult these negotiations are:

'Apart from those people who turn their backs on us, there are many other obstacles with which we have to deal.... We had an appeal from Macclesfield this morning for co-operation. Macclesfield have told the County Authority that they are not prepared to discuss the question with them. We have had an appeal from Wilmslow. Wilmslow has agreed; we have land at Wilmslow. The compulsory purchase order has been confirmed and agreement has been reached. They have not started the sewerage works yet!

'Further...because of our terrible problem, because of the conditions under which our people are living, other local authorities say to us "it will cost us £150,000 to put our sewerage right; how much are you going to pay of it?" This happens time and time again with every local authority to whom we go. Consequently, whilst in theory, whilst on paper, we have met with some co-operation, having had some sites offered to us, in actual fact, apart from Bowlee (Middleton) there is no place in any county surrounding this City where land is available to us on which to build now, and it is building land now that we want.

'...We require all the overspill land that has been offered to us up to now, and the addition of Lymm and the addition of Mobberley as well. Our demand will go to this Minister, the next Minister and the Minister

after that, if need be, because ultimately the people of this region must be rehoused in decent conditions. In order to do that, we must have Mobberley and we must have Lymm.'*

As the conference proceeded the temperature rose. A Cheshire alderman accused Manchester of being so preoccupied with Lymm and Mobberley that all other suggestions were 'rendered sterile'. Even when agreement in principle was obtained, 'hard bargaining by the exporting authority nearly wrecked some schemes.' Why, it was asked, should Manchester always look to Cheshire? Burnley, Nelson, and Colne had plenty of room—on land which was of relatively low agricultural value. 'This area has an industrial tradition and if the climate is chilly the same is not true of the attitude of the population towards strangers. Manchester people would feel at home there.' And what about land in the City?

'Whilst I was going round I noticed a few sites where flats could have been built. Manchester must get down to brass tacks and actively build on the sites available in the City before marching out, despoiling good agricultural land before it is necessary. If we get co-operation on those lines, we shall see the problem of overspill go into quite a small one as the years go by, and that is what I hope to see.'

To which a Manchester councillor retorted that 'it was time that Cheshire did something for the benefit of humanity at large, as distinct from Cheshire alone'.

This was an open battle, but it has been repeated time and time again behind the closed doors of Council chambers. The wonder is not that the overspill provision is inadequate, but that provision has been so great! Of course too much can be made of the public utterances of councillors. Verbal conflict is the life-blood of democracy,† Yet one cannot expect a background such as this to produce a solution to the problems of Manchester. And even if sufficient sites are provided in the near future for the City's housing and redevelopment programme to stagger along, for how long will this postpone the necessity for a Government-sponsored new town?

* This and the following quotations are taken from Town and Country Planning Association, *Report on the Regional Conference, Dispersal in the Manchester Region*.[106]

† Compare Orlan's account of the inception of Stevenage.[90]

Private Migration

To complete this sketch it remains only to analyse private migration. This is of particular importance in the Manchester region, since one of the objections raised to the 1957 Lymm proposal was that Manchester's overspill problem was gradually being solved by private movement out of the City. Manchester was too concerned with the future: if voluntary migration continued, Manchester would have no overspill problem shortly after 1971!

In 1951 the City of Manchester had a population of 699,900. During the period 1951 to 1958 there was a natural increase of 25,000, and a net outward migration of 48,000, resulting in a total populaton decline of 23,000. The average annual outward migration amounted to about 6,500 of which probably 2,700 was publicly sponsored. Private migration has, therefore, amounted to about 3,800 a year since 1951. Since this is only a little higher than the natural increase (3,550 a year) it is obvious that by itself it cannot 'solve' the overspill problem—even though it is more than double the rate assumed in Manchester's Development Plan.

It can, however, be objected that it is misleading to use the figures for the period 1951 to 1958 since private migration was 'restricted' by the controls over private-enterprise housebuilding at least up to 1952. Though it is certainly true that private migration increased in 1954, it has fallen since then and in 1958 was considerably below the 1954 level. Whether the trend will fall or rise is a matter of speculation. The shortage of sites within easy daily travel distance of Manchester may or may not be offset by the 'opening-up' of areas farther afield by the electrification and dieselization of the suburban railways.

The whole basis of the argument is, however, highly questionable. The 1971 target (606,480) was based on an assumed rate of housebuilding. If, for example, by the provision of large overspill sites or by large-scale private migration, this rate can be exceeded, then the target can be revised. In short, the 1971 target is a guess at what can be achieved in practice by that date: it is in no sense an optimum. No up-to-date figure of the 'ultimate population' of the City is available, but it will be recalled that the 'ultimate overspill' was calculated in 1951 to be 214,500—over twice the amount

proposed in the period up to 1971.* It follows that, as far as the City of Manchester is concerned, private migration is no 'easy answer' to the overspill problem.

In any case, as the first part of this study has shown, a calculation of the overspill problem in terms of population is inadequate since it takes no account of the rate of household formation and the fall in average household size.

Private Migration from the Conurbation

It is, however, unrealistic to isolate the City from the Conurbation. There have been very substantial movements of population between the fifty-two constituent administrative areas. This is partly shown by the fact that the Lancashire part of the Conurbation lost 64,000 people by outward migration between 1951 and 1958, whereas the Cheshire part gained 18,500. The Conurbation as a whole lost 45,500 people. If the London experience had been repeated the areas adjoining the Conurbation would have gained at least an equal number. The addition of fourteen areas† does show an increased migration to the outlying Cheshire areas, but this is small and is more than counterbalanced by migration out of the outlying Lancashire and Derbyshire areas. In short, the area as a whole is losing population. Indeed, the loss from this larger area (46,198) is almost identical with the loss from the Conurbation (45,444).

This short analysis underlines the contrast between the London and Manchester areas. But, though the Manchester problem is set in a context of outward population migration it is obvious that this is insufficient in itself to meet the problems of the congested inner areas. Indeed, the outward migration is a reflection of the more basic problems of the area.

* See above, Table 38, page 117.

† Chesire: Knutsford U.D.; Macclesfield M,B.; Bucklow R.D.; Macclesfield R.D.
Derbyshire: Buxton M.B.; Glossop M.B.; New Mills U.D.; Whaley Bridge U.D.; Chapel R.D.
Lancashire: Atherton U.D.; Leigh M.B.; Turton U.D.; Tyldesley U.D.; Ramsbottom U.D.

TABLE 43: Population Changes in the Manchester Conurbation and its Adjoining Areas, 1951–1958

	1951 Home Population	1958 Home Population	Change in Home Population 1951–1958* Natural Increase	Migration	Total Change
Manchester Conurbation					
Cheshire part†	418,961	443,760	+ 6,259	+ 18,540	+ 24,799
Lancashire part	1,990,246	1,971,910	+ 45,648	− 63,984	− 18,336
Total Conurbation	2,409,207	2,415,670	+ 51,907	− 45,444	+ 6,463
Adjoining Areas					
In Cheshire	73,486	77,260	+ 39	+ 3,735	+ 3,774
In Derbyshire	70,000	69,000	+ 203	− 1,203	− 1,000
In Lancashire	112,130	109,980	+ 1,136	− 3,286	− 2,150
Total Adjoining Areas	255,616	256,240	+ 1,378	− 754	+ 624
Total Conurbation and Adjoining Areas	2,664,823	2,671,910	+ 53,285	− 46,198	+ 7,087

* See footnote To Table 28.
† Includes Stockport C.B.

X

THE PRESENT IMPASSE

THE ANALYSIS presented in the preceding two chapters is by no means exhaustive. Nevertheless, the experience in London and Manchester amply illustrates what might be called 'the planning stalemate'. A similar story could be told for Liverpool, for Birmingham, and, indeed, for the majority of the conurbations and near-conurbations. Yet, in many ways, the problems of each area are rather different. London and Manchester provide a striking contrast, not only in the absolute size of their problems, but also in the economic framework within which their problems have to be tackled. The contrast between Birmingham and Liverpool is even greater. But the most striking difference is between what can be loosely termed the 'north' and the 'south'. Whereas in the south (and particularly in the south-east) the difficulty has been to keep economic expansion under control, in the north (and in Wales) the difficulty has been to maintain investment at a minimum level. Yet it is precisely in these areas which are unattractive to private developers that large-scale investment is urgently needed. The national slum problem is to a large extent the aggregate of the problems of such areas as Lancashire, Tyneside, and South Wales. These contain the boom towns of the nineteenth century which are now presenting a bill which the twentieth century is finding it impossible to pay. Indeed, to an unfortunate extent, social investment is taking place in inverse relationship to geographical needs. The declining economy of these older areas cannot support the existing populations without an injection of new industry which the private sector is

reluctant to provide. The result has been a continuation of the drift to the south. So far this has not assumed the dimensions of the pre-war period—a result of the generally high level of employment and the efforts of the Board of Trade in persuading industry to move to Development Areas. But herein lies the dilemma. The amount of new industry which, within the framework of post-war policy, it has been possible to steer to the north has been limited. As a result there has been little scope for encouraging industry to move to the new settlements which are required to take the overspill from the congested conurbations. Nowhere is this more clearly seen than in Merseyside. The past history of unemployment in Merseyside has been largely the result of its over-dependence on static or declining industries, together with a high rate of natural population increase. The need for new jobs has been acute and the Board of Trade has achieved considerable success in persuading new industries to settle in the area: between 1954 and 1957 60,000 jobs were provided.[115] This has brought about a welcome increase in employment, yet there is still a need for more.* But Merseyside is not only a 'Development Area' it is also an area from which an overspill of about 200,000 people is planned. Had the 60,000 new jobs been provided in new and expanded towns for Merseyside's overspill the problem of population congestion would have been so much the easier. Yet such a policy would have involved the acceptance of continuing high unemployment (at least in the short run), and could not have been implemented while overspill proposals were little more than an ill-defined long-term objective. The need to mitigate unemployment has been obvious and relatively easy to define. The need to facilitate overspill, on the other hand, has been less urgent and more problematical. Furthermore, it has been the responsibility of a different Government Department. The avowed planning policy is to restrict the physical growth of Merseyside; the industrial policy has been to bolster up the economy. But since sites for new industry are generally available only on the periphery of the conurbation the result has been a clash of policies, and urban growth is continuing in spite of long-term planning objections.

This clash is very obvious on Merseyside, but the problems are

* The *net* increase in employment during this period was less than 5,000.

common to many areas in the north and in Wales where there is an insufficient proportion of expanding industry. But, to repeat, each area has its own particular problems, and to attempt to analyse these in any detail is impossible within the framework of this study. In any case, it is no part of the purpose of this book to present a report on 'The State of the Nation'. Nevertheless, some sketch of the national picture is required.

The National Picture

The national overspill problem was summarized by Dame Evelyn Sharp, the Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, in 1956:[100]

'taking a fairly conservative view, the number of people to move out may be approaching 500,000 from the congested areas of Greater London; 240,000 from Manchester; 200,000 from Birmingham; 150,000 from Liverpool; 70,000 from Leeds and nearly as many from Sheffield. The list is not exhaustive; and cheek by jowl with some of these great towns are other smaller, but no less congested, towns whose needs swell the total...say two million people to move from the great towns; perhaps something over 500,000 houses to be built outside the towns'.

In the light of the analysis presented in Part One of this study, it can be safely be assumed that this is a gross understatement of the problem. Be that as it may, a survey of what has been done to provide for this overspill leaves no doubt that the provision is ludicrously inadequate even for this minimum need. Outside London not a single 'overspill new town' has been provided in England and Wales. The only such towns in Great Britain are East Kilbride and Cumbernauld, both for overspill from the Glasgow area.* (By December 1958 these two towns had provided just over 11,000 houses.) Elsewhere the search for new-town sites was either not undertaken or proved in vain. Thus, the problem of provincial overspill has been left solely to the efforts of local government.

* East Kilbride was set up not only 'to cater for dccongestion of overcrowded areas in Glasgow and north-west Lanarkshire', but also to 'provide important new facilities and services in a vital part of the Scottish Development Area'. (Report of the Department of Health for Scotland, 1947, Cmd. 7453, page 45.) The other new towns in England and Wales have special objectives, e.g. Corby—to provide for the expansion of Stewart and Lloyd's steel works; Cwmbran—to remedy the acute shortage of houses in an already heavily industrialized area.

The results are pathetically small. By the end of 1958 less than 10,000 houses had been provided under the Town Development Act* in the whole of England and Wales.

The picture is a depressing one. The only glimmer of hope appears in Scotland where a forthright policy of overspill under the parallel Scottish Act has recently been announced. Glasgow plans to disperse 200,000 people and industry to places as far afield as Arbroath, Inverness and Wick. It is significant that this plan has been worked out with, and has the full backing of the Department, of Health for Scotland. Even more significant is the fact that further peripheral expansion of the City is prevented by such physical barriers as the Kilpatrick Hills and the Renfrew Uplands. It is perhaps unfortunate that the English conurbations are not surrounded by equally effective physical obstacles.

A review of experience since the war shows that no single factor can account for the present impasse. In the immediate post-war years the shortage of houses was too urgent to allow time to be spent on deciding their 'proper' location. 'Houses anywhere, at once, were preferred to houses in the right place five years ahead.'[114] The new Ministry of Town and Country Planning was a virile and eager body, but it had to proceed warily. It was not responsible for actual development, but for 'securing consistency and continuity in the framing and execution of a national policy with respect to the use and development of land'.† Housing was the responsibility of the much older Ministry of Health, and though relationships were close and cordial the new Department 'sat well below the ink at the Cabinet table'.[92]

Difficult economic conditions necessitated stringent control over the allocation of scarce materials and labour and led to the restriction of large-scale developments. Not only was development in the designated new towns held up, but second thoughts were had on the desirability of concentrating an 'unfair' share of resources in further new towns. Original financial estimates proved

* Houses built or under construction: for London 4,176; for Salford 2,680; for Birmingham 1,425; and for Bristol 1,374—a total 0f 9,655. See Ministry of Housing and Local Government, 1958, Cmnd 737, Appendix XIV. This Appendix also shows 2,728 houses built or under construction for Wolverhampton and 450 for Walsall. These, however, are in peripheral estates built under the Housing Acts. Even if they are included the total is increased only to 12,833.

† Minister of Town and Country Planning Act, 1943.

totally inadequate and though it might have been agreed that the 'New Town method of providing what is needed will be the cheapest in the long run',* politicians were concerned with the short run. A policy of overspill catches no votes: the sheer size of the housing programme does. And what quicker way is there of providing houses than by allowing development on the outskirts of towns?

The necessity to develop industries which produced exports, dollar-saving goods and armaments led to consolidation and expansion of industry in areas where such development conflicted with the aim of securing 'proper distribution' of industry. More recently the re-emergence of unemployment has added to the difficulties. The Board of Trade has a growing list of areas of high unemployment to which it seeks to persuade industrialists to move. On social grounds alone is this policy to be welcomed, but unfortunately it often runs counter to planning policy. The sphere of influence of the Board of Trade has, for political reasons, been circumscribed: its energies are now virtually absorbed in dealing with areas of unemployment. As a consequence areas which are willing to receive overspill population are finding it difficult to obtain a guarantee of assistance from the Board. It is, of course, politically more important that factories should be built in, say, the Merseyside development area than in a new town for Merseyside's overspill. Though long-term needs might dictate a reorientation of this policy, the short-term costs in purely human terms cannot be ignored.

But perhaps the most unfortunate aspect of the present situation is the fact that at the very time when a strong lead from the Central Government is required, a new era of 'freedom for local government' has been inaugurated. Though the Ministry of Housing apparently recognize that 'it is undoubtedly true that local government is not designed to grapple easily with overspill' they also hold that 'it would be a misfortune to take the job from local government; and the Minister does not want to do it'.[100] The belief is that the overspill problem can and will be tackled by local government. It constitutes a challenge—but a challenge that

* See Foreword to the *New Town Development Corporation's Accounts*, 1949–1950, paragraph 4 (House of Commons Paper, No. 48, Session 1950–1951).

is being accepted. Though progress is slow, this is inevitable in a democracy.

So the argument runs—and the Minister is 'encouraged, not only by the two or three schemes started *[sic]*, but by the measure of agreement which could be seen coming along in the Midlands and other parts of the country'.

These views are not widely accepted. Even the Ministry of Housing and Local Government do not seem to share their Permanent Secretary's optimism:

> 'Five or six years' experience of the Town Development Act has shown that these schemes are most difficult to bring to fruition. Small authorities are naturally nervous about the financial and social consequences of embarking on a scheme of which the residual risk falls and is bound to fall on themselves *[sic]*. In addition there are many ways in which an area may fail to fulfil the tests of a "good" overspill area—for instance, it may lie off the main communication routes or be surrounded by first-class agricultural land, or if it is a "good" overspill area, the town may not wish to expand. Generally speaking those towns are most anxious to expand under the Act which have not the attractions to industry and private enterprise which would make expansion natural.'[95]

In more forthright terms the Town and Country Planning Association asserts that 'the creation of modern towns and substantial town extensions is a task requiring expert teamwork of a quality that only in very rare cases is likely to be attained by co-operation between local authorities', and that 'the history of the English Town Development Act is largely one of central exhortation, rigid negotiation, and disappointing fructification'.[105]

The fact remains that a few schemes have gone ahead. Can anything be learnt from these? Do they suggest that the critics of Town Development may be overstating their case and, most important of all, does it seem likely that a series of further schemes could make a significant contribution to the overspill problem? An examination of some of the schemes will throw some light on these questions.

* For a fuller discussion see J.B.Cullingworth, *Overspill in South-East Lancashire*[62] and H, B.Rodgers, *Employment and the Journey to Work in an Overspill Community*.[164]

Town Development in Operation

*(a) Worsley.** Worsley is situated just inside the western boundary of the South-East Lancashire Conurbation and lies eight miles from Salford. In 1946, Salford, faced with a large shortage of land for housing, submitted to the Boundary Commission a proposal that they should extend their boundaries to include Worsley and the two intervening municipal boroughs of Eccles and Swinton & Pendlebury—Worsley being the nearest place which had available building land. These proposals were strongly resisted by Worsley and Lancashire (not to mention Eccles and Swinton & Pendlebury). Worsley did not wish to lose its identity in an extended Salford County Borough, partly for reasons of local pride and sentiment, and partly because they feared that the needs of their area would be submerged. They felt that Worsley would become a vast dormitory estate looking to Salford for its major amenities and sources of employment. Lancashire did not wish to lose a considerable part of its area, population, and rateable value. The County's problem was an acute one since it was not only Salford that was proposing to extend its boundaries: proposals were also made by Bootle, Liverpool, Manchester, Oldham, and several other towns. Indeed, had all these proposals been accepted the Administrative County would have lost 53% of its land, 64% of its population, and 65% of its rateable value: it would have become a small, formless, and predominantly rural area shorn of the major part of its existing wealth and powers. Quite apart from the natural reluctance of the County to agree (in its own words) to 'annihilation', it argued that the need of land for housing alone was not a good reason for boundary extensions and that the County and District Councils could together provide for the housing of overspill population at least as effectively as could the exporting authorities themselves.

Such was the political background to the Worsley scheme. The validity of the County's arguments were quickly demonstrated, and the first part of a plan to provide at least 3,000 houses was commenced in 1948. A guarantee against defined 'losses' was made

* The 'Worsley formula' as it came to be known, provided that any rate increase due to overspill development was to be met by the County Council subject to the overriding rule that no contribution was to be made which would reduce the Worsley rate below the average rate of all county districts in Lancashire. Recently this 'average rate stopper' has been abolished.

by the County.* Later a Joint Management Committee consisting of representatives and officers of the three authorities was set up and technical assistance was provided by an 'Estate Development Team' consisting of officers of the County Council.

Tenants have been selected from Salford's waiting list, and about a fifth have obtained work in Worsley—mainly in new factories which have been built as part of the development.

The provision by the County of technical and financial assistance, and the setting up of a Joint Management Committee have resulted in teamwork of a quality which ensured the success of the scheme.

On the debit side it can be argued that the 'choice' of site was wrong. Geographically and economically Worsley is part of the S.E.Lancashire Conurbation. Though the overspill scheme has done some 'thinning out' it has also resulted in a 'spreading out' of the conurbation. Nevertheless, the scheme has shown how, in a conducive political climate, local authorities can co-operate to overcome the difficulties inherent in a development of this nature. Apart from a lengthening of the journey to work, Worsley shows every sign of being a most successful scheme—on financial, economic and social grounds.

(b) Swindon. The position in Swindon was completely different. The problem facing the Borough Council was the basic dependence of the town on one industry—it had all the characteristics of a 'railway town'. These characteristics, as seen by Swindon, included a 'limited range of occupations for young people, and an excess of population in the lower-income groupings, with a consequent clamp on commercial and residential development'.[56] The migration to the town, during the Second World War, of evacuees, military forces, and war-workers, and the establishment of war factories was noted to have a stimulating effect on the social, recreational, and cultural life of the town. No less important it had a stimulating effect on the Council; it was agreed by all parties that a diversification and expansion of industry was needed 'if Swindon was to avoid economic decline and cultural stagnation'. Efforts were made from 1945 onwards to attract new industries to the town but these met with little success. Swindon had no unemployment problem, and the Board of Trade, continuing its pre-war policy, was still giving priority to the Development Areas.

Such was the position in Swindon prior to 1952. Unlike most local authorities which have 'considered' town development, Swindon was convinced as to the necessity for expansion. The 1952

Act was, therefore, welcomed with acclamation. Instead of the long period of debate and worry over financial implications which besets most town development proposals, Swindon immediately entered into negotiations with the London authorities and in October 1953 families started to move in. By April 1959 over 2,000 families had been received from the London area.* Present proposals are for 5,311 Council houses and (to prevent Swindon becoming a 'council house town') 1,590 private houses. Despite great difficulties in attracting industry to the town (owing to the present location of industry policy) over a million square feet of factory premises have been built and occupied.

No financial aid has been given by the County and temporarily unprofitable expenditure has been a matter of concern. Nevertheless, with the Exchequer and exporting authorities' grants and contributions, the scheme is beginning to pay its way. An optimistic estimate shows that Swindon will eventually reap a financial profit; on the most pessimistic assumptions it will incur only an insignificant loss. In social terms the benefit to the town is immeasurable.

(c) Haverhill. Haverhill is a small town with a population of just over 4,000. It is situated at the extreme south-east corner of West Suffolk, very near the Cambridgeshire and Essex borders, sixty miles from London.

The problem facing Haverhill is very similar to that in Swindon. The predominant source of non-agricultural employment has for many years been clothing and textiles. Indeed this is wholly concentrated in one firm—employing over a quarter of the non-agricultural workers in the area. The distributive trades are the second major source of employment. Both these employ a large proportion (nearly 60%) of women. More important, nearly one-seventh of all male workers travel daily to Cambridge to work. Daily movement into Haverhill is very small. In short, there is an absolute shortage of male-employing industry and a lack of diversity in such employment as exists. There is a strong likelihood that, if new industry does not come to the town, the large number of men who travel to Cambridge to work will seek homes in that area: this will be encouraged as the housing position is improved. Added to these problems, there is a need for new employment to absorb agricultural workers living in

* An additional 500 had come from other parts of the country.

the town who are becoming redundant as a result of agricultural mechanization.

Like Swindon, Haverhill saw in the Town Development Act a means of solving these problems. But, unlike Swindon, it did not have the financial or technical resources to undertake expansion without outside help. The sewerage plant is quite inadequate even for existing needs. Improvements are desirable in any case: town expansion makes them essential. Water supplies need to be improved and additional council offices and central area roads are required. The cost of the works required solely for the purposes of 'town developments' totals about £80,000—an insignificant sum to a large authority, but a frightening amount to a small urban district with a id. rate product (in 1958) of £136.

Financial difficulties have largely been overcome by grants from the West Suffolk County Council and the London County Council. Further the L.C.C. have undertaken to purchase the necessary housing sites and finance the entire development during the period of site preparation and house construction; Haverhill will take over the financial commitments when the houses are let. Similarly with industrial sites the L.C.C. will purchase the land and finance the cost of laying out the various industrial areas; Haverhill will assume financial responsibility when the sites are disposed of to industrialists. Thus, the L.C.C. will bear the whole of the expense incurred prior to the occupation of houses and factories, viz. until they become rate producing. This is a considerable help to Haverhill since the period of construction may be eleven or twelve months, during which time charges have to be met without any counterbalancing rate and rent income.

However, even with this assistance the Haverhill scheme could not have been started during the period of high interest rates, and so in July 1956, the L.C.C. 'after several approaches to the Ministry, determined to undertake what it regarded as a "pump-priming" operation to make sure that at least a limited number of town development agreements should be completed'.[69] On completion of each stage of the scheme the L.C.C.is offering Haverhill a loan of the amount necessary to cover the expenditure incurred. This carries interest at 4¼% for a period of up to five years.*

This financial help, together with the normal housing subsidies have sufficed to permit Haverhill to take the risk of town expansion. The position at the end of five years will depend on

the current rates of interest: at that time the L.C.C. will have to be repaid by a loan raised either from the Public Works Loan Board or in the open market. At the end of ten years, when the L.C.C. housing contribution ceases, the position may deteriorate unless the scheme results in a considerable increase in rateable value. However, the Ministry have announced that in cases where an 'unduly' heavy burden would be placed on the rates by the withdrawal of this contribution an Exchequer grant will be forthcoming.

The problem of inadequate technical resources has been solved by aid from the West Suffolk County Council and the L.C.C. The West Suffolk County Planning Officer has been empowered by the County Council 'to give any technical assistance required' and the L.C.C. have provided technical assistance for site surveys, preparation of layouts and house designs.

Thus, in spite of considerable difficulties the Haverhill scheme has been able to proceed. The expansion involves the transfer of some 5,000 persons from London and the building of 1,430 houses. It is beyond doubt, however, that without the impetus provided by the Haverhill Council itself, the difficulties would not have been overcome. The drive shown by this Council and its officers is out of all proportion to its size and status. No unbiased observer could claim that Haverhill has outstanding advantages as an industrial site: yet efforts made by the Council to attract industry are proving successful.

The Inadequacies of 'Town Development'

These are 'success stories'. But for every scheme that is going ahead a dozen or more have proved abortive. The position in Manchester has already been described. Birmingham has had negotiations with ninety-six authorities all over the country, from Exmouth and Barnstaple in the south to Nantwich and Winsford (Cheshire) in the north, and from Merioneth and Holyhead in the west to Cromer and Wisbech in the east. Twenty-five agreements have been signed but by the end of June 1959 only 745 houses had been built and occupied. Many of the agreements are unlikely to provide more than a handful of houses since the reception authorities are unwilling

* Similar assitance has been given to Thetford, Letchworth, and Huntingdon.

to build until families are willing to move, and the majority of families are not prepared to move to areas having a restricted range of jobs. Movement of employment is the crucial problem. Most of the local authorities who have approached Birmingham have done so in the hope that they may secure additional industry, but the City Council, of course, has no powers to direct industry to reception areas and its attempts to persuade industry to move have met with only limited success. The potential reception areas are typically small and isolated and are therefore unattractive to industrialists and their workers.

The three schemes described above show that the Act can be made to work but they also demonstrate that it has inherent limitations. In all three cases the receiving authority had a very good reason for wishing to expand—economic vulnerability in the case of Haverhill and Swindon, and political vulnerability in the case of Worsley. This initial predisposition to expansion provided the impetus that is essential if the formidable difficulties facing town expansion authorities are to be overcome.

The reasons why local authorities are prepared to receive overspill are not always as simple as has so far been implied. Some fear the effects of local government reorganization or have in mind the attainment of Municipal Borough status. Others see town development as a means whereby government or county grants can be obtained towards the cost of expanding services—although the limitation of government grants to that part of the cost which is specifically due to 'town development' has brought about some disillusionment. Some authorities have realized that their towns are likely to expand naturally and are prepared to undertake 'expedited development' in order to facilitate comprehensive planning and to obtain such grants as are available.

Usually, of course, the reasons are mixed. But whatever the motives—and some of the baser ones have not been mentioned—town development works only where a receiving authority believe that they can obtain some definite benefit from it. As the Ministry have pointed out 'generally speaking those towns are most anxious to expand under the Act which have not the attractions to industry and to private enterprise which would make expansion natural'.[95] This is to be expected: it would be asking too much of human nature to expect local authorities to accept overspill solely because of unalloyed sympathy for the problems of the big cities. The

'brotherhood of man' does not stretch this far even among Socialist councils!

It is also quite obvious to the researcher that in nearly all the successful town development schemes there is one man, whether a councillor or an officer, who is the moving spirit behind the scheme—one man who has the drive and ability to convince the Council that town development would be in the good interests of the area, and who is prepared to coax and cajole his colleagues to attempt to overcome the problems which beset them. Some of the problems have already been discussed. But apart from financial and technical difficulties there are the more intangible ones of inertia, of fear of the implications of changing the social and physical character of the town, and sometimes of political consequences. Receiving authorities are generally small, vulnerable, and highly disinclined to take risks. If town expansion is to go ahead it must do so at reasonable speed and with due regard to the wishes of the local inhabitants. If the newcomers are to be integrated, goodwill is an essential pre-requisite. It is usual to find in any receiving area certain elements who are suspicious, who believe that expansion will do more harm than good, and who prefer their town 'as it is'.

These difficulties can often be overcome if the financial and technical problems are capable of solution. In the three cases described they were. Swindon was big enough to manage on its own without County aid; Worsley received a financial guarantee and considerable expert technical assistance from Lancashire; Haverhill obtained financial and technical assistance from both West Suffolk and London. But if the authority is the typically small one (i.e. unlike Swindon) and the County is unwilling or unable to provide assistance what hope is there that town development will work? Huntingdon is a case in point. Here the County is itself too poor to provide adequate assistance. Fortunately through the good offices of Sir Humphrey Gale (the Ministry's town development 'catalyst'), a *deus ex machina* appeared—in the form of the secondment by the Hemel Hempstead New Town Development Corporation of a 'task force' of technical officers to carry out the preliminary survey, planning and costing of the Huntingdon Town Development Scheme. *Ad hoc* arrangements of this kind can obviously facilitate town development schemes. But if the analysis which has been presented

is correct it seems unlikely that the Town Development Act will ever make a really significant contribution to the overspill problem. The requirements for success are too numerous and too seldom found all together in one place at the same time. The contribution of schemes that are being undertaken, though certainly not to be despised, is totally inadequate. Haverhill and Huntingdon (which are more typical than Swindon and Worsley) will eventually provide respectively 1,400 and 1,000 houses. To meet the problems of the exporting authorities well over a hundred schemes of this size are needed. Further it must not be forgotten that once a town undertakes town expansion it is the needs of that town—and not of the exporting authority—that must take priority. Industries may come from 'non-exporting' areas and may bring key workers with them. It may be necessary to recruit skilled labour from all over the country. In Swindon, for example, up to March 1958, 793 key workers had been transferred or recruited from outside the London area; this represents more than a third of the total number of families who had moved to Swindon under the scheme. (In the London new towns about a sixth of the migrant families are non-Londoners.)

Another serious limitation of the present arrangements is that when the necessarily fortuitous combination of circumstances do appear, there is no guarantee that the town in question is a 'good' overspill area—'it may lie off the main communication routes or be surrounded by first-class agricultural land,'[95] or, as in the case of the S.E.Lancashire schemes, it may be actually inside or adjoining a conurbation.

Conversely, a town that is ideal for receiving overspill may not want to expand: 'Part of the trouble is that some local authorities, and some whose areas are most promising, dislike the whole idea of expansion (as distinct from natural growth); and the authorities of the big cities hesitate to force themselves where they are not wanted.' Yet the Minister has 'to remember his appellate function and to hold the scales fairly.... The Department did a good deal in the way of getting authorities together and providing general information. But they had to keep an open mind....'[100]

An 'open mind' will not solve the overspill problem. What is needed is a policy—a policy of planned dispersal to areas which are suitable on economic grounds for expansion. The idea that local authorities must be left free to decide among themselves how the overspill

problem is to be tackled is a gross misunderstanding of the concept of 'freedom for local government'. Local government needs freedom to undertake the tasks to which it is suited—this does not include national or regional planning.

There is no doubt that in certain areas the Town Development Act can work: the examples quoted show this. What is argued here is that given the present circumstances it cannot provide sufficiently for the overspill from the big cities and it will not necessarily go ahead in the best places. The problem demands something much bigger than an odd thousand or so houses scattered over the country in areas which are willing to provide them.

XI

OVERSPILL—A RE-EXAMINATION

THE RESTRAINT of urban growth around the major cities was a keystone of post-war planning policy. This necessitated the provision of homes and jobs in new or expanded towns at some distance from the cities. As has been shown, this policy has never been fully put into operation on a national scale. Indeed, except for the eight new towns in the London area the vast majority of post-war housing for families from the major cities has been provided on peripheral sites.[114] Had this been merely a regrettable, though inevitable, prelude to long-distance dispersal it could be regarded as a necessary price that had to be paid before the planning machinery could be brought into operation. But the machinery is still in bottom gear. Negotiations for long-distance sites are continuing with few significant results—even where the big cities have not had their ardency tempered by fears of losing status, by political or financial considerations, or, more recently, by hopes of a drastic reorganization of local government in the conurbations. The temporary expedients adopted by the cities vary. Some are hoping that the Boundary Commission will recommend large boundary extensions;* others are trying to 'stem the tide' by increasing densities. London is hoping to build its own new town.

* Birmingham's case was outlined in a recent letter to *The Observer* from a Birmingham Alderman: 'If your industry does not want to move, and that is overwhelmingly true, and if your people do not want to move, what do you do? Use compulsion? A properly planned area with houses and amenities, industry and open spaces, is not only a national asset, but the homogeneity of a planned garden suburb adjacent to the present boundaries would be using land as it should be used, for the welfare of human beings.' (*The Observer,* 3rd May, 1959.)

Yet even if all these proposals are conceded will the overspill problem be solved? Indeed, would it not be better to abandon the low density 'urban sprawl' and 'prairie planning' which the architectural aesthetes have so forcefully condemned? Could not the overspill problem be obviated by redeveloping our cities at high densities?:

> 'True urban redevelopment makes unnecessary both sprawl and overspill (which is only sprawl-gone-somewhere-else). And the right sort of urban redevelopment means a New Deal for town dwellers. Flats for big families in towns provide companionship but no privacy (or children's breathing space): cottages on the outskirts provide (sometimes) privacy, but no companionship, remote alike from work and play. But the mixture, in the town, of flats for those who want them (the childless, the single people, the old couples) and taut terrace housing, for the families, can achieve both—and may even, as in Regent's Park, give a terrific bonus in the form of one of the finest town parks in the world. In short, we are trying to tackle today's problems with…pre-war town-hating attitudes of mind. It is time for a new look and some new solutions.'[64]

This is an appealing argument, and one which those who see how our town centres are rotting may be tempted to acclaim. It will be welcomed by architects and civic designers who would like to create (or re-create) modern *towns* which can be far more visually satisfying than an endless series of dreary 'estates'; by those who see the eating-up of agricultural land as a national disaster; and by the sociologists who tell us that few amilies wish to leave the Gorbals or the East End of London.[142,150]

The argument, of course, is not a new one. It is heard, in one form or another, at most public inquiries on the compulsory purchase of land for housing by local authorities. Yet it is not so simple and straightforward as it seems at first sight. On the contrary it is an amalgam of several highly questionable propositions and assumptions. To analyse these fully will take up the majority of this chapter. Nevertheless, it is important that the analysis be undertaken, since without it no framework for planning policy can be provided. It would be ludicrous to make suggestions for implementing a forthright policy of overspill if such a policy is neither necessary nor desirable.

The main elements in the argument seem to be:

(1) Social considerations lead to the conclusion that high density redevelopment is preferable to overspill.
(2) High-density redevelopment will obviate, or at least significantly reduce, the need for overspill.
(3) High-density redevelopment is financially practicable.
(4) Low-density development constitutes a thread to food production.

SOCIAL ASPECTS

Evidence on the social aspects of density and location is by no means unequivocal. On the one hand it is argued that flats lack privacy, are unpopular and are unsuitable for families with children. On the other hand, it is maintained that the alternative of housing estates at some distance from the centre of a town involves an undesirable break-up of kinship ties and provides a social milieu which is as barren and arid as the (stereotype) physical layout and design.

(1) Flats v Houses

Every social survey which has been undertaken on the subject of individual preferences has shown that the vast majority of British families prefer houses to flats.* There are, however, important methodological objections to this type of survey. In the first place, the very terms 'house' and 'flat' conjure up in the minds of many families very definite stereotypes. A 'house' is often thought of as cosy (yet modern), providing plenty of space and privacy, and set in idyllic surroundings, whereas a flat is a noisy, drab, tenement-like building, with ill-lit stone staircases, affording little or no privacy, and surrounded by other equally drab and depressing buildings. Secondly, the choice which exists in the real world outside the sociologists' questionnaire is not a simple one of a house versus a flat. It is more likely to be a choice between two dwellings (which bear some or no relation to the stereotypes), one at a low rent several

* See, e.g. Bournville Village Trust, *When We Build Again*;[141] Mass Observation, *People's Homes*;[147] Scottish Housing Advisory Committee, *Planning Our New Homes*;[45] M.Young and P.Willmott, *Family and Kinship in East London.*[150] See also C.Bauer, *Social Questions in Housing and Town Planning.*[140]

miles from work, friends and relatives, and the town centre; and one at a higher rent but nearer to these things. Alternatively, it is a choice between renting a flat *in* the town or buying a house outside it. Not infrequently, there is no choice at all: families have to take what they can get.

Nevertheless, there seems to be no doubt that the majority of families with children prefer houses to flats *in a given location*. Furthermore, the desire for a house is often stronger for such families than the desire to remain near their friends and relatives. The families interviewed by Michael Young and Peter Willmott did actually go to 'Greenleigh', even though they did not want to leave Bethnal Green and did not like the estates:

> 'Most of the young couples who go to the estates don't go because they like the estates…but because they like the houses, and if they could get the houses without the estates they would jump for joy.'[149]

This preference for houses among young families is often related to the needs of children. 'Flats are no good for children', or 'You do need a garden'. Yet half the households in the country have no children, and among this group it seems that a larger proportion might consider location more important than the type of dwelling, and that a significant number may actually prefer flats. A recent survey carried out by the author on the Worsley overspill estates suggests that this may be the case.[145] About a quarter of the dwellings in Worsley are flats, and the proportion of families who criticized their accommodation was twice as high among the flat-dwellers than among the house-dwellers. But half of those living in flats were apparently quite satisfied. When the families are analysed by their composition a striking difference appears between those with and those without children. The majority of the families preferring flats were single people and childless couples: they considered them more convenient, easier to manage, and cheaper to furnish than houses. Families with children, on the other hand, thought flats were too noisy, too small or 'not the right place to bring children up'.

Similarly, among the families who disliked living on the estates and wished to move back to Salford, only those without children said they would be prepared to take a flat.

TABLE 44: Worsley Social Survey: Attitudes Towards Living in flats (64 families living in flats)

Family type	*Number who:* Objected to living in flats	Liked living in flats	*Total*
Single persons	1	10	11
Childless married couples; two unmarried persons; etc.	5	18	23
Married couples with children and lone persons with children	23	2	25
Married couples with relatives	3	2	5
All Families	32	32	64

It is, of course, inadequate to consider preferences without taking rents into account. The Worsley flats actually had lower rents than comparable houses, and it is possible that this was a significant factor for the flat-dwellers. Indeed, among those who wished to move back to Salford, there was a very definite pattern of demand. In general they were willing to pay a 'high' rent for a house but not for a flat. It is dangerous to be dogmatic on this issue since it is quite clear that the rents families are prepared to pay depends very much on what they consider to be 'reasonable', and this seems to be related far more to the rent they are used to paying than to the rent which a disinterested observer might think they were able to afford. The whole picture is, of course, confused by the effects of housing subsidies and rent control.

On balance it seems reasonable to conclude that, *other things being equal,* most families prefer houses to flats. Where a real choice exists, as in the new towns, the effective demand for flats has been found to be very small,* though it may increase when the family structure of the population becomes less abnormal. Yet other things are rarely equal, and it is because of this that it is so difficult to

* See, e.g. '10th Annual Report of the Crawley Development Corporation', *Reports of the Development Corporations* 1957, House of Commons Paper No. 249, page 161; and '10th Annual Report of the Welwyn Garden City Development Corporation', *Reports of the Development Corporations,* 1958, House of Commons Paper No. 260, page 397.

obtain a clear picture of individual preferences in any given situation. It is highly probable that one of the reasons why so many city-dwellers are apparently satisfied with living in flats is that the alternative necessitates a long journey to work. On the other hand, there is no doubt that some Londoners are glad to live in flats in order to be near the centre of London. If the centres of Manchester and Liverpool could be made similarly attractive it is likely that a similar situation would apply there. Whether the provincial middle class would be prepared to pay the high economic rents of central-area flats is an open question.

The problem is thus not a straightforward one, and it is becoming increasingly complicated by the advent of the motorized society in which space for the car is becoming almost as important as space for the television set. With small-scale dispersal from the great cities flats may be a lesser evil than houses at an hour's journey from work; with large-scale dispersal flats can be reserved for those who prefer them, and the evidence suggests that the proportion is not a large one.

So far the discussion has assumed that high-density development is synonymous with flat development. But in fact, given imaginative planning, it is possible to develop at high densities and yet include a proportion of houses. Thus at 100 habitable rooms per acre, one-third of the dwellings can be two-storey houses; at 140 the proportion can be one-seventh.* It is even possible to develop at 70 or more habitable rooms per acre entirely with houses.† It is thus possible to provide houses for some families on central sites. How far this reduces the overspill problem and at what cost are separate questions which are discussed later.

* Ministry of Housing and Local Government, *Flats and Houses,* 1958[40] pages 10 and 17. But the greater is the proportion of houses, the greater is the required height (and hence the cost) of the remaining flats. See below page 172 et seq.

† See Ministry of Housing and Local Government, *The Density of Residential Areas,*[79] page 9. For an illustration of a successful housing scheme at 70 habitable rooms per acre (Horndean Close, Roehampton) see lan Nairn, *Counter-Attack Against Subtopia,*[88] page 423. The Boston Manor 'Living Suburb' scheme, though at an overall density of about 123 habitable rooms per acre, proposes 30% of 'dwellings with gardens'.[52]

(2) Social Aspects of Overspill

During the last few years the whole concept of overspill has come under fire from various sociologists. Brennan, for example, has argued that the population in the two worst parts of the Gorbals 'have adapted themselves very well' to their conditions; 60% of households interviewed 'said definitely that they did not want to leave the area'.[142] Young and Willmott, in their fascinating study of Bethnal Green and the 'Greenleigh' overspill estate came to the conclusion that 'very few people wish to leave the East End. They are attached to Mum and Dad, to the markets, to the pubs and settlements, to Club Row and the London Hospital'. These sociological arguments have been avidly seized upon by the opponents of overspill. The 'hands off good agricultural land, wherever it is'* campaign has now been reinforced by arguments which not only seem eminently sensible, but also have academic respectability. But a careful perusal of these sociological studies suggests that the problem is far more complex than is generally assumed. Often no distinction is made between peripheral housing estates and new towns, or between schemes which are populated by families from 'the top of the housing list' and those in which the population is recruited through an industrial selection scheme. Again, the break-up of kinship ties is often assumed to be a *necessary* concomitant of overspill; little account is taken of alternative costs and rents; and, finally, the time factor is ignored—an old-established central area is compared not with a pre-war estate, but with an estate which is new or even in process of being built. Yet it is these distinctions which are crucial. Greenleigh, the estate investigated by Young and Willmott, is an L.C.C. 'out-county' estate nearly twenty miles from Bethnal Green, for which families are selected from the housing list. It has been developed as a housing estate, not as a self-contained community. As a result it lacks the amenities of a town. The majority of the earners travel daily to work in London. In fact it is the very antithesis of a new town where families can both live *and* work, and where (though the new towns were slow to recognize the need) it is possible for elderly parents to move out with their married children.

* Stated by Charles Cornwall-Legh, Lord of the Manor of Legh, at the Inquiry into Manchester's proposal to develop Lymm; See *Manchester Guardian,* January 1958.

It is strange, and highly regrettable, that no social survey has yet been carried out in any of the new towns. It is thus not possible to compare the attitudes of the new town families with those in Greenleigh. However, the Worsley Social Survey[145], already mentioned, throws many doubts on the validity of Young and Willmott's findings. In their survey at Greenleigh they interviewed only forty-seven families. This enabled a fairly intensive study to be made but, as the authors point out (and has been consistently ignored) their conclusions 'are bound to be impressionistic'. Further, the Greenleigh sample was deliberately chosen so as to consist solely of parents with at least two children. This was done in order to provide a comparison with a sample interviewed in Bethnal Green. The results obtained by a survey designed in such a manner cannot give a reliable picture of the reactions of all types of family. We are not told what proportion of the total families on the estate were visited, nor is there any evidence to suggest how far those interviewed were representative. We only know that there were 268 who had moved from Bethnal Green and that 129 (48%) of these were families consisting of parents with two or more children. It was no part of the authors' intention to ascertain the views of families who had not come from Bethnal Green or of those who were of a different family composition. In the Worsley Social Survey the object was to interview a cross-section of families on the estate. The sample was selected on the basis of dwelling types: 10% of each class of dwelling were extracted from the local housing authority's records. Altogether 264 families were visited and 250 interviews obtained.

For the majority of families on the Worsley overspill estates the move from Salford involved considerable changes in their way of life. The intimate social life of the slums had given way to the more reserved, home-centred life of the typical middle-class suburb. Contacts with relatives were much reduced. Many families had, for the first time, to contend with a long and comparatively expensive journey to work. This, together with a very large increase in rents (on average about 300%), and the social necessity to 'keep up appearances' resulted in social and economic strains which sometimes made the process of adjustment a long and arduous one. Nevertheless, for the majority of families these difficulties were accepted as a necessary price that had to be paid for the great improvement in

living conditions. Over a quarter of the families had moved from shared and overcrowded houses; a further third had previously lived in unhealthy, damp, and obsolescent accommodation. Their present living conditions formed a most striking and welcome contrast. Separation from 'Mum' was not the hardship which Young and Willmott have led us to expect; on the contrary it often allowed a more harmonious relationship to be established. The possession of a house in which pride could be taken resulted in a closer and more intimate family life: activities were now centred on the home, the garden and the ubiquitous television set. Visiting relatives was now an 'outing', not an escape from sordid living conditions. The overall impression we received was that the majority of families were thrilled with their new way of life and would not return to Salford unless financial circumstances made it imperative. Though the cost of living in Worsley was considerably higher than in Salford so was the standard of living.

Nevertheless, by the date of survey, some 10% of the total number of families who had moved to Worsley had returned to Salford, and of the families interviewed a further 17% wished to return. (Three-quarters of these said that they would return only if they could obtain accommodation in Salford which was of 'the Worsley standard'.) It was abundantly clear that the main reason for this dissatisfaction was the length of the journey to work. Though some 3,000 jobs had been provided in Worsley, the survey indicates that only about 25% of these had been taken by people on the overspill estates—70% of earners worked in the central areas of the conurbation and spent on average about ninety minutes in time and 2/6 in money on travelling to and from work each day. Local employment seemed generally to be comparatively poorly paid and offered few prospects for advancement. Opportunities for female employment—particularly part-time—were scarce. Employment for school-leavers was completely inadequate: only 12.5% of the children who left school in the four years prior to the date of the survey had obtained work locally.

A few families found the social climate on the overspill estates uncongenial and a few felt that separation from friends and relatives was too great a price to pay for the superior housing conditions in Worsley. But the majority wished to return in order

to live nearer to their work. Even among those who did not wish to return many complained of their journey to work. Further, of those who had already returned (and who are at present being interviewed) the majority did so in order to reduce the cost of travelling.

In short, the Worsley development exhibits one of the unwelcome characteristics of dormitory development. This is undoubtedly the only major social problem facing the scheme; and it is a problem that is likely to increase—between 1958 and 1963 over 1,400 young people from the estates will be seeking work. Nevertheless, the problem must be seen in perspective. A fifth of earners had found local employment and of those having a long journey to work 76%* did not find it a hardship.

It is interesting to speculate how far Worsley does in fact differ from Greenleigh. Making allowances for the difference in the size of the London and Manchester Conurbations they are very similar in character—both are essentially suburban dormitory estates, and in both cases tenants have been selected from the top of the housing list. They therefore exhibit the inevitable problems of such estates—the separation from kin and the long journey to work. But by taking a cross-section of all types of family at Worsley the break-up of kinship ties can be seen in its proper perspective. The estate is not made up entirely of young married couples forcibly separated from the wider family. And 'Mum' differs from the stereotype of a frail, grey-haired old lady spending her last remaining years in a lonely dreary way, deprived of the companionship of her married children by the machinations of bureaucracy. On the contrary, the majority of the Mums referred to by the families we interviewed were agile, middle-aged women who went out to work full-time. Furthermore (if the comments we heard are to be believed) some of them were not 'kindly souls'. Quite often we were told of the 'interfering——' who had tried to dictate to their married children how they should run their homes. This was particularly the case among families in which the mother had lived with them—comprising 30% of all families in which the wife's mother was alive. For many of these the move to Worsley had led to a very welcome weakening of kinship ties.

* A 'long' journey to work was defined as being one which took at least one hour (single journey), or cost more than 1/6 a day (return journey).

For those who wanted their Mums to live near by (but not too near!) there was the chance of a bungalow or flat on the estate. By the accidents of the slum clearance programme and the structure of the housing list twenty-five (22% of the total living Mums) had already moved. Had Salford not been so preoccupied with its housing list* the number would have been greater.

The overall impression thus differs from that gained by Young and Willmott in Greenleigh. It seems reasonable to suppose that the picture in the New Towns would be even more favourable—as is evidenced by the very low removal rate.

Young and Willmott's study should be viewed as a swing of the pendulum of thought: for too long housing and planning specialists were so concerned with the sheer size of the problems facing them that the social quality of the physical results they were producing was ignored—in practice if not in theory. To show that rehousing and redevelopment involves the destruction of a social milieu is a welcome corrective, and should make 'the planners' aware of their responsibilities to re-create something equally if not more socially desirable.† But, to requote Hazlitt, 'With change of place we change our ideas; nay our opinions and feelings.'‡ The social life of the slums is not necessarily a precious flower to be preserved and transplanted into a new environment. The fact that people follow a certain pattern of life in a given environment, and are temporarily upset when that pattern is disturbed does not mean that the disturbance should be avoided. Even this overstates the case since the disturbance is not upsetting

* Salford, like most housing authorities, have selected their tenants on the basis of housing need. The difficulties to which this gave rise on the Worsley estates is discussed in the author's paper, 'Overspill in South-East Lancashire: The Salford-Worsley Scheme',[62] page 197. The social problems which result from such selection are now well known. For a recent analysis, see T.Brennan, *Reshaping a City*;[143] his concluding sentence is of particular interest: 'one cannot build a new town or provide a new lease of life for the city by the accidental operation of a housing list based on need.' There is a big field for inquiry here.

† Communities cannot be 'planned' but community facilities can. There is an extensive literature on this subject, but see P.E.P. 'Can Communities Be Planned ?'[148]

‡ W. Hazlitt, *On Going on a Journey.*[184] Quoted in Young and Willmott, op. cit., page 154.

if the new environment is a good one; or at least the upset is small in comparison with the superior living conditions provided. The sympathetic sociologist is apt to read too much into the happy way of life of the dear old London slums with their fish-and-chip saloons and pawnshops. At the extreme, much of the patter reads like a modern version of 'the poor are happier as they are'. Theories of cultural relativity are invaluable to the historian, but to the social policy-maker they can easily become blinkers. This is not to say that social factors are to be ignored: indeed, it is because they so often have been ignored in the past that the sociologists' dicta are now so uncritically welcomed. The rehousing of young families with children on a distant housing estate while aged parents are left behind (because they are not in 'housing need') is obviously undesirable. The building of standard three-bedroom houses to the exclusion of all other types is an equally short-sighted and inadequate policy. But to suggest that overspill should be stopped is to carry the argument to its illogical conclusion. In any case it cannot be stopped: if it is not provided for in the public sector, then private enterprise will meet the need. Young and Willmott make much of the fact that people want to stay in Bethnal Green: they give insufficient emphasis to the fact that the population of the Borough fell by 59,000 (from 117,000 to 58,000) between 1921 and 1951. The enormous movement of population out of areas such as Bethnal Green and Salford will not stop until they are made attractive places to live in:

> 'How can I get out of here—when can I get out of here: that, continually is at the back of both their minds, to get out of Barbary Street, out of East London. For ten generations almost everybody in East London has wanted to get out of the place.'*

PRACTICAL POSSIBILITIES

It is quite erroneous to think of overspill as being due solely to a shortage of houses in a given area. The existing land provision for social and public services, for roads and for industry is in many cases well below present requirements. Between 1947 and 1957 the London County Council developed an additional 274 acres for

* Frank Tilsley, *Heaven and Herbert Common.*[187]

educational purposes—an increase of 17.1%; present proposals are for a further increase of 258 acres. Yet, 'the difficult property and rehousing considerations involved make it impracticable in most instances to achieve the full site standards prescribed in the (Ministry of Education) Regulations.' Similarly, in Manchester where 'school facilities in almost all parts of the city are unsatisfactory'[136] it is impossible to achieve modern standards even with large-scale redevelopment and overspill. Proposals made in the City's Development Plan

'will in no way bring about the desired improvement in the school system as a whole, but at the same time it is impossible to suggest where, or to what extent, additional land is likely to become available for new schools or for extensions to existing schools, in those parts of the city for which no appreciable redevelopment is envisaged in the foreseeable future. Such additional land could, for the most part, only be provided by clearing residential properties for which no allowance is made in the housing policy and programme envisaged for the next twenty years'.

Nevertheless, the Plan proposes an increase in the area for educational purposes (including school playing fields) from 762 to 1,606 acres.*

The need for parks is particularly acute. The London County Council is aiming at an interim standard of 2½ acres per 1,000 population. Though this is well below the recommended 7 acres, it involves the displacement of 52,000 people over the twenty-year Plan period.†

Of equal importance, though often forgotten, are the increasing land needs of industry. Increased mechanization and the flexibility of the one-storey building with plenty of space for expansion (and car parking) are resulting in a demand for land which it is difficult to meet, and which has provided a 'natural' impetus to the overspill of industry. But even with industrial dispersal the amount of land needed for the remaining industry is often greater than is easily available. Thus Manchester,though assuming a reduction in industrial employment, has proposed an additional 361 acres for

* At the date of the survey the proportion of land devoted to educational purposes was 2.8%. The Plan proposes to increase this to 5.9%.

† London County Council, *Development Plan,* Analysis, page 225, Table 49. Betweeen 1951 and 1960 the L.C.C. provided about 521 acres in new and extended parks.

industry in its Development Plan.* This policy was based on a survey which suggested that

'the future site area per 1,000 workers, necessary to secure adequate standards of daylighting and ventilation, and to ensure a proper reservation of space between buildings, should generally be not less than 50% above the site area per 1,000 workers existing at present for particular industries'.

In Birmingham,

'the increase in the area of existing industry for the relief of its present congestion is likely to be considerable, as information supplied for the factory survey carried out in a number of the Redevelopment Areas indicates that many factory owners have asked for alternative sites three to five times the area of those they at present occupy'†

Dame Evelyn Sharp recently summarized the position:

'The increasing pressure on land does not arise only from housing. It arises too from the ever-increasing demands of industry. About a million new jobs have been created in the last six or seven years; and meanwhile the tendency in industry is increasingly to need more land per worker employed than was foreseen ten years ago. There are demands, too, for the great new roads—the measure of which we do not yet know; and enormous demands for car parking and garaging. And there are other demands—for power, for defence and so on—constantly increasing.'[101]

Peter Self gives a striking illustration from two not untypical redevelopment areas in Birmingham 'of the extent to which, in inner areas, housing must make way for other uses'.[97]

Land Use Estimates	*Existing* %	*Proposed* %
Residential	47·0	27·4
Industry	21·8	21·2
Public Open Space	0·5	15·6
Education	1·7	8·6
Through Traffic Routes	1·3	6·7
All Other Uses	27·7	20·5
	100·0	100·0

* *Manchester Development Plan, Written Analysis,* Appendix I. The increase is from 1,800 to 2,161 acres.

† *City of Birmingham Development Plan, Written Analysis,* page 24. The increase in land proposed was from 3,748 to 5,854 acres.

These factors are not sufficiently appreciated by those who seem to suggest that high-density housing is a practicable *alternative* to overspill. Obviously by building ten-storey flats more people can be accommodated on a given housing site than by building semi-detached houses at twelve or sixteen to the acre. But land is required not only for housing but also for schools, shops, parks, service industry, and so on: the amount of land required for these purposes in a given neighbourhood varies with the *number* of people living in it, not with the *area* their dwellings occupy. Thus, the greater the number of people accommodated on a given *housing* site, the greater is the amount of land which must be reserved around it for other purposes. Alternatively, the higher the density of housing in a neighbourhood of given size, the smaller must be the acreage devoted to housing within that neighbourhood. It follows that if housing density is increased the resultant increase in overall population density is by no means proportionate. In a typical non-dormitory town between 25% and 50% of the area is used for purposes other than housing. Increases in housing density could affect these proportions but the number of extra people it is thereby possible to accommodate is comparatively small. This is dramatically illustrated by figures prepared by Manchester Corporation. Manchester plans to redevelop at a net density of approximately twenty-two dwellings to the acre. If this density were increased by a third, the number of dwellings which could be built in the clearance areas would rise from 8,830 to 10,400, i.e. by only 1,570 or less than one-fifth. Overspill would be reduced by only 6%. Similar calculations in other areas would give broadly the same results. Thus, increased densities are no *solution* to the overspill problem. At the most they can reduce it only marginally.

This is not to suggest that central areas should be developed with semi-detached houses at twelve to the acre. There is great scope for imaginative high density central area redevelopment, and even more for suburban redevelopment such as that suggested in the Boston Manor 'Living Suburb' scheme.[52] But it is quite wrong to assume that the overspill problem can thus be obviated.

The high-density versus overspill controversy is really a bogus one. Overspill is not an alternative: it is a means by which areas can be 'thinned out' in preparation for redevelopment. It allows

decent living conditions to be provided not only for those who move out but also for those who remain. Such, anyway, is the theory. Unfortunately practice is different—not because the theory is wrong, but because policies have been half-hearted and have not been geared to meet the increasing housing needs of our time. The fact that little 'comprehensive redevelopment' has taken place since the war is not due to an overemphasis on overspill: on the contrary it is, at least in part, the result of the inadequacy of the overspill provision.* To argue that high-density redevelopment is an alternative to overspill is to stand facts on their head.

COMPARATIVE COSTS

The factors to be taken into account in calculating the alternative costs of overspill and high-density redevelopment are numerous and complex, and it is a matter of some doubt whether the tools of analysis are adequate. Nevertheless, sufficient evidence is available to show that overspill is an attractive economic proposition when compared with the costs of highdensity redevelopment.

First and foremost is the high cost of building flats. Since 1952 the Ministry have undertaken a considerable amount of research on the costs of high-density development. The results, which show how 'remarkably large sums of public money can be saved if high building is not used except to the extent that it must be', have recently been published.† At moderately high densities the aim should be 'to provide the highest possible proportion of dwellings in houses, for these are between £200 and £250 cheaper than four-storey maisonnettes'. If higher densities are 'necessary', the aim should be 'to have the highest possible proportion of four-storey maisonnettes, for these are £400–£500 cheaper than dwellings in high buildings'. Figures quoted from such an unimpeachable source can be accepted as reliable, and the conclusion is clear: even if the

* Other factors include those of finance and the multiplicity of ownerships. See A.Ling, *Decaying Town Centres,*[76]

† Ministry of Housing and Local Government, *Flats and Houses 1958*. The quotation is from the Minister's Foreword.

Ministry's advice is followed, the higher the density, the greater is the cost.

This is the economic aspect of high-density building; there is also a purely financial one. To enable high flats to be provided at reasonable rents large subsidies are given by the Exchequer.* On twelve storey flats built at forty to the acre the subsidy may amount to £67 9s. a year. The comparable subsidy given for a house built for slum clearance on a central site may be £33 16s.† For an overspill house the subsidy is £24. The cost to the taxpayer of building 500,000 high flats would thus be £34 million a year; if the same number of dwellings were provided in new or expanded towns the cost would be £12 million a year. This calculation takes account only of Exchequer subsidies. Additionally the ratepayer is usually called upon to make a contribution towards the real rents of high flats, and a hidden subsidy from other municipal tenants in the form of 'rent pooling' is common. Thus in Birmingham, the net rent for a three-bedroom municipal flat is £1 11s. 5½*d*., but this 'represents in reality an economic rent of £5 4s. 10*d*. less £1 14s. 3d. subsidy less about £2 which is "saved" by pooling, that is to say, paid for by tenants of other types of dwellings'.[66]

The financial effects of high-density development can be 'absorbed' in such a manner if they are small in relation to the total 'rent pool'. But there is a limit to the extent to which this is possible. Birmingham had to increase their rents in 1957 because of, *inter alia,* 'the fact that such a high proportion (somewhere between 60% and 80%) of new dwellings must perforce be in the form of multi-storey flats which are more expensive, both in capital and in maintenance costs, than two-storey houses'.‡ Only two years later a further increase was necessary:

'The present rent scales, approved by the City Council in 1957, are based on Rateable Value, and for post-war houses they give slightly below twice Cross Value.* These scales are applied to all new houses

* For rehousing families displaced by slum clearance.

† These figures are taken from a memorandum prepared by the Town and Country Planning Association.[107]

‡ City of Birmingham, *Report of the Housing Management Committee on Review of Rents,* presented to the City Council on November 3rd, 1959. Other factors were the abolition of the general needs subsidy and the high level of interest rates.

and to all relets, and were so designed that the rents of new houses should be reasonably within the average tenant's means. Because so many of the new dwellings are multi-storey flats which are expensive both in capital cost and in maintenance, it is necessary, in addition to the Government subsidy and the agreed Rate Fund Contribution, to find an additional sum amounting to £69 a year for each new dwelling if they are to be let at rents of approximately twice Cross Value. This means that each year a fresh burden of some £175,000 falls on the Housing Revenue Account, and this is cumulative. It therefore follows that the problem of rents can never be finally solved as long as the City continues building, and it will be necessary either to make for a small percentage increase each year, or to further review rents say, every three years, when further increases will have to be made, or other sources of revenue found.'†

High flats are therefore costly both on economic and financial grounds. But there are other economic costs to take into consideration. If families are dispersed to new and expanded towns, the whole range of public and social services has to be provided. Does this lead to unnecessary duplication of services? It is not possible within the compass of this book to discuss all the services involved, but two illustrative examples can be given.

It might be argued that the provision of new schools for an overspill population is an economic waste since schools already exist for them in the exporting areas. Overspill thus involves a waste of 'social capital'. This would be true only if the existing schools were adequate both in quantity and quality. In fact the reverse is true. In the central areas of the big cities the schools are as obsolete and inadequate as the houses. A huge programme of rebuilding is under way. Adequate school facilities can be provided only if some part of the population moves elsewhere, thus allowing room for modern schools to be built. (The higher the residential density, the greater is the required number of schools.) Thus overspill does not result in the inadequate use of 'educational capital': on the contrary it is a prerequisite for the creation of the new assets that are required.

* Twice the Cross Value was the normal standard adopted for privately-rented controlled houses in the 1957 Rent Act.

† Furthermore, 'the increasing proportion of multi-storey flats throws additional burdens on the Repairs Fund every year, and this is a factor which needs to be borne in mind whenever costs are being reviewed.'

All the big cities have inadequate open spaces. Overspill will by itself make the provision less inadequate. Alternative costs here are striking. To provide six acres of playing fields and other open space for a population of 1,000 in the new towns costs about £6,000. The cost in London—if such a standard were attainable—would be over £84,000.[107]

There are, of course, other costs which it is difficult to estimate such as that of traffic congestion and the journey to work. In this connection it is interesting to note that the new Victoria Underground Line is estimated to cost £55 million with an annual loss of between £2.5 million and £3 million.* By comparison the total cost (including transfer payments) of a new town for 80,000 people amounts, at present prices, to about £95 million.[102]

To compare the overall cost of rehousing and providing the necessary services for a given number of people in different locations is an extremely complicated matter, and must take account not only of the costs of development but also those of maintenance, movements of people and industry,† the effect of the new conditions on production and on the health of the migrants, and the economic effects of the reduction in population and employment in the area from which the move has been made. To make even a rough calculation an elaborate series of assumptions must be made. The most thorough study so far undertaken is that carried out by the Building Research Station, to which the reader is referred.[102,103] At the time of writing, the first major report on this study had not been published, but a short account has appeared in *Town and Country Planning*.[108] Stone's analysis makes use of the concept of 'improvement value'—which results from the fact that obsolete or old buildings are replaced by new ones having a longer life and smaller operating costs. ‡

* Report by the London Travel Committee on the Victoria Line, H.M.S.O., 1959. The Committee point out that 'present network of London Transport railways does not meet all its charges either, and indeed has never done so, although it does cover its operating expenses'.

† Stone quotes £5 million as the cost of movement to a new town for 80,000 people; about 75% of this is attributable to the movement of industry.[102]

‡ The replacement of an entirely obsolete asset by a new one would result in an improvement value of 100%.

'Having assembled the capital costs of housing and neighbourhood facilities at densities from fourteen to forty dwellings an acre, with estimates of normal costs where they occur, and with an offset for 'improvement value', and having translated these into annual running costs, he gives the following comparative costs for a unit of 154 persons rehoused after slum clearance:

(a) 122.5 persons rehoused centrally on one acre in five-storey flats with lifts, and 31–5 dispersed to a new town, with a completely new urban equipment: total net cost £3,500 per annum.
(b) 70 persons rehoused on the central area and 84 displaced to a new town: cost £2,500 per annum.
(c) As (b) but dispersal of 84 persons to a country-town expansion: cost £1,850 per annum. (Cheaper than [b] because fewer new facilities are necessary.)
(d) As (b) but to a new suburban neighbourhood on the fringe of the city: cost £1,600 per annum. (Cheapest method, but daily travel costs are not assessed because too variable.)'[108]

Inevitably, of course, the assumptions on which such calculations are made, can be questioned. Nevertheless, it fully supports less exacting studies in their conclusions on the economic disadvantages of very high-density redevelopment. For 10,000 people the extra cost of (a) over (b) amounts to £64,000 a year—roughly equivalent to a capital saving of £1,200,000. 'As against ten-storey flats the saving would be equivalent to about £2½ million.'[108]

The social costs and benefits to both the families who move out and those who remain cannot be set out in a profit and loss account. Nevertheless the conclusion seems incontrovertible: high-density redevelopment is much more costly than redevelopment at a lower density accompanied by some overspill.*

THE 'THREAT' TO FOOD PRODUCTION

It has already been shown that redeveloping at high densities is costly and reduces overspill only marginally. Nevertheless, it is often argued that 'the saving of farmland, as irreplaceable national capital is surely

*But, to repeat, this does not mean that central areas should be developed solely with two-storey houses. It is unfortunate that the two opposing sides on this density question both make use of a *reductio ad absurdum*.

worth paying for, since it is a perennial productive asset'.[111] If this argument is valid then there is a strong case for reducing overspill by lowering housing, open space, and educational standards. The matter is not one to be dismissed lightly: 30,000 acres of farmland are 'lost' to urban uses annually.

It is important to see this problem in perspective. The high standard of living enjoyed in this country is largely the result of industrial specialization. As this has increased so has our 'dependence' on the importation of food. It is unlikely to be seriously suggested that we should reverse the trends of economic growth and resort to a subsistence economy. It is also completely misleading to think of imports of food as a burden which we should attempt to shed. It is more accurate to maintain that we might have to import even more if our standard of living is to increase.* But even this does not give a complete picture. Loss of agricultural land does not necessarily involve a reduction in agricultural production. During the period 1948 to 1957, in spite of a net loss in England and Wales of 462,000 acres of agricultural land (rather less than 2% of the total), food production increased by about 16%. As the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture has pointed out, the effects of further land losses could 'readily be made good by the increasing efficiency of British farmers'.† If it were considered economically (or strategically) desirable to increase agricultural production still further, extensive areas of underdeveloped land could be utilized and the rate of agricultural investment increased. The policy of 'saving' agricultural land by the building of high-density flats cannot be justified on economic grounds. To save an acre of land by increasing the housing density may cost £2,000, £10,000, or even £50,000 an acre[97] because a flat in a tall block costs about £500 per bedroom more, in labour and materials alone, than a house in a two-storey terrace. This represents the real cost of saving agricultural land. It may be compared with Dr. Wibberley's suggestion that '£160 to £200 (at 1949–50 prices) spent on improving hill land should suffice to make good the loss of production of one lost, urbanized acre'.*

* This greatly simplifies the situation; see G.P.Wibbcrley, *Agriculture and Urban Growth*, Michael Joseph, 1959, especially Chapter 6, 'Food Replacement—At Home or Abroad?'

† See 'Land Which Is Lost To Farming', *The Times*, 9th February 1959.

Finally, one must take account of the value of food produced in gardens. Though some of the claims made in this respect seem somewhat exaggerated it must be realized that 'the retail value of food from the average garden when houses are built at a density often or twelve to the acre, has only to reach £4 a year to ensure that the value of output from the whole site is equal to the farm-gate value of output from an acre of better-than-average farmland'.[55]

The cynic might observe that while farmers will hotly contest the building of municipal estates no objection is raised to private development. The fundamental objection is not to urbanization but to municipal development: and this is often simply because compensation paid for compulsory acquisition by a municipality is less than a private builder would offer. The large amount of unopposed private building which has taken place on agricultural land is evidence of this. How far the new compensation provisions under the Town and Country Planning Act 1959 will alter the position remains to be seen.

CONCLUSIONS

Each of the main assumptions underlying the high-density argument has now been discussed. It appears that high-density redevelopment is comparatively unpopular, expensive, uneconomic, and cannot possibly obviate the need for overspill. On the other hand, our city centres cannot be allowed to rot indefinitely. The case for redevelopment (certainly at higher densities than in suburbia) is clear. How far it is financially viable is a separate question which at present must remain open. But if current tendencies, both in this country and in the United States, continue, then the city centre will become more and more 'a place of extremes—a place for the very poor, or the very rich, or the slightly odd'.* There may be a good case, as William H. Whyte suggests, for middle-class subsidies: 'if the city is to hold the middle class, a vigorous subsidy programme is the only solution.'† It may

* Quoted in P. Self,[97] page 113, to which the reader is referred for further discussion. See also D. Senior, 'Farm and Garden', *Town and Country Planning,* September 1956: 'the increase in food output obtainable by investing £40,000 in farm improvement is at least eighty times as great as the output saved by building forty flats on one acre instead of forty cottages on three.'

be that with a vigorous urban renewal programme a retreat *from* suburbia will take place. There are some slight indications of this in the United States:

> 'The grass, particularly seems to become a Thing, and it is sometimes mentioned with such animosity as to suggest that the suburban lawn may be the salvation of the city.'

Nevertheless, modern standards of living require space and this cannot be provided without overspill.‡ The exodus from the City is in full spate, and cannot be significantly reversed. Very largely (and increasingly) it is not due to the efforts of local authorities but to the demand which is being met by private builders. It is unfortunate that much of the argument about overspill is couched in terms of housing lists and municipal estates. This is only part of the problem: the bigger part is the enormous demand in the private sector. As already shown, the problem is not one of the desirability or otherwise of overspill, but one of who shall cater for it and, much more important, where it shall be catered for: overspill is taking place and will continue to take place whether it is 'planned' or not. If provision of new town character is not made, the overspill will continue to go to the periphery of ever-expanding conurbations.

* W.H.Whyte, Introduction to *The Exploding Metropolis,* by the Editors of *Fortune,*[68] Cf. Editorial in *The Listener,* entitled 'The Big Street', 11th June 1959: 'The poor may cling to the town centres, but the better-off classes march—or rather drive—in and out.'

† Whyte adds that there would be 'simple justice' in this since 'the middle-income group, after all, is about the only group in America whose housing has not been subsidized'.

‡ At least in the short run. When the older low-density suburban areas are redeveloped it may be possible to provide adequately for a larger number of people.

XII

TOWARDS A POLICY

THOUGH THIS STUDY has purposely been called a restatement of problems, it is incumbent on the author to outline the implications of this restatement for future policy. This is no easy task: the identification and analysis of problems is merely a preliminary stage to the analysis of the means whereby defined objectives can be achieved. Though suggestions can be made, these require detailed study before they can be accepted as possible pointers to future action. Social scientists are often criticized for ending a study with the conclusion that further research is required: yet this is often the only conclusion which can be legitimately and realistically drawn from the study. To go further may entail the introduction of questionable assumptions based on inadequate facts. Of necessity, therefore, this chapter does not provide the blueprint for a new policy. Instead, it puts forward a series of suggestions which, in the opinion of the author, warrant consideration.

THE PROBLEM OF LONDON

The Barlow Commission had no hesitation in concluding that 'the disadvantages in many, if not in most of the great industrial concentrations, alike on the strategical, the social, and the economic side, do constitute serious handicaps and even in some

* Cf. *A Planning Survey of Birmingham and the Black Country* by the West Midland Group, Architectural Press, 1948, page 199: 'It has become clear that the strategic, social, and long-term economic consequences of the growth of London and other urban centres are harmful and dangerous.'

respects dangers to the nation's life and development'.* This view was endorsed by the Government of the day and, until recently,[91,152] has formed the unchallenged background to post-war planning policy. Yet a re-examination is long overdue. Strategical considerations hardly apply in the Atomic Age. There is no simple correlation between size of city and health conditions.[60,65] 'Social' and 'intellectual' health may or may not be poorer in a vast conurbation, but the concepts are so vague and ambiguous as to be virtually meaningless. Economic disadvantages of urban concentration are almost as difficult to quantify. That there are definite economic advantages in concentration* is indisputable, but are these outweighed by the social costs? Of course, many of the real costs are not directly paid for by those who cause them, and it is this which makes untenable the view that large conurbations would not have come into existence if their advantages had not outweighed their disadvantages. Decisions on location are taken in the light of 'private costs': these necessarily exclude the cost, e.g. of subsidizing passenger transport or high flats for working-class families in central areas.† Nevertheless it could be argued that on balance it is preferable for these costs to be imposed on the community, since the economic advantages of concentration are so great. These are intangibles, and too little research has been undertaken to provide unambiguous guides to policy. Yet one factor is clearly undesirable—the long (and increasing) journey to work. To argue that people who live a long distance from work 'choose' to do so is to beg the question. The element of choice in human affairs is in reality very restricted. What the suburban dweller chooses is decent living conditions for his family: the journey to work is a personal cost which he has to put up with, and which he is prepared to accept for their sake. The reduction of the journey-to-work problem is a desirable end in itself, even if it involves some 'strictly economic' loss. But present indications are that it is getting steadily worse, particularly in

* As the Barlow Commission pointed out, concentration is not the same thing as congestion or overcrowding: 'a medium-sized town may suffer the evil as well as a million mark town.' (Report, op. cit., page 156.)

† Except to the extent that taxes and rates are levied for these purposes; but the incidence of these is too widely spread and indirect to weigh heavily in any individual decision. For a discussion of 'private and social costs in development', see N.Lichfield, Economics of Planned Development',[76] Chapters 18 and 19.

London. The problem must be viewed in relation to the continuing expansion of London. The evidence supports Powell's view that 'the expanding conurbation is the product of geographical and economic forces too powerful for man to reverse'. Does it thus follow that the journey-to-work problem must inevitably grow? Indeed, does the argument imply (to quote the *Architectural Journal*) that 'the attempt to limit the growth of industry and population in Greater London and South-East England has not only failed, but that it should never have been made'?*

There are three issues here which, though inter-connected, are in some ways separate: the growth of employment in the central area and the related journey-to-work problem; conurban growth around Greater London; and migration from other parts of the country.

THE JOURNEY TO WORK IN CENTRAL LONDON

The growth of employment in central London has been documented in Chapter VIII. It is this growth, together with the outward movement of population, which gives rise to the main journey-to-work problem in London. As Westergaard and the Centre for Urban Studies have shown,[57,152,155,172] the conventional picture of the London Conurbation is false, or at least exaggerated. It is generally thought of as 'a complex, unified system of mutually interdependent parts, linked by an intricate pattern of daily movements between homes and jobs, forming one large and diversified pool of labour, and one large and diversified pool of employment opportunities'. The true picture is rather different:

> 'The different areas of the metropolitan region are much less closely tied to each other than is generally realized. Greater London does in some ways form one economic unit. But its unity in terms of everyday movements of labour derives very largely from the special position of the Central Area. Were it not for the Centre, the Conurbation would be little more than a loosely knit conglomeration of local communities. Only Central London

* *Architectural Journal,* 17th September 1959, p. 183. This was the *Architectural Journal's* interpretation of Powell's argument. In fact his argument was the reverse of this and was meant to imply that the basic principles of decentralization were sound, but that the attraction of London was proving to be far greater than had been allowed for by either Barlow or Abercrombie.

draws its labour force over great distances and from all parts of the region. Daily movements to work are otherwise short and local in character. Contrary to assumptions which are still sometimes made, long journeys to work between widely separated districts of the Conurbation are thus rare, except for those to the Central Area and a few other inner boroughs.'[57]

The Scope for Decentralization

Westergaard and the Centre for Urban Studies conclude that 'a critical re-appraisal of current planning policy in the region' is required. The scope for decentralization of central area employment (which is predominantly non-manufacturing) is very limited and, indeed, further expansion is inevitable. Thus 'if the burden of long journeys to work is to be reduced, the only feasible alternative is to arrest and reverse the outward shift of population. This can only be achieved by raising residential density standards throughout the inner and innersuburban areas of Greater London'.[57]

To the present author the conclusion is a *non sequitur* and the suggested remedy is completely inadequate as an *alternative* to present policy.

The facts revealed by the studies relate solely to commuting, not to the practicability or otherwise of decentralization. To argue that 'recent developments underline the impracticability of breaking up the complex of economic activities that are located in, and tied to, Central London' is to go further than the facts warrant. It is true that the extent to which decentralization of employment is practicable is unknown. Time and time again it has been stressed that there is 'an insufficient appreciation of the economic forces at work and a lack of accurate and up-to-date information about them. In particular, the locational requirements of business firms should be investigated as a matter of urgency'.[109] In view of the importance of the subject it is incredible that so little research has been undertaken.* But, such being the case, surely dogmatism is

* For examples of research see A.Beacham, *Survey of Industries in Welsh County Towns;*[151] D.C.Hague and P.K.Newman, *Costs in Alternative Locations: The Clothing Industry;*[156] W.F.Luttrell, *The Cost of Industrial Movement;*[159] D.L. Munby, *Industry and Planning in Stepney*; [162] C.Woodbury, 'Industrial Location and 'Urban Redevelopment', Part II of *The Future of Cities and Urban Redevelopment.*[113] For a bibliography on industrial location see, Board of Trade, A list of Publications on the Distribution of Industry, Board of Trade Library.

premature? A more balanced view has recently been put forward by the London County Council:

'There are, clearly, a large number of offices which cannot be dispersed because daily contacts with other businesses, government departments, research organizations and clients are essential: those dependent upon the financial and commodity markets and those heavily dependent on the transport network of London (e.g. daily newspapers) are obvious examples. However, it is becoming apparent that it is not absolutely necessary to have the entire clerical staff under one roof when many of them are doing routine work. Where rents are very high and staff difficult to get, there may be economic advantages in moving away from the centre. At least 70 firms and over 100 Government and private research establishments have already relocated part or all of their head offices outside central London.

The degree to which decentralization is possible varies with the needs of individual firms. Some have moved entirely to headquarters elsewhere. Others have split their head offices between London and another location, either with their management in the country area or transferring only the more routine work.'[135]

Special Census tabulations prepared for the L.C.C. showed that in central offices two-thirds of office workers were clerks, typsts, office machine operators and so on:

'This suggests that not all the operations at present carried on in the centre are tied to the metropolis, but that there is scope for the decentralization of routine work. The new figures thus tend to refute the contention that the proportion of London office workers in posts of great responsibility is too great to permit substantial decentralization. It is true that such senior staff as must remain in the centre will require a number of assistants to remain with them, but it should be noted that not all the higher grade workers are in senior positions; they include, for instance, junior professional men and women, many of whose jobs could be carried on elsewhere.'

The experience of offices which have moved has not been thoroughly investigated, but present indications are that there are very real and tangible advantages in an outlying location—though the transitional period may be one of acute difficulty.*

* See e.g. Town and Country Planning Association, *Report of the Conference on Office Location in the London Region,* 1958.

There is a profitable field for inquiry here: are the firms that move out different from those who do not?; what are the economic advantages and disadvantages to migrant firms? etc. etc.

High-density Residential Development as an Alternative

The grounds for contending that high-density residential redevelopment in the inner and inner-suburban areas is not of itself an *alternative* have been outlined in Chapter XI. High-density redevelopment *on the scale required* would be fantastically costly, both in economic and purely financial terms. It would necessitate a considerable reduction in planning standards and might well prove socially unacceptable. And in any case, the practical possibilities are strictly limited—even with multiple land use. The case for high-density redevelopment is not in question, but it is inconceivable that this can 'solve' the journey to work problem.* A balanced view of the required policy has been outlined by the authors of *The Living Suburb*:

'The size and function of London and the extent of the renewal problems it presents are such that all three solutions to the overspill problem (new towns, expanded towns, and new suburbs) will be needed. Together with these goes the concept of the higher concentration of densities in special areas like the Barbican and the Elephant and Castle, which is now accepted as official policy.'† It is unfortunate that the problem is so often posed in terms of alternatives.

CONURBAN GROWTH AROUND LONDON

Where the analysis of Westergaard and the Centre for Urban Studies is so useful, however, is in showing that the different parts of the London Region are (with the exception of the central areas) far more 'self-contained' than has been generally realized.‡ This being the case, is the 'growth' of London so undesirable that a policy of

* A not insignificant administrative problem which would arise if the attempt were made, would be to ensure that the central-area dwellings were occupied by those who at present commute long distances.

† *Architecture and Building,* Vol. XXXIV, No. 2, February 1959. As one of the authors has recently pointed out: 'One of the ironies of the generous criticism that the 'Living Suburb' project received was that it was used in some quarters as a stick to beat New Towns with. This is absurd.' G.Shankland, 'New Prospects for New Towns'.99

‡ The analysis is, of course, based on the 1951 Census. Considerable movements have taken place since then which may, or may not, have changed the situation.

restraint should be applied? All the forces for future expansion already exist: why should they not be unleashed? Short-distance dispersal of employment from central London would obviously be easier than dispersal beyond the Region. Why not accept the facts of the situation and allow a controlled expansion of London over what is left of the Home Counties? There seems to be no strong case on strategic or health grounds for restraining the growth of London, and the economic disadvantages of further growth are not manifest.

The largest objection must be a value-judgement: the urbanization (or suburbanization) of further land on the periphery of the expanding Metropolis would be a prostitution of our rural heritage which would appal future (if not present) generations. It would entail the destruction of vast areas of the countryside which are at present accessible (though with increasing difficulty) to the Londoner. This would be a huge price to pay for failing to come to grips with planning problems which have grown greater than our determination to cope with them. Our legislation refers to Town *and Country* Planning. The gain would be smaller than the loss if the problems of the largest Town were met by the extinction of a considerable proportion of its surrounding Country. Though it seems that some further growth of London is inevitable, the aim should be to restrict this as much as possible. This cannot be done unless a safety-valve—of very large dimensions—is provided elsewhere.

This 'subjective' objection to the further growth of London is not, however, the only one. Problems of sewage disposal, refuse disposal, transport, and communications, for example, would become even more difficult. But even more important than the problems which would arise for the London Region itself are the implications for the country as a whole. If London is to be allowed to grow 'naturally', there is no reason why restrictions should be placed on growth elsewhere. Manchester, Warrington, and Liverpool would coalesce and form an enormous North-West Conurbation. A similar process would take place, for example, in the Birmingham-Coventry area and the Nottingham-Derby-Long Eaton-Leicester area. Looking further ahead one could expect development along the London-Birmingham motorway which would eventually result in a fusion of the London and West Midlands Conurbations—an area of development which would

still be small in comparison with the 600-mile urbanized Atlantic seaboard from Portland, Maine to Norfolk, Virginia. The implication is simple and obvious: no plan for London can be adequate unless it is set 'in a larger scheme of regional and national development'.*

LONDON IN ITS NATIONAL SETTING

Evidence was presented in Chapter VIII to show that migration to the Metropolitan Region is continuing. Population statistics suggest that this is not very great, but the net movements of workers as recorded by the Ministry of Labour give a rather different picture. But even if the movement is small in relation to pre-war experience, what is significant is that it has taken place in a period of unprecedented full employment. Powell's warning is disturbing:

> 'If general depression were ever to hit the country again, can there be any doubt that the new industries of Greater London, which maintain the lowest unemployment rate of any part of Britain, would again weather the storm as they did in the thirties better than any other part of the country? And can there be any doubt that, in the future as in the past, the unequal distribution of unemployment would bring a flood of immigrant labour into the economically favoured south-east.'

We may, of course, hope that the days of severe depressions are over. Yet the fact remains that large areas in South Wales, Lancashire, and the north generally are saddled with a problem of the decline of their basic industries and a legacy of the aftereffects of nineteenth-century industrialization which forms a striking contrast to conditions in the south. As was stated in Chapter X, capital investment is taking place in inverse relationship to geographical needs. It is the northern areas which are relatively unattractive to private developers. If the 'brake' is to be taken off development around London it seems reasonable to suggest that the drift to the south will assume larger proportions. The need is for continued restrictions in the south east and a disproportionate rate of investment, redevelopment and renewal in the north. Only

* L.Mumford, The Plan of London, in *City Development,*[87] page 169. See also the numerous writings of Sir Patrick Abercrombie, e.g. *Town and Country Planning,*[51]

thus will it be possible to keep expansion in the south-east within reasonable bounds.

THE NEED FOR A REVIEW OF PLANNING POLICY

Contemporary planning policy assumes an expanding economy. It is very largely a policy of 'development control', of 'zoning' land to meet the demands of developers. This is predominantly negative. Even the 'positive powers for the execution of plans' are mainly directed at making land 'available for any development which the plan shows to be desirable'.[84] But if the desirable developers do not appear the whole machinery is out of gear. Far more *positive* action is required. This is particularly so in relation to central area redevelopment and urban renewal. The problem in many areas is so great that it is unlikely that the present local government machine can ever cope with it. Redevelopment Commissions might achieve more—providing that they had sources of finance other than local rates. Employment is, of course, a crucial issue. The Local Employment Act is a small, though welcome, step in the right direction.* It provides powers to encourage industrialists to move to areas of *potential* unemployment. Even more important is 'the power which signalizes the Government's change of heart towards what might be called industrial slum clearance'†, though slum clearance is not the same thing as renewal. Yet the policy is still one of dealing with unemployment. Indeed, despite the phrase, 'the proper distribution of industry,' industrial location policy has largely been interpreted in terms of preventing or reducing unemployment. This is a 'first-aid' policy, quite divorced from that of regional planning and redevelopment. As we have seen, the policies of overspill and the relief of unemployment have clashed in the Merseyside area. The only indication that this deadlock might be broken lies in the new definition of areas 'where high and persistent unemployment exists or is threatened'. These now include 'places to which workers in these localities would travel to work or to which they might move

* For a critical analysis see A.T.Peacock and D.G.M.Dosser, 'The New Attack on Localized Unemployment'.[163]

† *The Times,* 29th October 1959.

under "overspill" arrangements'.* This is a very welcome recognition of the dilemma which faces Merseyside. Yet it is still restricted. The farcical situation to which it can lead is illustrated by the case of Winsford. This small Cheshire town had negotiations with Liverpool for the reception of overspill. The negotiations proved abortive and Winsford has now signed an overspill agreement with Manchester. But Manchester is not an area of 'local unemployment' and hence Winsford cannot benefit from the new Act—as it would have done had the agreement been made with Liverpool.

It is, of course, easy to object that there is no such thing in practice as an ideal pattern of industrial distribution, and that we should agree with the President of the Board of Trade that:

'we should start from the assumption that the economic and industrial expansion of the country should proceed freely in response to growing and changing consumer demand, and that it should proceed on the principle of the most effective use of our national resources, especially in competitive conditions.... This principle of the most efficient use of our resources must clearly be mitigated in some cases by Government action to deal with certain social consequences which the nation does not regard as acceptable.'†

The two '*social*' consequences which, in the Government's view require 'mitigation' are excessive concentration (as in London) and unemployment (as in Scotland). This is in line with the actions of the previous Labour Government and the deliberations of the Select Committee on Estimates when considering the Development Areas.[165]

The inadequacy of this view has been analysed by McCulloch:

'The arguments and conclusions of the Select Committee are based upon an implicit social-economic philosophy itself inspired by the now slowly dying memory of the harsh experiences of pre-war mass unemployment and wastage of economic resources. In this philosophy, government financial aid and positive interest in "steering industry" to

* Local Unemployment Bill, Explanatory and Financial Memorandum, House of Commons Bill, No. 5, Session 1959–1960.

† Mr. Reginald Maudling on the opening of the Second Reading Debates on the Local Employment Bill, H.C.Debates, Vol. 613, Col. 32, 9th November 1959.

places of heavy unemployment is justifiedonly as a social service, profitable to industrialists and their workers but unprofitable financially to the wider community who paid the costs of providing opportunities for investment and employment. In contrast a healthy economy would require no such special and extraordinary aids from government, and would pursue its own independent way from the initial flash of genius in the mind of the creative enterpriser to the final happy enjoyment of dividends, profits and wages.... The logic of the Committee's attitude is that government intervention in matters of individual location and financial aid to industry are signs of weakness in the national economy, justified as a charitable service in times of great depression but in itself forming no useful and necessary economic function.'[160]

It is fair to say that the new Act represents a slight step forward, but McCulloch's strictures on the present philosophy are by no means out-dated. There is insufficient appreciation of the simple fact that 'industry tends to hold civilian population to its locale, that expanding industry tends to attract additional population and declining industry to expel and repel population;[160] and that given the present distribution of new and expanding industries it is inevitable that the drift to the south will continue and may well increase. There seems little or no recognition of the relationship between industrial location and regional planning; between industrial decline and urban decay; or between industrial expansion and urban concentration.

The problem of encouraging expansion in static or declining areas is by no means a straightforward one. The scope of the powers of the Board of Trade is of less importance than the way in which they are used. (The cynic might question the necessity for some of the new powers in the Local Employment Act, since the Government has not shown outstanding enthusiasm for the powers which previously existed.) But probably the most effective way of steering industry to areas of high (or potentially high) unemployment is to make these areas less unattractive:

'It is all very well to offer industrialists inducements to set up factories where they do not really wish to put them by offering them low rentals or ready-built premises. In some places this may be the right policy. But in my experience the real reason why some industrial areas find it hard to attract new factories is that the standard of local amenity is too low—and especially access and communications... I think that in many cases what

is wrong is inadequate roads, difficult (or non-existent) bridges, a poor rail service, bad water supplies, unattractive conditions for managerial staff and so on. The right way to attract industry is to spend money in remedying these deficiencies and leaving it to industry to pay for their own factories.'*

There is much sound common—and social—sense in this argument. And it underlines the need for large-scale physical rehabilitation and renewal in the older areas. It also points to the need for planning the new motorways in relation to regional needs. At present 'the policy of the Ministry of Transport, by concentrating its resources on a motorway system based on London, seems bent on increasing the attractive power of the metropolitan area'.†

Yet it may be questioned whether the policy of 'taking work to the workers' is always a good one. It has already been shown how it may conflict with the policy of restraining urban growth. In other cases it may be in effect little more than a blood transfusion for a dying patient. There is certainly an argument for helping some of the smaller nineteenth-century settlements to die gracefully.‡ Such a policy, of course, would not accord with the political facts of life, yet it seems that in a rapidly changing economy more emphasis might be placed on taking workers to their work.

REGIONAL PLANNING

The case for regional planning is, from this aspect alone, very strong. The required approach is indicated in Durham Development Plan:

* Letter from W.E.Ripper to *The Times,* 26th September 1959.

† R.Matthew, 'Retreat from Town Planning'.[78] It should be pointed out, however, that the London-Birmingham motorway is only the first stage of a national road plan.

‡ 'The aim must not be to fossilize the patterns of population and employment distributions which had developed in the mid-eighteenth and late-nineteenth centuries, when coal was the dominant source of power, but to ease the process of economic change while maintaining the industrial efficiency of the nation.' J.R. James, in the report of the discussion on Professor Wise's paper. 'Some Economic Trends Influencing Planning Policies',[173] p. 37.

'The pattern and total of mining employment is changing, and will change rapidly in the future. Inevitably the pattern of mining villages which grew up on the old economic foundations will also change. Many of the rows of houses which grew up around the pit-heads have outlived their usefulness and, as the uneconomic pits close and coal working is concentrated in more economic workings, a gradual regrouping of population should take place. Indeed the very reason for the existence of some of these small, isolated places will disappear completely, and new development and redevelopment in some of the better placed settlements will not only be better adjusted to the future pattern of employment opportunity but will also offer better living conditions than ever before to many of the inhabitants of the County.'*

It may, however, be questioned whether the existing planning machinery is adequate to deal with problems such as these. There are 145 local planning authorities in England and Wales, ranging in population from 23,000 (Rutland) to 3,225,000 (London). Many of the large geographical counties are riddled with independent county boroughs. Thus Lancashire, with over five million people in the geographical county has over two million of these living within the boundaries of seventeen county boroughs. Two conurbations (Merseyside and Manchester) straddle the County boundary. The strains and stresses to which this patchwork gives rise makes regional planning impossible. What is required is the setting up of regional planning authoities, the need for which has long been recognized.† At present there is no *positive* co-ordinating authority in any of the Regions of England and Wales. The co-ordination effected by Government Departments is essentially regulative and quasi-judicial. As was stressed in the Report of the London Planning Administrative Committee, Government Departments

'can do, and have already done a good deal to secure concerted action in the production of a *Plan;* similarly they can do, though they have not yet done, a good deal to secure concerted action in the production of a *Programme*. But what is now wanted in the Region, where a Plan is already

* Durham County Council, *County Development Plan,* 1951, Written Analysis, page 3. The object of the Plan is 'to remould gradually the pattern of development in the interests of the County as a whole'.

† The evidence of the Town Planning Institute to the Royal Commission on Local Government in Greater London contains a useful summary of the various proposals that have been made for regional planning bodies for London. See[110]

in shape, are *Operations* in actual building and development. This is not the business of Departments. It is not part of their normal functions to initiate, and still less to carry through, actual development, and they are unlikely to do it effectively. They can direct; they can control; but they cannot secure that positive concerted action which is necessary to produce the physical changes by which alone, as Sir Patrick Abercrombie said, a plan can be carried into effect'.[77]

What form these authorities should take is a question which it is tempting to try to answer. There is certainly no dearth of suggestions,[96,98,110] but the present author hesitates to enter the already overcrowded arena or even to attempt to consider the various proposals which have been put forward. Nevertheless, it seems clear that the only satisfactory solution would require a drastic recasting of the present local government structure. The need for a regional authority in the London area has recently been stressed by Dame Evelyn Sharp. Though the Ministry of Housing and Local Government 'could, and did, achieve a good deal in the way of co-ordination by getting the local planning authorities to move in a common direction', this was inadequate:

'That is not anything like as satisfactory as having one authority at the regional level responsible for the initiating work and for thinking about the whole of the area. No Minister sitting in Whitehall can ever be so successful as an authority responsible for the region.'*

Dame Evelyn's remarks apply with equal force to other parts of the country.

CONTROLLING THE LOCATION OF EMPLOYMENT

Though the emphasis in this chapter is on positive planning, there is still a need for tighter negative controls. The difficulty lies in devising the appropriate machinery. At present, firms take decisions on location (theoretically at least) in the light of alternative economic costs. This is as it should be, but there is a strong case for making employers bear more of the burden of the social costs of congestion than they do at present. Consideration

* *The Guardian,* 13th January 1960.

might be given to Professor Sykes's suggestion that a levy should be imposed on industrial firms which elect to stay in areas to be designated as industrially overcrowded.[169,153] If this is acceptable in principle there is no reason why it should not be extended to all employers—including Government Departments. This is likely to be more effective than administrative controls, and certainly cheaper than the enormously costly procedure of purchasing vacated sites. The danger is that the big concerns could probably absorb the cost with ease or pass it on in slightly higher prices, whereas the small firms (though paying much less) might be driven out of business.

It may be that further controls could be exerted over vacated premises. The French Ministry of Housing and Reconstruction has recently decreed that approval is required for the purchase of vacated factories in the Paris area.* Such a device here might enable local authorities to extinguish industrial uses in congested areas, or to reserve sites for the re-location of non-conforming industries which cannot be expected to move out of the area. But this would necessitate the purchase of the vacated premises. Indeed, the question of compensation is a crucial issue. If more money could be made available for purchasing sites and for extinguishing user rights it might be possible to effect a significant, though gradual, reduction in central-area employment. The case for greater Exchequer aid appears strong.

The increasing importance of non-manufacturing employment suggests that controls exerted over industrial building are likely to become progressively more inadequate. If a workable scheme could be devised there seems to be no prima facie reason why office development, for example, should not be subject to 'development certificate' control in the same way as industrial development is now.

All these suggestions are beset with difficulties and require detailed study. Much might be learnt from foreign experience. It seems clear, however, that any further negative controls are unlikely to do more than touch the fringe of the problem. The main approach must be to

* International Labour Office.[157] Permission is also required for the construction of industrial buildings with a floor space in excess of 100 square metres *or* employing more than fifty persons.

create new magnets away from the London and West Midlands Regions.

THE CREATION OF NEW MAGNETS

Where new magnets should be located is largely a technical question which lies beyond the scope of this book—and the author's competence. It is clear, however, that large-scale developments should be planned in a regional—and indeed, a national—setting. They should be regarded not merely as 'reception areas' for overspill from the congested cities, but as new areas of growth, located in relation to the new motorway plan, and forming a counter-attraction to the existing conurbations.

The present situation—in which the congested cities have to negotiate overspill schemes with 'willing' authorities scattered all over the country—is the very negation of planning. It also results in restricted thinking. To expand a town with a population of 5,000 to one of 10,000 achieves little for either the town itself or the city which is 'benefiting' from it. When completed it remains a very small town, with a restricted range of jobs, amenities, and services—Huntingdon is a case in point.* But a scheme to double the population of Northampton† would be completely different: here it would be possible to provide most of those features of city life which are so markedly absent in the normal town development scheme. A new town of 150,000 in Shropshire, connected by a spur to the new motorway could be similarly attractive and would be well placed to accommodate population from Merseyside, the West Midlands, and probably Manchester as well.

At present any such development would have to be undertaken by a New Town Development Corporation, though the position would be radically altered if Regional Planning Authorities were set up. The time is particularly appropriate for starting further new towns. Those already built have proved successful, and much

* Huntingdon would appear to have the site requirements for development of 'new town' character.

† Northampton could be expanded only if further water supplies could be made available. But this is really only a comparatively simple engineering problem which is made difficult by the archaic administrative structure of water authorities.

useful experience has been gained. Teams of experienced officers are about to be disbanded: to allow this to happen when their services are so urgently required in further new towns would be stupid.

The main difficulty concerning further new towns is a purely political one: the present Government dislikes Treasury-financed, State-sponsored developments. Yet these are not essential characteristics of new towns: as is evidenced by the first two that were built—Letchworth and Welwyn Garden City. There is plenty of scope for joint ventures between public and private enterprise. Such ventures might, incidentally, have advantages other than those of political practicability.*

Smaller schemes must inevitably be of secondary importance. They progress slowly, are expensive in terms of technical manpower and give rise to administrative problems out of all proportion to their significance. Yet, conceived in the framework of a regional plan, they could constitute a useful supplement to larger-scale development, and more could be done to encourage them.

THE FINANCE OF OVERSPILL

One useful measure would be an increase in the amount of financial assistance given to receiving authorities. It is an open secret that the 1952 Act is a watered-down version of the original draft Bill. Its present provisions are workable but they are certainly not attractive. There seems to be an absolute horror on the part of the Government that local authorities might make a bit of profit out of town development. Yet, if town development schemes are to be regarded as desirable, surely this is precisely what is required? The Government 'hopes' that when the exporting authority's contribution ceases at the end of ten years, the increased rateable value resulting from the expansion should enable the receiving authority to meet the financial commitments without too much difficulty. Experience at Worsley and Swindon suggests that, at least in the case of these two schemes, the Government's hopes will be fulfilled. But the risk remains, and is

* e.g. the avoidance of what I believe is called 'the dead hand of the Treasury'. More seriously, it would reduce that fundamental problem of State-sponsored enterprises—public accountability.

undoubtedly a major deterrent to small authorities contemplating expansion.

The Government takes the view that it would be unreasonable to expect them to underwrite possible losses when they have no control over the way in which local authorities operate their schemes. At present, therefore, receiving authorities must remain content with the assurance that if at the time when contributions from the exporting authority cease, 'the Government are satisfied that this would place an unduly heavy burden upon the local rates, they will provide an Exchequer grant to meet the whole or part of the rate contribution for such further period, beyond the first ten years, as they may consider appropriate.'* Experience has shown that this is far too vague an assurance to settle doubts: the risks remain—if only in the minds of local councillors. Financial arguments are avidly seized upon by members who 'prefer their town as it is'.† The climate of opinion is often against change and the financial risks give ample opportunity for resistance.‡

More important is the problem of attracting industry. There are many authorities (e.g. Nantwich and Wellingborough), which would welcome expansion if the Board of Trade would agree to encourage industries to move into their areas. A reorientation of the policy of industrial location might do more than anything else to expedite town development.

* H.C.Debates, Vol. 540, *Written Answers,* Col. 44, 26.4.55.

† To illustrate: in one area where town development was not welcomed it was estimated that a scheme would result in an increase in the rate burden of 5s. in the pound; in another very similar area, but where town development was welcomed a 'profit' of 1s. 4d. in the pound was forecast.

‡ The manner in which increased financial assistance should be given warrants greater discussion than is possible here. Five suggestions are:

(i) A guarantee that where town expansion results in a net rate increase, grants will be paid to offset this.

(ii) Increased grants for expansion of sewerage and water-works,

(iii) A higher rate of housing subsidy. (If the subsidy were doubled it would still be considerably less than that given for high flats. See Chapter XI.)

(iv) A weighting of grants under the Local Government Act in favour of 'town development authorities',

(v) A recasting of town development grants perhaps on the basis of the provisions of the Housing and Town Development (Scotland) Act. (Under this Act Exchequer contributions are given amounting to 75% of the annual deficit on a town development scheme.)

The question of finance concerns not only ‘expanding towns’ but also the ‘exporting authorities’. It is a mistake to assume that all the big cities are following an energetic policy of dispersal. Though some have made heroic efforts, others appear to believe that high-density redevelopment and peripheral expansion is preferable and obviates the need for overspill.* Unfortunately, the financial arrangements under both the New Towns and Town Development Acts, and the financial implications of a falling population encourage this attitude. If a local authority provides dwellings within its own boundaries for families from slum-clearance areas, it receives housing subsidies from the Exchequer† but it is not called upon to provide any subsidy from the rates. Yet if these same families are housed in new or expanded towns, a rate fund contribution has to be paid by the exporting authority for ten years.‡ It is extremely doubtful whether these contributions can be defended in principle.§ Though overspill is desirable on social and economic grounds, its effects on a local authority’s finances can be very disturbing. A fall in population may not only increase the ‘unit cost’ of local authority services but it may also involve a reduction in the Exchequer Grants under the Local Government Act. Since high-density redevelopment is heavily subsidized the financial effect of

* This may, in fact, be true in some cases. Controlled urban growth around some cities may well be preferable to dispersal. Obviously the growth of London and Birmingham needs to be checked as far as possible, ‘but, for example, is Sheffield with its half-million people already too large, and should its future growth be completely detached from it?’ J.R.James, *Green Belts and the Form a Town’s Outward Growth should Take.*[73]

† Exchequer subsidies are also available for one-bedroom dwellings, but not for other ‘general needs’.

‡ Outside London the contribution is normally £8 per dwelling provided. In London the provisions are rather more complex. Since only about 50% of the families who move to new and expanded towns from London are on the local authorities’ waiting lists, the Government have agreed that the contribution should be reduced to £4; a further subsidy of £4 is paid by the Exchequer. See Ministry of Housing and Local Government, Circular 33/56, ‘Housing Subsidies Act 1956’, and J.B.Cullingworth, ‘Some Administrative Problems of Planned Overspill’,[63] for a fuller discussion than is possible here. (No rate fund contributions are paid for families moving to Peterlee and Newton Aycliffe New Towns.)

§ They may have had some justification when local authorities were compelled to make a rate-fund contribution on every dwelling which received an Exchequer subsidy (i.e. prior to the Housing Subsidies Act 1956).

exporting population tends to be comparatively disadvantageous. Taking contributions to receiving authorities into account, it may 'pay' a local authority to build high blocks of flats and subsidize them from the rates.

Furthermore, since the principle of contributions is established, receiving authorities sometimes require, or at least try to obtain, additional assistance from the exporting authority before they will agree to accept overspill. The efficacy of additional financial help is evidenced by the comparative progress of schemes assisted by the London County Council, but this points to the need for further Exchequer aid. The administration of overspill has many inherent difficulties: it is unwise to add unnecessarily to them. In any case overspill should not be regarded as a series of local problems to be settled (or, as is more often the case, not settled) by bargaining between local authorities. It is a national problem which should be financed from the national Exchequer.*

CONCLUSION

To summarize: the thesis of this book is that the rising standard of living which this country has experienced since the First World War, together with long-term demographic changes, has greatly increased both the need and the effective demand for housing. Current Development Plans have not taken this increased need into account, and, since it is not merely a temporary phenomenon, it follows that the future housing requirements of England and Wales will bear little relation to the assumptions on which housing and planning policy is based. In Part One an attempt was made to analyse these requirements. On the assumptions stated the minimum number of additional dwellings required between 1958 and 1978 was estimated at about 1½ million. This works out at an annual average of only 75,000, but replacement needs are for at least another 100,000

* The question of what 'benefit' an exporting authority derives from overspill is a complex one which certainly cannot be translated into financial terms. For a study of the effects of overspill on the housing problem in one London area see J.B.Cullingworth, 'Some Effects of Planned Overspill: A Case Study in the County Borough of East Ham'.[24]

a year. Various reasons are given for the supposition that actual requirements might be considerably in excess of this and it was suggested that the actual need between 1958 and 1978 might be of the order of four million. The object of Part Two has been to show the inadequacy of present planning policy to cope with these requirements in a satisfactory way. Chapter VII outlined the aims of post-war planning policy, and Chapters VIII and IX analysed the position in the London and Manchester areas. The conclusions to be drawn from these chapters is that urban growth has not been restrained; that the control over employment in the London area has been inadequate; that the policy of dispersal to new and expanded towns has not been fully implemented; and that the drift to the south is continuing. Chapter X attempted to show that the Town Development policy is completely inadequate to deal with the problems of the big cities. In Chapter XI the concept of overspill was re-examined and held to be sound; indeed, it was maintained that overspill was a social force that could not be halted and that the problem was to steer it to those places which could provide the superior living conditions which people wanted without the disadvantages of a long journey to work and the accompanying urban sprawl and central area congestion.

In this final chapter suggestions have been made for dealing with the problems highlighted in the previous chapters. The problems are complex and require consideration of national issues. Is the Barlow Report still to be taken as the basis for planning or is it in fact twenty important years out of date? Is the drift to the south really an unmitigated evil or is it the result of economic and social forces which must be accepted and taken into account in a new policy for the distribution of population and industry? Is the present policy of persuading industries to move to areas of comparatively high unemployment a misguided attempt to resuscitate areas which have lost their economic *raison d'être*? How does the new road and rail plan fit into the picture? These, and many other questions need to be answered before an overspill plan can be formulated. The present situation lacks a framework of objectives and, as a result, policy is fragmented and often conflicting. But, once the objectives are defined, overspill can be seen as presenting a great opportunity to improve living and

working conditions throughout the country. The problems of the location of employment, of urban congestion, of communications and of the declining areas need to be studied as aspects of an overall problem of meeting a multitude of needs in an efficient and satisfactory manner.

APPENDIX

Local Authorities in the Greater London Planning Region, the Abercrombie Plan Region and the 'Metropolitan Region'.

I: THE GREATER LONDON PLANNING REGION

(a) Inner London

London Administrative County

Essex: East Ham C.B.; West Ham C.B.; Barking M.B.; Leyton M.B.; Walthamstow M.B.;

Kent: Penge U.D.

Middlesex: Acton M.B.; Brentford and Chiswick M.B.; Edmonton M.B.; Hornsey M.B.; Southall M.B.; Tottenham M.B.; Willesden M.B.; Wood Green M.B.

Surrey: Croydon G.B.; Barnes M.B.; Mitcham M.B.; Wimbledon M.B.

(b) Suburban Ring

Essex: Chingford M.B.; Dagenham M.B.; Ilford M.B.; Wanstead and Woodford M.B.;

Hertfordshire: Barnet U.D.; East Barnet U.D.

Kent: Beckenham M.B.; Bexley M.B.; Bromley M.B.; Chislehurst and Sidcup U.D.; Crayford U.D.; Erith M.B.

Middlesex: Ealing M.B.; Enfield M.B.; Finchley M.B.; Friern Barnet U.D.; Harrow M.B.; Hendon M.B.; Heston and Isleworth M.B.; Ruislip-Northwood U.D.; Southgate M.B.; Twickenham M.B.; Wembley M.B.

Surrey: Beddington and Wallington M.B.; Carshalton U.D.; Coulsdon and Purley U.D.; Epsom and Ewell M.B.; Kingston-upon-Thames M.B.; Maiden and Coombe M.B.; Merton and Morden M.B.; Richmond M.B.; Surbiton M.B.; Sutton and Cheam M.B.

(c) Green Belt Ring

Buckinghamshire: Eton R.D.

Essex: Chigwell U.D.; Hornchurch U.D.; Romford M.B.; Waltham Holy Cross U.D.

Hertfordshire: Bushey U.D.; Cheshunt U.D.; Chorleywood U.D.; Hoddesdon U.D.; Rickmansworth U.D.; Watford M.B.; Elstree R.D.; Hatfield R.D.; Watford R.D.

Kent: Dartford M.B.; Orpington U.D.; Sevenoaks U.D.; Dartford R.D.; Sevenoaks R.D.

Middlesex: Feltham U.D.; Hayes and Harlington U.D.; Potters Bar U.D.; Staines U.D.; Sunbury-on-Thames U.D.; Uxbridge M.B.; Yiewsley and West Drayton U.D.

Surrey: Banstead U.D.; Caterham and Warlingham U.D.; Chertsey U.D.; Dorking U.D.; Egham U.D.; Esher U.D.; Leatherhead U.D.; Reigate M.B.; Walton and Weybridge U.D.; Godstone R.D.

(d) Outer Country Ring

Buckinghamshire: Beaconsfield U.D.; Chesham U.D.; Eton U.D.; Slough M.B.; Amersham R.D.

Essex: Basildon U.D.; Brentford U.D.; Epping U.D.; Harlow U.D.; Thurrock U.D.; Epping and Ongar R.D.

Hertfordshire: Baldock U.D.; Berkhamstead U.D.; Bishops Stortford U.D.; Harpenden U.D.; Kernel Hempstead M.B.; Hertford M.B.; Hitchin U.D.; Letchworth U.D.; Royston U.D.; St. Albans M.B.; Sawbridgeworth U.D.; Stevenage U.D.; Tring U.D.; Ware U.D.; Welwyn Garden City U.D.; Berkhamstead R.D.; Braughing R.D.; Hemel Hempstead R.D.; Hertford R.D.; Hitchin R.D.; St. Albans R.D.; Ware R.D.; Welwyn R.D.

Kent: Gravesend M.B.; Northfleet U.D.; Swanscombe U.D.

Surrey: Farnham U.D.; Frimley and Camberley U.D.; Godalming M.B.; Guildford M.B.; Haslemere U.D.; Woking U.D.; Bagshot R.D.; Dorking and Horley R.D.; Guildford R.D.; Hambledon R.D.

II: THE ABERCROMBIE PLAN REGION

The whole of the Greater London Planning Region (excluding part of Sevenoaks R.D.) and:

Bedfordshire: Dunstable M.B.; Luton M.B.; Ampthill R.D. (part); Luton R.D. (part)

Berkshire: New Windsor M.B.; Windsor R.D.

Buckinghamshire: High Wycombe M.B. (previously named Chepping Wycombe M.B.); Wing R.D. (part); Wycombe R.D. (part).

III: THE ‘METROPOLITAN REGION’

The whole of the Greater London Planning Region and:

Bedfordshire: Dunstable M.B.; Leighton Buzzard U.D.; Luton M.B.; Luton R.D.

Berkshire: Reading C.B.; Maidenhead M.B.; New Windsor M.B.; Wokingham M.B.; Bradfield R.D.; Cookham R.D.; Easthampstead R.D.; Windsor R.D.; Wokingham R.D.

Buckinghamshire: Aylesbury M.B.; High Wycombe M.B.; Linslade U.D.; Marlow U.D.; Aylesbury R.D.; Wing R.D.; Wycombe R.D.

Essex: Southend C.B.; Benfleet U.D.; Canvey Island U.D.; Chelmsford M.B.; Rayleigh U.D.; Chelmsford R.D.; Rochford R.D.

Hampshire: Aldershot M.B.; Farnborough U.D.; Fleet U.D.; Hartley Wintney R.D.

Kent: Chatham M.B.; Gillingham M.B.; Maidstone M.B.; Rochester M.B.; Royal Tunbridge Wells M.B.; Southborough U.D.; Tonbridge U.D.; Maidstone R.D.; Mailing R.D.; Strood R.D.; Tonbridge R.D.

Oxfordshire: Henley M.B.; Henley R.D.

Sussex East: Burgess Hill U.D.; Cuckfield U.D.; East Grinstead U.D.; Cuckfield R.D.

Sussex West: Crawley U.D.; Horsham U.D.; Horsham R.D.

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