

Successful City-Suburbs for Successful City-Regions

Interim Report
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“Urban renaissance needs to spread out beyond our city centres. Most of our city-centre population growth consists of young and single people. To draw families back to cities, we need to create beautiful and family-friendly suburbs too. Architects and planners have often neglected, or even derided, suburbs. They may lack the urban vitality and mix many of us enjoy, but they provide a quieter, greener environment for families and can enhance the mix of housing that a city can offer. The best suburbs - linked to the city by good public transport - already offer a model for a different style of environmentally sustainable urban living. We need to bring all of them up to this standard, through intensification and new infrastructure” (Richard Rogers, ‘How to Build Intelligent Suburbs’, The Guardian 2nd December 2006)

Suburban Sounds

“Same old boring Sunday morning old mans out
washing the car,
Mums in the kitchen cooking Sunday dinner her best
meal moaning while it lasts,
Johnnys upstairs in his bedroom sitting in the dark,
Annoying the neighbours with his punk rock electric
guitar,
This is the Sound,
This is the Sound of the Suburbs”
‘Sound of Suburbia’ – The Members

“If Jack Kerouac had set out to find a real bookstore in
the suburbs, he would still be on the road, Phileas Fogg
would still be in the air, the Ancient Mariner wouldn't
have had time to tell anyone his story.”
Michael Winerip

“In an expanding universe, time is on the side of the
outcast. Those who once inhabited the suburbs of
human contempt find that without changing their
address they eventually live in the metropolis”
Quentin Crisp

“I would sum up my fear about the future in one word:
boring. And that's my one fear: that everything has
happened; nothing exciting or new or interesting is ever
going to happen again... the future is just going to be a
vast, conforming suburb of the soul”.
J. G. Ballard

“Lost in the high street, where the dogs run
Roaming suburban boys
Mothers got a hairdo to be done
She says they're too old for toys
Stood by the bus stop with a felt pen
In this suburban hell
And in the distance a police car
To break the suburban spell”
‘Suburbia (The Full Horror)’ – The Pet Shop Boys

“Suburbia is where the developer bulldozes out the
trees, then names the streets after them”
Bill Vaughan

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1. Summary [1]

History

- The city-suburbs have always been a quintessentially English phenomenon and will remain the residence of choice for the vast majority for a long time to come.
- Since the establishment of green belts there has been remarkably little public policy interest in suburbs, with the focus falling on city centres, no more so than under New Labour having inherited severe urban centre problems.

Changing Suburbs

Meanwhile suburbs themselves have been changing very rapidly. In particular :

- They are significant economies in their own right, often with people living in one suburbs and commuting to another or travelling with their own suburb to work. Employment is predominantly in service industries, the public sector and in small and medium sized enterprises, providing high end employment as well as jobs serving those knowledge workers.
- Whilst initially quite mono-cultural (often older white middle class), city-suburbs have become much more mixed, both ethnically and in terms of class as people have moved out of the centre of cities, i.e. they now more or less reflect the cities to which they are attached more than ever before.
- The lack of infrastructure investment in city-suburbs means that many are 'showing their age' and the increasingly intensely populated suburban areas and their populations are feeling the strain as they have grown with no/little supporting investment.

1. Summary [2]

Where the suburbs are currently

The consequence of this comparative lack of attention has been:

- An increasing move of wealthier suburban residents away from many "connected" suburbs to either disconnected towns and villages that have now become the new equivalent of older suburbs, leap frogging the green belt and extending the sprawl of city-region area/development/commuter distances further and further as the cities 'push outwards'.
- Those that have remained 'attractive' have priced themselves out of the market for younger people, leaving them with ageing populations.
- A consequent further outward movement of much new employment beyond the immediate city-suburban areas.
- Increasing evidence of public dissatisfaction amongst suburban citizens as older certainties are removed.
- There has been no coherent public transport policy to address the realities of the new patterns of movement.
- Social cohesion issues have not received as much attention as elsewhere, despite ethnic fractionalisation occurring faster in the suburbs than anywhere else.

All of which is impacting on the levels of satisfaction of those living in the suburbs

1. Summary [3]

Why all this matters

- Instead of seeing suburbs and city centres as competing for resources against each other, we need to recognise that successful suburbs are necessary for the revival of urban centres. Those cities facing greatest challenge in their urban regeneration are those where the traditional connected suburban areas have themselves lost much of their historic professional classes (who have moved further out to 'disconnected' towns and villages).
- The pattern of moving yet further and further out is not sustainable – either environmentally or socially.
- The next general election will in the main be fought in the suburbs – taking North London only as an illustration the key battlegrounds are now all in the suburbs – Enfield Nth, Harrow East and West, Finchley, Ealing Nth.

Policy Implications/Recommendations

1. Establish suburbs as the '*home of aspirational Britain*' and central to successful city-region strategies.
2. Recognise the need to develop financial instruments for the redevelopment of suburbs that do not directly compete with public resources used for inner city/estate regeneration. Potentially review resource equalisation model which may have reached a tipping point as the many suburban authorities believe they are not receiving sufficient funding to even stand.
3. More understanding is required of suburban communities (hopes/fears/aspirations) being the increasingly diverse communities that they are, and how this differs to residents elsewhere in the city-region in order to be able to support community cohesion efforts in these areas as issues and solutions are often very different to elsewhere in city-region.

2. Introduction

- Project aimed at:
 - Addressing **policy gap** in relation to city-suburbs, providing a view of the current needs and aspirations of those people living and working in suburban areas
 - **Raising the profile** of city-suburbs in national (urban) policy
 - Working to provide a **vision and policy for action** for those tasked with shaping suburbs going forward, securing their role as successful, aspirational places within successful cities
- The city-suburbs project establishes that for cities to remain, or indeed become, successful, this relies as much on the success of its suburbs as its inner city areas. It is predicted that it is those suburbs (or rather city-suburbs) that attract and retain the most sought after and economically productive (national and international) workforce groups to cities due to the often appealing inherent characteristics of city-suburbs (such as good schools, open space, low density housing, good transport connections and high land values).
- In contrast to many more inner city areas, it is also proposed that investment in city-suburbs will lever a far greater return on investment for urban areas and drive urban success overall due to the characteristics outlined above, success levered through the investment of far lower levels of public sector investment.
- This is not, therefore, to say public funding should not continue to favour areas of deprivation overall, rather that by viewing the city as a whole this will ensure there are not hidden biases against further strengthening city-suburbs and that their appeal is used to best effect in driving urban economic, social and environmental success. This may require new ways of providing such areas with the necessary resources to lever investment.
- Furthermore, driven above all by the sustainability agenda, the role and nature of city-suburbs can be seen to be changing, increasingly characterised as places where increasingly diverse groups of people work as well as live, challenging the traditional biased centre-periphery model and classic stereotypes underpinning urban policy.

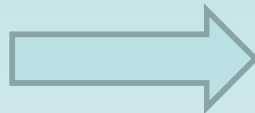
3. Project Lines of Enquiry

1. What role do city-suburbs play in driving the success of city-regions now and into the future?
2. What role is there for city-suburbs in relieving housing pressures brought on by urban population growth and how will this be supported by regional and national government going forward?
3. What is the role of city-suburbs in relation to the sustainability agenda?
4. To what degree should city-suburbs be further developed as economic hubs as well as residential areas that continue to appeal to urban aspirationalists?
5. How do city-suburb leaders best enhance the potential of suburbs in terms of their economy and liveability? Where can city-suburb leaders best focus their efforts in bringing a virtuous mix of economic and sustainability benefits to such areas?
6. What is the predominant demography of city-suburbs and do city-suburbs purely appeal to a certain cross-section of the wider urban population?
7. Are there challenges specific for city-suburbs leaders in engaging with their communities and promoting active participation by groups and individuals that may not look to connect with their local area?
8. Are there specific intergenerational issues for city-suburbs? How do different elements of communities in city-suburbs view the changing nature of those areas?
9. Does the city versus suburb divide act as a barrier to understanding city-regions in their entirety and securing economic and social success in British cities? Is the notion of the city-suburb the most appropriate means of signalling their inseparable interdependency?
10. If so, what does this mean for future urban economic, social and environmental policy?

4. Defining the Suburbs [1]

Suburbs have traditionally been seen as:

- Wealthy
- White
- Middle-class
- Old
- Stable (socially and economically)
- Only located on the outer fringe areas of towns and cities

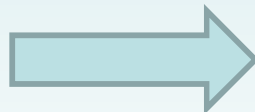


Suburbs are really:

- Everywhere – home to the vast majority and well loved by the British
- Under explored and poorly understood
- Diverse in nature, within themselves and between them
- Growing and thriving
- Some need more nurturing than others

Many have experienced success due to:

- Quality of life
- Population growth and diversity
- Good schools
- Attractive environment
- Affordable and family friendly housing offer



But some have also experienced issues such as:

- Stagnating (population and economy)
- Ageing private housing stock and out of town 'sink estates'
- Transport pressures and inadequacies
- Pockets of deprivation masked by wealth
- Town centres under stress

Suburbs remain the home of aspirational Britain:

“Research has shown that city centre living has so far only appealed to limited sections of the population such as affluent young professionals without families or ‘empty nesters’ ... Public policy has not so far changed most families’ preference for **suburban** or semi-rural living” (State of the English Cities, vol 2 para 10.5.13)

4. Defining the Suburbs [2]

Suburbs should be viewed as playing a vital role in driving urban competitiveness, defined as:

“the ability of cities to **continually upgrade** their business environment, **skill** base, and **physical, social and cultural infrastructures**, so as to attract and retain high-growth, innovative and profitable firms, and an **educated, creative and entrepreneurial workforce**, thereby enabling them to achieve a high rate of productivity, high employment rate, high wages, high GDP per capita, and low levels of income inequality and social exclusion” (State of the English Cities, March 2006, vol 1 para 4.1.2)

Reinforcing this, and tying in specifically to the importance of high quality suburban environments, it is said that:

“a **good and attractive environment** [in the widest sense] may not be an alternative to economic success but may rather **contribute to it**; as in the knowledge based economy highly qualified professionals with scarce skills can choose where to live from among different cities” (OECD Territorial Review, 2006, p.20)

For the purpose of this exercise, therefore, the term ‘city-suburb’ is defined as:

“Those areas identified as located within a city-region that are predominantly characterised as residential in nature, often with a net out commute, but with distinct and strong communities and economies in their own right”

Within this, therefore, it must be recognised that notions of place are neither simple nor singular, rather places can be seen to have **‘multiple identities’** – whereby a given place may be seen to be a city-suburb within the context of the London city-region, but also a town in its own right perhaps even with its own suburbs on a local level. Beyond the definition above, therefore, what is or is not a suburb may depend on the geographical scale of analysis.

5. Project Activity to Date

- Desk based review of current policy thinking and documentation relating to the role of the suburbs within the city (see section 8 for summary of key literature).
- Extensive primary research with wide cross-section of key interested parties in this field, both in terms of the suburbs specifically and urban policy more widely (see section 6 for full list of organisations).
- Participation in review of Greater London Authority's London Plan as well as Assembly's Planning and Spatial Development Committee's investigation into the future of London's suburbs. Reporting by May 2007.
- Initiation of 'State of the Suburbs' analysis through Local Futures Group to seek to identify broad issues and trends common across suburban local authority areas (socially, economically and environmentally). Due to report by June 2007.
- Early discussions into form of possible exclusive piece of market research into views on the suburbs, people's hopes, fears and aspirations for suburbs now and in the future. If commissioned, to report by June 2007.

6. Organisations Engaged

Local/Regional Government

- LB Barnet
- LB Ealing
- RB Kingston Upon Thames
- LB Havering
- City of Westminster
- Solihull MBC
- Stockport MBC
- Trafford MBC
- Greater London Authority
- Core Cities Group
- Capital Ambition

Academic Institutions

- Centre for Suburban Studies, Kingston University
- London School of Economics
- King's College University
- University College London
- University of Durham

Think Tanks

- New Local Government Network
- IPPR Centre for Cities
- Policy Exchange
- Audacity

Market Research Organisations

- IPSOS MORI
- YouGov

Other Organisations

- Guardian Newspaper
- MJP Architects
- URBED
- Local Futures Group
- Lancefield Consulting

National Bodies

- Leadership Centre for Local Government
- Academy for Sustainable Communities
- Urban Policy Unit, DCLG
- CABE
- Chartered Institute of Housing
- Improvement and Development Agency
- Core Cities Group

7. Initial Analysis and Emerging Themes [1]

- **Significant interest around suburbs:** in all quarters compared to two years ago when initial efforts made to raise the profile of the city-suburbs agenda, with broad agreement on city-suburbs 'story' across numerous and diverse governmental and non-governmental organisations.
- **Current policy underdevelopment, fragmentation, contradiction and incoherence:** lacking is a 'suburban champion', whether an individual or organisation, seeking to lead on coordinating all the good work related to this area into a coherent whole in order to seek to represent the interests of those communities of interest in this area.
- **Urban Taskforce regrets:** never intended for final taskforce report to be read purely as manifesto for change in inner urban areas as said to apply equally to all areas of the city including suburbs.
- **Image and the need to reclaim the term suburb:** remains a huge barrier to the city-suburbs agenda being taken seriously, with suburbs still widely perceived to be anonymous places with no burning platform for investment or change, while recognising this may lead to a potential gradual decline in quality of suburbs. Need to reposition suburbs as the *'home of aspirational Britain'*.
- **Institutional complexities:** poor communication and working across local authority/layers of government, particularly where such authorities are not located within the same administrative region such as the GLA working with SEERA. London is not a city-region in its own right and need to act more closely with the wider south-east region, for instance.
- **Funding:** generally perceived to be a problem with resource equalisation perhaps having gone too far with successful areas not supported in continuing to be successful. Resource equalisation seen as right, but as having gone too far towards *'first worst' vs 'invest in success'*. Agreement around need for innovation in funding mechanisms, such as local income tax, business rates supplements and capital funding for infrastructure.

7. Initial Analysis and Emerging Themes [2]

- **Economy:** role of city-suburbs as economic hubs in own right, not just as dormitory residential areas providing the workforce for city and green field sites of investment. Where suburban development has been purely residential (new suburbs or extensions to existing historic suburbs), it has commonly resulted unsustainable communities highly dependent on cars and urban centres, for instance. Home to knowledge workers feeding urban centres but local economies not tending to benefit from this strength themselves.
- **Diversity and change:** city-suburbs are increasingly diverse and rapidly changing in nature, mirroring changes in the wider urban social and physical fabric. As such it is not deemed helpful to seek a common stereotyped view of what characterises a city-suburb due to their changing and diverse nature.
- **Suburb shaping strategies:** across suburban authorities have thus far separately tended to converge around a 'protect, enhance and grow' model, focusing development in town centres and edge urban public sector housing estates in order to preserve the attractive characteristics of those suburban areas.
- **Planning system and the green belt:** view widely held that there remain issues in terms of the planning system and green belt policy that, if resolved, could help city-suburban leaders and communities better engage in a consumer driven approach to the future form of place across regions as lives not lived solely within single local authority boundary. Need to better empower local areas to become masters of own destiny.
- **London factor:** not unique in terms of the suburban model, although it does hypervisualise (highlight) change due to its rapid change dynamic due to its global interconnectedness. But other UK cities experiencing the same phenomena.
- **Supporting and reinforcing findings from other reviews:** such as Lyons (on incentivising local authorities to develop business etc in area through tax system), Barker (planning review such as potential loosening of green belt) and Eddington (transport infrastructure key to future success and a major issue for city-suburbs above all) to name but a few.

8. National Policy Framework Summary [1]

There have been a number of hugely significant policy initiatives reporting over the past year from which the city-suburbs work can not only usefully draw, but also highlight elements as particularly pertinent to shaping the future city-suburbs agenda. The key elements of those policy reviews which are congruent with the findings of this review are outlined below:

Lyons Inquiry

- Avoids broader debate around the role of and approach to the equalisation of resources.
- Drives towards increasing local financial flexibilities and incentivising local authorities to deliver growth.
- As part of this, support for supplementary business rates (SBRs) as one way of driving town centre revitalisation and incentivise growth. Especially useful in terms of funding transport infrastructure projects
- Side steps equalisation debate, stating the “...proposals are not intended to dramatically reduce equalisation... rather... to provide space... to incentivise local government to grow their tax bases and crucially enable local communities to receive some reward for allowing their area to develop and grow” (Lyons, p.318).

Barker Review

- More building on green belt as response to long-term pressures.
- Modify ‘town centres first’ approach (maintain objective but not determine local market need).
- New system for major infrastructural projects determined by Independent Planning Commission.
- Emphasise economic role of planning with a presumption in favour of development (incentivise growth).
- New economic incentives for local authorities (link to Lyons but also e.g. Tax Increment Financing relating to increase in tax base/land values post-development).

8. National Policy Framework Summary [2]

Eddington Review

- Resonance with much of Lyons Inquiry in terms of a change of approach to major infrastructural investment.
- Push to reprioritise Britain's £18bn annual transport budget around economic growth objectives, shifting balance to London, south-east and a few northern city regions. Drive to sustain long-term urban economic growth by focusing on 'smart investments' in urban centres that achieve economic, environmental and social goals.
- Urges the government to '**invest in success**' to ensure successful areas do not lose edge, focusing investment on existing networks within and between big cities to underpin growth in UK economy to ensure effective access to jobs. Advises to avoid iconic projects and focus on major improvement projects to target congestion.
- However, some concern as to whether this approach will impact on suburban and smaller urban areas in city-regions, experiencing the problems related to growth without the necessary investment.

'Loosening the Leash', All Party Urban Development Group

- In line with Eddington and Barker findings.
- High quality infrastructure, above all transport, vital to economic performance.
- Still a significant 'infrastructure gap' in Britain, a system that is over centralised, experiences financial fragmentation, suffers weak strategic coordination across sectors and initiatives further hindered by a lack of capacity and skills in planning departments.
- Need for innovative/new ways of pulling private sector funding into the pot, a simplified financing framework that pulls streams together, all of which is governed through substantial devolution of power to local leaders who are also provided with significantly more planning and economic development resources and skills.

8. National Policy Framework Summary [3]

Leitch Review

- Refocusing education and skills provision to ensure global competitiveness.
- Emphasis on knowledge economy, skills that meet the changing needs of the economy and life long and vocational learning.

Ideopolis: Knowledge City-Regions, Work Foundation

Knowledge economies are driven by nine key factors, within which the role of successful suburbs is self-evident:

1. Creating the physical knowledge city – having the architecture and accommodation that knowledge intensive businesses and workers require.
2. Building on what's there – recognising the city's existing strengths and weaknesses and playing to these.
3. 'Diverse specialisation' – having a diverse range of economic specialisms for which the city is known.
4. High skill organisations – a focus on productivity through high quality jobs and highly skilled people.
5. Vibrant education sector embedded in community and economy – one or more universities linking closely with the city and businesses, supported by good education institutions helping all individuals develop their skills.
6. Distinctive 'knowledge city' offer – a distinctive offer for knowledge intensive businesses and workers who are considering investing, working and living in the city, supported by diverse cultural and leisure facilities.
7. Leveraging strong connectivity within and outside the city-region – good communications infrastructure combined with quick links both within the city and to other cities via air, rail and road.
8. Strong leadership around knowledge city vision, supported by networks and partnerships – civic or private sector leadership around the vision of a knowledge intensive city, based on strong networks across different industries.
9. Investing in communities – investing in strategies to ensure the benefits of knowledge intensity are experienced by the whole community (i.e. social cohesion and relative social equality).

9. Draft Policy Headlines [1]

- The city-suburbs agenda should be viewed in the context of the **city-regions** debate, whereby city-suburbs and their success is integral to future success of city-regions.
- Role of authorities and partners (including regional government) in visioning and shaping city-suburbs, specific to each city-suburb. **No two city-suburbs are the same**, however there are some common practitioner tools and policies emerging that could be better shared and coordinated. But need to drive '**diverse specialisation**' (ref Work Foundation 'Ideopolis') to avoid all city-suburbs chasing the 'creative classes' model of growth or else risk serial reproduction of clone city-suburbs competing for same market.
- Need for the development of new, innovative and flexible **funding mechanisms** in the context of tighter government expenditure which, in the main, has already hit the bottom line of suburban authorities more than most due to their comparative high performance. Such mechanisms would allow government at all levels to move to a position whereby it invests not only in improving levels of deprivation, but **rewards and invests in success** and drives high performance higher for the benefit of the city-region as a whole (or else risks pushing low and high performing areas to converge around mediocrity).
- **Need to address resource equalisation issues**, which many believe to have gone too far. An 'invest in success' approach, or at least allow successful areas to have a fair cut of their success to incentivise and facilitate them to reinforce such success, may be required. Currently successful (suburban) authorities frequently talk of having gone beyond the tipping point beyond which resources are too limited to even stand still in terms of their ability to provide adequate services to remain successful. This is a **revenue issue** predominantly.
- **Economy of city-suburbs** often underexplored/lacking attention across those areas. Role and nature of suburbs needs to be determined (locally and within city-region) so as to drive this agenda as often complacency around economic role and success of suburbs. What role do they have in economy? **Town centres** as drivers of much of economic success of suburbs.

9. Draft Policy Headlines [2]

- **Physical capital**, not just social, *is* essential to the new or continued success of city-suburbs as places people want to live (whether clean streets, green spaces or building design). Place still matters in the knowledge economy – it is not weightless. **Transport** central to physical capital of area, as this relates not only to how an area looks and feels but all aspects of the experience of that area as driving satisfaction.
- Related to the economy issue, **policy contradictions** in relation to city-suburbs and role within city-regions as a whole require resolution. For instance, push to increase housing density within city-suburbs at expense of increased mixed land use and the existence of poor transport links not reconcilable currently with sustainability agenda. Many current policies resulting in weakened town centres, continued dominance of cars and role of city-suburbs as ‘places to sleep’ in poorly designed densified developments countering sustainability drive. Links to greenfield development within city-regional context as potential resolution.
- **Improvements in working relationships/governance/communications/joined up visioning** across tiers of government, including local authority, regional government and central government, particularly around city-regional land and transport planning issues, not just involving public authorities in each separate regions (e.g. the effect of the creation of GLA closing London in on itself).
- **Planning policy and capacity/skills of planning locally to deliver** needs revisiting both to support a suburban agenda but also to assist wider regional planning (beyond the city to the true city-region) on housing, economy etc. Authorities require support to be able to better deliver on sustainable and attractive suburbs challenging developers to up their game in terms of quality of design and creativity and sustainability of developments (whether new developments or revitalising older suburban areas) with support of organisations such as CABE. And deliver truly **sustainable suburbs**.
- **Diversity and social cohesion** increasingly pertinent issue to city-suburbs as areas experiencing much of the changes of inner areas previously but even more rapidly already leading to cohesion issues in places.

10. Areas Requiring Further Review

- **Sustainability and climate change:** Significant policy gap concerning the definition of sustainability, particularly in reference to city-suburban areas. Is suburban development actually unsustainable or is it in fact the manner in which new city-suburbs develop that is unsustainable, with elements such as sustainable transport not factored in up front but more as an after thought? What can be done in existing city-suburban areas to increase their sustainability and minimise their impact on climate change?
Can areas be successful *and* sustainable and if so what can we learn from other countries to make this a reality? Could suburban development handled in the right way in fact be the most sustainable form of growth?
- **Implications of emerging changes to planning regulations:** tied to the point above but distinctly different, what are the full implications of the Barker Review and Planning White Paper for suburban areas in areas such as green belt and town centre development policy?
- **Affordable and appropriate housing to meet customer demand:** again related, but how can new and existing suburbs play a role in providing the right mix of housing (type and tenure) to meet the future needs of the British public? Also the need to bottom out controversial truths vs myths in areas such as housing density.
- **City-suburban economies:** recognising the diverse nature of these areas, how can government in partnership with others best support and strengthen such areas economically? Is this the most effective economic strategy for city-regions and if not what role should city-suburbs best serve?
- **Enduring appeal:** More is required on what the enduring appeal of suburbs is/needs to be and how this can be ‘bottled’/harnessed by city-suburban leaders and partners (residents included) to ensure existing city-suburbs continue to appeal to the vast majority of the British public (as they do today)?

11. Delivering the City-Suburbs Agenda [1]

The policy headlines outlined in section 9 of this report point to a number of broad policy areas that require action in order to deliver on the city-suburbs agenda. While these actions come from work looking to address perceived issues within city-suburban areas, it is hoped that they will be relevant across much of work of local and regional public bodies no matter what the characteristics of such areas.

First and foremost, it is clear from the research work undertaken and networks formed in relation to the suburban agenda that it would be hugely beneficial for a period of sustained focus by specialists in this field to formally close off the lines of enquiry agreed between the leaders in the field in a hugely under explored policy area. As such, the work of this report encourages the establishment of a 'suburban taskforce', perhaps best positioned within a wider '**city-regions taskforce**', updating, broadening and reinvigorating the work of the urban taskforce. The **Local Government Association** may be best placed to deliver this work. A focus on city-suburbs would form one key element of this work, placing suburbs within the context of the wider urban system in which suburbs sit and which both the future role, form and success of both cities and their suburbs rest.

The specific work of this taskforce in relation to the suburban agenda could include:

1. Collectively finalise and agree a working definition for (city-)suburbs for the purpose of future work.
2. Draw together in some depth the numerous pieces of work in existence looking at the funding of infrastructural improvements, including the Lyons Review, LB Barnet's Barnet Bond and All Party Urban Development Group amongst others. Focus on freedoms and flexibilities within current capital expenditure arrangements.

11. Delivering the City-Suburbs Agenda [2]

3. Take forward/roll out on national level current ad hoc work, for instance by the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames, into the resource equalisation issue aimed at ensuring the future success of city-suburbs, and therefore city-regions as a whole, is not undermined by a resource equalisation regime that undermines the continuous improvement and future success of suburban areas.
4. Feed into future work around changes to national planning policy, for instance in relation to the green belt issue, in particular feeding into consultation on DCLG's upcoming Planning White Paper.
5. Consider the formation of a national (city-)suburbs working group to represent views of local authorities predominantly characterised as suburban, perhaps including an outer London authorities (and surrounding authorities) sub-group to represent those interests within the context of the London city-region in its widest sense.
6. Establish a hub to coordinate, gather and share innovative practice and learning from city-suburban areas in a multi-disciplined and diverse policy area.

How this is best achieved is very much up for debate, but such a focus within the context of urban and city-regional policy, would be a significant step towards creating a voice for the suburbs nationally. This may be best achieved through the development of a centre of excellence relating to suburbs, either through a suburban research centre, expanding models such as that in Kingston University; or the growth/extension of an existing centre of excellence for cities such as the IPPR's Centre for Cities to include a greater focus on suburban areas within existing work programmes; or finally a more coordinated and effectively mainstreamed version of current practice embedded within existing professional institutions. Also review the potential for establishing a PhD studentship through CASE funding mechanism (£4k per year for 3 years from collaborating public body/-ies – possibly LGA or suburban authorities group).

12. Next Steps

Finalisation of Studies

- 'State of the Suburbs' analysis through Local Futures Group to seek to identify broad issues and trends common across suburban local authority areas (socially, economically and environmentally). Due to report by June 2007.
- IPSOS MORI report on hopes, fears and aspirations of suburban residents through analysis of resident satisfaction surveys 2006/7. Due to report by June 2007 (subject to funding).

Policy Summit (September)

- An event of this nature would aim to refine and validate the findings of the initial research exercise with a view to publishing a finalised 'city-suburbs strategy' outlining the agreed policy agenda and key actions required. This is intended to drive national urban policy towards a renewed emphasis on the importance of city-suburbs in the wider urban renewal agenda. Due to take place in **6th-7th September 2007**.
- This event and the shape and nature of the city-suburbs project going forward clearly depends on whether a taskforce is indeed established as this would represent the best high profile vehicle for taking the agenda forward, and may become a launch pad for any taskforce that may result

Final Report and Consensus on Way Ahead

- Final published report post-September event, to include action plan and future ways of working together across stakeholders in the city-suburbs agenda

13. Selected References [1]

- ‘Strong and Prosperous Communities’, DCLG (October 2006), The Local Government White Paper
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