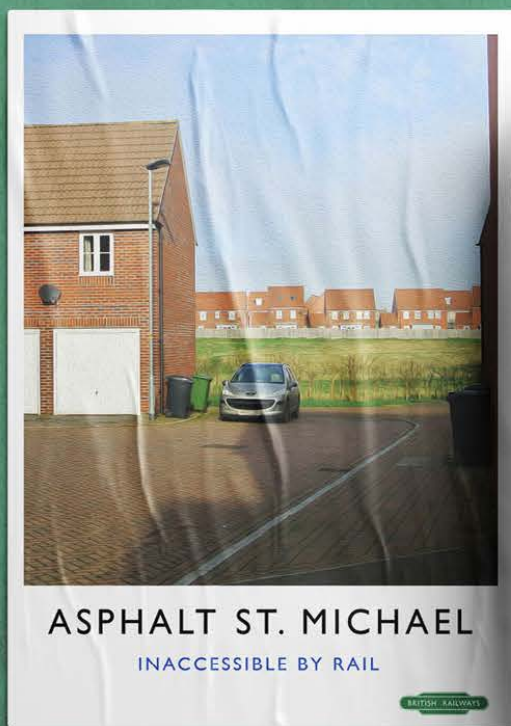


# Building Car Dependency



The tarmac suburbs of  
the future



TRANSPORT FOR NEW HOMES

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Rees Jeffreys Road Fund



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The listing of these organisations and individuals does not imply acceptance or endorsement of the recommendations or contents in this report.



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TRANSPORT FOR NEW HOMES



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# 1. Introduction

Transport for New Homes believe that planning and transport should be done in a joined-up way and reduce the emphasis on the car.

We want future planning to be centred instead on sustainable transport modes, by which we mean public transport, safe walking and cycling, and newer forms of personal mobility. We think this shift away from the car is key to reducing carbon emissions from transport, and essential in preventing mounting congestion on our roads. It would mean less sprawl across the countryside, better places to live and new homes located in such a way that people use town centres rather than abandon them.

Transport for New Homes aims to better understand the interplay between transport and planning on a practical basis by visiting new housing and associated development. On this basis, we hope to make recommendations about what works and what doesn't so that we can genuinely build around sustainable transport, bringing planning and transport together.

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### Visiting new developments

Here at Transport for New Homes we visited a number of new housing developments in 2017/2018 and wrote about our observations. We have recently visited some of these sites again to see how they had progressed as places in terms of sustainable development, a key concept in national planning policy. We visited some additional developments in Leeds and one in York.

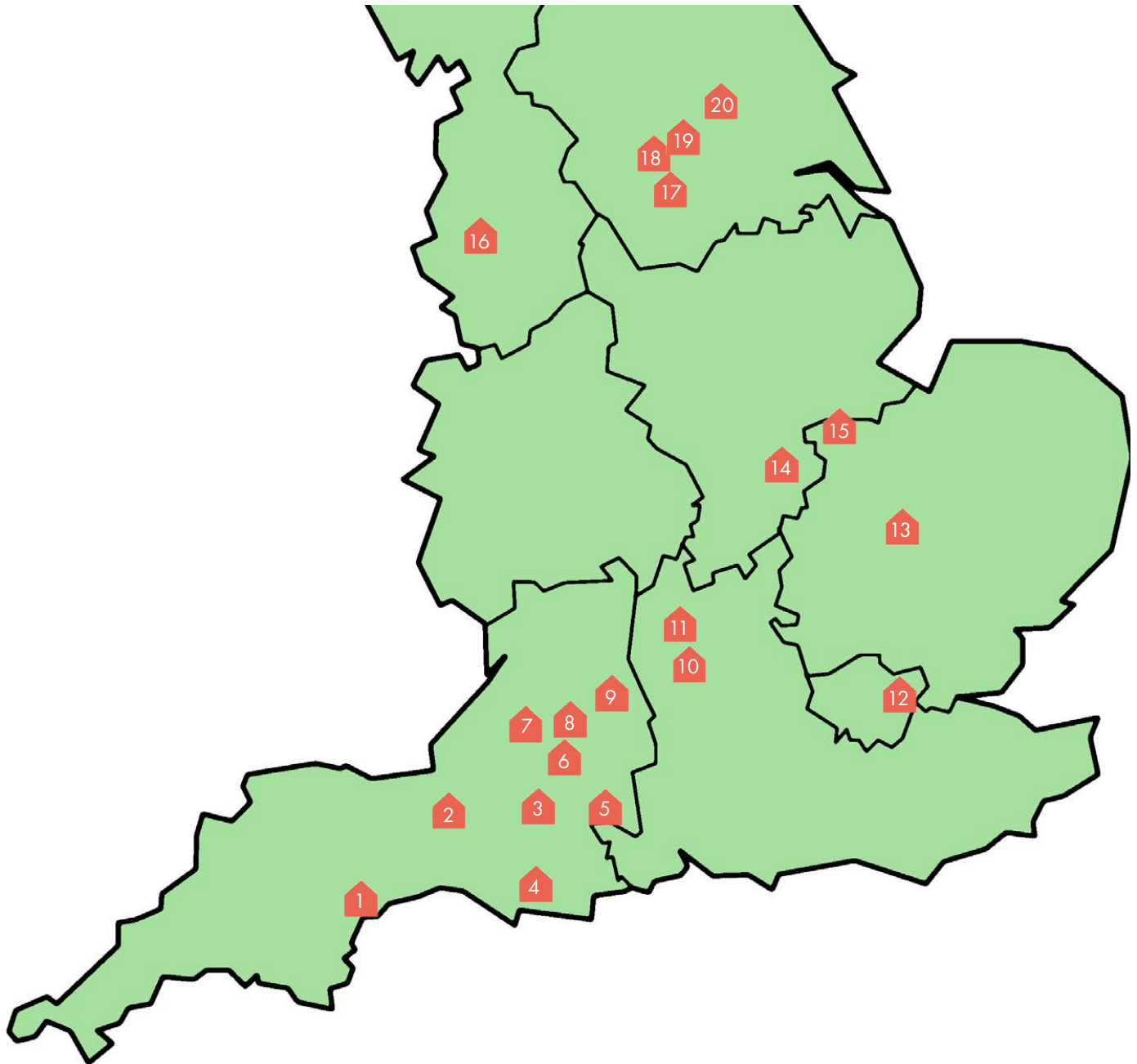
Where possible, we use public transport for our visits, and cycling and walking routes on our way to and from the development and within it. We take photographs and speak to residents and others familiar with the area. We also look at whether destinations are car-based, and the extent that town centres are being used, or not.

Read our previous reports at

[www.transportfornewhomes.org.uk](http://www.transportfornewhomes.org.uk)



## 2. Where we visited



1. Cranbrook New Town
2. Monkton Heathfield
3. Gillingham, Dorset
4. Poundbury
5. Old Sarum and Longhedge
6. Castlemead
7. Bath, Riverside
8. Melksham Clackers Brook
9. Wichelstowe
10. Great Western Park

11. Barton Park
12. Kidbrook Village
13. Trumpington Meadows
14. Priors Hall Park
15. Hampton Park
16. Chapelford Urban Village
17. Allerton Bywater
18. Leeds Climate Innovation District
19. Kirkstall Forge
20. Derwenthorpe



## Poundbury

A truly mixed-use 400-acre development in Dorset designed around walkability. The development is an urban extension of Dorchester to which it is seamlessly joined by continuous streets. When complete, Poundbury is expected to have 4,500 residents.



## Castlemead

650 homes on a greenfield site outside Trowbridge in Wiltshire, next to an older development - Paxcroft Mead. These estates are orientated around a large distributor road complex and the A350, which the local authority hopes will become a fast route to the M4 with a series of bypasses partly funded by house-building. The future development next to Castlemead is Ashton Park, which is planned to have a further 2,700 homes.



## Great Western Park

A large area of 3,200 homes built as part of the continuing large-scale expansion of Didcot in Oxfordshire into a 'garden town'. The transport elements include widening of the A34 interchange towards Didcot, a new 'science' bridge to enable the old Didcot power station to be developed, a Clifton Hampden bypass and a new river crossing.



## Priors Hall Park

A development of 5,095 dwellings on a 420-hectare site outside Corby as part of a strategy for expanding and regenerating the town. The development is in close proximity to the A43 and existing business development, and is marketed on account of the fast travel times from Corby to London by train, and easy access to the motorway network.



## Barton Park

A new area of housing outside Oxford just across the A40 ring road. The 36 hectares of land are to provide 885 new homes, of which 354 will be let at social rent, owned and managed by Oxford City Housing Limited. The proposed bridge over the dual carriageway for buses, pedestrians and cycles was not built: instead there is a road crossing for buses and pedestrians only.



## Wichelstowe

Up to 4,500 homes built on greenfield land between the M4 motorway and Swindon. Wichelstowe benefits from its proximity to an existing large built-up area which makes serving by bus viable, although original public transport plans were scaled back. The development was originally proposed with three local centres for walkability, but over time the masterplan changed. East Wichel, the eastern quarter, was started in 2008. By 2020, some 12 years after the first homes were built, a new Co-op store, a fish and chip shop, a dentist, a Brazilian restaurant and a hair salon opened in East Wichel.



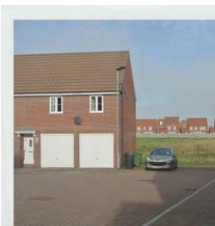
## Cranbrook New Town

A new town east of Exeter with up to 2,900 homes and potential for expansion to 6,500. It was originally developed by the Exeter and East Devon Growth Point, a partnership of local government, the Homes & Communities Agency and various private sector partners. A new railway station serves Cranbrook, although this is some way from the development.



## Kidbrooke Village

A large neighbourhood of apartments and town houses comprising 4,763 new homes (1,906 council homes were demolished to make way for the development) in South East London. It includes an improved station and notable wild flower area developed with the London Wildlife Trust.



## Melksham Clackers Brook

750 new homes with a further 450 in a related estate south of Clackers Brook. The development is one of a string of edge-of-town urban extensions in West Wiltshire as part of the A350 road corridor.



## Bath Riverside

This large-scale development consists of apartments and town houses. It occupies the site of a disused gasworks about 1 km west Bath centre. Located on the banks of the River Avon, it is well situated for walking to shops, entertainment, the railway station, bus station and bus stops. Car parking is limited and mostly out of sight, while the public realm is shaped around walking.



## Old Sarum and Longhedge

These two adjacent developments are on the northern edge of Salisbury, close to the Old Sarum airfield and the city football stadium, and also a park and ride. However otherwise they are in an isolated position some 2-3 miles from the city centre.



## Trumpington Meadows

Outline planning permission for development at Trumpington Meadows on Cambridge's southern fringe was granted in 2009 and included 1,200 new homes and a primary school and a 60-hectare country park. The first homes were built in 2012. With easy access to the nearby M11, Trumpington Meadows incorporates a park and ride and interchange for buses into town.



## Chapelford Urban Village

A 200-acre former RAF site northwest of Warrington. The first homes were sold in 2004 and the last ones completed in 2017. A new station, Warrington West, finally opened on the southern edge of the development (in 2019).



## Derwenthorpe

Derwenthorpe is a development of 481 new homes on the edge of York, about 2 miles from the city centre, developed by the Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust in partnership with Barratt Developments.



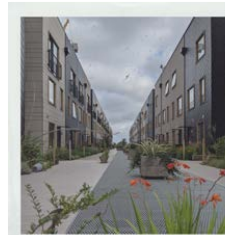
## Monkton Heathfield

This is a large area to eventually encompass 4,500 homes on countryside near Taunton as part of Taunton Garden Town.



## Kirkstall Forge

A modern 57-acre development 3.5 miles out of Leeds of 1,050 houses and apartments, and 400,000 sq ft of commercial, retail and leisure units. With a new railway station on-site, Kirkstall Forge is close to woodland walks and a river footpath. To include a gym, playgrounds, an open meadow, and a bridge across the railway to connect to the fields and canal towpath beyond.



## Leeds Climate Innovation District

516 new homes on a brownfield site in Leeds, this is an innovative development based on Scandinavian urban densities working in conjunction with city developer Citu. The previously industrial area has been converted into a walkable, leafy, and family friendly environment with urban social spaces open to everyone. The masterplan's distinctive urban design allows for a pedestrian and bicycle-friendly street environment.



## Allerton Bywater

520 new homes as part of the Allerton Bywater Millennium Community was announced by John Prescott in 1998. It lies on the former site of Allerton Colliery with the Millennium Village aiming to prevent the onset of post-industrial decline following the pit closure and instead makes a positive change to the character of the village.



## Hampton Park

The Hamptons are a connected series of large urban extensions of Peterborough, many using former clay pits and brick works, but some within open countryside. The transport is integrated and there is a network of open spaces, from small local play areas to country parks. The new area also boasts a high street.



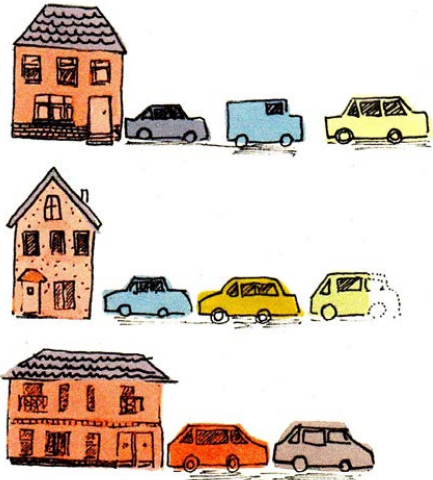
## Gillingham, Dorset

A small market town that has substantially expanded in past years and is still expanding in response to a formal target for 30,500 new homes in the Dorset Local Plan. A railway station connects it to Salisbury and London, and there is easy access to the A303. Our visits identified the poor interaction between new development and the existing town centre.

# 3. What we discovered

Our visits involved contrasting developments in town and country. From what we saw, housing developments on brownfield sites in our cities were generally far more suitable for those wanting to walk or cycle about their daily business, and for those wanting to use public transport. You didn't need to drive.

By contrast the large greenfield sites that we saw were places that needed a car. With the exception of Hampton Park (Peterborough), Poundbury (Dorset) and Derwenthorpe (York), the design and layout of the greenfield housing that we visited anticipated that residents would drive for nearly every journey they made. The internal road layout, the car access onto major roads with bigger junctions to take the traffic and the sheer quantity of residential car parking, all told the story.



Parking takes up a great deal of space in greenfield housing estates. A non-urban local authority policy may for example specify three spaces for 4 bedroom houses; 2.5 spaces for 3 bedroom homes and 2 spaces for 2 bedroom homes. Add in visitor parking and space to manoeuvre and you end up with an awful lot of tarmac!



The amount of parking that we saw in new housing developments told the story: residents lived a car-based life-style despite masterplans that spoke of local, vibrant, walking communities.

Cumulative parking often takes up a lot of space and impacts severely on public realm and good urban design.



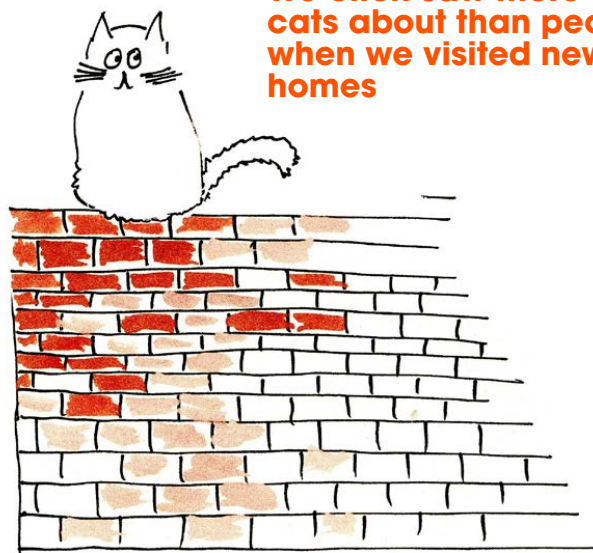
## New places built around the car

With few local facilities and small businesses built within new greenfield housing developments, a walking community was not established, and we saw hardly any people about on the streets. We generally saw more cats than pedestrians on our visits!

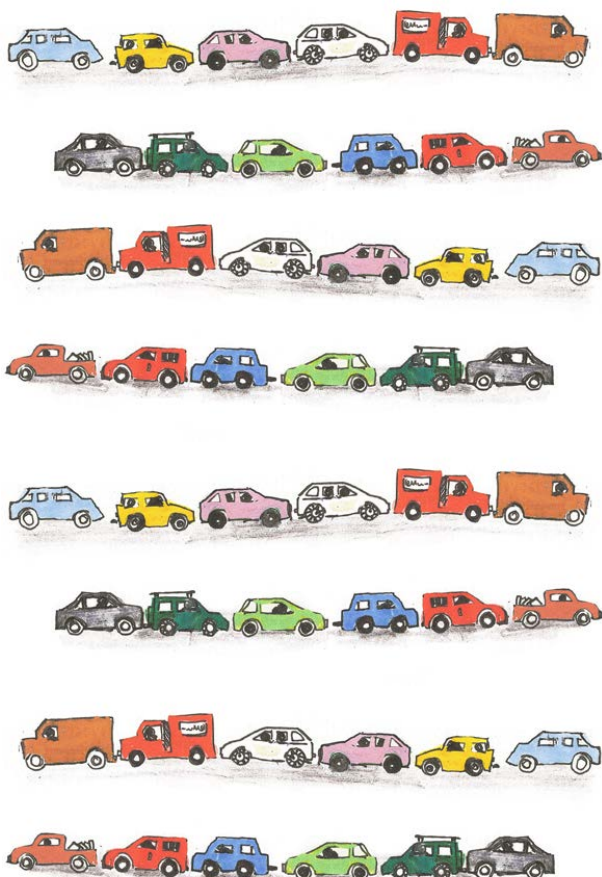
Part of the problem seemed to be that many places that were supposed to be 'vibrant and walkable' communities were still waiting for the very elements that would make the dream come true. For example, Cranbrook, the new town in Devon, was still waiting for a promised high street, a children's centre and other community facilities to get it going, many years after the first people moved in. The thousands of new residents of nearly 2,000 homes still don't have the things that an ordinary community would expect. It's no wonder that people have to drive elsewhere for what they need, that is, if they are indeed able to drive and can afford to run a car.

The other part of the problem was that even if a very small 'centre' was built in a housing area, this was often

**We often saw more cats about than people when we visited new homes**



a mini shopping mall or a large supermarket designed for arrival by car, rather than on foot. There were few interesting independent businesses established – although an independent café in Cranbrook and a restaurant at Wichelstowe had opened. On the whole, there was tendency to 'clone-town housing development'.



## Hard to live without a car

In the majority of new housing estates on the urban fringe or more isolated in the countryside, we realised it would be hard to live without a car unless you carefully matched and timed your daily activities with limited public transport services and destinations, and had good knowledge of timetables so as to avoid long waits. Residents would need to be prepared for what was often a very long walk to the station.

## 'It's just five minutes along the bypass off the second roundabout'

Greenfield sites tend to be situated on ring roads, bypasses and major roads that they may have helped to pay for, and these provide the ring-main for other car-based destinations to be plugged in. We saw retail parks, large farm shops that had diversified, new business parks, US-style drive-through takeaways,

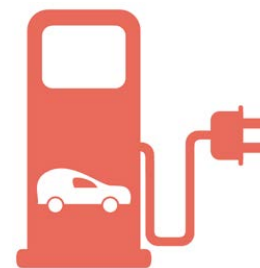
drive-to country parks, out-of-town fitness centres, new rugby clubs, even a residential home for the elderly on a bypass. We spoke to people in towns that had expanded fast around this kind of development. Traffic, they said, was increasing on many country roads including minor ones, and was much resented. There were queues at junctions where there had never been before and walking had become unpleasant because of the general overall increase in traffic, with people complaining how long it now took to cross roads as a pedestrian.

## **‘We don’t really go to the town centre very much’**

Apart from our ‘exception’ greenfield sites (notably Poundbury and Derwenthorpe), we saw green field housing disconnected from the urban area rather than being connected to it by continuous and overlooked streets. Despite having large greenfield housing sites on their fringes, the less affluent town centres had empty shops and businesses with comparatively few people visiting. We realised that these places had begun to replicate the car-based lifestyle seen out-of-town, with sections of inner ring road directing cars to large supermarkets, retail and popular eateries all with ample car-parking. Shoppers arriving by foot or cycle found retail in the remaining pedestrian friendly areas limited. The more affluent towns fared much better and were busier – Oxford, Bath, Cambridge, York.



## **Electric cars?**



We don’t believe that electric cars will solve the problems that we have seen. Electric vehicles are undoubtedly part of the picture of tackling climate change, but we think that nonetheless society has to move away from car-dependency, as it will enable the growth of the harmful patterns of development and lifestyles that we have seen.

A typical new greenfield development of 3,000 new homes may have roughly 6,000 car parking spaces. Imagine the traffic created. Even if the cars are electric this is going to pose real problems.

While our cities are trying to become more car-free, our new homes are creating more traffic.

From a transport and planning point of view, electric cars won’t magic away the problems that we have seen. There are questions about the sustainability of manufacturing and running even more cars than we have at the moment.

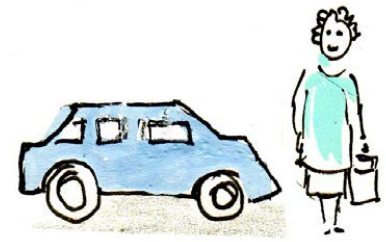
## **‘The gardens are trampoline-sized and the houses are tiny’**

City developments we visited such as Bath Riverside, Kidbrooke Village in London and housing being built in Leeds, tried to mix the new homes with areas of parks and trees with parking largely underground. On the other hand, where the countryside was but is now housing, trees and greenery have given way to the car. It wasn’t house and garden; it was often house and car park.

During lockdown the importance of gardens became especially important, and many families with children now seek a garden or equivalent play area when they buy a house. However, when we visited developments on greenfield sites, back gardens were often very small or non-existent. What seems to have happened is this: because of the car-based lifestyle, most homes are required to have 2-3 spaces, with visitor parking

in addition. So, where homes occupy small plots (as they often do) or where there were affordable homes very close together (as there often are), gardens end up very small or missing entirely. Instead of a view of gardens from upstairs, or to the front of your home, you overlook lots of parked cars.

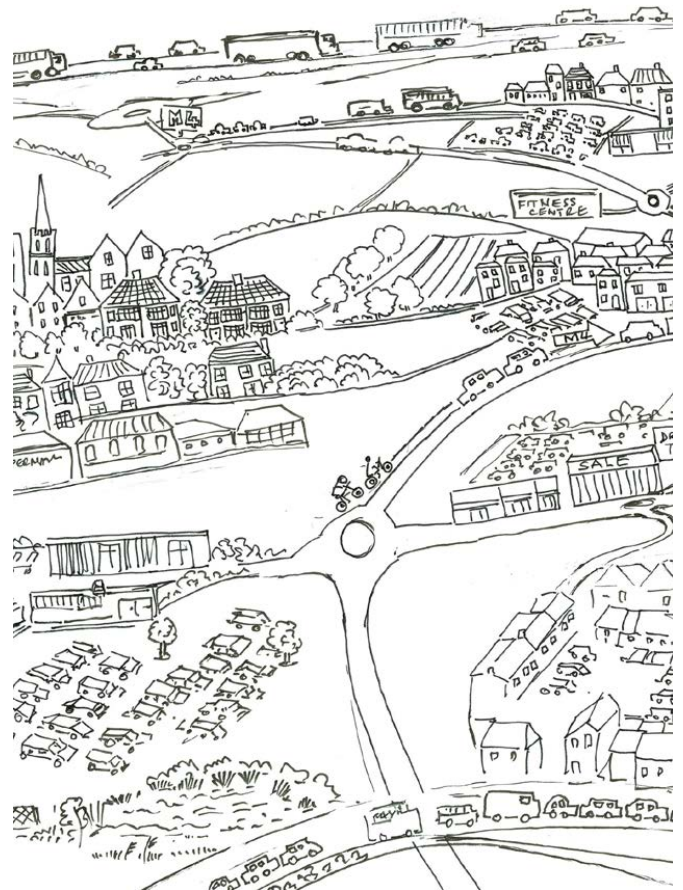
We saw many back gardens for family homes that were so tiny that a trampoline occupied the entire area wall-to-wall. We wondered what it could be like for families having to work from home. Given the paucity of parks and corner shops and cafés to pop into, it can't be easy to venture out on foot for exercise, sociability and a change of scene.



*'You have to go in the car everywhere. The traffic is getting worse and worse!'*



*'It's so embarrassing I have to get my mum to take me everywhere because the public transport is so rubbish.'*



## More traffic everywhere

Local people complained that as a result of building car-based 'doughnut developments' and 'cowpat housing' in the countryside, that traffic increases right across the whole area. It's not a matter of just a couple of junctions with longer queues: it's everywhere. Country roads in places that were previously sleepy are full of cars and hold-ups. Walkers and cyclists are intimidated.

Developer money is put to enlarging junctions and building new roads to 'mitigate' the effects of so much additional traffic and paradoxically the new roads and bigger junctions attract even more car-based sprawl. Meanwhile for those homes marketed as within easy access to a given motorway junction, there is no analysis as to what happens to traffic further down the line as those cars drive from several new 'cowpat'

estates into our cities or on for example, the M25, M5, M4 or M6, although everyone fears the worst!

Meanwhile the cities themselves are trying to get rid of traffic not have more of it.



OFF STREET PARKING



PARKING BAYS



GARAGES



LOCAL WALKS



EASY ROAD ACCESS



GARDENS



## POSTCARD

We are still on our tour looking for a new place to move to. I'm sad to say our time in Asphalt St Michael was underwhelming. Though very easy to access off the nearby Oldtown bypass, Asphalt St. M. had very little in the way of things to do. There are no guesthouses here (and I can see why) so we stayed at the nearby Travellodge. The bus service was limited, and there was no safe way of walking or cycling between Asphalt St. M and Oldtown, or the Travellodge. So I'm afraid we took a taxi. The whole place felt like being in a large car park, with very little in the way of greenery, no public realm to speak of, and not much sense of a community either. Onwards and upwards! Let's hope our next destination is more inspiring!

Love,

Jill & John



Chris & Carol Hutchinson

32 Rosebud Avenue

Webley

Middx

UB19 7ZB

This is a postcard sent by a (fictitious) couple house hunting. They wanted somewhere walkable where you didn't need to have a car, and they could safely cycle their tandem into town.

You will see on later pages they visited some more suitable places than "Asphalt St Michael". The full set of postcards is available at [transportfornewhomes.org.uk](http://transportfornewhomes.org.uk)

## 'Yes, I think there is a bus...I have seen one...but I wouldn't know where to catch it'



Supplying public transport to new and dispersed development divorced from a large urban area is difficult. Bus companies cannot easily extend existing routes to incorporate the new development 'retrospectively' when

they are stranded on an out-of-town road system. Developers are not always sympathetic to the idea that buses should take on a central role in a new housing area, for example in the prominent location of bus stops, wide enough roads, priority over other traffic on the way into town and so on. If a new housing area is designed around the car, and if buses are not in place from the moment that new residents move in, people simply get used to driving. Good bus ridership is then hard to achieve. If we were lucky enough to see a fellow pedestrian in new housing areas, we would ask them about buses. They were by and large unsure about where you caught a bus. This was partly because buses didn't actually come into the estate but stopped at the entrance.

At Trumpington Meadows near Cambridge the housing had centred on a bus park-and-ride. The parking area was very large and overlooked by many people living in apartments. Not only was the view not the best for new homes, but we felt that this was taking buses out of the context of their residential and high street setting. Although it is useful for residents if they can use the park and ride bus, it seemed wrong to orientate new estates around a park and ride in this way, especially one where travel by car is being discouraged!

## 'They're going to build a new station!'

Many new housing developments are promoted on the basis of a small country station nearby which 'just' needs more frequent services and better access to provide a useful 'sustainable link'. Other developments

even put forward the idea of new stations.

These concepts are of course perfectly reasonable but there is a catch. It is almost impossible in England to deliver a more frequent railway service to a rural station to cater for a development, let alone open a new station. There are barriers at every stage, both procedural and financial, and each one requires consultants to work up the case. Although Cranbrook did manage to open a new station for a new town, this was after many, many years of perseverance. We found only three cases where a new or much improved station was opened directly adjacent to a new housing development - Warrington West for Chapelford Urban Village, Kirkstall Forge in Leeds and Kidbrooke Village in London. Warrington West station had its planning permission granted in 2017 and was completed in 2019.



### Plans for a station for 9,000 homes 'poor value for money'

A new railway station at Beam Park in East London is planned to serve 9,000 homes. The station is under construction but services stopping there have been cancelled. The Department for Transport's (DfT) position appears to be that the station was "poor value for money" and there were concerns about a long-term operational subsidy. This illustrates how the supply of sustainable transport to new homes is really at the bottom of the agenda, despite the carbon and accessibility implications.



# Cycling

Cycle routes to places stranded outside of an urban area are not easy to arrange for safe travel alone or in the dark. It was possible to cycle to some of the new greenfield estates but you take your life into your hands on country roads and on the many large roundabouts and junctions, not to mention dual carriageways. On roads in and around these large greenfield developments, the amount of traffic makes it dangerous and the cyclist feels intimidated by lorries and fast cars trying to overtake. Cycling to a different town only a few miles away is only for the daring cyclist who is prepared to hold up impatient traffic – the country roads tend to be too busy around places where greenfield development has been concentrated.



Cycling to and from new homes built in a countryside location is often dangerous because there are no segregated cycle lanes alongside the roads. You take your life into your hands. Drivers are frustrated when cyclists share the road with them because it can be difficult to overtake safely. Cycle paths across unbuilt areas may be nice in the summer but not in the dark, and many riders may be wary of their isolation. This points again to the need to build new housing along connected streets into urban areas rather than 'out in the sticks'.

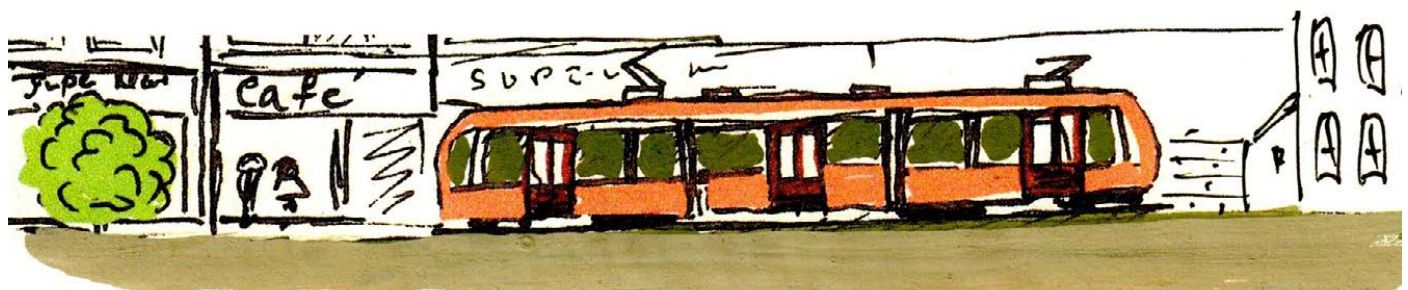
# Trams, light rail and rapid transit



We very much wanted to see new development pinned on trams and light rail as we had seen in other parts of Europe. However, we were disappointed to find that none of the large-scale housing developments outside our very largest metropolitan areas were close to a tram or light rail network. A number of areas are becoming urbanised and seeing a very large amount of development. Here there is a real opportunity for new light rail networks using new technologies, integrated with modern buses at

transport hubs. At Great Western Park, buses took a relatively short time to go to the railway station. However, travel to the large number of new hi-tech and science parks in the Greater Oxford area was often less direct. With the fast-expanding Didcot Garden Town and other towns around Oxford, it was obvious from our visits that the whole Abingdon, Didcot and Oxford area itself needs a much more coherent urban and suburban transport network. The same applies to other areas with a lot of new development.

We need to invest in local public transport including trams, light rail and modern bus infrastructure which lets buses really beat the traffic, and couple this with the right locations for new homes.





# QUAGGYTOWERS

WISH YOU WERE HERE



Jill wanted to visit Quaggytowers because she thought we might like apartment-living European-style in a city. Then you can walk, cycle or take the bus or metro and the world's your oyster!

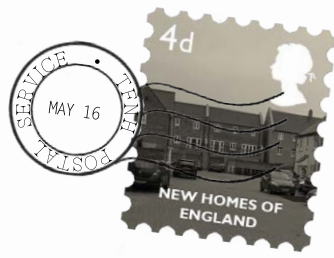
To our amazement it was beautiful with its own nature reserve and ponds and two swans even followed us into the sales office!

I'm particularly taken with the contemporary design and architecture. There's no waste of space or parking but you can pay for an underground space if you want, not that we would need it.

We're going to hire bikes tomorrow for a tour.

See you soon,

John & Jill



Chris & Carol Hutchinson

32 Rosebud Avenue

Webley

Middx

UB19 7ZB

# 4. Conclusions from our visits

**Our visits in 2021 reinforced our conclusions from those four years ago. Top of the list is that large-scale greenfield housing usually ends up being almost completely car-based. There are exceptions to the rule but these are rare and require that the land-owner and their partners building the development are strongly motivated to construct the place according to an entirely different model. Poundbury in Dorset and Derwenthorpe near York were in this more visionary category.**

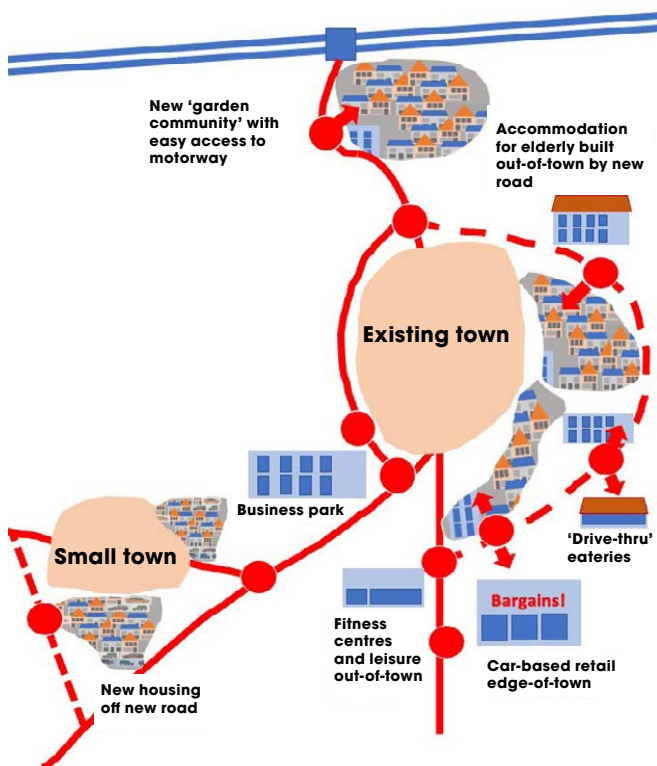
## Lifestyles

Transport and planning shape the way we live. Despite our planners hoping for 'vibrant places' where people have many opportunities to interact in real life, the reality seems very different. Small shops, cafes and

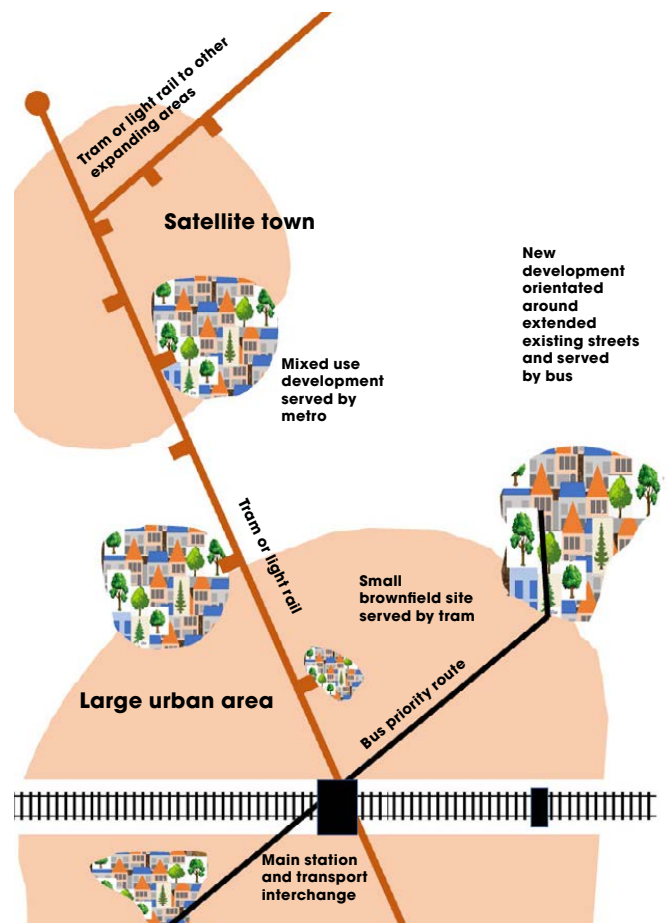
businesses forming a compact and walkable local centre, are just not there in most new greenfield estates. Local parks, community halls, playing fields and other amenities that would take people away from looking at their screens and encourage them to get out and walk or cycle, appear not to have materialised. Good public transport often remains aspirational with cuts to services looming. For people who cannot afford a car or cannot drive, they are essentially stuck. This cannot be a healthy vision for how people will live in the future.

The first of the diagrams (below) tried to capture the essence of our observations. The locations of the new homes, the transport infrastructure that accompanies it, and the destinations pinned along an expanded road network anticipate car-based lifestyles and traffic expansion.

The second diagram (below) is a more modern alternative, which at the moment is hard to achieve, as addressed in our recommendations for change on page 28.



A common pattern of development seen on visits: new housing in car-based locations in combination with new roads and out-of-town destinations, fuelling more car-based sprawl and more traffic, and meaning you have to drive. How would you serve this by bus, tram or metro?





# Types of development: our categories

We've arranged the places we visited into categories as shown in the table below.

The categories are:

**Cowpat** – a new area of housing dropped on fields built separate from the existing urban area, to which it is not connected by continuous streets.

**Severed community** – a new housing estate cut off from the parent town by a major road or cut in half by a busy road running through it.

**Exclusive exurb** – a new outer suburb which offers accommodation for the more affluent buyer in an estate with a separate identity from the less desirable town centre.

**Brownfield first** – a development built predominantly on previously developed land.

**Park and Ride-led** – new homes arranged around a park and ride car-park.

**Urban unicorn** – a rare case of a new greenfield development that succeeds in being built around walking, cycling and public transport.

**Doughnut** – town centres sapped of vibrancy by poorly integrated bypass developments and out-of-town retail areas.

development	type	development	type
1 Cranbrook New Town	Cowpat	11 Barton Park	Severed community
2 Monkton Heathfield	Cowpat	12 Kidbrook Village	Brownfield first
3 Gillingham, Dorset	Doughnut	13 Trumpington Meadows	Park and ride led
4 Poundbury	Urban unicorn	14 Priors Hall Park	Exclusive exurb
5 Old Sarum and Longhedge	Cowpat	15 Hampton Park	Brownfield first
6 Castlemead	Cowpat	16 Chapelford Urban Village	Brownfield first
7 Bath, Riverside	Brownfield first	17 Allerton Bywater	Brownfield first
8 Melksham Clackers Brook	Cowpat	18 Leeds Climate Innovation District	Brownfield first
9 Wichelstowe	Cowpat	19 Kirkstall Forge	Brownfield first
10 Great Western Park	Exclusive exurb	20 Derwenthorpe	Urban unicorn



# 5. Stories from our site visits

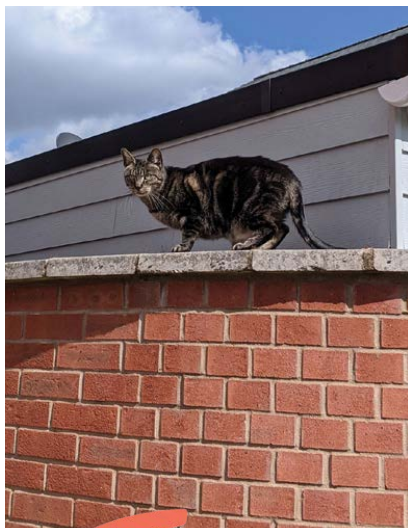
## Cranbrook



Start at Cranbrook Station.



Walking from the station to Cranbrook (no bus).



Plenty of cats out and about, few people.



Example residential street.



Small parade of shops.



**Unique green square in residential area.**



**Ample parking.**



**General view of Cranbrook with green infrastructure to the left.**



**Leaving Cranbrook via bus.**



**Finish at Exeter bus station.**

# Derwenthorpe



The new homes area was seamlessly joined to an existing street – the original street had been extended. It was an easy walk to the shops and a café.



It was easy to get to Derwenthorpe, a development by the Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust. The bus from York stopped at a nearby shopping parade.

The road into the development took us through a new square.



The architecture was varied and included small and larger homes, as well as flats.





We found a wonderful new park with a playground and a pond with swans and geese. This was used by people in the older suburbs so residents new and old benefited. People were walking because it was only a short distance away.

Car-parking was limited and well integrated into the fabric of the place. It seemed unobtrusive, allowed for gardens and has a much lower impact on the public realm than seen on many visits to other developments.



On the way back to catch the bus we saw people walking or cycling rather than driving.



We met residents walking and cycling near the park.

# Old Sarum & Longhedge



The bus from Salisbury to Old Sarum took us two miles out of town to the new housing development area.



The estate had a school, community centre, playground and convenience store all within easy walking distance of the bus stop.

However the place overall appeared to be car-based and there was also no obvious direct walking route to the adjacent estate, or map and signposts for pedestrians.



The local centre in the next estate, called Longhedge Village, was a small shopping mall organised around a car-park but with some cycle parking.





**We found a residential home for the elderly overlooking a large car park, but with no easy walking route to the small shopping mall.**



**Flood attenuation ponds are common in many new developments, as in this one.**



**Easy access to the development for cars driving to Salisbury.**



**The bus stop back to Salisbury was on a main road not outside of the estate.**



**The view from the top of the bus was scenic as we travelled back to town.**



# Chapelford Urban Village

**Warrington West rail station, newly built since our last visit in 2017, featured a building designed to look like an aircraft hanger - a reference to the site's history as a American Air Force base.**



**Other references included a spitfire-shaped children's climbing frame, concrete propellers, US state street names, and themed benches.**



**The bus service didn't integrate with the rail timetable, making for an inefficient commute. No wonder the car park was so full!**



**The car is king in Chapelford, dominating its streets. Some innovative methods of squeezing in additional parking spaces are on show.**







The car parks reach their greatest extent in the 'village centre', complete with Sainsbury's supermarket, pub and primary school, all with car parks.



Hardly any retail opportunities in such a large urban area; just three small units attached to the supermarket.



An abundance of "end of cycle route" signs; a relic from a redundant shared walk and cycleways scheme where road cycling made more sense.



Surrounded by existing suburbs, Chapelford is needlessly car-orientated. Rather than influencing travel behaviours towards sustainability, Chapelford provides ample car parking, low quality public transport integration and poor walking and cycling provision, making for an unsustainable neighbourhood.



Sustainable access to new homes needs to be in place from the very start.

# Trumpington

We started from Cambridge station from a conveniently placed bus stop.



A frequent bus service with all modern conveniences.



We arrived at the park-and-ride terminal in the middle of a giant car park.



And walked along the tree-lined boulevard.



Only to discover it goes to nowhere!

Disabled? Got a buggy? Too bad!



Lack of clear signage meant we accidentally accessed the housing from the school-only access, with no clear alternative access.



Finally we reached the housing where pavements were in short supply.



Accessibility?  
Who cares!



No expense spared for electric cars.



Clearly there's demand to use active travel, despite having to navigate through a giant car park and the poor access to it.



# 6. Recommendations

## Things have to change

### Doing things differently

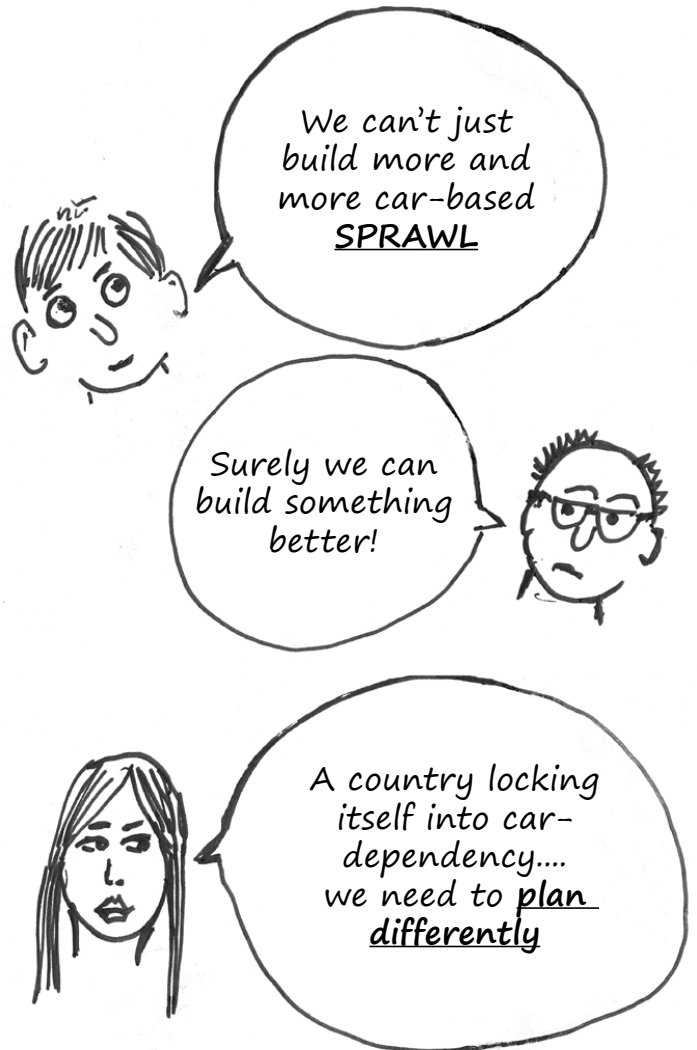
We cannot go on as we have been, building many hundreds of thousands of new homes in places which are not only impossible to serve with sustainable transport, but actually promote more and more travel by car. At a time of climate emergency and with a need to cut congestion on our roads, this is not the way we should be planning for the future. We have to draw the line and do things differently.

### Location, location, location

Where we build is absolutely key. New homes need to be built in places which can be served by a modern public transport network and where residents are able to walk or cycle within the development and into and out of it to the adjacent urban area. Giving rural and semi-rural local authorities high housing targets of tens of thousands of new homes, when they have very limited public transport and a paucity of community provision or jobs in the area, makes little sense. Local authorities should not feel forced by developers and national policy to say 'yes' to planning applications for new estates that are plainly in the wrong place for sustainable modes.

**The right location.** Avoiding 'cowpat' housing set apart from an existing large urban area is key. These are particularly hard to serve with viable public transport. It also means avoiding building out-of-town when there is a selection of smaller sites or empty buildings to convert into homes within towns and cities themselves.

**New homes must avoid locations that encourage new traffic onto our roads.** It would be a mistake for example to build a large new area of homes in close proximity to a motorway junction or access onto a bypass. Even with extra road capacity locally to 'mitigate' for thousands of daily new journeys, new housing in the wider area cumulatively adds to congestion on major roads and holds up freight and other long-distance traffic.



**More choice for those looking for homes without relying on the car.** The new car-based estates do not suit all ages and aspirations - many younger people and families do not want the isolation in terms of transport and amenities. Younger people want the independence and older people benefit from being part of a walkable community at a more human scale. We need new homes for people who don't want to drive everywhere and want a truly local, and genuinely vibrant community to live in.

# Design, density and layout of new-builds need to change

At present nearly all large-scale greenfield housing is designed around the needs of the car. This needs to change.



**Walkability.** The current formula that builds new homes for easy road access, and an internal road layout designed primarily for cars, needs re-casting for walkability and easy access to public transport. The very high proportion of space taken up by parking and driveways makes no sense when land is at a premium. It also has a negative impact on 'place'. The design and layout need to be re-cast around sustainable travel and this means substantial changes to what we are accustomed to building. The scale and public realm need to be done differently, with more compact development at a human scale. Pavements are essential and cannot be left out. Consideration for those with young children and buggies, or with reduced mobility must also be a priority. There needs to be places to actually walk to.

**Parking.** Design around walkability does not mean 'no cars allowed'. But it does mean a more people-friendly street network with less parking per home. With the right location and modern public transport in place, parking can be limited to one space per home, and include underground or separate parking spaces in the area for people who want to pay for extra parking, have vans for work, and so on. For non-car owners needing a vehicle for a day for an outing or for shopping, different sized 'pool' cars and vans should easily be bookable on demand.

**Public transport a central theme.** The development should be designed around a series of boarding points for a frequent and modern public transport network linking to and serving the wider area. This network can be rail, light rail, tram, bus or a mix, and the service needs to be in place from day one when people move in.

**Mixed development.** There should be a policy for truly mixed-use development with small and flexible-use premises for start-ups, individual cafés, retail and shared workspace to create a walkable community that also attracts a daytime

community. Financial incentives are needed to encourage small businesses to establish.

**We need to build in a more compact way but with more greenery and less tarmac.** Housing with parking and roads taking up much of the space not only means that there are fewer people within walkable distance of public transport and local amenities, it also results in a waste of land, very small towns, tiny gardens and few urban trees. A more compact place, with less space wasted on tarmac has many advantages for walkability as well as community, and can be greener with more spacious homes too.

**Parks and green squares.** These need to be central features designed into the development as part of active lifestyles and overall liveability. Our urban planners need much more involvement in creative design. Parks must not be confused with country parks or informal areas left as green infrastructure. A good park needs a combination of provision for different ages and is immediately accessible for all on foot.

**European-style flats for anyone.** Findings from The Office for National Statistics (ONS) show that a large number of those looking for new homes are single people, the old and retired. They and younger people may not want the isolation of the new estates that we are building where you have to have a car. European-style flats, with balconies and a café or office below may well suit many looking for accommodation and who want to walk to amenities.

**A network of Dutch-style cycle routes.** This should be a priority within the development and linking it into the existing urban area. This network also needs to extend to business parks and other employment on the fringe of town, with cycle hubs at public transport interchanges as they are in the Netherlands.



# The National Planning Policy Framework needs to be redrafted

We need to redraft the national planning policy to make it unequivocally clear that building around sustainable transport modes is essential for a low carbon future and healthier and sociable local living. Meanwhile the converse (building around access to easy road access) is counter-productive. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and associated Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) must give much clearer direction on these matters, so that both private sector and public bodies know what to expect and what to do.



**New guidance on where to build.** Government planning policy should move away from the current heavy emphasis on achieving local authority housing targets, to a system that seeks the right locations to build in terms of sustainable transport and investment, access to jobs and services, and quality of life.

**Working together over a larger area.** Cross-boundary working together needs to be the order of the day when it comes to strategic planning. Joint strategic planning by neighbouring districts, with county councils involved where they exist, backed by appropriate Strategic Plans, governance and resources, is needed to be in place to coordinate development across a city area or a group of more rural authorities.

**Small sites to be encouraged.** Planning authorities should be able to count small sites as well as larger ones towards any 'targets' for 'housing need', and take into account the demographic of those groups who are predominantly looking for new homes, such as single or older people.

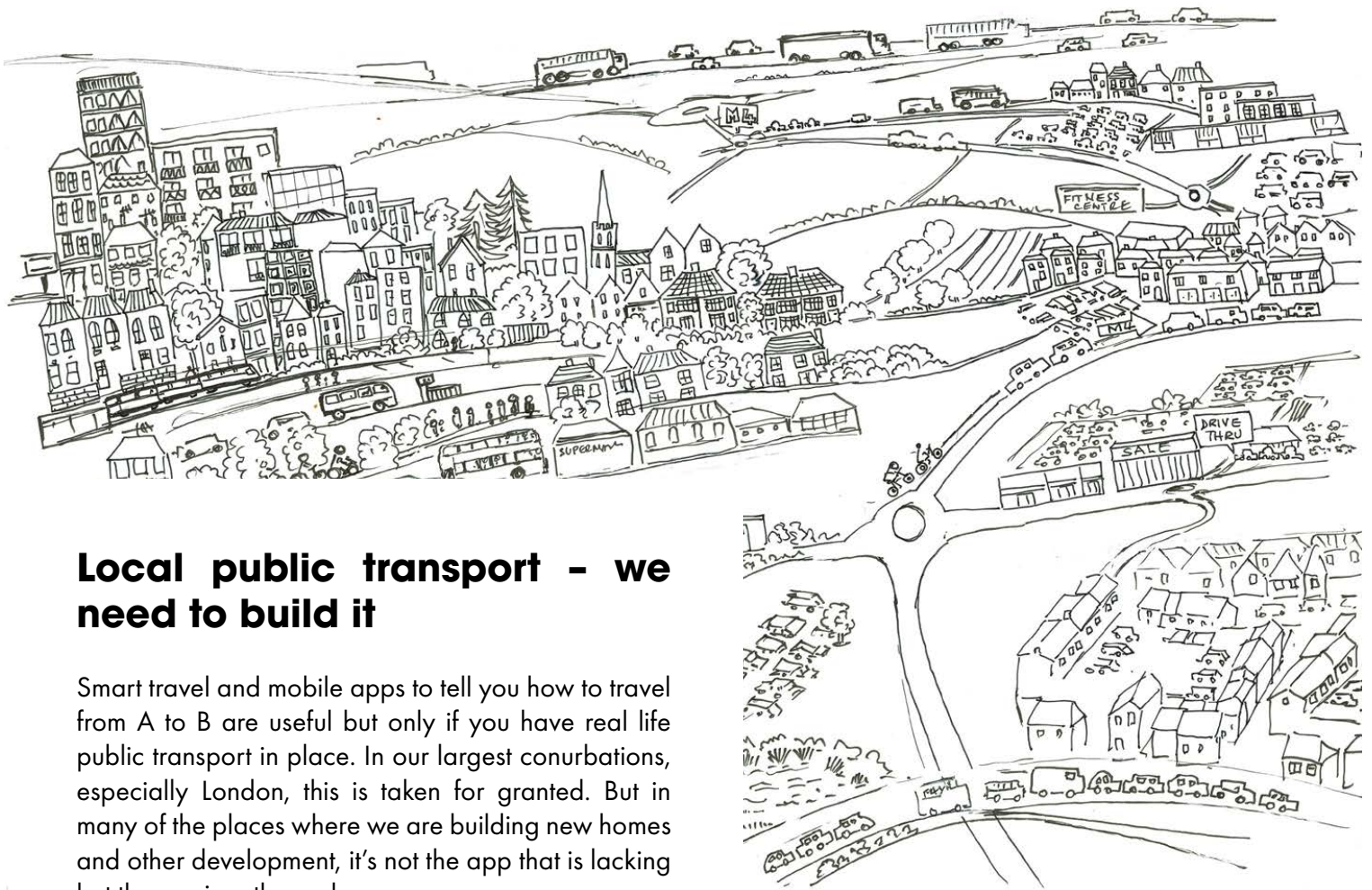
**The importance of the Local Transport Plan.** Strategic Plans need to be supported by a good Local Sustainable Transport Plan developed with adjacent authorities so that it provides a cohesive framework onto which to plan development.

**Outline planning applications need to genuinely focus on sustainable transport.** When an outline plan is submitted for specific housing allocation this needs to reflect the Local Sustainable Transport Plan and how its layout caters in detail for all the elements of sustainable transport. The current emphasis on road access for cars and mitigating traffic needs to be changed.

**New government guidance.** The guidance on Transport Assessments and the detail shown in Design and Access Statements will need to reflect the new emphasis on sustainable modes, away from reliance on the car. Equally, local authorities will need to use different criteria when they sift through sites offered by land owners or their promoters deciding which to include in the Local Plan.

**Geographic Information Systems (GIS).** GIS and other ways of presenting the interplay of datasets visually should be used over local and wider areas to coordinate the best locations for new homes with public transport networks, taking into account biodiversity, landscape and other environmental impacts, capacity of services, and so on. Resources are needed for this informed way of doing things.





## Local public transport - we need to build it

Smart travel and mobile apps to tell you how to travel from A to B are useful but only if you have real life public transport in place. In our largest conurbations, especially London, this is taken for granted. But in many of the places where we are building new homes and other development, it's not the app that is lacking but the services themselves.

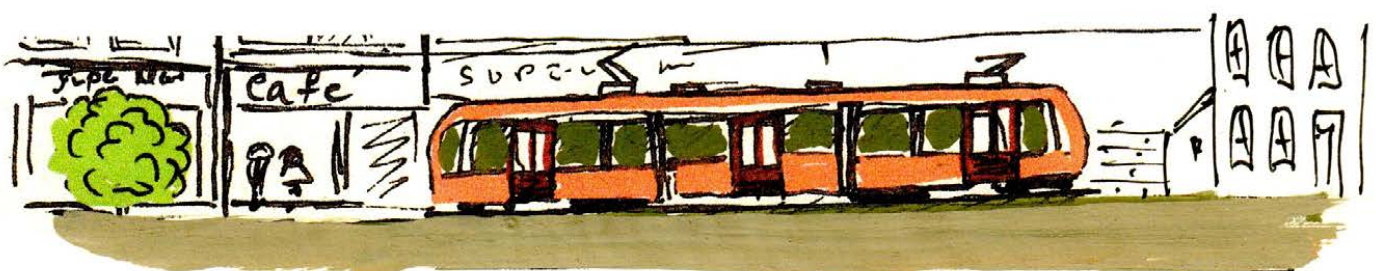
**Metros need to be built or extended to cater for new development.** In Europe, Canada – and even in the USA – and many other parts of the world, metros extending to new suburbs are being built for even smaller cities. Here in England we need to catch up. Funding and removing the many procedural and funding barriers to take new public transport networks from concept to delivery are key, as is governance, conviction and vision. We cannot continue to set our aspirations low.

**The Government should devolve more powers for local rail, tram-trains, light rail, and bus rapid transit.** New homes can then be coordinated with better and extended 'metro' based integrated transport networks.

**Funds from roads should be moved to modern public transport networks.** We need a shift from expensive new roads and improved junction capacity to the construction of

better local public transport networks. This is a more modern and low-carbon way to support new homes and associated development. Public funds from Homes England, DfT as well as from developers need to be urgently directed to sustainable modes. New public transport infrastructure brings people into town and city centres and provides opportunities for building attractive places not dominated by the car, as increasingly seen in many successful smaller and larger cities in other parts of the world.

**Public transport expertise from the beginning.** We need to apply public transport expertise early on in the production of local and strategic plans, with Great British Railways having a formal and proactive role, as with Active Travel England and bus companies who understand from experience what they need in terms of infrastructure, density of development, layout and so on.





At last we have found somewhere different. Gardenwick is on the edge of Greenbridge, which of course is a large town. The good thing is that it's joined to the existing suburbs - you walk down a normal suburban road and it turns into Gardenwick. They obviously used good architects - we loved the homes. And it's not all about cars and parking. What a difference that makes! Even the smaller homes had gardens, and there were some lovely flats with balconies. We found schools, nurseries, supermarket, a cafe and even a new park with tennis courts and a brilliant playground for the grandchildren and places to sit. Two bus routes take you straight into Greenbridge and to the railway station and from there you can travel to so many other places.

What a find!

John & Jill

Transport for New Homes © transportfornewhomes.org.uk



Chris & Carol Hutchinson

32 Rosebud Avenue

Webley

Middx

UB19 7ZB

This post card shows a place built around sustainable transport rather than the car. What a difference it makes!







Handwritten white graffiti on a green wall, consisting of stylized, overlapping characters that appear to be 'H' and 'A'.