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**University of Southampton**

**Engineering and the Environment**

**PLANNING POLICY AND QUALITY OF LIFE:  
AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE RELATIONSHIP  
BETWEEN PLANNING POLICY AND THE QUALITY OF LIFE  
OF TENANTS' AND RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION MEMBERS**

**Katherine Brookfield**

**Thesis submitted for the qualification of Doctor of Philosophy**

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UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

ABSTRACT

FACULTY OF ENGINEERING AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Civil and Environmental Engineering

Doctor of Philosophy

PLANNING POLICY AND QUALITY OF LIFE:  
AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE RELATIONSHIP  
BETWEEN PLANNING POLICY AND THE QUALITY OF LIFE  
OF TENANTS' AND RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION MEMBERS

By Katherine Brookfield

This study explores the relationship between planning policy and quality of life and, in doing so, contributes to long running debates occurring within the planning literature, and between planning practitioners and planning theorists, about the nature of this relationship. Specifically, the study investigates the relationship between planning policy's approach to combining residential and non-residential uses, an understudied area of policy, and the quality of life of tenants' and residents' association (TARA) members, an understudied population which frequently participates in the planning system.

Within the study, quality of life is understood in terms of preference-satisfaction theory which equates the 'good' life with the satisfaction of preferences. Subsequently, where policy's aspirations for the built environment overlap with the environmental preferences of TARA members, it is assumed that policy might, when reflected in the built environment, support members' quality of life. To investigate such instances of overlap, the study first explored policy's approach to combining residential and non-residential uses through a qualitative content analysis of written policy, interviews with local authority planning officers and an analysis of planning applications and their associated decision notices. Then, to investigate the environmental preferences of TARA members, focus groups were held with a diverse sample of TARAs. These focus groups suggested ways of amending policy so that it might better satisfy members' preferences and, perhaps then, better support their quality of life. A conceptual framework was developed to begin to explore the deliverability of these amendments with data for this exercise collected from self-proclaimed representative bodies for the planning profession and housebuilding industry. In pursuing these interests, insights into a number of additional

issues emerged, including, the relationship between policy as 'content' and policy as 'process', the interests, activities and spatial distribution of TARAs, the planning system's potential to support the quality of life of TARA members, and planners' and housebuilders' attitudes towards land use mix and the State's planning apparatus. Taken in its totality though, the study's major contribution perhaps lies in suggesting answers to the vexed question of what should be civil society's role in the planning system.

In terms of land use mix, the study found that planning policy and TARA members shared a largely similar conceptualisation of the 'good' residential environment with both favouring predominantly residential areas, featuring pockets of green space, 'everyday' services, and the exclusion of most traffic generating, obtrusive and noisy uses. They also shared a similar conceptualisation of the 'good' town or city centre with both favouring land use mix, a concentration of activities and the presence of residential occupiers. Consequently, in these instances, policy perhaps seems suited to supporting the quality of life of TARA members. However, in other instances, members' preferences and policy's requirements were seen to diverge. Furthermore, the task of revising policy to avoid these points of divergence seems challenging.

The study updates and expands knowledge on an understudied area of policy and a relatively understudied population. It presents insights into policy's approach to land use mix, and attitudes towards this approach, at a time when the planning system is experiencing considerable change with regional planning due to be abolished, neighbourhood planning introduced and a new form of national planning policy launched. The study comments on the implications for the research findings of these various developments. It also identifies environmental designs and characteristics that might be of interest to policy-makers if an objective is to address the concerns of a frequently vocal participant in the planning system (i.e. TARAs).

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# Academic Thesis: Declaration Of Authorship

I, KATHERINE BROOKFIELD

declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

PLANNING POLICY AND QUALITY OF LIFE: AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PLANNING POLICY AND THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF TENANTS' AND RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION MEMBERS

I confirm that:

1. This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
2. Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
3. Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
4. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
5. I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
6. Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
7. Either none of this work has been published before submission, or parts of this work have been published as: [please list references below]:

Signed:

.....

Date: .....



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## ABBREVIATIONS

ABC	Ashford Borough Council
CABE	Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment
DCLG	Department for Communities and Local Government
DMO	Development Management Officer
DWA	Douglas Wheeler Associates
E&EBC	Epsom and Ewell Borough Council
GOSE	Government Office for the South East
HBF	Home Builders Federation
HMO(s)	House(s) in Multiple Occupation
LDF	Local Development Framework
MU	Mixed use
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PO	Policy Officer
PPG(s)	Planning Policy Guidance
PPS(s)	Planning Policy Statement(s)
QoL	Quality of life
'RNR mix'	'Residential non-residential mix'
RSS(s)	Regional Spatial Strategy
RTPI	Royal Town Planning Institute
SCC	Southampton City Council
TARA(s)	Tenants and residents association(s)
WHO	World Health Organisation



## Chapter 1

### A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

*“First we shape our buildings, and afterwards they shape us”*

(Winston Churchill, 1874 - 1965)

The research discussed within this thesis is supported by a studentship which had, as its main concern, the link between residential environments and residents' quality of life in South East England. This subject matter could have been addressed in multiple ways but, for reasons discussed in Chapter 2, it was decided to focus on a presumed relationship between residents' quality of life, termed here QofL, and planning policy.

The research begins from the premise that residential environments are tangible, spatial entities relevant to the QofL of residents. Owing to the requirements of various Planning Acts, the research identifies planning policy as an influence on the majority of these environments. It is seen to form a framework of spatial governance that structures the exercise of planning's regulatory function which in turn influences the kind of development ultimately permitted within these (and other) environments (Allemdinger, 2006). These assumptions supported the assertion that planning policy, through the medium of residential environments, is relevant to the QofL of perhaps a majority of residents. Given this analysis, there seemed merit and importance in investigating the relationship between planning policy and residents' QofL.

In studying this topic, the research contributes to ongoing debates about the equity of planning policy and the wider planning system found within the planning literature and occurring between planning practitioners and theorists. Whilst policy-makers claim the planning system ensures “a better quality of life for everyone”, much of the literature identifies a biased system which advantages and supports only some (although opinions differ on who is advantaged) (Office of Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM), 2005a: 2).

The research is rooted in theories of QofL. Though a much debated notion, with no 'correct' understanding being evident, a series of well-established, influential models of the concept exist. Sandøe (1999) advises that for QofL research to begin, researchers must select a single understanding. To this end, within the research, QofL was understood in terms of preference-satisfaction theory where QofL is equated with the satisfaction of preferences. This theory grounds and directs the research helping to mould the research design and explain and give meaning to the collected data. It prompted a design

concerned with investigating residents' preferences for planning policy and suggested that where policy satisfies these preferences it might have the potential to support (when reflected in the built environment) residents' QoFL. Given the centrality of theory to the research, rather than confine it to a separate theoretical framework chapter, it is discussed in Chapter 2 when the main perspectives and assumptions underpinning the research are introduced.

To provide focus and manageability, the research interest in planning policy quickly became an interest in a single aspect of policy. Attention turned to policy's approach to combining residential use with non-residential uses, termed here 'residential non-residential mix', abbreviated to 'RNR mix'. This was partly because policy's approach to 'RNR mix' has not been subject to any dedicated scholarly study. In addition, partly because tenants' and residents' associations, termed here TARAs, are routinely identified as active participants in planning matters, as they seek to influence the content and application of policy, it seemed interesting to focus exclusively on their relationship with planning policy. Thus, *the relationship between planning policy's approach to 'RNR mix' and the QoFL of TARA members formed the central focus or unifying thread of the research which, when combined with the adopted understanding QoFL, created a study concerned with exploring TARAs' preferences for this aspect of policy.*

In pursuit of this specific interest, the research explored, or engaged with, a series of additional, related subjects. These included the nature of planning policy and its influence on the built environment, planning policy's current approach to land use mix and the relationship between policy as 'content' and policy as 'process'. Further, the research explored the nature of TARAs (their activities, interests and membership), their engagement in the planning system and their attitudes to land use mix with their distribution and dynamics, within a single settlement, mapped in detail. The study investigated residents', planners' and housebuilders' attitudes towards, and views on, land use mix through the literature and/or the collection of primary data, while the issue of the planning system's overall potential to support the QoFL of TARA members was broached. In presenting findings on this array of topics, the thesis takes discussion beyond the core issue of the relationship between planning policy's approach to 'RNR mix' and the QoFL of TARA members and, in doing so, contributes to the existing body of knowledge in several ways. However, taken in its entirety, perhaps it is in suggesting answers to the vexed question of what should be civil society's role in the planning system that the major contribution of the research lies. Here, civil society is understood as the social organisations, institutions, associations and movements which exist between the State, the market and the family, although it is recognised that multiple alternative interpretations of the concept exist (Friedmann, 2011; Sorensen, 2001; Gomez and Bullock, 2012). It was

thought interesting to open the thesis by discussing this major contribution. In the course of this discussion, a number of the study's most significant findings are introduced.

### *The role of civil society in the planning system*

In recent years there has been growing interest, in the planning literature and planning practice, in the concept of including civil society, (in terms of community groups, environmental and heritage organisations, amenity societies, residents' groups etc.), in planning decisions (Sorenson, 2001; Friedmann, 2011). It has variously been argued that broadening the decision making process, to include actors other than technical experts, is both inherently and instrumentally 'good'. Normative arguments have claimed that it is simply right to involve civil society in planning whilst elsewhere it has been suggested that including this social sphere improves and enhances the legitimacy and implementation of decisions (Bickerstaff and Walker, 2001). It has been argued, for instance, that better decisions will occur because civil society will contribute new information creating the conditions for more informed decisions (Bickerstaff and Walker, 2001; Campbell and Marshall, 2000).

Presently, the Coalition Government's much mentioned localism agenda is introducing a number of ways in which civil society can engage in decision making and, indeed, service delivery. In planning, this agenda is being promoted through initiatives like neighbourhood planning and compulsory pre-application consultation. Neighbourhood planning, discussed in Chapter 11, provides opportunities for community groups to develop land use strategies and development orders for 'neighbourhood areas' whilst the introduction of compulsory pre-application consultation for certain types of development, (to be specified in secondary legislation), places new requirements on applicants to engage with local residents and others (DCLG, 2011; DCLG, 2011b). Governments elsewhere have also pursued the objective of involving civil society, and the wider public, in planning decisions. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (1996) points, for instance, to the significance attached to involving the public and interest groups in various planning and development projects within Japan, Australia and Canada, whilst Pahl-Weber and Henckel (2008) discuss how Germany includes requirements around public participation in its planning legislation (in Section 3 of the Federal Building Code, the *Baugesetzbuch*).

Whilst legislation, policy and municipal initiatives might discuss the desirability of including civil society in decision making, the literature on participation in planning frequently argues that, at least for some parts of this society, opportunities to shape outcomes are limited. Discussed in Chapter 4, community and residents' groups are

repeatedly found to have few opportunities to participate in planning and only minimal influence over decisions when they do. In fact, even the new concept of neighbourhood planning seems capable of providing only modest opportunities for such organisations to shape outcomes in the ways they may wish. For instance, as discussed in Chapter 11, within neighbourhood planning, groups are restricted to constructing plans that reflect national policy and the tenets of a local planning authority's adopted development plan. Further, within the study, it was found that TARAs firmly identified themselves as marginalised and powerless groups within the planning system, strongly believing that the interests of developers and local government triumph over theirs in decision making (see Chapter 9).

Putting aside debates about its relative influence, the research discussed within this thesis suggests that one should be cautious about assuming, as some arguments for its inclusion do, that civil society's involvement in the planning system will inevitably result in 'better' outcomes. Friedmann (2011: 110), for instance, comments that there is a tendency within the literature "to portray civil society as always being on the side of the angels" with its involvement in policy always seen to deliver 'just' outcomes. Though mindful of its obvious focus on TARAs, findings discussed within this thesis perhaps suggest that involving certain segments of civil society in planning decisions may actually support unsustainable outcomes that produce and/or reproduce social, spatial and/or economic inequalities.

As discussed in Chapter 7, the research found, similar to past studies, that the spatial distribution of TARAs is uneven with concentrations present in some locations but a total absence of groups in others. Further, groups were seen to be differentiated in terms of size, interests, capabilities and level of resources. Some were well-organised operations with a clear agenda, a regular meeting schedule, and, for groups based in affluent areas, a well-resourced membership of educated professionals and retired professionals with a good understanding of the planning system and local government. Others, however, lacked many or all of these attributes (see Chapter 7). These latter groups may be less able to successfully and confidently engage in the planning system to pursue and defend their interests (Russell et al., 2005). Such findings perhaps suggest that the presence and capacity of civil society will differ between areas and so, whilst some locations will be visibly and competently represented in planning matters, by associations and groups drawn from this sphere, others will not. In the case of planning, areas with a robust and vigorous civil society could, in pursuing their own self-interest, successfully repel unwelcome development and policies that, following a path of least resistance, may 'gravitate' towards areas without such local structures and organisations (Saunders, 1980; Scott et al., 2012; Kirby, 1982). Some areas may, then, experience a disproportionately

high number of unwelcome or controversial policies and developments. Poorer areas might suffer in particular because any civil society which is present may lack the resources (e.g. social, cultural and/or economic capital) necessary to successfully resist such incursions.

Similar to past studies, the research found that the membership of TARAs is biased towards older adults and long term residents (see Chapter 7). Though these groups claimed to operate to promote and protect the 'mass' interests of the communities in which they were based, TARA members suggested that their views and interests were unique to an older generation and reported that younger adults, and those with young families, would hold quite different interests (see Chapter 9). Further, for a number of groups operating in areas with a notable student population, this population seemed to be excluded from the conceptualisation of 'residents' that they employed when they spoke about representing 'local residents' (Chapter 9). There was selectivity then, in the 'kind' of resident that these groups were concerned with 'protecting'. Indeed, they frequently acted to limit the presence and size of student households in their locales (Chapter 7 and 9). They engaged in the planning system to object to planning applications for student Houses in Multiple Occupation and they lobbied (successfully) for new planning restrictions on such properties. These findings perhaps suggest that, within an area, some sections of the community will be better 'represented' by the local manifestations of civil society than will others. Indeed, some sections might be labelled 'undesirable' and this civil society could act to exclude them. Thus, when planning matters arise and when planning decisions are made, whilst some sections of the community may be visibly and competently represented, other sections may, for want of a better word, be invisible. Without representation, these invisible sections of the community might be disproportionately affected by planning decisions. Whilst before it was suggested that involving civil society in planning decisions might encourage inequalities *between* areas, this set of findings perhaps suggest that its inclusion could encourage inequalities *within* areas.

Again matching past findings, the research found that TARAs held relatively conservative preferences for the design and development of residential areas. They favoured a low density, predominantly residential environment, featuring examples of open space and the occasional non-residential use serving a local need (e.g. a primary school or corner shop). Generally, they appeared to favour an environment similar in design to a traditional post-war British suburb and believed that most people would share this preference (Chapter 9). They also felt it desirable to conserve and preserve existing examples of such environments. Analysis of the content of English planning policy revealed that it too favoured a relatively traditional style of development within residential areas. It encouraged residential use, protected existing areas of housing, promoted the

provision of green space and created only limited opportunities for the development of non-residential uses (Chapter 8). The research found, though, that representatives from the planning profession and housebuilding industry were concerned about the social, environmental and economic sustainability, and indeed viability, of only producing suburban-style residential environments, and of protecting all existing examples of such environments (see Chapter 10). If the concerns raised by these representatives, which also find expression in sections of the academic literature, are accepted, such findings suggest that involving civil society in planning decisions is not certain to encourage 'better' outcomes. Indeed, these findings indicate that involving this society, or at least certain segments of this society, might encourage outcomes with questionable merits.

The discussion to date questions the wisdom of simply assuming that involving civil society in planning decisions will produce 'better' outcomes. It has been suggested that involving certain segments of this society may, in fact, encourage unsustainable outcomes that produce and/or reproduce social, spatial and/or economic inequalities. This analysis suggests that when ascribing civil society a role in the planning system one must be conscious of, and perhaps then include appropriate safeguards to minimise, the potential for the promotion of 'unjust' and/or unsustainable outcomes, such as outcomes which disproportionately affect, either negatively or positively, particular geographic, social and/or cultural units.

## RESIDENTIAL ENVIRONMENTS, QUALITY OF LIFE AND PLANNING POLICY

Various assumptions and perspectives about the nature of knowledge, the nature of 'being', QoL, residential environments, the planning system and TARAs underpin and orientate the research. These are considered within this chapter. In so doing, the research interest and the motives for its choice become clear. The chapter therefore addresses the 'so what' question - it explains why the research topic was selected and why it is important. To close the chapter, the three research objectives, constructed to address the research interest, and which served to steer the study, are presented, along with an outline of the thesis structure.

### 2.1 RESIDENTIAL ENVIRONMENTS AND QUALITY OF LIFE

The research defines residential environments as tangible, spatial entities featuring examples of vacant and/or occupied residential property (property provided or adapted, whole or in part, for day-to-day domestic use). This definition is orientated by an understanding of the environment which emphasises space and physicality. Alternative understandings can though jettison such an emphasis. Discourses can, for instance, refer to a 'policy environment' or 'supportive environment', concepts which arguably have no obvious connection to the physical world. Relative to these though, when considering residential environments there appears greater justification for employing a definition that brings the physical to the fore. However, the selected understanding does acknowledge the presence of an additional social dimension in that it is concerned with the use of the environment by social actors. However, whilst the physical dimension is constant, this second dimension seems fluid since social actors can be present in, or absent from, residential environments.

Within the research, it did not seem necessary or appropriate to tie the selected understanding of a residential environment to any particular spatial scale. A continuum ranging from an individual dwelling to larger entities such as streets, electoral wards and entire settlements was favoured. However, at these larger spatial scales, residential property is liable to be accompanied by non-residential property. Thus, at these scales it is probable that residential environments will feature some degree of 'RNR mix'.

In some approaches to QoL, importance is attached to perceptions, experiences and/or conditions within the physical environment which, by extension, includes

residential environments, as defined by the research (Rapley, 2003; Cummins, 2005). For Sandøe (1999: 11), these approaches are as good as any other since where QoFL is concerned he claims “no view comes out as the right one”. Typically, it is domain based models, which understand QoFL in terms of ‘conditions’ within particular ‘areas’ of life, which explicitly attach importance to perceptions of and/or experiences within the physical environment. Notable examples of such models include those provided by the World Health Organisation (WHO) (WHOQOL Group, 1998), the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress<sup>1</sup> (Stiglitz et al. 2009) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (OECD, 2011). All identify ‘the environment’ as a ‘domain’ (WHOQOL Group, 1998), ‘objective feature’ (Stiglitz et al. 2009) or ‘dimension’ (OECD, 2011) relevant to QoFL. However, there are differences in how each defines the ‘environment’. For the WHO, it refers to items plainly associated with the physical world, such as “home environment” and “physical environment (pollution / noise / traffic / climate)”, plus an array of issues that demonstrate a more opaque association such as “financial resources” and “opportunities for acquiring new information and skills” (Power and Kuyken, 1998). Within Stiglitz et al.’s (2009) model, the environment is understood in far narrower terms with the focus being on issues and events occurring within the physical world such as air pollution, water supply and climatic events. In the OECD’s (2011: 6) model, concern also rests with the physical world. However, here, ‘QoFL’ is itself a component in the broader concept of ‘human wellbeing’. It forms a distinct domain which, when combined with the domain of ‘material living conditions’, constitutes this concept (OECD, 2011: 6). Both ‘QoFL’ and ‘material living conditions’ reference aspects of the physical world including air, soil and water quality and dwelling size (OECD, 2011: 30). Reflecting on the multiple dimensions which constitute the concept of ‘human wellbeing’, noticeable similarities to the domains and objective factors which constitute QoFL as defined by the WHO (WHOQOL Group, 1998) and Stiglitz et al. (2009) are observed.

In terms of *how* the physical environment influences QoFL, Stiglitz et al. (2009), the OECD (2001) and the WHO (Power and Kuyken, 1998) take different views. For Stiglitz et al. (2009), the environment can affect human health (e.g. through pollution), damage property, harm people’s lives (e.g. through climatic events) and provide services that benefit individuals (like clean water) - items all judged relevant to QoFL. The OECD (2011: 30) emphasises the environment’s effect on human health but claims it also has intrinsic value because “people attach importance to the beauty and the cleanliness of the place where they live”. Unlike these two models, for the WHO, it is not the environment

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<sup>1</sup> An expert panel established by the French Government in 2008 to explore ways of measuring economic performance, societal wellbeing, sustainability and QoFL

per se which affects QoFL, rather it is the individual's subjective interpretations of the environment that count (Power and Kuyken, 1998; WHOQOL, 1998).

Though clearly prescribing a role for the physical environment, Stiglitz et al. (2009) and the OECD (2011) fail to specify how important this role is. Stiglitz et al. (2009: 156) claim 'ranking' domains in terms of importance is an exercise based on "value judgements about which aspects [of QoFL] are of greater importance at a given place and time, and on the purpose of the [research] exercise". For the OECD (2011), such rankings risk accusations of being arbitrary. The WHO, although not itself ranking the importance of the environment, reports findings which suggest the public's views on the matter. These findings emerged from field tests carried out to support the development of a measurement tool (the WHOQOL-100 assessment) created to implement the WHO's QoFL model. This measurement tool comprises a series of questions exploring perceptions of, and experiences within, 29 'facets' linked to six domains judged relevant to QoFL (Power and Kuyken, 1998). When tested in 'healthy' and 'ill' (i.e. accessing health care) populations, it was found that of these six domains the 'environment' contributed most to explaining the observed variance in 'overall QoFL and general health' (WHO, 1998). However, when the 'well' and 'ill' populations were studied separately, whilst the 'environment' explained most variance in overall QoFL for the 'well' population, for the 'ill' population the key domain was 'psychological state' - the environment appeared second most important (WHO, 1998). Perhaps relevant here, Cummins (2005) argued that beyond certain 'core' life domains such as 'health', some domains will be more important to some people and this will be determined by an individual's social, cultural and personal context. The personal context of the 'ill' population might explain the heightened importance of the psychological domain.

Turning to theories of QoFL drawn from the moral philosophy literature, it seems that here there is also potential for the environment to be judged relevant to QoFL. These theories do not always tie QoFL to experiences or conditions within, or perceptions of, 'concrete' life domains and so, freed from a focus on discrete areas of life, they perhaps seem capable of finding a role for all areas. Thus, they appear able to accommodate a role for the physical environment, plus multiple other issues and factors. For instance, in a 'subjective wellbeing' account, QoFL is about life as experienced by the individual with concern resting on people's '*mental states*'; i.e. their "conscious experiences – in terms of hedonic feelings or cognitive satisfactions" (Diener and Suh, 1997: 191). Here, "if a person experiences her life as good and desirable, it is assumed to be so" (Diener and Suh, 1997: 190). Diener (1984: 544) claims that a hallmark of this approach is a concern for the individual's global assessment of all aspects of their life. In being concerned within

everything, as it were, this global assessment might include an assessment of the individual's physical surroundings. This understanding of QofL is returned to later.

A second major account of QofL drawn from the moral philosophy literature focuses on the idea of '*preference-satisfaction*' and here again a role for the physical environment seems possible (Angner, 2009). As mentioned in Chapter 1, preference-satisfaction theory equates QofL with the satisfaction of preferences. It is a theory which "simply identifies quality of life with what seems attractive from the individual person's point of view" (Sandøe, 1999: 13). What is meant by a preference is, however, an area of debate. Fehige and Wessels, (1998: xxiii) claim that "at a first approximation" preferences are about 'pro-attitudes' and 'anti-attitudes' meaning they relate to desires, interests, likes, dislikes, wants etc. However, they note that some commentators go further and link preferences to feelings, so an individual is happy/pleased/satisfied if a preference is met. Others have linked preferences to actions, so "you want something if, in appropriate circumstances, you would try to get it" (Fehige and Wessels, 1998: xxiii). Others still have linked preferences to beliefs with desires identified as a type of belief (Fehige and Wessels, 1998). Different interpretations of the theory can entail different understandings of preferences and result in different views on the 'type' of preference judged relevant to QofL. In the "most general view" of the theory, what Scanlon (1993: 186) terms the "unrestricted actual desire theory", the satisfaction of *any* preference, with preferences understood as desires, affects QofL. Consequently, if individuals hold preferences for the physical environment satisfying these will affect their QofL. Even within interpretations of the theory which might be judged more 'restrictive', preferences relating to the physical environment might still matter. In "success theory", for example, discussed by Parfit, preferences must be "intuitively 'about the person's own life'" if they are to matter to QofL (Scanlon, 1993: 187). Though restrictive, this condition does not seem certain to exclude preferences for the physical environment. However, distinguishing between preferences that are intuitively about a person's own life, and preferences that are not, seems an inherently difficult, arguably subjective, task. Taking another example, within 'informed preference theory', discussed by Hamlin (2012), only 'informed preferences' are judged relevant to QofL. These are the preferences held following full consideration of their consequences and possible alternatives. Again, this criterion does not seem certain to exclude all preferences for the physical environment. However, it is unclear how many alternatives and over what time period, or what scale, consequences must be considered for preferences to be identified as 'informed'.

Turning from models of QofL to proxy measures for it, some substitute measures identify a relationship between the physical environment and QofL. For example, parts of the literature claim residential satisfaction is a partial substitute for, and/or is directly

related to, QoFL (see Yang, 2008; Bonaiuto et al. 2006). Residential satisfaction is a construct comprised of housing satisfaction (where the concern is an individual's satisfaction with the home) and neighbourhood satisfaction (where the concern is an individual's satisfaction with the neighbourhood) with both thought to be determined by the objective characteristics of the individual and home/neighbourhood, and the individual's subjective interpretation of this home/neighbourhood (Lu, 1999). Consequently, the physical environment becomes relevant to residential satisfaction in two ways - through the objective characteristics of the home/neighbourhood and through the individual's interpretation of these characteristics. With some studies finding that the individual's interpretation of these characteristics is a greater determinant of residential satisfaction than the characteristics themselves (Amole, 2007, Dekker et al., 2011; Lu, 1999), it may very well be that the *interpretation* of the physical environment, rather than the physical environment per se, is crucial in residential satisfaction and, perhaps then, QoFL.

Noting that parts of the literature identify a relationship between the physical environment (and by extension residential environments) and QoFL, the research might have focused on an analysis of QoFL within 'real-world' residential environments or sought to identify the components of a residential environment associated with a 'good' QoFL. Numerous studies have already pursued these and closely aligned interests. Research has, for instance, examined residential satisfaction amongst the elderly residents of apartment schemes (James, 2008), the residents of social housing schemes (Varady and Preiser, 1998) and within communities that reflect the principles of 'New Urbanism' (Yang, 2008). Further, studies have explicitly explored the physical components of the home and neighbourhood most associated with neighbourhood satisfaction (Mohan and Twigg, 2007) and estate satisfaction (Dekker et al., 2011). Rather than simply add to this volume of studies, it was thought important and worthwhile to turn attention to the relationship between planning policy and QoFL.

## **2.2 PLANNING POLICY AND QUALITY OF LIFE**

There are many ways to define planning policy, indeed, Bracken (1981: 230 - 231) argues there is "no simple definition about what policy is". Williams' (1999) refers to a distinction, said to be long established within planning theory, between policy as '*content*', meaning statements of intent, in the guise of text and diagrams etc., and policy as '*process*', meaning the processes of implementation associated with interpreting and applying these statements. Influenced by this view, *the research understands planning policy as statutory and non-statutory statements of intent produced by formal planning bodies on land use regulation, development management and spatial planning* (Haughton

et al., 2010; Williams, 1999). As will be seen in Chapter 4, this understanding seems to be shared by many commentators. In that chapter, studies on policy's approach to land use mix are discussed and, within these, 'policy' is invariably understood as development plans, Planning Policy Statements, development briefs etc. – i.e. statutory and non-statutory statements of intent. However, within the research, it is assumed that these statements are 'activated', if you will, when they are interpreted and applied in planning decisions. Consequently, the processes of implementation associated with these statements are recognised as important.

Central government produces a large amount of policy that applies across England and, because planning is a devolved matter, the Scottish Government, the Welsh Assembly, and the Northern Ireland Executive each produce their own national planning policy (Tewdwr-Jones, 2002). Given the studentship's earlier noted concern for South East England, the research focuses on English planning policy and regional and local policy constructed by English regional and local planning authorities. *This point should be borne in mind when reading the thesis.* Besides national policy's nation-wide (England) coverage, the Planning and Compensation Act 1991 brought in the mandatory provision of district wide Local Plans (Cullingworth and Nadin, 2002; Marsh and Coupland, 1996). Consequently, few, if any, residential environments are exempt from the requirements of some level(s) of planning policy. Further, few interventions within these environments seem able to escape the attention of policy. A planning application must be submitted, and planning permission granted, for 'development' to occur and 'development' encompasses a huge range of activities<sup>23</sup>. The Planning Acts require planning applications to be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise (Ratcliffe et al., 2009). Policy is then the primary reference point when planning applications are decided and a planning application is required for most interventions within residential (and other) environments (Ratcliffe et al., 2009). Given this, it is suggested here that it is at the development management stage, when policy is interpreted and applied in planning decisions, which in turn may influence residential environments, that policy has the greatest direct scope to affect residents' QoFL. However, policy's influence within these decisions is not guaranteed. As noted, when determining a planning application, planning legislation provides decision makers with the discretion to decide whether material considerations should override policy (Allmendinger, 2006). Thus, planning decisions are not bound to reflect policy and, consequently, nor is development within residential environments (Allmendinger, 2006). A seamless, unbroken continuum

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<sup>2</sup> Section 55 of 1990 Town and Country Planning Act gives the legal definition of 'development' - it includes practices like material changes of use, demolition, building and rebuilding.

<sup>3</sup> Retrospective planning permission can be sought once development has commenced but this is not encouraged and there is no guarantee it will be granted. Permission could be refused and the applicant would have to return the property/site to its pre-development state.

between policy and planning decisions is not present (Allmendinger, 2006). Whilst bearing this in mind, planning policy's scope of influence, and high priority in decision making, suggests that through residential environments it is relevant to the QoFL of perhaps a majority of residents. This analysis identifies research on the relationship between planning policy and residents' QoFL as worthwhile and important.

The research is not alone in identifying a relationship between QoFL and the State's planning apparatus - policy-makers have highlighted such connections since the very first Planning Act. Indeed, when John Burns<sup>4</sup> introduced this first Act to Parliament, the Housing and Town Planning Act 1909, he said it would help "provide a domestic condition for the people in which their physical health, their morals, their character and their whole social condition can be improved" (Cullingworth and Nadin, 2002: 15; HC Deb April 1909 Vol. 3, cc733-98). Most recently, in March 2012, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), a document which condenses all national planning policy contained in Planning Policy Guidance and Planning Policy Statements, claimed the planning system's aim was to promote sustainable development and key to sustainable development was a concern for improving people's QoFL:

"The purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development...Pursuing sustainable development involves seeking positive improvements in the quality of the built, natural and historic environment, as well as in people's quality of life." (Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG), 2012: 2-3)

However, whilst policy and policy-makers profess a concern for improving the QoFL of 'people' - an inclusive category - much of the planning literature claims the planning system protects and promotes the interests of only some. Thus, claims that planning supports the QoFL of all are disputed (Adams, 1994; Healey et al., 1988). Evans and Hartwich (2005a; 2005b) argue, for instance, that the planning system disadvantages residents because it tightly controls the release of land and this prompts the development of unpopular, small, high density, expensive properties. By exploring the relationship between one aspect of planning policy and the QoFL of one type of actor (TARAs), the research makes a useful contribution to ongoing debates about the equity of planning.

As mentioned before, policy can be identified as an influence on residential environments, and thus on residents' QoFL, but, because planning decisions are not bound to reflect planning policy, that influence is not fixed and preminent and so its bearing on

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<sup>4</sup> John Burns was the President of the Local Government Board – a Government supervisory body concerned with local government, public health and 'the poor'

QoFL is not fixed and certain. Indeed, policy's influence on the built environment is a much debated issue within the planning literature. For some, such as Evans (2004), Norton (2008), Cheshire (2009) and Evans and Hartwich (2005a and 2005b), planning policy, and the planning system as a whole, are very powerful forces. Those adopting this view often claim that by allocating land for development, the planning system controls the release of sites, structures the cost of land and thus shapes the location, volume, size and cost of property. Developers seem, publicly at least, to side with this understanding. When interviewing property developers, Senior (2005: 15) found planning policy was emphasised as a significant determinant of a scheme's "density, design, parking arrangements and mix of uses". Developer behaviour also suggests that importance is attached to planning with Wilkinson and Reed (2008) and Murdoch et al. (2000) reporting that developers readily lobby planning authorities to influence the allocation of sites and the nature of policy. The Coalition Government also identifies the planning system as a powerful instrument. The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government claimed the "failed" planning system inherited from the previous Labour government "puts at risk young people's future prosperity and quality of life" (Pickles, 2011a) and forms "the single biggest drag anchor on growth" (Pickles, 2011b). (Perhaps, though, this is hyperbole rather than the Minister's 'real' views). Contrasting with this analysis, parts of the literature argue that planning and planning policy are relatively powerless (Rowley, 1996a). Typically, this literature claims the market is preeminent and, compared to market forces, the planning system and policy are "limited in nature and weak in their application" (Pickvance, 1982 in Stead and Hoppenbrouwer, 2004: 126). It is claimed political factors (e.g. central government's approach) are important in determining the balance of power between market forces and the planning system (Thornley, 1991; Allmendinger, 2006; Marsh and Coupland, 1996). Beyond these factors, Grant (2009) identifies various social, economic and cultural factors as determinants of this balance and thus of policy's influence. For example, the cost of land and construction, the organisation of planning staff and the availability of institutional tools for the implementation and enforcement of policy are all thought important in structuring policy's 'power' (Grant, 2009: 26-29). Unless these factors are aligned and orientated towards supporting policy, Grant (2009) claims its capacity to direct development will be curtailed. In this perspective, the influence of planning policy is clearly context-dependent.

### **2.3 SELECTING AN UNDERSTANDING OF QUALITY OF LIFE**

As noted previously, competing theories of QoFL exist. For Sandøe (1999), whilst no theory is correct, selecting an understanding is advised because it enables research to begin. The research interest and purpose, ethical concerns and methodological considerations are identified as valid factors in this decision (Sandøe, 1999). It seems

Myers (1988: 347 in Yang, 2008: 309) shares Sandøe's view as he discusses selecting an understanding of QofL for "planning purposes" implying that the concept can be interpreted in different ways according to the purpose/interest of the study. Within the research, the factors suggested by Sandøe (1999) influenced the decision to understand QofL in terms of preference-satisfaction theory (discussed previously). A desire to avoid tying the study, at the outset, to any specific interpretation of this theory (several were discussed earlier) led to just the central principle being taken forward, that QofL equates to the satisfaction of preferences. Preferences were seen to relate to pro- and anti-attitudes (likes, wants, desires, dislikes etc.). Chapter 11, however, reflects on the overall findings in the context of particular understandings of the theory.

The research interest in planning policy formed a key prompt for the focus on preference-satisfaction theory. The interest in policy means that concern does not lie in exploring QofL within tangible settings and contexts, such as particular residential environments. Planning policy is a set of normative guidelines and requirements defining how the built and natural environment ought to be. In comprising values, principles, objectives and aims, it consists of 'abstract' components. Relative to certain other theories, preference-satisfaction theory seemed better able to engage with this latter quality of planning policy.

In some theories, QofL is understood as experiences and/or conditions within tangible contexts. A 'social indicators' or 'objective lists' approach, for instance, understands QofL as being about conditions within a given cultural or geographic unit (Angner, 2009; Deiner and Suh, 1997). Interest lies in the presence of 'objective' QofL indicators within a specific setting, such as a town. These indicators are seen to reflect a community's and/or an individual's 'objective' circumstances and thus point towards the QofL experienced by the individual or group (Diener and Suh, 1999). Indicators are based on 'objective', quantitative statistics not on an individual's subjective interpretations and experiences. Indicators can relate to a wide range of life domains such as health, crime, the environment, education etc. Underpinning a social indicators approach is the assumption that all individuals share the same understanding of what constitutes a 'good' QofL – an assumption which is queried by many (Burnell and Galster, 1992; Diener and Suh, 1999). In moving beyond economic measures, a social indicators approach can be useful for providing an initial insight into an individual's or community's material wellbeing (Stiglitz et al., 2009). However, across various disciplines, there is growing recognition of an "imperfect relationship" between objective conditions and psychological and societal wellbeing (Deiner and Suh, 1997: 200; Diener et al., 1999; Brereton et al., 2011). Thus, it is being increasingly argued that rather than simply analysing objective indicators, be they social or economic, to understand QofL, one must turn also to subjective indicators.

This view was championed by the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress, mentioned earlier, which concluded that “the time is ripe for our measurement systems to shift away from measuring economic production to measuring people’s wellbeing” (Stiglitz et al., 2009: 10). It argued that “measures of both objective and subjective wellbeing provide key information about people’s quality of life” and so recommended that governments should collect data on both (Stiglitz et al., 2009: 16).

Governments and institutions have expressed an interest in moving away from a focus on purely objective indicators (Brereton et al., 2011; Dolan and Metcalf, 2012). In the European Union, for instance, the European Commission is taking forward a ‘Beyond GDP’ initiative which is concerned with creating indicators of progress that have the clarity of GDP, but accommodate the environmental and social aspects of ‘progress’. The Commission (2009) published a Communication ‘GDP and Beyond: Measuring Progress in a Changing World’ outlining a series of actions that the EU and member states should take in order to improve indicators of progress. The document commented on the potential usefulness of measuring wellbeing and QoL and noted that the Commission is supporting studies on the feasibility of wellbeing indicators, including those relating to people’s perception of wellbeing. Within the UK, Prime Minister David Cameron (2010) has expressed dissatisfaction with approaches to measuring progress and wellbeing which rely on economic indicators claiming, “it’s high time we admitted that, taken on its own, GDP is an incomplete way of measuring a country’s progress...the point is that all of life can’t be measured on a balance sheet”. Acting on this sentiment, the Coalition Government asked the Office of National Statistics (ONS) to devise a new way of measuring wellbeing with a Measuring National Wellbeing Programme launched in 2010. In response, following a national consultation, the ONS is now working to combine “traditional economic measures, such as GDP, with those that reflect the social and environmental aspects of society, including subjective wellbeing” (ONS, 2011: 3).

Subjective wellbeing, though already briefly mentioned, is another understanding of QoL which, similar to the social indicators approach, is concerned with experiences and / or conditions within tangible contexts. Focus rests on the experiences and evaluations of an individual situated within a given cultural or geographic unit (Diener and Suh, 1999). Subjective wellbeing is a multi-faceted construct encompassing several phenomena which the literature argues should be studied and measured separately. Facets include affective reactions (positive and negative moods and feelings), cognitive evaluations of life satisfaction and domain (i.e. areas of life) satisfaction, and evaluations about whether a life has meaning (Diener and Suh, 1999; Dolan and Metcalf, 2012). Unlike the social indicators approach, where concern lies in factors ‘external’ to the

individual, with inferences made about how these might affect wellbeing, in subjective wellbeing, interest lies in the individual's internal judgements about their own 'experienced' wellbeing. It shares then, "the democratic aspect of preference-satisfaction theory" as it allows people to determine their own wellbeing, rather than imposing the judgements of an observer (Dolan and Metcalf, 2012: 411). For the literature, subjective wellbeing is typically understood as a companion to, and not a replacement for, an objective indicators approach. The issue of adaptation, for example, cautions against relying solely on measures of subjective wellbeing when seeking to understand QoFL. It has been suggested that new events and changed circumstances can, over time, "lose their power to evoke affect" as individuals adapt to their altered conditions (Diener, 1984: 567). It is suggested that individuals compare circumstances against an internal standard which is based on their past experiences. When this standard is exceeded, there is said to be a positive impact on the individual's subjective wellbeing. However, over time, if the external circumstances continue to exceed this standard then it is raised to match the new conditions. Thus, the conditions no longer evoke an affect on subjective wellbeing (Diener, 1984). It has been argued that an individual's standard can rise or fall to match almost any event or change in circumstances. The perverse result is that "people can be tolerably happy even in many undesirable circumstances" (Diener and Suh, 1997) with Sen's famous example of the 'happy slave' being a case in point (Dolan and Metcalf, 2012).

For approaches to QoFL, such as subjective wellbeing or an objective lists / social indicators account, where the focus is on experiences and/or conditions within tangible contexts, to explore planning policy's relationship to QoFL, one would first need to identify an environment that faithfully reflects the tenets of policy. The QoFL within this environment would then be 'measured'. In an 'objective lists' approach, this would entail collecting objective data on 'QoFL indicators', having first identified what these indicators were. If concern lay in exploring subjective wellbeing, self-report data on experiences and perceptions from individuals occupying this environment would be gathered. With planning's capacity to direct development being changeable and questioned by some (points raised earlier), it was thought unlikely that environments faithfully reflecting all tenets of policy could be identified. Thus, it would not be possible to find suitable environments in which to measure and explore policy's relationship to QoFL. Also, exploring QoFL within an environment potentially shaped by policy is not the same as exploring the relationship between policy and QoFL, the research interest. The QoFL recorded within a given environment is unlikely to be determined solely by the physical dynamics of that environment. Indeed, the domain based models discussed earlier in the chapter suggest that multiple areas of life affect QoFL. It may prove difficult to isolate and measure just the physical environment's contribution to QoFL within a given spatial setting,

but this information would be important for illuminating the relationship between planning policy and QofL. This uncertainty about the environment's relative importance also ruled out a research design that focused on identifying an environment with a 'good' QofL, according to whatever measure, and then exploring how far this environment reflected the environment promoted by policy.

For preference-satisfaction theory, the concern with preferences detaches the theory from a requirement to understand QofL in terms of experiences or conditions within 'actual' contexts and environments. Thus, the potentially elusive 'policy-perfect' environment does not need to be found. Also, with preferences understood as 'pro-attitudes' and 'anti-attitudes', the theory can support a research design orientated around identifying residents' attitudes towards actual policy. This enables direct engagement with planning policy. Preference-satisfaction theory seemed then a practical means for operationalising the contested concept of QofL within the context of the research interest.

It was assumed, and it turned out to be the case, that in the process of collecting data on residents' attitudes towards/preferences for policy, data would also be collected on the type of guidance residents' would prefer in place of current policy. It was assumed (and proved to be) that where residents disliked an aspect of policy, in addition to highlighting this dislike, they would identify an alternative, preferred scenario. This preferred scenario would point to the type of environment residents' favour, perhaps even idealise. If policy is compared against this 'ideal' environment, to explore the 'distance' between the two, it is being compared against residents' preferences. A further perspective on the relationship between residents' QofL and planning policy, within the context of preference-satisfaction theory, is then created. This made the use of preference-satisfaction theory additionally appealing.

Similar to any theory, preference-satisfaction theory is critiqued. Parts of the literature dispute the theory's fundamental assumptions that a) QofL is purely about the satisfaction of preferences and b) the satisfaction of preferences inevitably results in a positive effect on QofL. For instance, Sandøe (1999) discusses the potential for the satisfaction of some preferences, such as an old preference, to have no effect on QofL whilst he suggests QofL could be enhanced by means other than the satisfaction of preferences. To focus on the former point, he reports that to address this issue, preferences could be required to meet certain criteria, such as being current, to be judged relevant. However, he claims this potentially "transforms" the theory into something that only associates QofL with preferences that, when satisfied, please the individual (Sandøe, 1999: 18). It becomes then a theory about positive mental states not the simple satisfaction of preferences. For Scanlon (1993: 187), though, placing restrictions on

preferences does not so much 'transform' preference-satisfaction theory as represent a "departure" from the original model, whilst for Fehige and Wessels (1998), such restrictions simply represent alternative interpretations of the theory. When employing preference-satisfaction theory within the research, the criticisms it receives were borne in mind.

Choosing a particular understanding of QoFL enables research to begin but it also places restrictions on what the research can say about QoFL. For the research discussed here, the most notable restriction is that the findings only offer insights into policy's relationship to QoFL within the context of preference-satisfaction theory. Since alternative theories do not place such emphasis on preferences, they might struggle to view findings on residents' preferences for policy as a prime indicator of the relationship between policy and QoFL. Turning to a second restriction, preference-satisfaction theory prompts a focus on policy's relationship to QoFL from the perspective of residents. No 'objective' or 'external' point of view is accessed. Some models argue that QoFL comprises objective and subjective components (e.g. see the model by Cummins, 2005), hence, by only collecting subjective data, these approaches would claim only part of the story on the relationship between policy and QoFL is revealed (Phillips, 2006, Stiglitz et al., 2009). As a last point, the research might fail to capture residents' 'unadulterated' preferences for policy owing to the possibility of adaptive preferences. Adaptive preferences, discussed by Watts (2009: 100), are the preferences that people are made to hold by want of their circumstances rather than being "what they really prefer". The literature debates the merits and qualities of adaptive preferences querying if they are irrational and if they can be beneficial if they serve to prevent unrealistic desires (Watts, 2009). Of relevance to the research is the view that if residents hold preferences for the physical environment that are adapted to their local surroundings, these adapted preferences might shade their attitudes towards and preferences for planning policy. Hence, the research might capture residents' adaptive preferences for policy and, if so, it might struggle to reveal policy's 'genuine' relationship to residents' QoFL.

## **2.4 PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE RESEARCH**

Analysis of the literature clearly indicates that QoFL is a socially constructed, subjectively defined concept with understandings reflecting disciplinary, personal and organisational interests and divergent social, cultural and historical contexts. No 'true' understanding seems evident, only multiple permutations of, arguably, equally valid understandings. Given this, it seems hard to avoid the view that in QoFL research one purposefully selects, on whatever grounds, a particular model of QoFL and then constructs a 'reality' that reflects this model. This gives rise to a second seemingly hard to avoid view, that multiple alternative realities reflecting alternative models of QoFL exist. Since one can

only 'know' about conditions within the selected reality, the production of universal truths about QofL would seem impossible. This analysis would seem to suggest that a constructivist ontological and epistemological approach is an appropriate partner to QofL research and indeed this approach was adopted within the research (Merriam, 2009: 8-9)<sup>5</sup>. This is not to say that the ontological and epistemological positions were pulled on "like a jumper"; rather the concern is to highlight how an orientation such as, say, realism, which believes in the possibility of universal truths, seems, from the author's perspective, within the context of QofL research, less appropriate (Marsh and Furlong, 2002: 17).

A constructivist ontological and epistemological position is typically associated with a qualitative methodology and indeed this approach was adopted within the research (Merriam, 2009). There was a concern for identifying rich, in-depth information on residents' preferences for policy and the narratives residents' construct when evaluating policy. Plus, as shall be seen in Chapter 6, there was an interest in exploring decision-makers' understandings of, and experiences with, policy, and planners' and housebuilders' attitudes towards policy and land use mix. A qualitative methodology seemed suited to these tasks. Further, this approach created opportunities to, when exploring residents' preferences for policy, investigate the 'strength' of these preferences and the values which lie behind them. Senior et al. (2006) employed qualitative interviews largely for this reason when exploring residents' preferences for land use mix (Chapter 5). They sought to examine "the reasons for, malleability of, and attitudes behind expressed preferences" (Senior et al, 2006: 4).

## **2.5 FOCUSING THE RESEARCH - 'RESIDENTIAL NON-RESIDENTIAL MIX' AND TENANTS' AND RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATIONS**

### **2.5.1 Targeting an aspect of planning policy**

English planning policy is expansive and complex. It promotes, encourages, requires and discourages a range of principles, practices and concepts. There is guidance on procedures within the planning system (e.g. for policy preparation) and the development and protection of the built and natural environment. Exploring, in-depth, preferences for every aspect of policy appeared a task beyond the confines of a single thesis. Focusing attention on a single element seemed necessary. However, in doing this, it is not then possible to generalise about preferences for the totality of English planning policy. Thus, one cannot draw conclusions about how policy as a whole relates to QofL.

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<sup>5</sup> The intention here is not to provide a detailed account of constructivism. The aim simply is to identify, at the outset, the philosophical foundations of the research.

Within the research, *it was decided to focus on policy's approach to 'RNR mix'*. Studies find that policy promotes 'RNR mix' (though noting this term is an invention of the research) in certain contexts. Barlow et al. (2002) found that policy promoted mixed use schemes featuring residential and non-residential uses in town and city centres. Couch (1997) identified growing policy support for town and city centre housing schemes. Further, Williams (1999) pointed to policy support for the provision of employment uses in residential areas. Policy is therefore found to encourage various 'kinds' of 'RNR mix' (combinations of uses, scales etc.) in several 'types' of residential environment (e.g. city/town centres, predominantly residential areas) (Chapter 3 explores the approach in detail).

Amongst the many aspects of policy available, why was the approach to 'RNR mix' selected? First, findings are mixed on residents' preferences for and satisfaction with environments featuring 'RNR mix'. Whilst many studies find residents' prefer and report greater satisfaction within single use residential environments, some find notable levels of satisfaction and higher house prices (perhaps revealing residents' preferences) in environments featuring certain forms or amounts of 'RNR mix' (Chapter 5). Thus, by investigating preferences for policy's approach to 'RNR mix', it seemed new light could be shed on the somewhat cloudy issue of residents' attitudes towards land use mix and, perhaps then, the relationship between land use mix and QoL. Second, to enhance the continuing relevance of the research it seemed appropriate to select an established aspect of policy with a 'secure' (as much as policy positions can be) future. 'RNR mix' has been promoted in planning policy for a couple of decades and, when the research began in 2008/09, the practice was supported by the two main political parties (Coupland, 1997; 1997b). In 2008/09, national planning policy, and so one might assume the Labour Party, promoted 'RNR mix' whilst the Conservative Party supported the practice in the Shadow Cabinet advisory document 'Blueprint for a Green Economy' (Gummer and Goldsmith, 2007). Later, in 2010 the Conservatives released a planning policy document 'Open Source Planning' which promoted 'RNR mix' (Conservative Party, 2010). Thus, if the 2010 General Election were to return a Labour or Conservative government it seemed likely that support for 'RNR mix' would continue. Of course, a Coalition Government (Conservatives and Liberal Democrats) eventually took power. However, this government has continued to support 'RNR mix' as evidenced by policies in the NPPF (DCLG, 2012) (see Chapter 11 for comments on the NPPF). As a last prompt, a focus on policy's approach to 'RNR mix' provided an opportunity to address an information gap. Past studies have focused on policy's approach to subjects related to 'RNR mix', such as mixed use development and city centre residential development, but they have not looked squarely at 'RNR mix' (Chapter 3). The research provided a forum to do just this.

### 2.5.2 Selecting a 'type' of resident

Though discussion to date has mentioned residents' QoFL, as noted in Chapter 1, the research was actually concerned with the QoFL of TARA members. Whilst the literature is a little vague about the precise definition of a TARA, what is clear is that *TARAs comprise residents (homeowners, private and social housing tenants) - put simply they are groups of residents*. Consequently, the research interest can be seen to lie in a particular 'type' of resident. Beyond this trait, picking out suggestions from different parts of the literature, it seems *TARAs can be defined as voluntary, non-party political, place-based, non-property owning (as groups) organisations which profess multi-issue concerns and claim an interest in protecting and promoting the perceived interests of their area of activity and/or this area's population*.

Three issues prompted the focus on TARAs. First, the literature finds TARAs can be active, vocal participants in the planning arena, operating as a crucible for action within a community (Baker, 1987; Hall 2007; Kleinhans, 2004; Scott et al., 2007; Short et al., 1986). They can lobby councillors, monitor planning applications, object to unwanted development, participate in formal public engagement exercises and undertake less formal protest activities such as street marches and leaflet distribution (Short, 1982; Short et al., 1986 and Scott et al., 2007). Saunders (1980, 1990) and Linowes and Allensworth (1973) argue that certain types of TARAs can prove to be very effective at influencing local government in development and planning matters, although numerous other studies claim they have only limited success (e.g. Scott et al., 2012; Baker et al. 2010). Given the study's concern for planning policy, it seemed interesting to focus on a stakeholder group that has actively engaged with, and sought to shape and challenge, policy.

Second, emerging political support for the (arguably rather nebulous) ideological concept of 'localism', in planning and in other arenas, has created (and is creating) new opportunities for TARAs to engage in local land use decisions. There seemed merit in exploring what a TARA's agenda might be in this decision making context, specifically in terms of policy and environmental preferences. When the research began in 2008/09, TARAs' future opportunities to participate in these decisions seemed substantial. However, as the study progressed and the political agenda evolved, the scope of these opportunities seems reduced (Chapter 11 reflects on this issue and on some of the opportunities occurring in planning under the banner of localism).

Third, there are few contemporary studies on UK based TARAs. Some of the most extensive research on these groups dates from the 1980s and this leads to questions about its continued relevance. Contemporary studies on TARAs in other countries fail to

address this information gap because a country's unique institutional, political, cultural etc. setting will shape the way indigenous TARAs operate, focus their interests and determine their emergence and evolution. Consequently, it is questionable how far conclusions drawn on TARAs in other countries can be transferred to UK TARAs. The research provided an opportunity to begin to address this identified information gap.

## **2.6 RESEARCH AIM AND OBJECTIVES**

As this chapter has explained, the overarching concern of the study is the relationship between planning policy and residents' QoFL. By targeting a particular aspect of planning policy and a particular type of resident, the relationship between planning policy's approach to 'RNR mix' and the QoFL of TARA members emerges as the focus or unifying thread of the study. When combined with the adopted understanding of QoFL, this creates a study concerned with exploring TARAs' preferences for / attitudes towards this aspect of policy. To address this interest or aim, three research objectives were identified:

- Objective 1: Identify planning policy's approach to 'RNR mix'.
- Objective 2: Explore TARAs' preferences for planning policy's approach to 'RNR mix' using the account developed in Objective 1. From this, draw tentative conclusions about policy's relationship to TARAs' QoFL. Further, identify how policy could be amended to better suit members' preferences and perhaps then better support their QoFL. As an additional goal, through the process of engaging with TARAs, investigate the interests and activities of these groups, and their distribution within communities.
- Objective 3: Begin to consider the deliverability of amending policy so that it might better support TARAs' QoFL. After first identifying the policy amendments in Objective 2, it seems a necessary next step to begin to consider how feasible it might be, within the current political, economic, social etc. climate, to 'deliver' these amendments.

Objectives 1 and 2 form the focus of the research and were designed to directly address the research aim. Relative to these objectives, Objective 3 has a lower status. It steps away from the research aim and is simply included as an opportunity to begin to consider what potential there might be to amend policy so that it might better support the QoFL of TARA members. As will be discussed in Chapter 6, it was addressed by exploring planners' views on, and housebuilders' attitudes towards, the policy amendments identified

in Objective 2. Reflecting their higher status, relative to Objective 3, data collection activities for Objectives 1 and 2 were more extensive.

In the process of addressing the three objectives, the research collects primary data, and provides insights, on a wide range of issues and, in so doing, contributes to the existing body of knowledge in several ways. For example, it explores planning policy's approach to land use mix; the relationship between policy as 'content' and policy as 'process' and the distribution, dynamics, representativeness and interests of TARAs. It also investigates TARAs' land use preferences and their perceptions of the planning system and considers housebuilders' and planners' views on and/or attitudes towards land use mix and the State's planning apparatus. However, as discussed in Chapter 1, when taken in its entirety, the study's major contribution perhaps lies in suggesting answers to the vexed question of what should be civil society's role in the planning system.

## **2.7 STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS**

The thesis is divided into 11 chapters. The three research objectives help structure the report. Chapters 3 to 5 orientate and position the research within the existing body of knowledge by commenting on, and critiquing, relevant literature. Chapter 3 explores planning policy's historic and recent approach to 'RNR mix'. Chapter 4 introduces TARAs with attention resting on their planning activities and attitudes to land use mix. Chapter 5 considers residents' attitudes towards land use mix, with the scarce research on TARAs' attitudes prompting recourse to this broader literature. It also considers developers' attitudes to mix – a concern motivated by the interests of Objective 3 - and institutional investors' attitudes to this form of development. It therefore considers land use mix from the perspective of the supply side of the property market, i.e. developers, and the demand side, i.e. residents and institutional investors.

Chapter 6 sets out the selected research methods. These include a qualitative content analysis of written planning policy, interviews with local authority planning officers, an analysis of planning applications and their associated decision notices, focus groups with a diverse sample of TARAs and semi-structured interviews with individuals at self-proclaimed representative bodies for the planning profession and housebuilding industry.

Chapters 7 to 10 present the study's empirical findings. Chapter 7, owing to a selected focus on Southampton's TARAs (see Chapter 6 for the motivation for this selection), describes and maps the city's population of TARAs. Plus, it introduces the TARAs and TARA members who participated in the study. Chapter 8 reports the findings of an analysis of planning policy's current approach to 'RNR mix'. Chapter 9 explores the

relationship between this area of policy and the QoFL of TARA members by reporting findings on members' preferences for, and attitudes towards, this policy. Chapter 10 begins to consider how feasible it might be, within the current political, economic, social etc. climate, to amend planning policy so that it might better address members' preferences and perhaps then better support their QoFL.

To close the thesis, Chapter 11 presents a set of overarching conclusions drawing out key findings from the previous four chapters. It also reflects on the research act and the wider relevance of the research findings and reiterates the study's major contribution to knowledge (as set out in Chapter 1). Lastly, it sets out three worthwhile areas of future study.



## PLANNING POLICY AND 'RESIDENTIAL NON-RESIDENTIAL MIX'

This chapter explores the approach to 'RNR mix' found within past versions of English planning policy. It is intended to provide a backdrop against which policy's current approach, as identified within the research (see Chapter 8 for the research findings), can be considered and thus the focus on English policy is intentional. However, in restricting discussion to English planning policy, it is recognised that support for, and/or opposition to, land use mix is a feature of planning policy within countries around the world.

Land use mix is promoted, for instance, within many European countries including Germany (Hirt, 2007), the Netherlands (Siy, 2004) and Sweden (Siy, 2004). In fact, the European Union promotes land use mix to all member states. The Leipzig Charter on Sustainable European Cities, for instance, (signed in 2007), highlighted the desirability and sustainability of land use mix in urban neighbourhoods whilst two decades ago, in 1990, an EU Green Paper on Urban Environments argued for high density, mixed use development within urban locations (Stead, 2011). Outside Europe, in Australia, large, gated communities featuring a host of non-residential resort-style facilities are an increasingly common sight (Atkinson and Flint, 2004), whilst in Canada (Grant, 2002) and North America (Agnotti and Hanhardt, 2001; Hirt, 2007), land use mix is encouraged, though only in specific types of location. In America, for instance, attempts have been made to introduce some flexibility into rigid zoning ordinances to allow examples of mixed use. Hirt (2007: 439) reports, though, that American cities can still readily zone 30% to 50% of their total area to single family dwellings as "U.S zoning still separates uses and shields single family homes from proximity to other activities". Away from the West, rapidly urbanising China is actively promoting urban containment strategies that focus on containing urban size and enhancing urban compaction (Zhoa, 2011). These strategies, promoted at all levels of government, are concerned with limiting the outward growth of cities, increasing development density and, of particular interest to the research, encouraging mixed use development (Zhao, 2011).

The presence of mixed use as a central component in particularly influential current planning paradigms, such as Smart Growth, New Urbanism and sustainable development, helps explain the international interest in land use mix (Hirt, 2007b: 226; Grant, 2002). These interconnected paradigms are laced with support for mixed use with each identifying a similar urban form, one which praises mix, as desirable. All generally

favour compact, walkable, high density environments featuring a mix of land uses and public transport connections (Cozens, 2008; Grant, 2002; Douglas Wheeler Associates et al., 2009; Krueger and Gibbs, 2008). Certain paradigms have had a greater degree of influence in certain countries. In Canada and Australia, for instance, New Urbanism has proved particularly important (Grant, 2002; Cozens, 2008). In North America, both New Urbanism and Smart Growth have taken root (Grant, 2002; Cozens, 2008). According to Krueger and Gibbs (2008: 1263), “Smart Growth is sometimes referred to as a uniquely American variant of sustainable development”. In the UK, the concept of sustainable development seems most influential (Couch and Dennemann, 2000).

Drilling down from the UK to a specific focus on England, the chapter’s concern with reporting English planning policy’s approach to ‘RNR mix’ is complicated by the fact that no studies have explicitly focused on this issue. Instead, information must be abstracted from studies which have looked at this policy’s approach to the broader, though related, concepts and processes of mixed use, *termed here MU*, compact cities (a concept which promotes high density and MU development) and city/town centre residential development. Studies on policy’s approach to MU and compact cities are relevant due to the conceptual ambiguity of MU within planning policy (discussed shortly). Studies on policy’s approach to town/city centre residential development are relevant because providing housing in these locations creates area-wide ‘RNR mix’. A handful of studies by Barlow et al. (2002), Coupland (1997a, 1997b) and Rowley (1998, 1996a, 1996b) provide the most detailed analysis of English planning policy’s approach to MU, whilst Couch et al. (2009) and Couch (1997) provide useful accounts of this policy’s approach to town/city centre residential development, especially its origins. An issue with all, though, is an obvious silence on the approach found in regional policy with attention instead resting on local and national policy. Also, taking up an issue from Chapter 2, all seem to understand policy as ‘content’ with policy as ‘process’, i.e. the way decision makers interpret and apply it, rarely if ever considered. Furthermore, with all studies bar Couch et al. (2009) being increasingly dated, they preclude an appreciation of policy’s current approach. These issues informed the manner and parameters of the investigation into policy’s current approach to ‘RNR mix’ completed within the study (Chapter 6 explains the manner and parameters of this investigation). In summary, the chapter outlines the content and origins of English planning policy’s approach to MU, land use mix and town/city centre housing and reflects on the rationale this policy gives for mix.

### 3.1 ORIENTATION TO MIX

#### 3.1.1 Promoting land use mix

Various studies find that planning policy actively promotes MU, and land use mix more generally. However, where MU is concerned, these studies find that policy is either silent on, or vague about, the concept's meaning (Rowley 1996a, 1996b, Coupland, 1997a, 1997b). Studies find that policy fails to a) identify the combination and number of uses necessary for MU to be observed and b) articulate whether MU is distinct from the general act of mixing uses. Even where MU is encouraged, there appears much flexibility around the 'type' (scale, integration between uses etc.) of development permitted (Rowley 1996b, Coupland, 1997a, 1997b). It seems possible that when it promotes MU, policy is promoting 'RNR mix' but this is not a certainty. Only a minority of English local planning authorities, 54 in a survey of 200, even attempt a definition of the concept (Barlow et al., 2002). This situation is replicated in other territories with, for example, definitions often absent in North American (Agnotti and Hanhardt, 2001), Scottish (Douglas Wheeler et al., 2009) and Canadian planning policy (Grant, 2002). Given this, when investigating policy's current approach to 'RNR mix', there was an additional interest in investigating whether/how MU is presently defined (see the findings in Chapter 8).

Looking outside policy, the literature offers diverse definitions of MU. For example, Coupland (1997a) presents a rigid, exacting definition. Here, MU is only seen to occur at specific spatial scales (buildings, schemes, sites and continuous street frontages), the mix must be between qualitatively different uses and there must be clear integration and balance between each use. In contrast, Rowley (1996b, 1998) proposes a flexible, inclusive, multi-dimensional definition where MU is understood as a continuum rather than a single, fixed state. In this understanding, the concept embraces several facets including spatial scale, location, tenure, occupation, 'grain' (referring to the manner in which the various components of an area - buildings, uses, activities, people and spaces - are mixed together), and time (referring to how uses can share space or change over time). How these facets are expressed, and interrelate, determines the 'type' and 'quality' of MU identified with the result being the possibility of multiple forms of MU (Rowley, 1998). Different again, Barlow et al. (2002: [n.d]) identify MU as "a type or category of development product" and "a distinctive development process". They claim MU "incorporates both of these and yet is neither" because "in reality" it is a "development outcome, a higher level concept" – though they fail to explain what this really means (Barlow et al., 2002: [n.d]). They are alone in the literature in differentiating between a "mixed use outcome", meaning "a richly textured environment comprising a mix of uses and activities", and a "mixed use output" which is a "discrete development incorporating a

mix of uses” (Barlow et al., 2002: [n.d]). Within the research, when investigating whether/how policy currently defines MU there was an interest in exploring the relationship between policy’s (potential) definition and the literature’s definitions (see the findings in Chapter 8).

Besides promoting the rather vague concept of MU, policy is seen to encourage mix between specific types of use, frequently residential and particular non-residential uses. For example, policy is found to promote the provision of retail in new and retail-deficient residential areas and support the conversion of vacant space above retail units to flats (Rowley, 1998). In promoting residential development in town and city centres, in stand-alone schemes and through the conversion of vacant office stock (Barlow et al., 2002; Rowley, 1998), policy, by default, is found to favour mix between residential and ‘main town centre uses’ - a category which includes retail, leisure, office, entertainment, arts, culture, intensive sport/recreation and tourism uses (DCLG, 2009a: 3). As a last example, Williams (1999) found national policy favoured locating certain ‘employment’ uses (commercial and industrial uses) in residential areas. These examples suggest policy is comfortable with ‘RNR mix’ occurring at smaller and larger spatial scales since it promotes mix at individual buildings/schemes and across whole areas. They also indicate that mix is supported in a spatial and temporal context with mix in a given place supported and mix over time, through conversions, encouraged. Lastly, they suggest policy is comfortable with ‘RNR mix’ involving more or less integration between uses as it facilitates mix within a building where uses are pressed close together and mix across whole areas where integration is much looser. Within the research, when analysing policy’s approach to ‘RNR mix’ these kinds of issues were considered. For example, analysis reflected on the spatial scale at which mix was encouraged (Chapter 8, Appendix 1).

The degree to which policy promotes ‘RNR mix’ and MU varies between communities (Douglas Wheeler Associates et al., 2009). For example, CBRE, a built asset consultancy firm, found that London’s Boroughs differed in their insistence on land use mix. Westminster had “a very strict mixed-use policy” where additional residential space was ‘required’ when larger commercial schemes were proposed (CBRE, 2006: 5). Southwark, however, was “more likely to grant [planning permission for] single-use commercial schemes” where no additional use, such as housing, was required (CBRE, 2006: 5). Partly in light of these findings, the research compared the ‘priority’ attached to ‘RNR mix’ in three local authority areas (Chapter 6 and 8).

Barlow et al. (2002) identified differences in support for mix between written policy and planning officers. They found that local authority planning officers appeared more in favour of MU than their planning documents might imply. Whilst 87% of contacted

planners, situated in 200 planning authorities, considered “mixed-use development to be an important area of policy”, only 53% of authorities encouraged MU in their development plans, whilst only 29% possessed plans that required it (Barlow et al., 2002: [n.d]). This finding might suggest that the professional ideology of planners attaches a level of importance to MU which is not carried through into the plans they produce. Hirt (2007 and 2007b) and Grant (2002) reached a similar conclusion. They found that whilst there is a professional consensus on the benefits of mix, and huge enthusiasm for its potential, with Grant (2002: 71) claiming that MU has become “a mantra in contemporary planning”, plans often fail to replicate this sentiment with mix frequently confined to only a handful of locations or only permitted under very specific circumstances. Berke and Conroy (2000) identified a similar issue in regards to the concept of sustainable development (a concept which typically includes support for MU – see earlier). In a survey of 30 American cities, they found that whilst sustainable development had become a highly visible, well regarded idea, it did not hold an equivalent status in planning practice. The potential for a certain ‘distance’ to exist between planners and written policy on attitudes towards, and support for, MU was thus borne in mind when analysing policy’s current approach to mix (Chapter 8).

### **3.1.2 Variable and evolving policy**

Besides facilitating ‘RNR mix’ and MU, Rowley (1998) found that aspects of policy could actively resist these practices. Reviewing the Local Plans of Bradford, Peterborough and the London Borough of Camden, Rowley (1998) found that in addition to promoting mix, policy safeguarded residential areas for continued residential use, protected employment areas for continued employment use and created buffer zones of green space between housing and industrial uses. Consequently, Rowley’s (1998) research revealed that policy encouraged both the segregation and integration of different uses – it had variable aims. An interest in matching the scope of Rowley’s (1998) work meant that within the research the analysis of policy’s current approach to ‘RNR mix’ explored measures that encouraged mix and measures that restricted it - see Chapters 6 and 8. Hirt (2007) and Grant (2002) found something similar to Rowley (1998) in, respectively, North America and Canada. They found that segregating uses remained the norm with mixing uses restricted to a few “exceptional districts” within cities (Hirt, 2007: 447). Conversely, when commenting on European planning, Louw and Bruinsma (2006: 1) argued that “the last decades” have seen “a paradigm shift in town planning” where promoting the segregation of land uses has given way to promoting their integration. For Hoppenbrouwer and Louw (2005), European planning policy has embraced mix as a response to, and rejection of, the ‘Functional City’ ideal of the 1930s and 1940s which influenced the post-war rebuilding of many European cities. That ideal, inspired by Modernist and Functionalist principles, and

underpinned by concerns about mixing housing with industry, argued for a clear separation of uses and an 'ordered' pattern of development (Hoppenbrouwer and Louw, 2005; Grant, 2002; Agnotti and Hanhardt, 2001). Rowley (1998) identifies this concern in early British planning policy. Here, interest lay in separating uses and removing 'non-conforming' (obtrusive) uses from established residential areas (Rowley, 1998). Rowley (1998) claims this concern evolved into a desire to prevent further mix in places where it was already present but this then mutated into a desire to protect and maintain mix where it was evident as MU environments came to be valued in and of themselves (Rowley, 1998). For Rowley (1998), planning is now experiencing a period where mix is actively promoted in certain locations, namely town and city centres.

### **3.2 THE INITIAL AND CONTINUING CASE FOR MIX**

#### **3.2.1 Early prompts for land use mix**

English planning policy first began to actively promote fine grained land use mix in town/city centres. Initially, individual local planning authorities, in the early 1980s, created policies that encouraged town/city centre housing with Couch (1999 in Couch et al., 2009) pointing to Manchester's 1984 City Centre Local Plan, and Coupland (1997c) to a Bristol City Council planning brief from 1980, as early examples of support for this form of development. For national policy, support for town/city centre housing emerged in the early 1990s with the publication of 1993's PPG6 Town Centres and Retail Development (Couch et al., 2009).

Often, Jane Jacobs' influential book 'The Death and Life of Great American Cities' (1961) is cited as a key prompt for politicians' and planners' early support for land use mix in town and city centres and elsewhere (Carmona, 2012; Coupland, 1997d; Cozens, 2008; Grant, 2002). Jacobs (1961) argued that zoning and separating uses in city neighbourhoods, a practice she observed in many American cities, acted to break up communities, undermine vibrancy and hamper local economies. She argued that these areas required a mix of uses, sufficient densities to support these uses (both socially and economically), short street blocks and a diversity of building types and ages (Jacobs, 1961). In fact, key tenets of her work continue to influence contemporary design and development theories such as New Urbanism, Smart Growth and sustainable development (discussed earlier). As noted, all identify land use mix as desirable. Within England, Jacobs' work influenced the emergence, under the previous Labour Government, of the concept of 'sustainable communities' – a concept which proved important in encouraging land use mix. Sustainable communities were supposed to be settlements defined by various characteristics including the presence of "high quality, mixed-use, durable, flexible

and adaptable buildings” (ODPM, 2004a: 21). A further key prompt in England for policy’s early support for town/city centre ‘RNR mix’ was a report, ‘Towards an Urban Renaissance’ (1999), published by the Urban Task Force<sup>6</sup> for the previous Labour Government. This report argued for the creation of residential communities and land use mix in town and city centres claiming that it would reinvigorate and achieve an ‘urban renaissance’ in underperforming and declining commercial cores (Carmona et al., 2003; Urban Task Force, 2005; Urban Task Force, 1999). The Urban White Paper (DETR, 2000), which followed, picked up many of the report’s recommendations including the idea that it was desirable for town and city centres to feature residential communities.

### **3.2.2 The rationale for mix**

Policy explains its support for mix by highlighting how this pattern of development can deliver a range of benefits. It identifies city centre housing as a means for addressing housing need, expanding the quantity and variety of the housing stock, generating land receipts, re-using derelict/vacant properties and ensuring the maintenance of buildings (Couch, 1997). For MU, policy associates the concept with increasing the vitality, security and attractiveness of town centres, reducing the need to travel and reliance on the car and supporting public transport (Coupland, 1997a; Hoppenbrouwer and Louw, 2005; Louw and Bruinsma, 2006; Barlow et al., 2002). Rowley (1998) claims policy associates different benefits with different ‘types’ of mix. He claims policy associates small scale mix in individual buildings, schemes and streets with enhanced vitality, vibrancy, character and a better “urban experience” whilst mix across large areas is linked with sustainable development and sustainable transport (Rowley, 1998: 13). Barlow et al. (2002) explored planning officers’ personal thoughts on the benefits of MU. They found sustainability was the most frequently cited benefit with it mentioned by almost half the planning officers surveyed. Other benefits noted were: it addresses housing need, enhances vitality and vibrancy, makes efficient use of brownfield sites, promotes public transport use and contributes to crime reduction (Barlow et al., 2002: [n.d]). Within the research, see Chapter 8, there was an interest in investigating how far policy’s current arguments for mix matched those found in past versions of policy. With the literature contesting a number of policy’s arguments, an issue discussed next, it was thought interesting to see if current policy omits the more disputed claims.

Whilst policy is convinced of the benefits of MU, and the general act of mixing uses, the literature is somewhat cautious. Coupland (1997a) suggests that some of the benefits policy identifies are more about hope than reality whilst the evidence base for

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<sup>6</sup> A group of academics, developers, architects, consultants and environmentalists convened by the previous Labour Government

some of these benefits is questioned by many (Grant, 2002, Williams, 1999, Rowley, 1996). Indeed, Rowley (1996b: 85) claims “nostalgia and propaganda” is “taking over from research and analysis” in the case for mix. In disputing the claimed benefits, much attention has focused on questioning policy’s assertion that urban form is a direct and pivotal determinant of travel behaviour. Many of policy’s arguments for mix, such as claims that it reduces travel and supports more sustainable modes of transport, are anchored by a belief in this relationship. Various scholars, though, claim that factors other than urban form are the real determinant of travel behaviour (see Jarvis, 2003; Williams, 1999; Cao, 2010; Gordon and Richardson, 1997). Stead (2001), for instance, claims economic factors might be key in shaping an individual’s travel choices whilst Farthing et al. (1996) found that household characteristics, particularly ownership of a car, an issue which itself might be linked to economic factors, proved more important than urban form in shaping travel decisions.

Policy’s readiness to attribute benefits to mix is not replicated in its approach to identifying disadvantages with Coupland (1997a: 5) commenting, “there are undoubtedly certain perceived disadvantages of mixed use development that are overlooked by the government’s [policy] statements”. Further, Couch and Karecha (2006: 353) claimed that within cities, “the scope for further urban containment”, a process entailing mix, “may be limited and with more social consequences than have so far been acknowledged by policy makers”. It is unclear from the literature, however, whether policy makers are thought to be *consciously overlooking* and *purposefully* failing to acknowledge disadvantages to mix. Interestingly, when Barlow et al. (2002) explored planning officers’ views on barriers to achieving MU, the items identified were all about the ‘delivery’ of a scheme – e.g. public opposition, political opposition, developer and investor reluctance, site availability – weaknesses or problems with the concept itself were not mentioned. In contrast to policy, the literature identifies numerous potential disadvantages to mix. For example, Grant (2002) associates MU with processes of gentrification which drive out existing occupiers; Rawlinson (2005) discusses the potential for practical, economic and management challenges when diverse uses with differing needs are combined, whilst Angotti and Hanhardt (2001: 147) claim mixing housing with certain kinds of industry can cause health and QoL problems. For Barlow et al. (2002) though, the disadvantages of mix and MU have been overstated with problems often being the result of development and design rather than mix or MU per se. Whether policy has now identified any disadvantages to MU and mix, such as those reported in the literature and presented here, formed a point of interest in the research (see Chapter 8).

### 3.3 CONCLUSIONS

English planning policy's post-war focus on separating land uses has given way in some locations, primarily town and city centres, to an interest in land use mix. Work by Jane Jacobs (1961), and more recently the Urban Task Force (1999), has proved important in this. Policy continues, though, to protect existing residential and employment areas for continued employment and residential use and argues for 'buffers' between housing and industrial uses.

In regards to MU, it seems there may be some disconnect between the professional ideology of planners and the content of written policy. Whilst this ideology appears to identify MU as an important component in 'good' planning, written policy seems less convinced of its necessity. Some planning documents can make little or no mention of MU, and if it is mentioned, it might only be in policies that encourage MU in a handful of locations. Another interesting point is that the emphasis placed on MU can differ between communities. Importantly, policy is seen to promote the concept of MU whilst failing to define it. Items such as the number of uses necessary for MU to be identified are left unspecified.

Policy is seen to attribute numerous benefits to MU, and land use mix more generally. For example, both are seen to reduce the need to travel, support vibrant and vital places and address housing need. However, the literature queries the evidence base for many of these claims. Further, unlike the literature, policy generally fails to identify any problems with, or disadvantages to, the concept or practice of MU.

Though the chapter has focussed on English planning policy's approach to MU, and land use mix more generally, as noted at the outset concern for these patterns of development is not restricted to England. In countries around the world, land use mix is encouraged in planning policy and legislation, though conversely, it can be restricted through rigid zoning ordinances that aim to separate activities. The position of MU as a key tenet in particularly influential planning paradigms, namely Smart Growth, New Urbanism and sustainable development, seems to account for the international interest in land use mix.



## TENANTS' AND RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATIONS

This chapter introduces TARAs by considering their interests, membership and activities, specifically those related to planning. The few studies which consider TARAs' preferences for land use mix are reviewed to provide a backdrop against which to consider the research findings on TARAs' preferences for 'RNR mix' (see Chapter 9 for these findings). Several studies cited within the chapter are rather dated whilst some relate to residents' groups operating in Ireland and America. The paucity of recent studies on UK based TARAs prompted recourse to this older and international literature. However, one cannot simply assume that dated studies, and studies on groups in other countries, are directly relevant to present day UK based TARAs. These points were borne in mind when compiling the chapter.

Chapter 2 provides the definition of TARAs employed within the research. This definition allows TARAs to be distinguished, with some confidence, from organisations like civic societies, environmental protection groups and community associations who manage/own community centres. It also allows them to be differentiated from groups variously termed 'residential associations', 'homeowner associations' and 'residents'/flat management companies' (Kennedy, 1995, Blandy et al. 2006, Dixon and Pottinger, 1994). These are entities which own, in common, the property or area in which they operate be it a block of flats, a gated estate or some other residential enclave (Kennedy, 1995, Blandy et al. 2006, Dixon and Pottinger, 1994). There is an extensive literature on these groups in America and an emerging one in the UK. Both identify these groups as powerful organisations which set and enforce codes of behaviour on, and rules regarding, the use of dwellings, and set and collect maintenance charges (Kennedy, 1995, Mckenzie 2005, Dixon and Pottinger, 1994, Blandy et al., 2006). These kinds of groups are not the concern of the research and so are not considered here. It is important to be explicit on this issue at the outset.

### **4.1 MEMBERSHIP, ORIGINS AND INTERESTS**

#### **4.1.1 Membership**

To begin to appreciate how far the TARA members who participated in the research (discussed in Chapter 7) reflect TARA members at large, an understanding of the traits and characteristics of this wider population is needed. However, besides the

obvious quality that all members are residents, information is patchy and limited. Indeed, Ziersch et al. (2011: 384) identify “a lack of research on socio-demographic factors associated specifically with locally based community group participation”.

Some of the most extensive commentary on UK TARAs, including membership dynamics, is provided by Short et al. (1986). They conducted a large scale survey of residents’ groups in Central Berkshire (an area covering Bracknell, Wokingham, Reading and the eastern part of Newbury) in the early 1980s. It was found participation in a TARA was biased towards homeowners, long established residents, “housewives” or “white collar workers”, and “young married couples with young children” or “older married couples with grown-up children” (Short et al. 1986: 225). It is debateable, though, whether Short et al.’s (1986) findings reflect the characteristics of today’s members. Indeed, more recently, Scott et al. (2007) and Middleton et al. (2005) found that the members of community and residents’ groups tended to be middle-aged and older adults. Similar to Short et al. (1986) though, Scott et al. (2007: 178) found members tended to be “long established residents” whilst Saunders (1990) and Middleton et al. (2005) found membership was biased towards homeowners. Interestingly though, Saunders (1990) found residents’ groups were more prevalent in social housing areas than homeowner areas and claimed this was because groups operating in social housing areas received support from housing officers. The actual *proportion of households* participating in groups in social housing areas proved, however, to be lower than the proportion participating in homeowner areas (Saunders, 1990). Sticking with tenure, the literature often claims that residents’ groups are extremely unlikely to emerge in private rented areas (Short et al. 1986, Davis, 1991; Newton, 1976). However, studies reporting this view tend to be dated. Twenty years of growth in the private rented sector (Pattison et al., 2010), and/or changes in the social composition of particular segments of this market, for example the emergence of a ‘city living’ market, might have affected the tendency for groups to form in these areas. Davis (1991), however, would roundly dismiss any such suggestion. He identifies private renters as a transitory and extremely diverse population, occupying different types of properties, on different tenancies, with different landlords. He claims this makes it very difficult for these households to see the basic commonality of their situation, achieve “tenant consciousness” and organise into groups (Davis, 1991: 200). Newton (1976: 226) points to similar issues to explain why, for him, private tenants are the “least well organised” section of the housing market.

Moving on from tenure, Middleton et al. (2005) found affluence was correlated with membership of a TARA. It is interesting here to refer to Greer’s work on participation in social and community groups. Fagence (1977: 200) notes that Greer found the residents of high density, deprived areas joined “localised groups” whilst the residents of

suburbanised, affluent areas joined a wide range of organisations that typically lacked a concern for “localised interests or issues”. Greer’s analysis might lead one to expect the reverse of Middleton et al.’s (2005) findings - i.e. affluent people would be less inclined to join and form localised, place-based groups such as TARAs.

Perhaps a scenario common to many voluntary groups, the literature points to different ‘tiers’ of membership within a TARA - a small proactive core and a wider, more passive periphery (Scott et al, 2007; Russell et al., 2005; Short et al. 1986; Saunders, 1980). The proactive core is said to be responsible for most of the organisational and administrative duties (Short et al, 1986; 222), it is seen to make the majority of decisions (Saunders, 1980) and constitute the regular participants in group activities. Linowes and Allensworth (1973: 134) claimed that within Citizen’s Associations in the USA, (these being voluntary homeowner groups typically operating in affluent areas), this proactive core dispensed “oligarchic rule” with “an elite” dominating the wider group. For Saunders (1980: 240), a study of middle class residents’ associations in the London Borough of Corydon, led to the assertion that groups were ‘controlled’ by a small number of ‘leaders’ who exercised this control by speaking on the group’s behalf. Saunders (1980: 240) claimed these leaders came to prominence because they enjoyed “privileged access to local councillors and council officers” with much ‘group’ activity simply involving personal contact between these individuals. Within the research, the potential for different tiers of membership to occur in a TARA influenced the ‘type’ of TARA member invited to participate in the study (Chapter 6).

The wider literature on voluntary group membership might be seen to offer further insights into the potential characteristics of TARA members. However, whilst associating numerous personality traits and demographic characteristics with participation, debate occurs over which is key. Larson and Lach (2008: 819), for example, claim past studies have variously identified “age, gender, marital status, homeownership and length of residence” as key influences on participation whilst Ziersch et al. (2011: 383) claim that beyond affluence, tenure and educational attainment, findings are “mixed” on which factors are most associated with involvement in community groups. The result is that this literature contributes few clear insights into the potential qualities of TARA members.

With certain characteristics found to be associated with participation, and the very act of joining a TARA distinguishing members from non-members, it is unlikely that the membership of a TARA will reflect the membership of the wider community in which it operates. Indeed, Russell et al. (2005: 223) found that residents’ groups themselves “recognised the limitations of their representativeness”. However, these groups did still claim to “speak on behalf” of their local area (Russell et al.2005: 223). Interestingly,

research by Larson and Lach (2008) (in the USA) on neighbourhood associations' attitudes to watercourse management might support this assertion. Neighbourhood associations were defined as multi-issue groups that "usually undertake local activities" which address "substantive outcomes including environmental improvements and policy changes, as well as increased social capital and changes in attitudes" (Larson and Lach, 2008: 819). Larson and Lach (2008) found that whilst the demographics of these organisations differed from those of the wider community, members' views on favoured watercourse management techniques reflected, for the most part, those of non-members. Saunders (1980), though, would take issue with any claim that residents' groups 'represent' the interests and views of a wider community. He identifies these organisations as special interest groups, solely concerned with the pursuit of members' preferences with no regard for the interests of non-members (Saunders, 1980). Within the thesis, whether TARAs are representative groups, in terms of their membership and/or the interests they promote, is an issue returned to several times (Chapters 7 and 9).

#### **4.1.2 Origins and interests**

The literature offers several perspectives on the factors which prompt group formation and dominate a group's operating agenda. These were considered when reflecting on the origins and interests of the TARAs included in the research (Chapter 7) and their environmental preferences (Chapter 9). Within the literature, a prominent view is that groups form and act in response to a perceived 'threat' to their immediate environment and/or the perceived interests of the local population and/or group members (Saunders, 1990, Russell et al., 2005, Short et al, 1986). They are said to become the focus or crucible for action when such a 'threat' is identified as new groups form, new members join existing groups or existing groups become reanimated (Hall 2007; Kleinhans, 2004; Scott et al., 2007 and 2012). Davis (1991) is unusual in the literature in providing a theoretical framework to explain the genesis of a new group. He argues that residents must first become conscious of their interests in relation to their home and area, they must then realise that other residents in a similar situation share these interests, and finally, they must actively organise into a group to pursue and/or defend these shared interests (Davis, 1991). For homeowners, threats to house prices are routinely identified as the key prompt for group formation, participation and action (Saunders, 1980; Short et al., 1986, Linowes and Allensworth, 1973; Wilhelm, 1962; Davis, 1991; Conway et al., 2011). Saunders (1980) argues that groups can, however, mask their economic motivations by proclaiming an interest in issues like environmental protection. In this explanation of group behaviour, there is seen to be "a hard core of material interest underneath the environmental concern" with Frieden [writing in 1978] terming this "the environmental protection hustle" (Short et al., 1986: 209). Threats to house prices were a

key concern for one of three types of residents' group identified by Short et al. (1986). 'Stoppers' were identified as residents' groups, mainly comprising homeowners, who organised and acted in response to perceived threats to house prices, although they were also motivated by perceived threats to the social exclusivity of their area (Short et al., 1986: 209). These groups interpreted development that would, in their eyes, reduce house prices, or 'harm' this social composition, i.e. affect the status quo, as a threat and tried to stop it (Short et al., 1986: 209). For Davis (1991: 68), whilst he accepts threats to house prices will be the primary concern for some homeowners, he insists this is not true for all. He identifies different 'types' of homeowner differentiated by their 'relationship' to residential property. The "owner occupiers of acquisitive property" are said to view, value and relate to their home as an economic asset with its financial (or exchange) value being the main concern (Davis, 1991: 68). For these owner occupiers, threats to house prices are indeed considered the main prompt for group formation, participation and action. However, the "owner-occupiers of household property" are, in contrast, said to view, value and relate to their home primarily as a place to live with its "use value" being the main concern (Davis, 1991: 68). For these owner occupiers, "defence (or pursuit) of security, amenity or autonomy for themselves and their neighbors", not threats to house prices, motivates group formation and participation (Davis, 1991: 68).

Beyond the dominant threat-based explanation of group formation and activity, certain other models are found within the literature. For Purcell (2001: 178), discussing voluntary homeowner groups in Los Angeles, attachment to a normative spatial vision drives groups. Homeowners are seen to hold "a well-defined spatial vision" for their area (the details of which are discussed later) and they join groups and undertake activities to help defend and realise this vision. They are prompted to act by any perceived mismatch between this vision and the reality of their immediate area. Indeed, he claims groups are "virtually obsessed with making the material geography of the city match their spatial vision" (Purcell, 2001:181). Whilst a concern for maintaining house prices is part of this vision, and so threats to property values prompt action, this issue does not dominate. Purcell (2001) explicitly rejects, on the grounds of over simplification, theories of homeowner activism which claim a single issue, such as threats to house prices, fully explain homeowner activism.

Away from 'Stoppers', and their concern for house prices and social exclusivity, Short et al. (1986) identified residents' groups who were concerned with improving their area, and residents' groups who were concerned with both this issue, and with house prices and threats to an area's social exclusivity. To explain, 'Getters' were identified as residents' groups, comprising either social housing tenants or homeowners, which originated and operated to enhance their local area. They tried to secure environmental

improvements and new community facilities (Short et al., 1986). For Short et al. (1986: 251), improving “quality of life” and assisting in the establishment of “community life” drove these groups. Ultimately, they were concerned with ‘getting’, for their area, services, facilities and enhancements. ‘Stoppers-Getters’ were, as the name implies, residents’ groups that combined elements of both ‘Stoppers’ and ‘Getters’. They formed and acted to tackle perceived threats to, and unaddressed ‘needs’ within, their local area and they could include social housing tenants and/or homeowners. Scott et al. (2012: 155) perhaps found multiple examples of ‘Stoppers-Getters’ in the Greater Dublin Area. They reported how residents’ groups in this area had formed to mobilise “collective action” to “participate within urban governance processes” to lobby against unwanted development and anti-social behaviour and to lobby for environmental improvements and enhanced local services. Thus, they acted to oppose/tackle threats and to address needs. Like Purcell’s (2001) voluntary homeowner groups, ‘Stopper-Getters’ are seen to be motivated by multiple issues rather than a single concern. Such understandings of TARAs reject the positivist view of interests embraced by the dominant ‘threats to house prices’ approach. The positivist view sees social actors as being incapable of holding multiple interests (Healey et al. 1988). Given the literature’s contested view on whether TARAs hold single or multiple interests, within the research TARAs were defined as groups which *profess* to have multiple interests with no judgement made on the ‘truth’ of this assertion.

#### **4.2 EXPERIENCES WITHIN THE PLANNING SYSTEM**

Highlighted by the discussion to date, TARAs can partake in a range of activities, although their participation in the planning system is frequently mentioned. Within the planning arena, TARAs are seen to contribute to consultations on planning and housing policy (Short, 1982), submit objections to planning policies and decisions (Scott et al., 2012), construct development plans for their area of activity (Brindley et al., 1996), monitor planning applications, make representations at public inquiries, (Short et al., 1986; Dennis, [n.d]), lobby councillors on planning applications, liaise with public officials and negotiate direct with developers on development proposals (Scott et al., 2007; 2012; Russell et al., 2005). Scott et al. (2012) found residents’ groups were most involved at the development management stage of planning with participation being lower at the plan preparation stage. It was argued this was because tangible development proposals motivate and “invigorate” residents more so than “abstract policy” whilst groups perceive themselves as “local gatekeepers” performing a “scrutiny function” on applications (Scott et al., 2012: 161). Plus, opportunities for participation in development management were said to be “well developed” within Ireland (the study area) (Scott et al., 2012: 161). For Russell et al. (2005) and Scott et al. (2012), the type of collective action undertaken by

groups is influenced by the availability of cultural, social and economic capital. For example, where levels of cultural and economic capital are high, groups can readily participate and clearly articulate their interests in formal legal and planning arenas. In such cases, to influence decisions, only “a small number of affluent well connected individuals” need engage in place-based activism (Russell et al., 2005: 230). These groups tend to rely less on direct action such as street protests to present their concerns and can actually “play down the opposition” to unwelcome development (Russell et al., 2005: 230). In contrast, where levels of these types of capital are low, groups can feel excluded from formal decision making arenas, and, consequently, can turn to informal participation methods such as marches and public meetings to express concerns (Russell et al., 2005: 230). When reflecting on the activities of Southampton’s TARAs, and the diverse sample of TARAs included in the research (see Chapter 7), the activities reported here proved a useful point of comparison.

#### **4.2.1 ‘Success’ in the planning arena**

Short et al. (1986: 238) claim that it is “difficult to ascertain” how successful TARAs are in planning matters because “between the desire of the group and the final [planning] outcome lie a myriad of other interests, conflict and bargaining”. However, they concluded that ‘Stoppers’ groups had been successful in establishing within Central Berkshire a “powerful no-growth lobby” that “sensitized” councillors to the “issues of growth containment and growth deflection” (Short et al., 1986: 238). These councillors sought to deflect development to areas with “least resistance” and pressed developers to provide “community benefits” alongside new schemes (Short et al., 1986: 238). Scott et al. (2012: 163) found residents groups had some success in securing revisions to development proposals at the development management stage but were frustrated at their “limited success in influencing policy outcomes”. They believed the “strategic planning” performed by local government prioritised and favoured the interests of developers, not residents (Scott et al., 2012: 163). Perhaps substantiating this view, Murdoch et al. (2000: 200) argue that the “top down modes of central regulation” in plan preparation, plus the technical language, arguments and targets contained within and underpinning policy, typically results in the marginalisation of “local opinion” as “technical-expert opinion...necessarily displaces the non-technical views of local (anti-growth) participants”. Continuing this theme, Barker et al. (2010) found neighbourhood groups participating in the regional and local plan preparation process in England felt their views were overlooked relative to those of other stakeholders whilst Hastings et al. (1996 in O’Malley, 2004: 850), commenting on regeneration partnerships, found community groups appeared “relatively powerless compared to other partners”. Similarly, North (2003: 127) found that the “real decisions” in regeneration projects, projects that

professed to include 'the community', were actually taken by council officers and then presented to residents' and community groups "as a *fait accompli*". Within the research, TARAs' perceptions of, and experiences within, the planning system emerged, unprompted, as a particularly emotive issue. This resulted in a whole section being dedicated to the topic in Chapter 9.

The literature suggests that the relationship between TARAs and local authority decision-makers is important in determining how successful TARAs' are in planning matters. Within the research, TARAs' relationships with, and perceptions of, council officers and councillors emerged as another emotive issue and again it is picked up in Chapter 9. For the literature, the orientation or context of decision makers is important in structuring the relationship between these actors and TARAs (Russell et al., 2005). Stoker (1991: 133), for example, identified several 'types' of local authority differing by political persuasion and spatial context, and claimed each exhibited different orientations, shaped by their political interest and strategies, towards the voluntary, community and business sectors. Where TARAs were explicitly mentioned, Stoker (1991: 133) claimed urban, left wing Labour authorities were 'open' to tenant associations (and certain other community/voluntary groups) because these authorities judged it important to tip the balance of power towards community and voluntary interests. New Right Conservative authorities in urban and suburban areas were thought willing to "work closely with a select group of middle-class residents' associations" whilst, in contrast, urban, centre-right Labour and Liberal Democrat authorities were thought liable to demonstrate a superficial openness to residents' groups that masked an underlying suspicion of their motives and membership (Stoker, 1991: 134). Within the London Borough of Croydon, Saunders (1980) identified a "shared community of interest" between middle-class residents associations and the local Conservative councillors (Saunders, 1980: 249). He claimed the political elite's interests coincided so well with the interests of these groups that by simply acting on their own interests, this elite satisfied the interests of the residents' groups (Saunders, 1980: 249). Here, the orientation of the Conservative councillors embodied and reflected the interests of middle-class residents' groups. Discussing Citizens' Associations in the USA (defined earlier), Linowes and Allensworth (1973: 139) claimed that in some 'suburban local governments' "the local party of power is little more than a confederation of neighbourhood groups". In these locations, such groups "form the backbone" of the party of power, "provide man power in elections and guide the party's land use policy positions" (Linowes and Allensworth, 1973: 139). It is noted, however, that compared to pressure groups in the UK, parts of the literature report that pressure groups in America have a far greater influence over local politics (Hill, 2003). Viewed in this context, the status of Citizens' Associations perhaps seems less exceptional.

Besides the orientation of local authority decision makers, access to these decision makers is said to be another (though linked) factor in the 'success' of TARAs. Groups with better relationships and access are found, unsurprisingly, to achieve more favourable results than groups without such advantages (Saunders, 1980; Scott et al., 2012; Russell et al. 2005). Newton (1976) and Saunders (1980) claimed that to facilitate better access residents' groups had to adopt a moderate orientation jettisoning any militant or radical tendencies. In fact, Andrews (1979: 197) found that for some local government housing officers, "a single united estate organisation dealing with non-controversial matters" was the "ideal model" of resident participation with officers regretting occasions when more controversial agendas emerged (e.g. campaigns against rent increases). Interestingly, O'Malley (2004: 852) found, from studying relevant literature, that "community organisations" could consciously "mimic" the "bureaucratic norms" and general "style" of a partnership when they worked in conjunction with public and private sector bodies. She claimed groups did this to "access decisionmaking more effectively" (O'Malley, 2004: 852). Relevant here, DiMaggio and Powell (1983: 148) argued that within an organisational field (i.e. "organizations that, in the aggregate, constitute a recognized area of institutional life"); there is "an inexorable push towards homogenization". In such fields, where organisations are dependent on a third party, they are seen to adapt to the preferences of that party with a creeping homogenisation occurring. DiMaggio and Powell (1983) term organisational change occurring through the external pressures of such a party, or the "cultural expectations" of the society within which the organisation operates, coercive isomorphism<sup>7</sup>. This type of organisational change perhaps describes the 'mimicking' that O'Malley (2004) identifies amongst community groups. Indeed, DiMaggio and Powell (1983: 151), discussing work by Milofsky (from 1981), identify a "subtle and less explicit" form of coercive isomorphism when:

"neighborhood organizations in urban communities, many of which are committed to participatory democracy, are driven to developing organizational hierarchies in order to gain support from more hierarchically organized donor organizations" (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983: 151)

For some commentators, place-based groups are thought only ever capable of achieving small scale victories confined to the existing system (Saunders, 1980). It is claimed they do not pursue a fundamental reform agenda and are instead concerned with parochial issues adopting defensive strategies that aim to protect the status quo

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<sup>7</sup> DiMaggio and Powell (1983: 150) identify two further types of isomorphism – "mimetic isomorphism resulting from standard responses to uncertainty" and "normative isomorphism, associated with professionalization".

(Saunders, 1980; Kirby, 1982). It is suggested that, at least within the UK, they are divorced from any ideological politics and, consequently, their activities “rarely give rise, even potentially, to revolutionary consequences” (Saunders, 1980: 129). Their parochial focus often means that a victory for one area translates into a loss for another with services and investment diverted towards, and unwanted development away from, the ‘victorious’ area (Saunders, 1980; Scott et al., 2012; Kirby, 1982; Short et al., 1986). Adopting Saunders’ (1980) perspective, TARAs which engage in the planning system will only ever aspire to, and achieve, small gains, thus, in their successes and ambitions they appear conservative. However, it is perhaps difficult to identify what might constitute a revolutionary consequence within the English planning system and/or the other spheres of social and civic life where UK based TARAs operate. What type of outcomes would they need to pursue, or could they pursue, for Saunders (1980) to judge them revolutionary? Would activities like objecting to a planning application, fielding candidates in a local election or withholding Council Tax if an unpopular policy is passed or application approved suffice?

#### **4.3 PREFERENCES FOR ‘RESIDENTIAL NON-RESIDENTIAL MIX’**

Studies specifically exploring TARAs’ preferences for policy’s approach to ‘RNR mix’ are absent from the literature. In fact, the environmental and planning policy preferences of these groups have not been subject to much dedicated research. Consequently, there is little against which to compare the research findings discussed in Chapter 9. Also, it means that to gain any understanding of the relationship between TARAs’ QoFL and planning policy, within the context of preference-satisfaction theory, new primary research seems necessary since the paucity of existing data precludes anything but the very flimsiest/shakiest of conclusions. Based on what research there is, it seems groups dislike several land uses and development patterns since each generates much opposition when proposed. Examples include industrial uses (Baker, 1987), rapid development (Scott et al. 2012) and the development of green space (Saunders, 1980). However, a detailed understanding of the ‘complete’ environment, residential or other, favoured by TARAs is largely lacking. One might claim this is because TARAs lack fully realised views about most and least desired environments with preferences only emerging in response to specific development proposals and perceived environmental ‘threats’. However, Purcell (2001) would dispute this assertion. Where residential environments are concerned, he argues that groups do indeed hold fully realised normative spatial visions (discussed earlier).

Purcell (2001) claims residents’ groups hold a normative spatial vision for their area, which he terms the ‘suburban ideal’, which is “based on the image of postwar

American bedroom suburbs” (Purcell, 2001: 182). Components of this ideal include a preponderance of single family detached houses set within large gardens, low density development, lots of green space and planting, limited traffic, peace and quiet, a slow pace of life, and minimal commercial activity and related signage (Purcell, 2001: 186-187). Within the research, when exploring TARAs’ preferences for ‘RNR mix’, analysis considered whether these suburban-style characteristics were favoured (Chapter 9 and Appendix 1). Purcell (2001: 182) argued that partly underpinning the ideal was a strong belief in the “restorative power” of nature. Therefore, a ‘natural’ environment with landscaping, planting and open space was prized. There was an interest in property prices, but “spatially immediate concerns” were prioritised (Purcell, 2001: 187). In fact, Purcell (2001) found groups objected to planned new development that would have increased property prices because it would have compromised a ‘spatially immediate’ aspect of the suburban ideal – it would have increased development density. Clearly, environments characterised by a significant amount of ‘RNR mix’ would struggle to conform to this ‘ideal’. They would feature a greater volume of commercial uses and activity than permitted whilst, as Jacobs (1961) argues, higher densities might be necessary to support the non-residential uses. Plus, traffic, noise and signage would be at higher levels than desired. Residents’ groups might then be anticipated to reject all environments bar single use residential environments as desirable places to live and, in the context of preference-satisfaction theory, these rejected environments would be thought unsuited to supporting their QoFL. However, Purcell (2001) only considered the views of homeowner groups located in relatively affluent suburban areas that already largely conformed to the ‘suburban ideal’. If group members had consciously selected these areas partly because of their suburban traits, it is perhaps unsurprising that a preference for this type of environment emerged. To supplement the focus on suburban groups, the normative spatial ideal held by groups operating in urban and rural areas could be explored. If a similar ideal is identified across all these groups one might feel more confident in accepting the assertion that residents’ groups, as a population, are opposed to the idea of residential environments featuring ‘RNR mix’.

Turning to the literature’s prominent argument that residents’ groups form and operate to protect house prices; taken to its logical conclusion, this argument would suggest that groups lack any ‘independent’ preferences for the environment (and other items) since all preferences are thought rooted in concerns about potential effects on house prices. Consequently, this argument would claim that any configuration of the environment perceived to maintain or enhance property values would be viewed favourably by residents’ groups. If environments featuring ‘RNR mix’ were presumed to be associated with stable or increased house prices, groups would be presumed to support ‘RNR mix’. However, studies specifically exploring TARAs’ perceptions of the

effect on house prices of 'RNR mix' are not available and so one cannot deduce, within the context of this argument, how groups might view such patterns of development.

#### **4.4 CONCLUSIONS**

Typically, TARAs are seen to form and operate to defend an area and/or its immediate population from perceived threats with much of the literature identifying threats to house prices as the pivotal concern. However, some dispute this analysis and point to other motivations for group formation and behaviour such as realising a normative spatial vision. Membership of a TARA is found to be biased towards older adults, homeowners and long term residents; however, research on this subject is limited. Within a TARA, a few members account for the majority of the group's activities. These activities are varied but TARAs are noted for their involvement in the planning system. They participate in various ways, particularly at the development management stage. Their success in this and other arenas is shaped by their relationship to, and the orientation of, local authority (and related) decision makers with several studies finding that any influence they do achieve is limited.

TARAs' attitudes to land use mix have not been subject to any dedicated scholarly research. Indeed, their overall environmental preferences have attracted little attention. Perhaps this is because many scholars, adopting the dominant 'threats to house prices' understanding of TARA behaviour, do not consider these groups capable of holding 'independent' preferences for the environment – i.e. preferences which exist outside assumptions about house prices. Purcell (2001), though, assumes groups do hold such 'independent' preferences. He claims groups idealise the traditional, leafy suburb and desire their local environment to reflect this image. Suburban environments might then be thought best able to support the QoL of residents' group members. However, with his work only studying groups from suburban locations, the transferability of this preference to the wider population of TARAs can be questioned.

## *Chapter 5*

### RESIDENTS, DEVELOPERS AND INVESTORS AND 'RESIDENTIAL NON-RESIDENTIAL MIX'

Scarce research on TARAs' preferences for 'RNR mix' (Chapter 4) prompted consideration of the wider literature on residents' attitudes towards, and experiences of, this form of development. By referencing this literature, the purpose of this chapter is to provide a broad context in which to consider the research findings on TARAs' preferences for 'RNR mix' (found in Chapter 9). The research interest in preferences steers the chapter but attention also turns to residents' satisfaction with 'RNR mix' since 'satisfaction' and 'preferences' are, in some interpretations of preference-satisfaction theory, closely related (see Chapter 2). Even across this broader literature, though, studies on residents' preferences for policy's approach to 'RNR mix' are absent.

A second concern of the chapter is to provide a broad context within which to consider some of the findings associated with Objective 3. Chapter 6 provides a detailed description of this objective whilst Chapter 10 reports the findings. In short, though, Objective 3 is partly concerned with exploring housebuilders' attitudes towards amending aspects of planning policy's approach to land use mix. To provide a backdrop to these findings, this chapter considers the literature on housebuilders' attitudes to mix. Specifically, it considers attitudes towards the practice of introducing non-residential uses at residential schemes, and, owing to its links to 'RNR mix' (see Chapter 3), the delivery of MU schemes. Institutional investors' attitudes to the latter are also explored. The chapter begins, though, with a focus on the relationship between residents and 'residential non-residential mix'.

## **5.1 RESIDENTS**

### 5.1.1 PREFERENCES FOR MIX

#### **Preferences for MU environments**

Given the concerns of the research the most pertinent study within the literature seems to be Senior's (2005) and Senior et al.'s (2006) research (the same study) on owner-occupiers' preferences for MU environments – defined as environments featuring residential and non-residential uses.

Amongst a 'natural sample' of owner occupiers actively house hunting in Cardiff, Senior (2005) and Senior et al. (2006) found a dominant preference for detached and semi-detached houses with gardens in suburban locations. Higher density suburbs hosting a number of facilities were "generally liked" but a stronger preference was identified for traditional lower density suburbs with fewer facilities (Senior, 2005). This leads Senior et al. (2006: 50) to conclude that, "the traditional British suburb apparently remains the preferred form of urbanization". When considered in the context of preference-satisfaction theory, this would suggest that suburban environments support residents' QoFL. When assessing the appeal of a property, participants were flexible about the dwelling's proximity to facilities and appeared willing to sacrifice this in order to achieve other higher valued items (Senior, 2005: 13). For example, a private garden was prized with participants highly unlikely to compromise on this aspect of the home (Senior, 2005: 12). There was a modest discernible preference for homes to be within a six to ten minute walk of services and facilities (Senior et al., 2006: 50). Living closer than this was thought likely to result in "negative externalities such as litter, noise and anti-social behaviour" (Senior et al., 2006: 54). However, breaking data down by respondent characteristics, it was found that the preference to live this close to facilities was only significantly associated with households without a car (Senior et al. 2006: 52). Car-owning households were rather unconcerned about the property's proximity to services and facilities. Amongst participants, proximity to some facilities was favoured over others. Small local shops and doctors' surgeries were viewed positively but there was little desire to live near a public house owing to concerns over noise (Senior, 2005). Confirming the observed preference for suburban areas, environments featuring a high degree of land use mix (and high densities), such as city centres and redeveloped dockland schemes (waterfront regeneration projects hosting a mix of uses), generated the "least enthusiasm", particularly amongst participants of retirement age (Senior et al., 2006: 48). However, some respondents claimed that they would have considered city centre properties when they were younger or before they had children (Senior, 2005).

A point to note in Senior's (2005) and Senior et al.'s (2006) study is the absence of a representative sample. In the 'natural' sample they assembled, some groups were over and some under-represented with some being completely absent (e.g. no first time buyers). Senior et al. (2006: 45) posit that the sample featured "a reasonable balance" between "household types who are hypothesized to be more amenable to sustainable city living [meaning compact, MU environments] and those who might not be". However, in terms of place of residence, this assertion seems tenuous. Almost 50% of participants lived in older and new suburbs where land use mix is limited (Senior et al., 2006: 47). A large proportion of the sample might then be thought predisposed to locations featuring limited land use mix since some may have self-selected into suburban locations partly

because they offered a rather mono-use environment. The sample's composition was perhaps then 'primed' to find greatest support for suburban areas featuring little mix.

### **Revealed preferences for 'RNR mix'**

Studies that explore relationships between house prices and proximity to certain non-residential uses, and studies which consider house prices in environments featuring more or less 'RNR mix', might be seen to 'reveal' residents' preferences for land use mix. It is appreciated, however, that sections of the literature vehemently contest the idea that house prices 'reveal' preferences (Train, 2003).

Studies have found that house prices are depressed near certain types of non-residential use. This might suggest these uses are disliked and thus, in the context of preference-satisfaction theory, living in proximity to them would do little to support residents' QoL. For example, McMillen (2004), and Cohen and Coughlin (2009), find that prices are lower near airports, Bilbao-Terol (2009) finds they fall near iron and steel plants whilst Cheshire (2009) notes that in neighbourhoods featuring high proportions of land in industrial uses, prices are constrained. In such locations, Cheshire (2009: 6), referring to research by Cheshire and Sheppard (writing in 1995), reports that reducing the proportion of land in industrial use by 1% can increase house prices by £224 or 0.236%. On the flip side, studies have also found that higher prices are associated with the presence of particular types or amounts of non-residential use. As before, this might indicate a preference for these uses and, consequently, living in proximity to them might be conducive to a 'good' QoL. Song and Knaap (2003: 235-236), for example, found buyers would pay a premium for houses in proximity to a park, a light rail station, with better pedestrian access to commercial uses and in areas featuring a more even distribution of non-residential uses. However, they paid less for houses in areas featuring a greater concentration of commercial uses and public services relative to residential use (Song and Knaap, 2003: 236). Day et al. (2006: 14) explored the impact of several variables on house prices and found, of relevance to the research, that in most cases house prices increased when good quality primary schools were nearby, indicating that it is not simply proximity to facilities, but the standard of these facilities, that matters. Cheshire (2009), after reviewing various studies on the effect of proximity to public open space on house prices, concluded that this effect was variable. The 'nature' of the open space (e.g. park, field etc.), the 'type' of area in which it was provided (suburban, urban etc.), the area's overall supply of open space and the accessibility of this space were all seen to influence the effect on house prices (Cheshire, 2009).

## 5.1.2 EXPERIENCES OF MIX

### **Experiences of 'RNR mix'**

Several studies have examined residents' experiences within the relatively new city/town centre residential communities that occupy new build apartment schemes. Often, these studies find that residents are positive about their area with proximity to work, shops, leisure facilities etc. cited as key draws or advantages (Howley, 2009; Howley et al. 2009a; Barlow et al, 2002; Nathan and Urwin, 2006, Unsworth, 2005, 2007; Seo, 2002). Further, Howley et al. (2009b: 853) found that almost 66% of city centre residents surveyed in Dublin were 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' with their neighbourhood (however this was substantially lower than the proportion reported in a nationally representative survey - at approximately 90%). Studies usually find that, relative to the general population, city/town centre residents are younger and wealthier, and live in smaller, usually childless, households (Unsworth, 2005, 2007, Seo, 2002; Howley et al. 2009a). These demographic traits perhaps indicate that only a niche market favours city/town centres and thus these locations are only suited to supporting the QoL of a narrow demographic. Parts of the literature would seem to side with this view (e.g. Couch and Karecha, 2006; Rowley, 1996b; Senior et al., 2006; Howley et al. 2009a). In fact, Howley et al. (2009a) found city centre residents themselves seemed to share it. These residents only viewed city centres as short-term homes with a majority identifying lower density environments as their preferred long-term, future residence. Interestingly, though, Barlow et al. (2002) found that amongst a diverse sample of city/town centre residents, where individuals differed by age and socio-economic status, city/town centres were viewed positively with most individuals happy with their home and the immediate area. This might suggest city/town centres have the capacity to appeal to, and support the QoL of, a range of occupiers.

### **Experiences of single use areas**

Various studies report on the abiding appeal of a suburban environment to numerous households (Breheny, 1997; Rowley, 1996b). Indeed, Senior (2005) and Senior et al. (2006) identified this preference in their previously mentioned study. 'Suburban areas', typically low density, single use residential areas, though their definition is contested, are repeatedly found to hold a strong appeal as a preferred environment to start and raise a family (Howley, 2009; Howley et al. 2009a) and, more generally, simply as a preferred place to live (Senior et al., 2006; Rowley, 1996b). The literature identifies this appeal amongst households in various territories including Britain, America, and Australia (Breheny, 1997; Gordon and Richardson, 1997; Mccrea et al. 2005). Grant (2002: 80) argues that residents "want security, predictability, and tranquility

in their environments” and they believe suburban environments are better suited to delivering this. Many studies would therefore seem to suggest that suburban environments support the QoL of many, maybe even a majority, of residents.

Several decades of suburban population growth and urban population loss in places such as Britain, America, and Australia is seen by some as demonstrable evidence of a deep-seated ‘suburban preference’ (Williams, 1999; Gordon and Richardson, 1997; Rowley, 1996b). Breheny (1997) argues that dissatisfaction and underinvestment in cities, combined with economic decentralisation as jobs have moved out to the suburbs, plus the appeal of a better lifestyle, pull and push households towards suburban locations. However, Thurston and Yezer (1994: 115) found the process of concentrating certain types of employment in the central city area, namely manufacturing, was associated with increased suburbanisation and so, for some types of employment, decentralisation actually acted to “retard suburbanization”. Furthermore, Levine (2006) would argue that suburban population growth is not the result of residents holding a suburban preference rather it is a function of residents lacking alternative housing choices. Discussing the situation in America, Levine (2006) claims States’ regulatory zoning systems, by requiring land use separation and low density development, prevent developers from providing the kind of high density, MU, transit orientated environments which, he claims, are favoured by a significant proportion of suburban residents. Freed from this regulation, Levine (2006) claims that profit orientated developers would address this unmet demand by providing MU, high density schemes. The transferability of Levine’s (2006) work to England is, however, contentious since legally binding zoning ordinances are absent whilst, discussed in Chapter 3, English planning policy has, for a couple of decades, encouraged, at least in places, land use mix (and higher densities). Further, literature on developers’ attitudes to MU, and residents’ preferences for low density, single use residential areas, (reported in this chapter), would also challenge Levine’s analysis. Having said this, Levine’s (2006) argument that residents’ house moves are restricted to the properties that are available is valid. Within England, a tendency for housebuilders to, where possible, build single use residential schemes on the urban periphery (Fulford, 1996) might then be considered part of the explanation for the nation’s prolonged period of suburban population growth.

Studies on residential satisfaction have found that suburban residents report high levels of satisfaction and/or features typical of a suburban environment are associated with high levels of satisfaction. For instance, Yang (2008), found that at the level of street block, higher levels of neighbourhood satisfaction were associated with low density blocks comprising detached houses whilst lower levels were associated with blocks featuring higher density housing and land use mix. Further, compared to suburban (and

rural) residents, Todorovich and Wellington (2000: 3) found that the residents of 'urban areas' (inner city, town/city centres, areas close to urban centres hosting numerous social housing estates) were more likely to be dissatisfied with their area, report problems and consider these problems to be serious. However, Todorovich and Wellington (2000) found deprivation was also associated with dissatisfaction and noted that deprivation was concentrated in urban areas. Therefore, deprivation, rather than urban form, might be the real cause of the observed differentiation between urban areas and suburban (and rural) areas in reported levels of satisfaction and dissatisfaction.

The literature claims that the appeal of the suburbs lies in the larger houses and gardens, family friendly services (such as schools), lower density environments, peace and quiet and lower levels of crime which they can, and are perceived to, offer (Mace et al., 2007, Breheny, 1997; Couch and Karecha, 2006; Howley et al. 2009a). Indeed, Senior (2005: 3) argues that, "for decades many British households have exhibited an entrenched preference" for many of the 'hallmarks' of the traditional suburb, frequently favouring "decentralised living", lower densities, and "less land use heterogeneity in neighbourhoods not more". Hedges and Clemens (in 1994), discussed by Breheny (1997), found that houses, the standard suburban property type, were favoured far more than apartments amongst practically all types of household. The majority of these households also identified gardens as 'very important' (Breheny, 1997). More recently, Senior et al. (2006) found that households far preferred detached houses to terraced houses and flats whilst Parkes et al. (2002) found flats and terraced houses were associated with higher levels of dissatisfaction than detached and semi-detached houses. Collectively, these findings suggest that the property type and development pattern characteristic of suburban areas is favoured more, and is associated with higher levels of satisfaction, than the property types and development patterns typical of more urban areas. Suburban areas and suburban-style properties perhaps, then, seem better suited to supporting residents' QoL. Beyond this, Senior et al. (2006) and Couch and Karecha (2006) found evidence to suggest that the suburbs are an 'aspirational' environment. Amongst homeowners in urban areas and suburban areas, Couch and Karecha (2006) found that for the suburban homeowners, 'trading up' "*was the most frequently cited reason*" for the move to the present home (Couch and Karecha, 2006: 361, original emphasis). This was not replicated amongst the occupiers of urban areas where neighbour and social problems were the most commonly cited reasons. For Senior et al. (2006), a majority of households surveyed within 'inner urban areas' reported a desire to move to a home in the suburbs, not remain within this type of location.

### 5.1.3 CONCLUSIONS

The literature suggests that the residents of MU environments can find attractions in, and be satisfied with, their homes and area whilst property prices can be higher when certain non-residential uses, such as good quality schools, are located close by. This might suggest that MU environments can support residents' QoFL. However, prices can be depressed when some non-residential uses, such as industry, or certain volumes of non-residential use, are found in proximity to housing. Plus, studies have repeatedly found that residents prefer predominantly residential environments whilst parts of the literature point to a prolonged period of suburban population growth as evidence of an entrenched suburban preference. The 'suburban ideal' that Purcell (2001) identified amongst residents' groups (Chapter 4) might, then, seem to be shared by households more widely. These findings might also suggest that suburban environments are suited to supporting the QoFL of many, perhaps even a majority of, residents.

### 5.2 DEVELOPERS AND INVESTORS

There is a small, repetitive literature on developers' and investors' attitudes to MU and mix across residential developments. With few academic studies identified, property consultants' reports often provide the most information on these subjects, but the objectivity and rigour of this work can be questioned. Barlow et al. (2002), Douglas Wheeler Associates (DWA) et al. (2009) and Jones Lang LaSalle (2005) provide interesting primary research on developers' attitudes to MU, but, in each case, a poorly defined method proves problematic. Barlow et al. (2002) and Jones Lang LaSalle (2005) fail, for instance, to specify the number and 'type' of developers, investors and others who participated in the research. There is scant primary research on developers' attitudes to mix across residential schemes. Of note, Fulford (1996) reports findings on housebuilders' attitudes to the provision of non-residential properties whilst Beuschel and Rudel (2009) report findings on housebuilders' attitudes to the provision of open space. Both studies, however, use small samples whilst Beuschel and Rudel (2009) focus on the developers of luxury homes in New Jersey, USA. The generalizability of these studies can, then, be questioned. These core texts are referenced throughout the next sections of this chapter, but other studies are introduced where appropriate.

## 5.2.1 ATTITUDES TO MIX AT RESIDENTIAL SCHEMES

### **Provision of commercial and community-use properties**

Developers appear largely resistant to the idea of incorporating properties for non-residential use at their housing developments - a point Chapter 10 reflects on in the context of the research findings. Hall (2011), for instance, found it was only through the planning authority negotiating with housebuilders, and retaining the ultimate threat of refusing planning permission, that these organisations were persuaded to change their 'standard' practice and provide schemes with non-residential uses (and open space). Further, Stead (2000), referring to a study by Farthing and Winter (writing in 1997), reported that few facilities were included at major residential developments. Studying five developments (of 1,000+ units), none were found to provide a bank, only one featured a secondary school and two lacked a post office or primary school (Stead, 2000: 32). Interestingly, it seems, then, that developers perhaps favour the kind of environment, in terms of land use profile, that finds support amongst TARAs (Chapter 4) and residents more widely (discussed before).

According to housebuilders, buyers prefer single use residential areas and, in wishing to address this perceived preference, they build single use schemes (Fulford, 1996; Michelson, 1977). Parts of the literature claim developers are primarily motivated to construct products that satisfy buyers' preferences with DiLorenzo (2000: 12) claiming, "the profit motive provides a powerful incentive to get developers to cater to buyers' preferences" and concludes that housebuilders deliver single use suburban estates because "that is what people want". Gotham (2002: 5) terms this understanding of developer behaviour the 'preferences perspective'. As Fulford (1996) found, developers seem inclined to adopt this perspective when explaining their own behaviour. Indeed, Michelson (1977: 61) found housebuilders "stressed that they felt their duty was not to lead public taste, but rather to respond to it". The preferences perspective has, however, been challenged. Gotham (2002) claims that developers are not purely driven by buyers' preferences with building regulations and planning policy presented as important additional steers. Indeed, Grant (2009) appeared to find that developers were more responsive to planning policy and planners' preferences than to buyers' preferences. In search of "certainty and timeliness for their investments", Grant (2009: 27) found these organisations reported that they often created development proposals "based on what they believed the city [planners] will approve" - they did not then simply, or even primarily, respond to assumptions about buyer's preferences.

Housebuilders claim concerns about the potential to replicate, at new schemes, the atmosphere found in established MU areas, and worries about the viability of onsite services in new residential developments, form further disincentives to delivering land use mix (Fulford, 1996). They also claim that commercial units in suburban housing estates achieve low capital values whilst, in poorer areas, achieving market rents is impossible (DWA et al., 2009). Further, institutional investors shun these properties because they attract, from their perspective, 'undesirable' tenants - small, local businesses (Savills, 2005c). Collectively, these issues conspire to make onsite commercial units, from a housebuilder's perspective, unappealing.

Despite the above noted concerns, housebuilders do sometimes include commercial and community-use facilities within their residential developments. The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) (2011) identifies a large number of 'best practice' residential schemes and some of these feature either lone, or a concentration of, facilities. However, how far these schemes reflect 'typical' new build housing estates is dubious since they were singled out as particularly 'good' examples of the industry's output. Plus, it is unclear how far these schemes represent developers' preferences and how far they are shaped by planning authority requirements. At 'gated estates' developers can also offer the occasional onsite shop and leisure facility but again it is unclear whether their presence reflects developers' preferences or guidance from the local planning authority (Atkinson and Flint, 2004). Further, unlike America and Australia, the UK has not seen the development of large, private gated estates providing multiple 'resort' facilities such as swimming pools, meeting rooms, numerous shops and business space (Goodman and Douglas, 2010). Admittedly, though, this is more likely to be due to planning restrictions curtailing land availability (Blandy, 2008), and shaping the type of development possible, than any recorded reluctance on the part of UK housebuilders' to deliver such projects.

### **Provision of open space**

Housebuilders' appear more amenable to onsite open space provision than to the provision of commercial and community-use properties - Chapter 10 reflects on this issue in the context of the research findings. Harris and Larkham (1999: 19) claim speculative housebuilders, working closely with planning authorities in the UK, have started to include larger amounts of landscaping in their schemes in response to a perception that buyers want "immediate maturity" in their 'natural' environment. A larger number of CABE's (2011) best practice schemes, discussed before, included open space than onsite commercial and community-use properties. Beuschel and Rudel (2009) found that housebuilders would negotiate with planning authorities over open space provision

offering to provide larger amounts in return for building at higher densities. Thus, it seemed open space provision was something on which housebuilders were prepared to compromise. However, Beuschel and Rudel (2009) also found that housebuilders could, occasionally, take the local planning authority to Court in arguments over open space requirements whilst between housebuilders there were differences in the volume of space provided. For example, those carrying out infill development provided less than those developing greenfield sites with the former claiming space restrictions constrained their ability to provide such amenities (Beuschel and Rudel, 2009).

### 5.2.2 ATTITUDES TO MIXED USE

Amongst developers, MU is far from being identified as the 'most preferred' form of development (Barlow et al., 2005; DWA et al., 2009; Kochan, 2008). Single use schemes have long held this position (Barlow et al., 2005, Marsh and Coupland, 1996). Highlighting this attitude, developers have opposed planning policies that require MU with a report by CBRE and London Residential Research (2004) noting that office developers and institutional investors submitted evidence at the Public Examination of the draft London Plan (in July 2003) opposing a proposed MU policy relating to new office schemes. Developers have been slow to accept and pursue MU with parts of the literature claiming MU has been very much policy, rather than market, led (Kochan, 2008; Jones Lang LaSalle, 2005). When developers have provided MU, they have done so tentatively, much preferring to separate uses in different buildings rather than combine uses in a single property (Marsh and Coupland, 1996; CBRE, 2006). It seems then that they are reluctant to deliver fine grained MU. Discussed later on though, the literature suggests that developers' attitudes to MU were, until very recently, changing.

Developers give various reasons for their hesitancy around MU. When exploring and reporting data on housebuilders' attitudes to mix, collected for the purposes of Objective 3, a point of interest was whether these reasons were mentioned (Chapter 10 and Appendix 1). Chief amongst these reasons concerned difficulties in accessing finance (Barlow et al. 2002). Developers perceive, and indeed find, investors to be resistant to MU (Urban Initiatives, 2002; Barlow et al., 2002; DWA et al., 2009). Investors are seen to favour long term, low risk, large investments that require minimal management, have an established track record and can be easily incorporated into an investment portfolio (Barlow et al., 2002). Developers claim investors routinely identify single use commercial schemes as better suited to these requirements (Barlow et al., 2002). This perception is supported by the literature where investors are indeed found to favour single use schemes (Jones Lang LaSalle, 2005). Investors identify higher risks and lower capital values at MU developments and this, the developers claim, makes it

hard to achieve higher values on MU products (Marsh and Coupland, 1996; Barlow et al., 2002; Rawlinson 2005; Rowley 1996). Savills (2005b), however, finds that the commercial elements of MU schemes, the elements where information is available, outperform equivalent single use commercial schemes in the medium and long term suggesting that investors' assumptions about the profitability of MU are misguided.

Greater complexity and costs in planning and development, and less flexibility in long term redevelopment options, formed further grounds for developers' scepticism of MU (Barlow et al., 2002; Rowley, 1996b; Jones Lang LaSalle, 2005). Providing servicing and access to different uses, designing an acceptable arrangement of uses and addressing each use's differing environmental health requirements was said to complicate and prolong development and increase costs (DWA et al., 2009; Barlow et al., 2002). This complexity can result in large multidisciplinary teams, a scenario which rapidly inflates costs. Kochan (2008) reports that work on Liverpool One, a recent MU scheme in Liverpool city centre combining retail, leisure and residential, entailed 80 teams of consultants and 25 teams of architects. Turning to redevelopment options, since the different uses in MU schemes operate on leases of different lengths, with residential on by far the longest, developers claim that to complete periodic refurbishment works on the commercial elements it can be necessary to buy out the residential occupiers (Rowley, 1996b; Jones Lang Le Salle, 2005). This constrains the scheme's redevelopment potential and lowers its appeal to investors. Lastly, perceptions that planners promote MU in unviable locations, and assumptions about occupiers' preferences, were further reasons for developers to treat MU with caution. Developers felt planners failed to consider market dynamics when allocating sites for MU and so inappropriate plots were identified (DWA et al., 2009). This shaded their attitudes to MU, or at least to providing MU in some of the locations favoured by policy (DWA et al., 2009). Finally, developers believed residential and commercial occupiers (i.e. purchasers/tenants) favoured single use schemes and disliked MU (Savills 2003; Marsh and Coupland, 1996). Worries about finding a market therefore prompted some developers to avoid MU, or at least view it with caution.

### **Changing attitudes to MU?**

Despite the tone of the above discussion, parts of the literature report that developers (and investors) are becoming progressively more positive about MU. Between 2003 and 2005, Savills (2005a) recorded a massive 146% increase in major MU schemes in the English development pipeline (pre-planning to construction) whilst the proportion of major MU schemes featuring residential use increased from 75% in 2003 to 85% in 2005 (Savills, 2005a). In 2010, Savills (2010) identified 1.2 million homes in the

English development pipeline on sites of 250 plus dwellings and the majority of these (proportion not specified) were said to be provided in MU schemes (defined as schemes providing at least two uses with no requirements on the proportions of each use). However, whilst this shows developers are providing more MU schemes and are including residential use in a larger proportion of schemes, recent research by DWA et al. (2009) finds developers (and other property market actors) continue to identify various problems with MU. It is still far from being their 'most favoured' development product (DWA et al., 2009). As to whether attitudes will improve under today's difficult financial conditions (as of early 2012), the omens do not look promising. Marsh and Coupland (1996: [n.d]) claimed "an improving property market and development market" were a "pre-requisite" for positive attitudes to MU. Surveying 200+ individuals and organisations involved in regeneration in 2009, Parkinson et al. (2009: 30) found 50% of respondents believed there would be a 50% reduction in MU development in the short term. Of all property classes, respondents were only more downcast about the prospects for residential development with 64% predicting a 50% plus fall in activity in this sector. Lastly, whilst mortgage finance on all properties is constrained, this is particularly true for mortgages on new build city/town centre apartments (Cauglieri, 2011). These properties attract a lower loan to value ratio than either new build houses or second hand homes (Cauglieri, 2011). With apartments being the typical residential component in new build MU schemes, and with these schemes typically coming forward in town and city centres, issues with mortgage finance availability will constrain buyer demand and this, ultimately, will affect developers' willingness to provide new schemes.

### 5.2.3 CONCLUSIONS

Traditionally, developers have been sceptical of MU. Compared to single use schemes, they have been viewed as more costly and complex and less appealing to investors and occupiers. Investors have also rejected MU favouring single use commercial schemes. Attitudes appeared to be changing pre-credit crunch/recession, as indicated by a growing number of new and under-construction MU schemes. However, whilst economic conditions remain difficult, it seems developer and investor appetite for MU will be tempered. Turning to attitudes to mix at residential developments, housebuilders are generally resistant to the idea of providing onsite commercial and community-use properties partly because they assume buyers prefer single use residential environments. These uses can, however, be included in some new schemes and at some gated estates, but it is unclear how far their presence is directed by planners and planning policy. The provision of onsite open space seems less controversial. However, even here, negotiations between developers and planning bodies on acceptable amounts of open space can end up in the Courts.

## RESEARCH METHODS

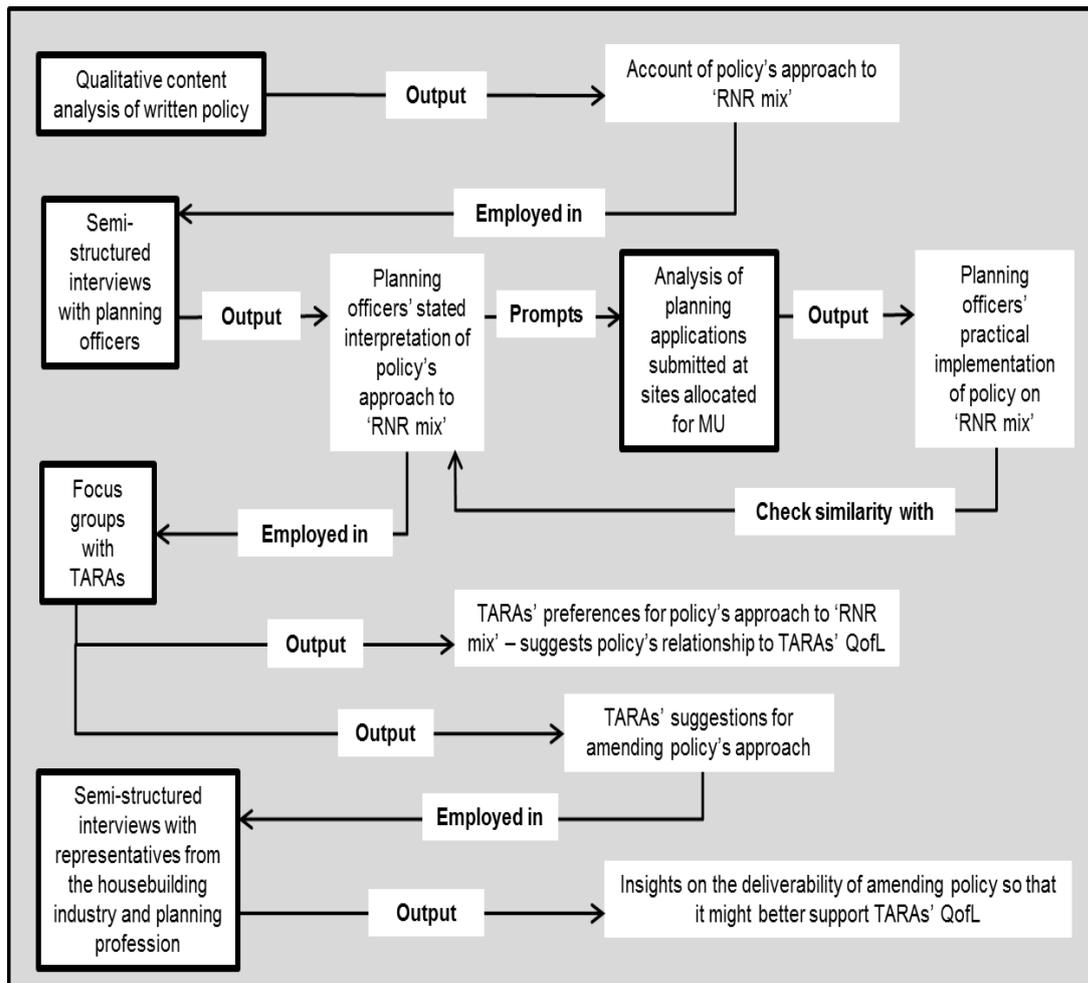
Rosengren (1981: 120) claims, “approaches and methodologies are never good per se; they are good for something”. Several methods were employed within the research on the basis that each represented a ‘good’ mechanism for addressing a research objective. Table 1 summarises these methods and shows their links to the three research objectives.

**Table 1: Selected Methods**

	Objective	Method / Data Analysis Technique
Primary objectives	1. Identify policy’s approach to ‘RNR mix’	Qualitative content analysis of written planning policy  Semi-structured interviews with planning officers  Analysis of planning applications at sites allocated for MU
	2. Explore TARAs’ preferences for policy’s approach to ‘RNR mix’.  From this, draw tentative conclusions about policy’s relationship to TARAs’ QofL.  As an additional goal, through the process of engaging with TARAs, investigate the interests and activities of these groups, and their distribution within communities.	Focus groups with committee members from a diverse sample of TARAs
Secondary objective	3. Explore the ‘deliverability’ of amending policy so that it might better support TARAs’ QofL	Semi-structured interviews with individuals at self-proclaimed representative bodies for the housebuilding industry and planning profession

Overleaf, Figure 1 maps the relationships between the selected methods showing how the output from one method feeds into another. The chapter then describes, taking each objective in turn, the methods used to address Objectives 1, 2 and 3 with discussion covering the reasons behind each method’s choice.

**Figure 1: Methods map**



Notes: The bordered boxes show distinct methods. The boxes without borders show the outputs of these methods.

## 6.1 ADDRESSING OBJECTIVE 1

### *Identify planning policy's approach to 'RNR mix'*

As discussed in Chapter 2, it seems that planning policy has the greatest direct scope to influence the QoFL of TARA members when it is interpreted and applied in development management decisions. It is the primary reference point within these decisions and these decisions can shape the residential environments occupied by these individuals. Given the study's overarching interest in the relationship between policy and QoFL, it seemed that the 'natural' focus of the research should be the content of policy's approach to 'RNR mix', and the way it is interpreted and applied within these development management decisions. An analysis of planning applications and their associated decision notices seemed to be an obvious method for addressing this concern. However, there were several weaknesses with this method and these led to its ultimate rejection. First,

there are real difficulties around identifying planning applications that provide a forum for the exercise of policy's approach to 'RNR mix'. Online databases of planning applications provided by local planning authorities are typically searched by site address, application submission / validation date, or application reference number, not by the development's proposed use. Without a thorough understanding of current and historic planning applications within a settlement, it would be difficult to readily identify suitable applications for study, such as applications for single use schemes and applications for MU schemes. Further, there are issues around identifying a sufficient number of relevant planning applications. With the Barker Review of Land Use Planning (Barker, 2006: 116) finding that approximately 50% of planning applications relate to small scale householder development and 4% to advertisements, fewer than half of all planning applications in the planning system are likely to feature opportunities for the exercise of policy's approach to 'RNR mix'. Also, given the fall in planning applications that has occurred during the credit crunch/recession (30% fewer applications were received in Q1 2009 than in Q1 2008), the population of recent planning applications from which to select relevant cases will be reduced (DCLG and National Statistics, 2009a). Second, a focus on planning applications would mean that analysis could only reveal policy's approach to mix in the context of submitted planning applications potentially 'blinding' the research to the totality of policy's approach. How the approach operates in development scenarios which are not covered in a sample of planning applications would go undiscovered. Finally, decision notices can provide minimum information on the content of policy, often just listing a series of development plan policies and providing little or no comment on their interests and concerns. Focusing on these documents is unlikely to reveal the detail of policy's approach. Given these issues, an alternative means for exploring the content of policy, and the way policy is interpreted and applied in development management decisions, was required. Attention soon turned to an approach that involved direct engagement with a sample of local authority planning officers, for the purposes of exploring how they interpret and apply policy, and an analysis of written policy.

Under a scheme of delegation, where there is no referral to ward councillors or a local planning authority's Planning Committee (a body comprising ward councillors) local authority planning officers have, in recent years, determined the vast majority of planning applications. Analysis of DCLG, ODPM and National Statistics data on planning decisions revealed that in Q1 of the years 2003 to 2010, officers determined, on average, 88% of planning applications<sup>8</sup>. The introduction of government targets on the time taken to decide applications and, between 2001 and 2004, targets on the proportion of decisions determined through delegated powers, helps explain the volume of applications decided in

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<sup>8</sup> Planning Applications Statistical Releases for Quarter 1 from DCLG, ODPM and National Statistics for the years 2003 to 2010 were reviewed to identify this figure (ODPM and National Statistics, 2003, 2004, 2005; DCLG and National Statistics, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009b, 2010a)

this way (ODPM, 2000, 2002a, 2003a). In possessing this role, the way officers interpret and apply policy seems crucial in determining how this policy influences residential environments and thus how it may affect the QoL of TARA members. This assessment prompted a focus on exploring how these actors understand and apply policy's approach to 'RNR mix'. However, it is noted that a) the Planning Committee and, in exceptional circumstances, the Secretary of State through 'call in' powers, can determine planning applications; and b) Planning Inspectors and the Courts determine planning appeals if the planning authority's decision is challenged. Consequently, it is appreciated that how these additional actors interpret and apply policy form further influences on the way planning policy shapes residential environments.

Within the research, to explore the basic 'content' of policy's approach to 'RNR mix' a qualitative content analysis was completed on a sample of national, regional and local policy. This account formed the discussion material for a series of semi-structured interviews held with local government planning officers. These interviews aimed to identify how officers' interpreted and applied policy on mix. Findings from these interviews prompted modest use of a third method - a number of planning applications submitted at sites allocated for MU were analysed along with their associated decision notices. These different methods are discussed below.

#### 6.1.1 QUALITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS OF WRITTEN POLICY

A qualitative content analysis of policy was thought able to produce information on the basic 'content' of policy's approach to 'RNR mix'. It was thought the resultant account would be able to steer discussion in the planning officer interviews, act as an *aide memoire* to these officers and indicate the degree of detail desired in their interview answers. The volume of information contained within policy, and its frequent revisions, created concerns that the planning officers might struggle to recall some of the finer details. Plus, without a guide to indicate the level of information required, there were concerns officers might opt for a 'broad brush' account of policy.

Qualitative content analysis is a form of textual analysis where the objective is to describe and analyse text "in order to represent its content" or meaning (Miller and Brewer, 2003: 43). Feher Waltz et al. (2010: 279) report that it is an approach designed to "identify, measure, describe, and make inferences about specified characteristics within or reflected by written or verbal text". Certain characteristics indicated that it was an approach suited to the research's interests and data. For example, it is usually concerned with the analysis of written material (texts and transcripts). Planning policy, as understood by the research, occurs, in part, as written material. The data therefore suited the method. Also, the

technique provides “convenience” as it simplifies and reduces “large amounts of data into organized segments” (Marvasti in Silverman, 2006: 163) with Singleton and Straits (1999: 383) reporting that the “basic idea” of the analysis “is to reduce the total content of a communication...to a set of categories that represent some characteristic of research interest”. The research was interested in doing precisely this. There was a desire to extract messages on ‘RNR mix’ from expansive volumes of written policy that cover a range of topics. Further, within qualitative content analysis the “emphasis is on the content of the written or verbal communication rather than its process or paralinguistic features” (Feher Waltz et al., 2010: 180). Within the research, concern lay in identifying the basic ‘content’ of written policy.

In selecting qualitative content analysis, the quantitative version of the technique was rejected. Though quantitative content analysis has been used for the analysis of planning policy before (e.g. see Bruff and Wood, 1995; Norton, 2008), the technique’s concern for reducing text to a numerical description, where frequency is paramount, was thought liable to lose the detail and narrative of policy. This was thought problematic in and of itself, but it was also thought liable to restrict the manner in which the resultant account could be employed within the planning officer interviews. Further, the core principle underpinning the technique, that frequency equals significance, is disputed. As Bauer (2000) argues, absence can be as significant as presence when analysing text.

A primary consideration when using qualitative content analysis is where in text ‘meaning’ is seen to lie. The literature posits several locations. Krippendorff (2004: 19) finds some scholars identify meaning within the text as it is seen to lie inert waiting to be discovered. He suggests some associate meaning with the “source of text”, i.e. with the author, and lastly, some are seen to identify meaning as emerging “in the process of a researcher analysing a text relative to a particular context” (Krippendorff, 2004: 19). For Krippendorff (2004), text is incapable of holding a meaning independent of interpretation whilst it cannot capture an author’s unadulterated intent because it may be the product of multiple authors/editors and is shaped by the context in which it was produced. He therefore rejects the first two models. For Krippendorff (2004), meaning only emerges through the subjective interpretation of text by the reader – the approach of the third model. This approach was judged the most convincing and therefore it was adopted within the research. Consequently, the account of policy’s approach to ‘RNR mix’ produced through qualitative content analysis is recognised as particular to the author. Bauer’s (2000: 134) criticism of content analysis, that it assumes “one can infer any particular intentions of a communicator or any particular reading of an audience”, is thus avoided.

The decision to use qualitative content analysis to analyse the policy sample influenced the decision to use this same technique to analyse the transcripts of the planning officer interviews, TARA focus groups and the semi-structured interviews with representatives from the planning profession and housebuilding industry. In each case, the interest lay in *describing the 'content'* of the interview or focus group (as interpreted by the author) rather than creating an extremely interpretive account that moved far away from the words of the research participants and perhaps emphasised, and invested much significance in, things like the length of pauses. Techniques such as discourse analysis can invest much meaning in such aspects of speech.

### **6.1.1 (i) Analysing the policy text**

Qualitative content analysis typically employs an inductive approach to the identification of themes in text (Feher Waltz et al., 2010). Within the research, to identify key messages within policy a part inductive part deductive approach was used. Providing the deductive component, there was a predetermined interest in identifying *what* policy proposed, in terms of the physical environment, whilst the *rationale* for these proposals was also of concern. Similar to Rowley (1998) (Chapter 3), there was an interest in exploring the totality of policy's approach to land use mix. Thus, analysis focused on identifying measures that encouraged and restricted opportunities for mix. Also, noting comments about the conceptual ambiguity of MU in policy (Chapter 3), there was a predetermined interest in exploring if/how written policy engaged with this concept.

When analysing the policy text, it was assumed that any 'function' for which land can be developed or protected was a type of 'land use' and therefore open space, transport hubs and children's play space were considered 'land uses' alongside the more 'traditional' uses of residential, retail and office etc. Whilst not featuring in the Use Class Order (ODPM, 2005b), these uses represent distinct and meaningful ways of using land and so, to be thorough, it was thought appropriate to understand them as uses within the context of the research. It was also decided that any arrangement of residential and non-residential uses, that brought one into 'proximity' with the other, with a precise definition of proximity consciously avoided, would be understood as 'RNR mix'. Under this approach, uses did not have to be located side by side to qualify as 'RNR mix'. Again, this was to develop the most comprehensive account of policy's approach to combining residential and non-residential uses. In the analysis, these assumptions determined where and when policy was seen to promote, encourage and discourage 'RNR mix'.

In the inductive component of the analysis, codes and themes were identified within the text. Codes and themes identified in this way were linked to ideas contained

within the literature (Chapter 3) and the author's own original thoughts and they related to various issues including influences on policy, policy's influence on the built environment and the components of an 'ideal' residential environment (see Appendix 1 for the coding scheme). Including an inductive component in the coding process made it less likely for the analysis to miss out potentially interesting issues not previously considered by the author – a possible risk in a solely deductive approach (Prior, 2003). The recognition of this risk led to a partly inductive approach being used in the analysis of all the interview and focus group transcripts compiled within the study.

In analysing the policy sample, since the aim was to abstract key messages on 'what' policy proposed and 'why' it proposed it, and use the resultant account as the discussion material in the planning officer interviews, analysis focused on providing a description of the approach which stayed close to the text. Consequently, the analysis focused on 'descriptive' codes and themes (King and Horrocks, 2010). However, since all codes and themes reflect the subjective interpretations of the author, all are, in essence, interpretative. The coding scheme remained a 'live' document with new codes added continuously. This approach was replicated in the analysis of all the interview and focus group transcripts. So that each policy document and indeed each interview transcript and focus group transcript could be analysed against all codes, each passed through the relevant coding process several times. Separate coding schemes were developed for each analysis - e.g. one was developed for the analysis of written policy, one for the analysis of the planning officer transcripts etc. Different schemes were needed because different interests and objectives informed each analysis (as discussed within this chapter).

An Excel spreadsheet was constructed to support the coding process (Appendix 1b provides an excerpt of this spreadsheet). For each policy document, sections of policy were coded and then electronically cut and pasted into separate rows. Against each section, separate columns noted the code and theme against which it had been marked, the document from which it had been extracted, the date of this document, the 'tier' of policy the document related to (national, regional or local) and whether the excerpt came from a distinct policy or the explanatory text accompanying a policy. The spreadsheet could therefore be filtered by all these items supporting a rigorous and systematic exploration of the text. Sometimes, the same section of text could be listed on multiple rows as it was allocated to multiple codes. It had been the intention to use the software package Nvivo, which supports qualitative data analysis, to code the policy. However, several of the older policy documents, and some of the more elaborate documents featuring many images, could not be imported into Nvivo.

## 6.1.2 THE POLICY SAMPLE

Purposive sampling was used to select examples of national, regional and local policy for analysis. Analysing all national, regional and local policy through qualitative content analysis would have been impractical. For each layer of policy, statutory policy was sampled. This policy is the primary reference point for planning officers when determining planning applications. Given this, it seems that of all policy, statutory policy is most likely to be reflected in completed residential environments and so is perhaps most likely to have an influence on the QofL of TARA members. Additionally, because statutory policy is required by government, and its content is prescribed to some extent in the Planning Acts, it is a good choice if comparing guidance between locations, an interest of the research (see later). Table 2 identifies the policy sample. Appendix 2 notes the interests/concerns of these policies.

The policy selection was finalised in January 2010. Since then, significant changes to the planning policy environment have occurred. The Localism Act 2011 revoked the legislation that supports the production of new Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS) and enables their revision. Government has stated its intention to eventually revoke all existing RSSs following an assessment of the environmental impact of doing so. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published in March 2012, has replaced virtually all Planning Policy Statements (PPS) and Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) and it now stands as the main source of national planning policy (though many Circulars do remain). Further, local planning authorities are now required to prepare Local Plans that satisfy the tenets of the NPPF. As Table 2 shows, the policy sample included an RSS, various PPSs and PPGs and several local development plans constructed pre-NPPF. Chapter 11 reflects on the implications for the research of this evolving policy environment.

**Table 2: Policy sample** (finalised in January 2010)

	<b>Policy</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Year adopted</b>
	<b>National</b>		
1	PPS 1 Delivering Sustainable Development	ODPM	2005
2	PPS Eco-towns – Supplement to PPS1	DCLG	2009
3	PPG 2 Green Belts	ODPM	1995
4	PPS 3 Housing	DCLG	2006
5	PPS 4 Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth	DCLG	2009
6	PPS 9 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation	ODPM	2005

7	PPG 13 Transport	ODPM	2001
8	PPG 15 Planning and the Historic Environment	Dept. of the Environment & Dept. of National Heritage	1994
9	PPG 16 Archaeology and Planning	ODPM	1990
10	PPG 17 Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation	ODPM	2002
11	PPG 19 Outdoor Advertisement Control	Dept. of the Environment and the Welsh Office	1992
12	PPG 20 Coastal Planning	Dept. of the Environment and the Welsh Office	1992
13	PPS 22 Renewable Energy	ODPM	2004
14	PPS 23 Planning and Pollution Control	ODPM	2004
15	PPG 24 Planning and Noise	ODPM	1994
16	PPS 25 Development and Flood Risk	DCLG	2006
17	Circular 03/07: Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007	DCLG	2007
18	Circular 04/07: Planning for Travelling Showpeople	DCLG	2007
19	Circular 01/06: Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites	ODPM	2006
20	Circular 03/2005: Changes of Use of Building & Land - The Town & Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987	ODPM	2005
21	Circular 06/05: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation - Statutory Obligations and their Impact Within the Planning System	ODPM	2005
22	Circular 10/05: Permitted Development Rights for Antennas	ODPM	2005
23	Circular 04/00: Planning Controls for Hazardous Substances	ODPM	2000
	<b>Regional</b>		
24	The South East Plan – Regional Spatial Strategy for the South East of England	Gov. Office for the South East	2009
	<b>Local</b>		
25	Ashford Local Plan	Ashford Borough Council	2000
26	Ashford Core Strategy	Ashford Borough Council	2008
27	Epsom and Ewell Local Plan	Epsom & Ewell Borough Council	2000
28	Epsom and Ewell Core Strategy	Epsom & Ewell Borough Council	2007
29	Southampton Local Plan	Southampton City Council	2006
30	Southampton Core Strategy	Southampton City Council	2010

At the national level, between September 2009 and January 2010, a scoping exercise considered all adopted PPGs, PPSs and Circulars, the documents which constitute national planning policy (DCLG, 2009b). Minerals Planning Statements, Mineral Policy Guidance Notes and Marine Minerals Guidance Notes are further sources of national policy but their focus is not sufficiently relevant to explanations of policy's approach to 'RNR mix' to have justified their inclusion in the exercise (DCLG, 2009b). Of the policies studied, those perceived as having obvious relevance to the practice of 'RNR mix' were abstracted for analysis. This included policies which spoke about land use mix, MU, diversifying uses, change of use, the location of housing in relation to non-residential uses, and/or that discussed protecting land for housing or non-residential uses. In Appendix 2, the PPGs, PPSs and Circulars which failed this 'test', and were excluded from the sample, are discussed.

At the regional level, The South East Plan (published by the Government Office for the South East (GOSE) in 2009), the RSS for the South East (the area covered by GOSE), which includes ten sub-regional strategies, was selected for study. RSSs replaced Regional Planning Guidance and supplanted Structure Plans (Cullingworth and Nadin, 2006). They were introduced by the previous Labour Government through the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (Cullingworth and Nadin, 2006). They were meant to provide an overarching development strategy for a region for a fifteen to twenty year period and they included a Regional Transport Strategy (ODPM, 2004b: 1). Mace et al. (2007: 52) suggest that higher density, compact MU development only "makes sense" in the "hot housing markets of the south-east". A focus on the South East Plan created an opportunity to 'test' whether policy-makers hold with Mace et al.'s (2007) assessment as indicated by the content of the regional strategy. A further prompt for the selection of the South East Plan was the regional focus of the studentship funding the research (mentioned in Chapter 1). Noting the size and detail of RSSs, and the overall size and detail of the entire policy sample (containing 30 policies and plans equating to over 2,000 pages of policy), it seemed prudent to restrict analysis to a single RSS.

Guided by the choice of regional policy, policies for three local planning authorities in the South East, three being thought a manageable number for detailed analysis, were selected for study. As planning legislation requires local policy to reference regional and national policy, it seemed interesting to explore consistencies between the different tiers (Cullingworth and Nadin, 2006). It also seemed interesting to investigate if a consistent approach was evident across several localities bound by the same regional policy context. The emphasis each placed on mix could, for instance, be explored - the literature finds that emphasis can differ between localities (Chapter 3). In January 2010, Core Strategies, the central document in the suite of documents termed the Local Development Framework

(LDF), and Local Plans, or in the case of unitary authorities, Unitary Development Plans, constituted the primary sources of statutory local planning policy. LDFs were introduced with RSSs in the aforementioned 2004 Act (Cullingworth and Nadin, 2006). They were to replace Local Plans and Unitary Development Plans (Cullingworth and Nadin, 2006). Local and Unitary Development Plans provide detailed development management and land use regulation policies. Core Strategies were to set out a high level spatial vision for a community and were to be supplemented, within the LDF, by a series of policy documents providing detailed area and issue based guidance. Until a community completed its initial set of LDF documents, government permitted the retention of Local and Unitary Development Plans. It was thought interesting to explore local policy's most recent approach to 'RNR mix' and so attention focused on just those communities in the South East with an adopted Core Strategy. These communities formed the relatively small sampling frame from which the three local planning authorities were drawn. The sampling frame proved small because few communities had a Core Strategy in place in January 2010 - through desktop research the author found that *less than 30% of local authorities in the South East, with a duty to prepare a Core Strategy, had one in place*. This situation is repeated across England where the DCLG found 30% of English local planning authorities had a Core Strategy in May 2011 (DCLG, 2011a).

#### **6.1.2 (i) The three communities**

Two of the three communities selected from the sampling frame were chosen because they reflected distinct *planning and development scenarios* common to a number of communities across England indicating that there could be opportunities to extrapolate findings to numerous similar cases. The two scenarios were 'high growth' and 'growth through brownfield redevelopment'. It was not presumed that these scenarios explained or determined each community's approach to 'RNR mix'. Rather, there was simply an interest in seeing if different and distinct approaches to 'RNR mix' were found in different and distinct development contexts. Patton (2002: 243) argues that by studying a phenomenon in diverse contexts "important common patterns that cut across variations" can be identified. Such common patterns are of "particular interest and value" because they capture the "core experiences and central, shared aspects or impacts of a program" (Patton, 1990: 172). If common patterns in the approach to 'RNR mix' were identified across diverse communities, it was assumed these patterns would capture the core aspects of policy's approach to 'RNR mix'. The final community selected represented another distinct development scenario but, of itself, this context did not form the main prompt for the community's choice – the main reason is discussed below. In the following paragraphs, the three communities are briefly introduced, and their development contexts (and the commonality of these contexts) explained:

*Ashford* in Kent was selected to represent a *high growth scenario*. The previous Labour Government introduced the idea of Growth Areas and Growth Points - areas programmed for substantial housing and employment development (ODPM, 2003b). Four Growth Areas and 50 Growth Points were selected with many located in the South East (ODPM, 2003b; Homes and Communities Agency, 2010). Ashford was identified as a Growth Area with 31,000 new homes and 28,000 new jobs planned by 2031 through major investment in employment and commercial space (Ashford's Future, 2007). The plan is for this growth to be delivered through intensification of development within the built up part of Ashford and through the creation of at least two urban extensions that will occupy small parts of the Borough's large rural hinterland (Ashford Borough Council (ABC), 2008). Whilst the Coalition Government has seemingly abandoned Growth Areas and Points, it is still avowedly pro-growth, as evidenced by policies contained in the NPPF (DCLG, 2012). This document promotes a 'pro-growth' future for all 'appropriate' locations (e.g. an inappropriate place would be one protected by EU directives).

*Southampton* in Hampshire was selected to represent a *growth through brownfield redevelopment scenario*. PPS3 Housing required 60% of new homes to be built on brownfield land (DCLG, 2006a), the new NPPF (DCLG, 2012) encourages the re-use of brownfield sites, while there is often strong public opposition whenever greenfield development is proposed. Consequently, in the future, all communities will be required, and perhaps inclined, to accommodate at least part of any new growth in brownfield redevelopment. Southampton is a densely developed city where the built up area extends to the administrative boundary in many places (Southampton City Council (SSC), 2010a: 17). Consequently, "the vast majority of future development will be as redevelopment of previously developed [brownfield] land" (SSC, 2010a: 17).

Lastly, *Epsom and Ewell* in Surrey, referred to throughout the thesis as Epsom, represents a planning and development scenario of '*growth constrained by the Green Belt*'. Green Belt policy protects designated Green Belt land from most development so that it remains permanently open (ODPM, 1995). Government data for 2009/10 indicates that 194 local planning authorities within England featured five or more hectares of Green Belt land (DCLG and National Statistics, 2010b). For many communities then, growth is affected to some extent by Green Belt policy and so the scenario of 'growth constrained by the Green Belt' might apply. In Epsom, some 42% of the Borough is designated Green Belt (Epsom and Ewell Borough Council (E&EBC), 2000). Whilst this development context is interesting, Epsom's unique political profile was the real prompt for its inclusion in the research. Within Epsom, councillors affiliated to residents associations form a majority and have done since the early 1970s (Rallings and Thrasher, 2003). The most recent Local

Council Elections in May 2011, (there were no elections in May 2012), saw residents associations retain their majority (BBC News, 2011). Given the research interest in TARAs, it was thought interesting to see how policy constructed within a political environment dominated by residents associations compares to policy constructed in political environments dominated by mainstream political parties. Unfortunately though, it is not possible to say if the approach found within Epsom is explained by the political dominance of residents associations. Interviews with planning officers at Epsom (discussed later) provided an opportunity to explore perspectives on the role residents associations played in shaping this policy, but, because the officers reported only being in post a relatively short time, they were unable to shed light on the issue (see Chapter 8).

Table 3 provides contextualising data for the three communities. This data was current, or was the most recent available, when the communities were selected in 2010. Besides differing in development scenario, Table 3 shows how the communities differ across a number of other measures including size, affluence, house prices and tenure profile.

**Table 3: Contextualising data for the case study communities**

(Plus the South East &amp; England)

Item	Ashford	Epsom	Southampton	South East	England
Type of Local Authority <sup>1</sup>	Non-met. District	Non-met. District	Unitary Authority		
Population in 2001 <sup>1</sup>	102,661	67,059	217,445	8 m	49.1 m
Size of area (hectares) <sup>2</sup>	58,000	3,400	5,600	1.9 m	13.3 m
Housebuilding target – no. of net additional dwellings by 2026 <sup>3</sup>	22,700	3,980	16,300	654,000	
2007 Index of Deprivation - rank 1 most deprived local authority, rank 354 least deprived <sup>4</sup>	227	338	87		
Average house price Q1 2010 <sup>5</sup>	£242,205	£348,019	£181,354	£262,076 <sup>6</sup>	£212,453 <sup>6</sup>
Median gross annual full time earnings, by place of residence, in 2009 <sup>7</sup>	£25,019	£32,101	£22,527	£28,657	£26,145
% owner occupiers <sup>1</sup>	75%	83%	58%	74%	69%
% private renters <sup>1</sup>	6%	7%	16%	9%	9%
% social housing tenants <sup>1</sup>	16%	8%	24%	14%	19%
% dwellings in Council Tax Band A in March 2010 <sup>1</sup>	7%	0.5%	31%	9%	25%
% dwellings in Council Tax Bands D to I in March 2010 <sup>1</sup>	45%	80%	14%	49%	34%
Political profile May 2010 <sup>8</sup> (post election)	Cons.	Residents' Associations	Conservative		Lib Dem. & Con. Coalition

Notes: Index of Deprivation 2007 prepared by UK Gov. Figures shown are the population weighted average of the combined index of deprivation ranks for Super Output Areas in each local authority district.

**Data sources**<sup>1</sup> Neighbourhood Statistics (ONS, [n.d]a)<sup>2</sup> Generalised Land Use Database 2005 at Neighbourhood Statistics (ONS, [n.d]a)<sup>3</sup> South East Plan (GOSE, 2009)<sup>4</sup> LA Summaries Index of Deprivation 2007 (DCLG, [n.d]a)<sup>5</sup> UK house prices: January – March 2010 (BBC News, 2010a, b & c).<sup>6</sup> House Price Index: Mix-adjusted average house prices by region (DCLG, 2010)<sup>7</sup> Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2009 - Annual Pay Gross (£) all employee jobs (ONS, 2010a)<sup>8</sup> Each Local Authority's website (ABC, 2010a; SCC, 2010c; E&EBC, 2010)

Since January 2010, Ashford and Epsom have created and adopted further LDF documents. Both, for instance, have adopted Town Centre Area Action Plans and these both discuss MU development, town centre housing and land use mix. Consequently, these documents create new avenues through which policy's approach to 'RNR mix' is articulated. Also, all three communities have become members of separate Local Economic Partnerships (LEPs) (Department of Business, Innovation & Skills, 2011a and 2011b; ONS, 2012). These are new local authority-business partnerships launched by the Coalition Government. The White Paper, *Local Growth: Realising Every Place's Potential* (2010: 13), claims they will drive "sustainable private sector-led growth and job creation" and it is possible they will play a role in planning. The White Paper (2010: 26) notes that they "will be free to...develop strategic planning frameworks to address economic development and infrastructure issues" and may "take on other planning related activities", including "processing" planning applications. It is possible, then, that these new bodies will create and implement planning policies that have a bearing on each settlement's approach to land use mix.

### 6.1. 3 SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS WITH PLANNING OFFICERS

Semi-structured interviews were completed with local government planning officers at Ashford, Epsom and Southampton. All interviews were conducted in 2010. Interviews were a way of exploring the narratives the officers used and/or developed to discuss and engage with policy and they provided a forum within which these officers could present their understandings, and experiences, of policy (King and Horrocks, 2010). The research was interested in precisely these issues. Interviews also supported a dialogue between the author and the officer enabling points of interest to be expanded, unexpected comments followed up, and points of confusion or ambiguity resolved in situ (Britten, 2006). Some commentators would suggest they even provided access to the internal "frameworks of meaning" that the officers held when conceiving and interacting with policy, however, others claim it is naïve to believe interviews afford such insights (Britten, 2006: 14; King and Horrocks, 2010). Taken together, these various features helped guide the choice of interviews over alternative methods when investigating how officers interpret and apply policy.

At each community, interviews were conducted with a Planning Policy Officer, referred to as a PO, and a Development Management Officer, referred to as a DMO. These officers were identified through an internal referral process at each community after first making contact with a senior planning officer by phone and email (see Appendix 3 for the invitations to participate provided to all research participants). The senior planning officer acted then as a gatekeeper. This might have introduced an element of bias with,

perhaps, only officers thought particularly 'good' at interpreting planning policy and engaging with the public being selected. This issue was borne in mind within the research.

POs are responsible for researching and preparing local policy and advising DMOs, councillors and others on the interpretation of policy and the policy implications of planning applications. DMOs determine planning applications through delegated powers and provide advice to councillors, applicants and others on planning applications. They can also work with POs during the construction of new policy or revisions to existing policy. Thus, both types of officer play a role in the plan preparation and development management stages of planning. They both influence how policy is interpreted and implemented in development management decisions and so play a role in how policy shapes residential environments. Consequently, it seemed necessary to interview both types of officer. The informed consent of the officers participating in the interviews, and indeed of all participants involved in the research, was obtained (Appendix 4 for all consent forms).

The interviews were guided by the account of policy's approach to 'RNR mix' identified through the qualitative content analysis of written policy. Interestingly, the planning officers felt this account closely resembled their own interpretation of policy. On only one occasion, regarding a policy in Epsom's Local Plan on employment development in rural areas, was the account found to be obviously out of step with the officers' understandings. The officer interviews also explored the motives and reasoning behind policy's approach to mix, and policy more generally, the influence of regional and national policy on local policy, whether planning officers held any fixed understandings of the concept of MU and officers' experiences of engaging with TARAs (Appendix 5 for talking points). These interests were shaped by a wish to understand the context within which policy was formed, including the role of regional and national policy, discussion in the literature about the conceptual ambiguity of MU in policy and the research interest in TARAs.

A week prior to the interview, the planning officers were provided with a brief account of their community's approach to 'RNR mix' identified from the qualitative content analysis. They were advised that the interview would focus primarily on talking through this account. It was considered essential to provide officers with time before the interview to familiarise themselves with this account and, to support this, and noting officers' workloads, the accounts were kept relatively brief (Appendix 5 includes the accounts).

The interviews were designed to last about an hour as this was thought the maximum time officers might reasonably be able to commit to the exercise. This time

constraint influenced the choice of semi-structured interviews. The characteristic wide ranging discussion of an unstructured interview was thought unlikely to enable all points of interest to be covered within the hour. A highly structured interview, though potentially able to address a large number of topics, was thought incapable of providing officers with the 'space' and flexibility to develop and elaborate points of view. Semi-structured interviews seemed an appropriate compromise between these two styles.

### **6.1.3 (i) Analysing the interview data**

The planning officer interviews, like all interviews and focus groups completed within the research, were recorded using a digital voice recorder and transcribed largely verbatim, although pause length was not counted and 'ums' and 'errs' were usually excluded. Again, like all interview and focus group transcripts, the planning officer interview transcripts were annotated to indicate intonation, laughter etc.

As discussed, the interviews were analysed using qualitative content analysis. An interest in describing the basic 'content' of the interview, and thus the basic 'content' of officers' understandings of policy, resulted in a focus on identifying largely descriptive themes and codes through a part inductive part deductive coding process. The interview topics (discussed earlier) provided a predetermined steer whilst repeated reading of the transcripts, combined with ideas from the literature (Chapter 3) and the author's original thoughts, led to the identification of numerous codes within the text. Codes identified in this latter way related to several issues including the nature of the decision making process in planning, the flexible nature of planning policies/concepts and officers' familiarity / unfamiliarity with written policy (see Appendix 1 for coding schemes). As before, an Excel spreadsheet was constructed to support the coding process. Coded sections of the transcript were cut and pasted into separate rows with separate columns noting the speaker, code and theme against which the section had been marked. The spreadsheet could therefore be filtered by all these items supporting a systematic and rigorous exploration of the data.

It is appreciated that the interpretations of policy identified in the planning officer interviews might differ from the interpretations officers employed in their planning decisions. Interview data is, after all, the product of collaboration between the interviewer and the interviewee and reflects the questions, tone and behaviour of the former, the behaviour, tone and answers of the latter and the interaction between the two individuals (King and Horrocks, 2010; Britten, 2006). Further, for whatever reason, forgetfulness, deliberate subversion of the 'truth' etc., the understandings presented by the officers might diverge from the understandings they employ in their normal planning activities. Gaining

access to these understandings did not, however, seem possible. One mechanism would have been analysing the decision notices issued by planning officers. However, as discussed at the beginning of this chapter, there were various weaknesses to this particular method. Having said this, some small use of this method did, in fact, occur – discussed next:

#### 6.1.4 ANALYSIS OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS AND ASSOCIATED DECISION NOTICES

When interviewed, the planning officers claimed a flexible approach was taken to the type and range of uses permitted at sites allocated for MU. However, they claimed the approach was not so flexible as to permit anything desired by an applicant with policy's requirements remaining a strong steer (Chapter 8). These findings prompted an interest in exploring just how flexible decision makers could be when determining applications at MU sites. To this end, planning applications, and the associated decision notices, relating to sites and areas allocated for MU were studied. Analysis focused on the 'fit' between policy's requirements on land use mix and the nature of the development permitted and refused. Plus, decision notices were examined to identify the grounds upon which applications were granted or refused. Whether there were any references to MU site and area allocation policies and/or general policies on land use mix was a key concern. As an additional motive, this exercise created an opportunity to 'test', for one aspect of policy's approach to mix, the extent to which the understandings reported in the planning officer interviews reflected the understandings employed by officers in their 'normal' planning activities.

Within the policy sample (Table 2), the Local Plan is unique in providing detailed site specific policies. Ashford's and Southampton's Local Plans, but not Epsom's, were found to allocate sites and areas explicitly for distinct MU schemes. To select applications relating to these sites and areas, each community's online database of planning applications was searched. Applications received and decided when each community's MU site allocation policies were active were extracted for analysis. For Ashford this meant applications received and determined between 2000, the Local Plan adoption date, and February 2010, the date the site allocation policies were replaced by a Town Centre Area Action Plan (a document in the LDF). For Southampton, the dates were 2006, the year the Local Plan was adopted, and, because the site allocation policies remain current, January 2012 (the most recent date when completing the analysis). Only applications for reserved matters, and for full and outline planning permission, were extracted for analysis. Full planning permission grants permission for development to begin whilst outline planning permission establishes only the principle of development (Planning Portal, [n.d]). An

outline planning application must be followed by an application for 'reserved matters': this application bottoms out the detail of the proposed development and it must be granted before development can begin (Planning Portal, [n.d]). These applications were chosen to ensure a manageable sample size and because they capture the types of development most likely to provide a context within which policies on land use mix can be exercised – new uses and changes of use. Owing to the high number of full planning applications submitted and determined within Southampton between 2006 and January 2012, only those received in the alternate years of 2006, 2008, 2010 and 2012 (only in January 2012) were selected for study.

In total, 514 applications were reviewed – 168 in Ashford and 346 in Southampton – though the overwhelming majority proved irrelevant to the exercise. Most related to advertisements and small scale improvements and alterations to existing buildings and boundaries, not the provision of new uses or changes of use, and so there was not the opportunity for policy's approach to mix to be employed. Plus, in Southampton, most had no connection to the sites and areas allocated for MU. This was because in terms of spatial scale, Southampton's planning application database could only be searched at the level of electoral ward - in Ashford searches could be completed at street and postcode level. Searching at the level of electoral ward returned a huge number of applications. To bring manageability to the exercise, attention focused on just those applications occurring within Bargate ward, the ward covering Southampton city centre, because this ward contained the highest concentration of sites and areas allocated for MU (Chapter 8). In total, in Ashford just nine relevant applications were identified. All these applications were granted planning permission. In Southampton, 20 relevant applications were identified – 11 were granted planning permission whilst nine were refused. Analysis focused on these applications and their associated decision notices.

## 6.2 ADDRESSING OBJECTIVE 2

*Explore TARAs' preferences for policy's approach to 'RNR mix' and draw tentative conclusions about the relationship between this aspect of policy and TARAs' QoFL*

To address Objective 2, focus groups were held with a diverse sample of TARAs. The focus groups were carried out in 2010 and 2011. Chapter 7 provides information on the selected TARAs and the TARA members who took part. In the focus groups, TARAs' attitudes towards, and preferences for, policy's approach to 'RNR mix' were explored.

Supplementary to its main concern, there was an interest in Objective 2 in exploring the interests and activities of TARAs, and their distribution within communities. The process of identifying and recruiting the study's diverse sample of TARAs created an opportunity to address this concern. This process entailed the detailed mapping and analysis, through desktop research and contact with key actors (e.g. umbrella organisations representing numerous TARAs), of a single settlement's population of TARAs. Chapter 7 reports the findings of this analysis.

### 6.2.1 FOCUS GROUPS WITH TARAs

For the research, a focus group comprised individuals, selected to exhibit certain characteristics pertinent to the object of study, engaged in a focused discussion guided by a set of predetermined questions presented by a moderator (Kruger and Casey, 2000; Barbour, 2007). Focus groups provide insights on ideas, opinions and attitudes expressed and developed within a group setting and afford opportunities to study group processes and dynamics (Barbour, 2007; Gaskell, 2000; Holloway, 1997; Morgan, 2006; Munday, 2006). Consequently, they reveal information on "content" and "process" within a group setting (Munday, 2006: 99). With TARAs included in the research because of their behaviour and interests as groups, and with the research concerned with exploring how these groups view planning policy, it seemed necessary to select a method which allowed the study of groups. However, focus groups do not allow the study of TARAs in a naturalistic setting (Kitzinger, 2006). They are an 'artificial' creation and the findings reflect this with the participants, their interaction, the role of the moderator, the nature of the venue and many other factors structuring the collected data (Gaskell, 2000; Munday, 2006; Barbour 2007; Bloor et al., 2001). There did not, however, seem to be a practical and ethical way to explore preferences for, and attitudes towards, policy's approach to 'RNR mix' within the 'natural' setting of a TARA. For instance, it was not thought practical (or perhaps ethical) to observe the meetings of individual TARAs and record instances when members discussed views on 'RNR mix'. Groups were presumed potentially unwilling to allow a researcher to observe their meetings whilst, depending on the meeting agenda, it

was thought unlikely that there would be many opportunities for opinions on land use mix to be aired.

One focus group was convened for each participating TARA. The research therefore engaged with existing groups. The literature warns that when holding focus groups with existing groups, familiarity can inhibit discussion and confidentiality can be impaired (Barbour, 2007; Krueger and Casey, 2000). However, since the focus groups were not covering sensitive subjects, participants were not 'vulnerable' people and participants were not dependent on one another in, for example, an employer-employee relationship, there were fewer reservations about using existing groups than there might be in certain other situations. Established groups have also been used in previous focus group research. Munday (2006: 90), for instance, used focus groups with existing branches of the Women's Institute to explore "the construction of collective identity". For Munday (2006: 96), existing groups had to be used because, as with the research discussed here, the interest lay in precisely these groups - how "collective identity" was "formulated in *established groups*" (emphasis added).

Small focus groups comprising between two and six participants were convened although on one occasion nine individuals participated (the initial goal had been to organise groups of between three and six). Small groups of between four and six (Krueger and Casey, 2000) or three and four participants (Holloway, 1997) can provide opportunities for all participants to speak, be easier for the moderator to 'control', have less potential for group fragmentation and can be easier to recruit (Krueger and Casey, 2000; Munday, 2006; Holloway, 1997). Relative to large groups, the main compromises seem to be that small groups might "lack sufficient communicative interactions and depth" (Scott, 2011) and/or have less diversity of opinion (Munday, 2006). However, a small group comprising very different and highly talkative participants might demonstrate a greater diversity of opinion, and a higher number of communicative interactions, than a large group comprising very similar, disengaged participants. Indeed, within the research, groups of two or three participants could feature diverse opinions and many communicative interactions.

### **6.2.1 (i) Selecting the TARAs**

The research focused on TARAs in Southampton. Planning legislation requires local planning authorities to employ community consultation in the preparation of statutory planning policy, a process which can entail discussion with local TARAs (DCLG, 2008). Since policy from Ashford, Southampton and Epsom was studied, it seemed interesting to see how TARAs within these communities viewed the adopted policy. However, initial

scoping exercises suggested that Ashford featured few residents' groups with the Council's online community database failing to identify any (ABC, 2010b). Plus, given Epsom's unique political profile, there were doubts about the extent to which the Borough's TARAs might resemble TARAs as defined by the research. Southampton was, in contrast, found to host a large network of TARAs operating across a variety of residential environments and these groups seemed to resemble TARAs as understood by the research. Additionally, Southampton City Council and the author's own university had established contacts with many groups providing potential avenues for recruitment. Chapter 7 explores Southampton's population of TARAs.

Using a variety of techniques, including desktop research and discussions with key actors (e.g. councillors and council officers), see Appendix 6 for techniques, 120 TARAs were identified in Southampton in August 2010 (Chapter 7). However, of these, contact details for a Chair/Secretary, or the whole group through a website, could only be established for 84 groups. A sampling frame was constructed using these 84 groups. Approximately 50% of the sampling frame was contacted between August 2010 and August 2011 to explore willingness to participate in the research. The wish to create a diverse sample and expectations about a low response rate informed the decision to contact this number of groups. Groups were normally contacted by letter (Appendix 3) although a few were contacted by email and, for the few that had them, through a website. Groups were contacted a first and then second time if there had been no reply. On several occasions, the author attended groups' committee meetings. If contacted by letter, groups were provided with a stamped addressed envelope to reply to the author. The groups to contact were selected by purposive sampling. Group features, i.e. size, activities, interests etc. (identified from various information sources – Appendix 6), and the group's residential environment, i.e. its physical and socio-economic context (identified from fieldtrips, Census data, mapping tools) were the two intentionally broad criteria that directed the choice of groups. However, with little information available on 'group features' the second criteria proved particularly important when sampling. A diverse sample was preferred because there was an interest in seeing if dissimilar groups held similar views on policy. If common views were found it was assumed, noting Patton's (1990) views on the logic of diverse samples, that these would represent core experiences and central shared views on land use mix.

The majority of groups contacted, around 52%, failed to respond whilst nine groups declined to take part citing 'other commitments' and 'lack of interest'. The goal was to recruit between five and ten groups equating to 6% to 12% of the sampling frame. Ultimately, 11 groups agreed to take part (Chapter 7 for the sample). A sample of five to ten groups was thought sufficient to provide a degree of diversity whilst also remaining

manageable in terms of recruitment, operation, data collection and analysis. The literature suggests researchers working alone should run a modest number of focus groups with Krueger and Casey (2000) suggesting four and Gaskell (2000) six to eight.

Of the 11 groups that agreed to participate, four came from a large, affluent, leafy suburban area. The bias towards groups from this area was not intentional. Groups here simply proved more willing to participate than groups from elsewhere. Interestingly, Southampton's PO and DMO reported that groups from this area were particularly active in planning matters and so, unintentionally, the sample featured a bias towards affluent groups with a demonstrable interest in planning. Though operating in the same kind of environment, these four groups did, however, differ in various ways including size, age, origins and the scale of area covered.

The sample's bias towards affluent, suburban residents' groups raises questions about the degree to which the findings can be generalised to a wider TARA population. However, with only a small number of TARAs from a single city studied, any claims about the generalizability of the findings would be contentious. Though Sacks and Perakyla claim it is possible to generalize from a single case, many scholars doubt this argument (Silverman, 2000). Silverman (2000: 109), for instance, believes only in cases of "very basic research on social order guided by theoretically sophisticated positions" is such an assertion valid. Whether qualitative research should even strive for generalizability is critiqued by many with Alasuutari, for instance, claiming this is neither appropriate nor reflective of the type of analysis undertaken (Silverman, 2000; Doyle, 2003). For Alasuutari (in Doyle, 2003: [n.d]), "what can be analysed instead is how the researcher demonstrates that the analysis relates to things beyond the material at hand...extrapolation better captures the typical procedure in qualitative research". Noting Alasuutari's arguments, within the research the aim was to produce findings capable of supporting extrapolation to other cases, not generalisation.

### **6.2.1 (ii) Focus group participants**

Participants were drawn from each TARA's committee. With the literature suggesting that TARAs comprise of a small set of active members and a larger body of passive members (Chapter 4), it was assumed that the committee would form the group's active core and perhaps then the segment most responsible for any planning related activities. Since TARAs were included in the research partly because they engage in the planning system, it seemed appropriate to work with the members most responsible for these activities. Members responded to an invitation to participate made to the whole committee. This approach was preferred to snowball sampling because there were

concerns this alternative technique could have produced a clique of likeminded individuals as friends would have referred friends. Andrews (1979) found TARA committees can comprise distinct cliques coalescing around specific, sometimes highly opposed, points of view. A focus group which captured just one clique could provide a biased account of the TARA committee's wider perspectives. Permitting individuals to self-select into the focus groups also, however, introduces bias. Only a certain type of committee member, for instance only those comfortable discussing their views on planning policy, are likely to volunteer. As noted before, the appeal to the whole committee was made by the author at a committee meeting and/or through an email/letter sent to the Chair/Secretary. If contacting the Chair/Secretary, this individual was asked to extend the invitation to the whole committee. In this instance, the Chair/Secretary had the role of gatekeeper controlling access to the wider group. Whilst gatekeepers can be barriers to the recruitment of participants, Crano and Brewer (2008) argue that they can sometimes be facilitators as they can legitimise a study and encourage participation. This proved to be the case within the research with Chairs and Secretaries often promoting the research to their TARA, booking venues for the focus groups and even hosting focus groups in their own home. On the subject of venues, the focus groups were conducted in a range of environments including community centres, participants' homes and seminar rooms at the author's university. To ensure participants felt comfortable, the author always let the participants select the venue.

Besides being committee members, participants will occupy numerous additional roles according to the multiple social, spatial and cultural contexts in which they operate. Amongst many roles, a committee member might be a resident, commuter, environmental activist and member of the National Trust. Different preferences, interests and concerns relating to land use (and other issues) might be associated with these and other roles (Healey et al. 1988; Carmona et al. 2002). Owens (1995: 383), for instance, claims individuals hold one set of preferences when occupying the role of citizen and another set when occupying the role of consumer. To satisfy preferences held as a citizen, for various "social and environmental outcomes", Owens (1995) suggests "policies that counter our immediate preferences as consumers" might be necessary and points to planning policy as a prime example of such policy. She claims, "if consumer choice were sovereign, we would not have land-use planning policies at all" (Owens, 1995: 383). The different roles individuals hold might also shape the way views are presented and received by others (Grant, 2011). Individuals who identify themselves as 'experts' on a particular issue may present their views as the 'established truth' and others might treat them as such (Grant, 2011). Within the focus groups, individuals did present their views as particular to certain professions, backgrounds, generations and classes and claimed these contexts had shaped their opinions. Plus, a couple of participants highlighted their professional

backgrounds in order it seemed to 'legitimise' subsequent pontificating on certain subjects. When commenting on participation within the focus groups, Chapter 9 discusses the way participants 'framed' their views by associating them with particular roles etc.

### **6.2.1 (iii) Exercises/activities within the focus groups**

The account of policy's approach to 'RNR mix' identified in Objective 1 provided the source material for discussion within the focus groups. However, this material had to be turned into something that could quickly impart, to a non-specialist audience, key information on policy's approach and facilitate discussion. To this end, three exercises were developed. These were designed around four criteria judged essential to the successful operation of the focus groups. The criteria required the exercises to:

1. Be simple to understand,
2. Clearly and quickly communicate aspects of policy's approach,
3. Be engaging,
4. Support a group discussion

The exercises were each designed to last up to half an hour giving a maximum focus group length of 1.5 hours. There is no correct duration for a focus group so assumptions about the time TARA members might be willing and able to commit to a focus group, and the period they might remain engaged, guided the selected length (Krueger and Casey, 2000). The exercises employed visual aids – lists and diagrams – to explain aspects of policy's approach. This was judged preferable to 'dry' verbal descriptions which might lose participants' interest. Appendix 7 includes the visual aids whilst the exercises are discussed below:

#### *Exercise 1 – Suitable uses to place near housing*

Findings from Objective 1 revealed policy identifies a number of non-residential uses as compatible partners to housing and a number that are incompatible (Chapter 8). Exercise 1 explored participants' views on, and preferences for, this aspect of policy. It also created opportunities to discuss preferred distances between uses and, through probing questions, explore the motives and values that lay behind participants' points of view.

On an A3 sheet, one for each participant, eight broad categories of non-residential use were listed (Appendix 7). These were the uses policy identified as compatible and incompatible partners to housing. Policy did not comment on the suitability of mixing every

conceivable type of land use with housing. It did not, for instance, comment on the suitability of mixing certain more 'controversial' uses, such as prisons, drug treatment centres and traveller sites, with housing. For example, 'Circular 01/06 Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites' simply comments on the desirability of locating sites near existing settlements within reach of local services and facilities (ODPM, 2006). As the research interest lay in exploring TARAs' preferences for current policy, though it might have been interesting to include these more 'controversial' uses, they were not.

### *Exercise 2 – The physical design of residential environments*

Findings from Objective 1 revealed policy adopts a different approach to 'RNR mix' in different 'types' of area, including different 'types' of residential environment (as defined by the research - see Chapter 2). Exercise 2 explored TARAs' preferences for the approach policy adopts in three different 'types' of residential environment - established residential areas/suburbs, large new residential areas and town/city centres. The author created a diagram for each type of environment which illustrated the type of mix policy could, potentially, 'allow' (Appendix 7). The diagrams therefore translated policy guidance into simple-to-understand pictures. The TARAs were presented with these diagrams and, taking each in turn, they were asked to discuss their preferences for the type of mix portrayed. Probing questions were used to explore the motives and values lying behind these preferences. Of all the areas it discusses, policy treats these three types of area to the most extensive commentary on 'RNR mix'. This was part of the reason for their choice. However, several other factors also informed their selection:

*1. Established residential areas/suburbs* – In England, in 1991, suburban areas were home to 84% of the population with further growth in the absolute size of this population being predicted (Echenique and Homewood, 2003: 40). Of course, how a 'suburb' is defined determines the size of the population seen to live there. On most definitions, though, the suburbs are home to large numbers of residents. As noted in Chapter 4, they can also be home to residents groups (Saunders, 1980, Purcell, 2001, Linowes and Allensworth, 1973). It seemed interesting to explore TARAs' preferences for the approach to mix that policy adopts within such a common, populous environment that can host TARAs.

*2. Large new residential areas* – The ONS (2011a) predicts the UK population will increase by 4.9 million between 2010 and 2020. To accommodate such growth, large new areas of housing may/will be needed, particularly in high demand areas like the South East. The Coalition Government is pro-growth noting in the NPPF (DCLG, 2012: 5) that, "every effort should be made objectively to identify and then meet the housing, business and other development needs of an area, and respond positively to wider opportunities for growth".

Against this background, it was thought interesting to explore TARAs' views on policy's approach to mix within a type of environment that might be produced in greater quantities in the future. Within the policy sample, three alternative approaches to land use mix at large new residential areas were identified. A diagram capturing each of these approaches was created and the focus groups discussed each one.

3. *Town/city centres* – Recent years have seen growth in the provision of new build one and two bedroom apartments in numerous UK town/city centres. This has supported growth in town/city centre populations although it is noted that, as a percentage of the total population, these populations remain small (Echenique and Homewood, 2003). Bromley et al. (2007: 144) studied population growth between 1991 and 2001 in several places including the city centres of Bristol and Cardiff and found that, whilst growth was not vast, 3,400 more residents had moved to Bristol city centre and 4,160 to Cardiff city centre. More impressive, Couch and Karecha (2006) found Liverpool's city centre population had risen from 2,340 persons in 1990 to approximately 12,000 in 2006. It was thought interesting to explore TARAs' views on policy's approach to 'RNR mix' within a type of residential environment that is still relatively new and, at least until the credit crunch/recession, was spreading to an increasing number of settlements (Parkinson, et al. 2009).

#### *Exercise 3 - The 'ideal' town/city*

In this exercise, participants had to plan and create their ideal town/city using coloured discs representing different types of land use. A couple of groups specified whether they were building a town or city and some even identified a settlement population size. Groups placed the land use discs onto an A2 sheet that showed the boundary of a settlement. The aim was to engage participants in a broad discussion about appropriate and inappropriate uses to include near housing (as explored in Exercise 1), and how uses should be physically arranged within a space (as investigated in Exercise 2). The exercise did not present aspects of policy for evaluation. It 'double checked' findings from the first two exercises and so engaged with policy in a rather circuitous way. An initial set of discs representing a series of broad land uses commonly referenced within policy were produced (e.g. housing, education, health, open space – see Appendix 7 for the full set). The author introduced/explained these discs at the outset of the exercise. Multiple copies of each type of disc were provided. In each focus group, if further uses were suggested by participants these were added to the initial set. It was thought interesting to see if uses suggested by one TARA were included in the ideal town/city created by a second TARA – this did in fact prove to be the case. Groups tended to use every type of land use disc available, but they did not use every copy of each disc. Sometimes groups associated very

specific activities with the discs. For example, when using the 'education' land use discs, groups often chose to specify the kind of educational facility being referenced, e.g. a school, a university.

The exercise began with a flurry of activity as participants worked together to create their ideal community. They often talked over one another and discussion at times fragmented with pairs and sub-groups continuing separate debates. After the group had settled on a design, a full group discussion began, orientated by questions from the author, on the reasoning behind the final design. The author employed questions like, 'I see we've placed [use X] near [use Y], what was our thinking behind that?' 'So we've placed [use X] towards the outside of the town boundary, what was our thinking behind that?'

#### **6.2.1 (iv) Moderator style**

An active management approach was taken to the moderation of the focus groups. The time available and the narrow interests of the research suggested this was preferable to a non-interventionist approach. The sacrifice, though, is that discussion has less opportunity to evolve in a completely organic fashion. Most of the focus groups were talkative and articulate with participants willing to engage in a collective discussion. However, two groups, (Groups B and E – see Chapter 7), required more encouragement with the author needing to ask questions to initiate the discussion. This approach eventually led to a free-flowing discussion as participants became comfortable with the situation and the type of engagement desired. Probing questions were often asked to explore the reasoning behind participants' stated preferences. These questions could be straight forward 'why' based questions, for example, 'why would you like to live within a ten minute walk of a shop?' Or the author could adopt a devil's advocate type role and ask 'confrontational' questions (Scott, 2011). For example, when one group favoured a complete demarcation between housing and employment areas, the author suggested this could create congestion problems as the population would move between the two areas at around the same time and queried what their views were on this outcome. In using probing questions, it is appreciated that the answers given might be a construct designed entirely in response to the question and have no real connection to any firm held belief. Participants may wish to 'assist' the author by providing an answer or they might want to appear connected to some wider scheme of reasoning when presenting views. The research might have created increased opportunities for such answers as participants were discussing issues (planning policy's approach to mix) about which they had perhaps given little previous thought.

### 6.2.1 (v) Analysing the focus group data

As noted before, focus groups were recorded and transcribed largely verbatim with the completed transcripts annotated to indicate laughter etc. Plus, notes on body language (nodding, gestures, pointing etc.) were also included. Field notes were made within and immediately after each focus group on interaction, body language and details participants revealed about themselves (e.g. job, children, marital status). These field notes were referenced when annotating the transcripts.

The focus group transcripts, as mentioned earlier, were analysed using qualitative content analysis. A largely inductive approach was employed in this analysis although this was influenced by ideas found within the literature with work by Purcell (2001), Senior (2005) and Senior et al. (2006) being particularly useful in suggesting issues to consider (Chapters 4 and 5). An interest in describing the basic 'content' of the focus group discussions resulted in a focus on identifying mainly descriptive codes and themes. These related to various issues including preferred and less preferred environmental designs, the reasoning behind these preferences, characteristics of the participants, interaction within the focus group and how participants 'framed' their comments (e.g. claiming they were the views of older adults) (Appendix 1 for coding scheme). The coding was completed using Nvivo. The volume of data, and the ease with which the transcripts could be imported into Nvivo, prompted its use.

Findings were analysed on an intra-group and inter-group basis. Barbour (2007) claims there is value in analysing focus groups in this way. Analysing discussion across groups allows tentative conclusions to be drawn on whether dissimilar TARAs hold similar views on policy, a concern which led to the use of a diverse sample of TARAs. Analysing discussion within focus groups allows differences and similarities of opinion between members to be explored enabling tentative conclusions to be drawn on whether TARAs form a collective voice or a collection of voices. It is noted, though, that a feature of the focus group method is a tendency towards consensus as participants converge around a single point of view (Barbour, 2007). Real or imagined peer group pressure is seen to be the cause of this (Barbour, 2007). Consequently, where consensus occurred within the study's focus groups, this need not have indicated the presence of a 'genuine' collective voice. The focus group method might also have shaped the collected data in other ways. For example, the desire to 'blend in' or the real or perceived influence of peer-group pressure might have led some participants to suppress certain points of view (Scott, 2011) and express rather conservative, uncontroversial opinions (Chapter 9). Supporting such assumptions, Scott (2011) reported how, in a study employing focus groups, several participants admitted withholding certain views and emphasising others because of the

presence and opinions of others in the group. Other aspects of the research design also seemed capable of exercising a data-shaping role. For instance, in basing the focus group discussions on existing policy, conservative views might have been encouraged. As discussed in Chapter 8, policy itself was found to hold rather conservative views on the design and development of the built environment. Since policy was the source material, perhaps participants were 'primed' to present conservative views (Chapter 9).

The data analysis identified areas of policy that TARAs' appeared to favour and areas they seemed to dislike with the motives underpinning these views highlighted. This information helped identify how policy could be amended to better address TARAs' preferences and perhaps then better support their QoL. For example, TARAs generally disliked non-residential uses being scattered amongst housing in established residential areas, preferring, instead, exclusively residential enclaves (Chapter 9). Policy, however, allowed some scattering of non-residential uses in these locations (Chapter 8). For policy to better address TARAs' preferences, it could be amended to prevent this development pattern. A series of policy amendments were built up in this way and these formed the material for Objective 3. Policy amendments were built up for the TARAs most frequently cited environmental preferences. At times, however, groups volunteered fully formed policy suggestions and these too were identified in the analysis and formed part of the material for Objective 3. For example, policy favours a restrictive approach to car parking at residential properties. A number of groups were aware of this and argued that it should be amended to ensure that all properties, including flats, feature plentiful car parking facilities. As this example highlights, fully formed policy amendments, and insights into how policy could be amended to better suit TARAs' preferences, were about issues other than just land use mix. These 'other' issues included balcony and public transport provision, building design and density and an area's social composition. Appendix 8 lists all the policy amendments identified in Objective 2.

### 6.2.2 USE OF CONTROL GROUPS

Control groups were not used within the research. This was partly due to concerns about the task of assembling such groups and partly due to the belief that there was merit in focusing exclusively on TARAs. Arguably, any resident unaffiliated with a TARA could be included in a control group making this a highly diverse population. It did not seem possible to recruit, run and analyse sufficient and sufficiently diverse control groups to reflect the diversity of this non-TARA population. Also, with little recent research being available on UK based TARAs, there seemed merit in restricting concern to just these organisations. Dispensing with control groups created the time and 'space' to run focus groups with a variety of TARAs. Lastly, there is an established body of literature exploring

residents' attitudes towards, and experiences of, land use mix (Chapter 5). This literature has the potential to act as a 'proxy' control group and, because it includes a diverse range of residents, it is better able to reflect the non-TARA population than could any control group assembled within the research. When the focus group findings are discussed in Chapter 10, this literature is referenced.

### **6.3. ADDRESSING OBJECTIVE 3**

*Explore the deliverability of amending policy so that it might better support TARAs' QofL*

Objective 3 is concerned with investigating the 'deliverability' of the policy amendments identified in Objective 2. A conceptual framework was developed through/against which the deliverability of these amendments could be conceived and discussed. Interviews with individuals from self-proclaimed representative bodies for the planning profession and the private sector housebuilding industry provided the data for this exercise.

After first identifying the policy amendments in Objective 2, it seemed a necessary next step to begin to consider how feasible it might be, within the current political, economic, social etc. climate, to 'deliver' these amendments. However, rather than interrogate the deliverability of the amendments from, for want of a better term, the 'inside out', in an exercise that might have considered their financial costs, environmental impact, social affects etc., it was thought interesting (and perhaps novel) to consider their deliverability from, again for want of a better term, the 'outside in'. Here, attention rests on exploring whether the amendments would be delivered, i.e. *taken forward*, by *external actors, institutions and systems* such as the planning system, institutional investors and developers. The amendments themselves, their potential costs etc., are not then the object of study. Rather, focus rests on the attitudes and orientation of external parties and systems towards the amendments. However, one might assume that these attitudes and orientations would be based, at least in part, on an assessment (howsoever accurate) of issues like the potential costs and impact of the amendments. Specifically, it seemed interesting to explore if the amendments would be delivered by two external parties in particular - the planning system, (i.e. would the amendments be incorporated into the existing body of planning policy), and the private sector housebuilding industry (i.e. would the amendments be reflected in new residential development). Various, these institutions help shape whether policy is promoted by planners and planning authorities, and whether it is readily reflected in new development. For the purposes of the research, these were considered two visible signs of policy being taken forward / delivered.

### 6.3.1 DEFINING DELIVERABILITY

A conceptual framework was developed to investigate the deliverability of the amendments identified in Objective 2 which were concerned with the practice of 'RNR mix'. It was constructed under the auspices of an 'outside in' approach to assessing deliverability, explained before, and takes forward the earlier stated interest in exploring whether these policy amendments might be taken forward by the planning system and the private sector housebuilding industry.

For this framework, deliverable amendments were seen to reflect the aims, goals and priorities of the current planning system, attract few objections and so prove uncontroversial, and gain widespread support from private sector housebuilders. The conceptual framework thus focuses on the rather practical issues which may facilitate or hinder policy amendments being promoted by the planning system and reflected in completed development. It does not seek to unpack the theoretical issues and debates associated with the concept of deliverability. Shortly, the rationale behind the selection of these three criteria will be discussed. First, though, it is important to note that *the intention here is not to argue that these criteria ought to be the items against which the deliverability of policy should be assessed*. Rather, it is argued that these criteria currently perform a role in determining whether policy suggestions gain a place within the planning system and whether adopted policies are eagerly reflected in completed development. This argument is expanded upon below.

Policy amendments which prove controversial are perhaps less likely to be incorporated within development plans and policy documents and, consequently, they are perhaps less likely to be 'delivered' by the current planning system. The draft NPPF, for example, encountered widespread and heated objections and was substantially revised before adoption. The adopted version waters down, and in some cases completely avoids all mention of, the most controversial proposals found within the draft document (Shepley, 2012). For example, all references to a 'default position in decision making', and for this position to be 'yes', were removed – clauses that attracted much opposition in the draft document (Shepley, 2012). Policy amendments which conflict with the aims and goals of the planning system are also, perhaps, less likely to be incorporated within development plans and so may be less likely to be 'delivered' by the current planning system. Regional and local planning policy must, for example, reflect rather than conflict with national planning policy. Local government planning officers, being immersed in the use of planning policy and the debates and activities which surround its preparation and application, were thought liable to be attuned to the kind of policy amendments that might attract strong opposition from residents, developers and other interest groups, and the kind that would

conflict with planning's current aims and objectives. With respect to the policy amendments identified in Objective 2 then, the research investigated planners' views on these issues.

If policy amendments that relate to residential environments, such as any on 'RNR mix', are to be readily reflected in new development, and thus readily 'delivered' by the development industry, the support of the private sector housebuilding industry seems important. Private sector housebuilders are responsible for the vast majority of residential properties built each year in England. Indeed, between 1990 and 2010, private sector completions accounted for between 78% and 91% of all annual residential completions (DCLG, [n.d]b)<sup>9</sup>. If their support is lacking, housebuilders might negotiate with planning authorities to minimise the effects of an unpopular policy or even try to exempt their schemes from the policy entirely (Carmona et al., 2003). The housebuilding industry's response to affordable housing policy is a good example of the industry negotiating to minimise the impact of an unpopular policy. Typically, housebuilders seek to negotiate the minimum possible level of affordable housing provision at their sites with some proving successful in negotiating off-site provision or the payment of a commutable sum (their favoured outcomes). Noting the current difficult financial climate, some housebuilders are attempting to renegotiate existing planning permissions to remove previously agreed affordable housing requirements. They argue that within the current climate, the requirement to deliver such properties makes their schemes unviable. The research explored private sector housebuilders' attitudes towards each policy amendment identified in Objective 2.

To identify housebuilders' attitudes towards, and planners' views on, the policy amendments from Objective 2, the research engaged with umbrella organisations for the housebuilding industry and planning profession. Engaging with planning officers at individual local authorities and lone housebuilders was thought likely to produce only narrow understandings and perceptions, particular to specific community contexts, market segments and geographies. Umbrella organisations were, in contrast, thought able to (potentially) move beyond 'particular' perspectives and access a 'bigger picture' view on how the amendments might be viewed by the industry/profession as a whole and/or by different segments within the industry/profession (see later for comments on this issue). This type of 'big picture' view seemed better suited to the concerns of Objective 3.

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<sup>9</sup> Various factors explain the private sector's dominance of housing development see Cole and Furbey (1994) and Short (1982) for detailed commentary.

### 6.3.2 THE ROYAL TOWN PLANNING INSTITUTE AND THE HOME BUILDERS FEDERATION

Through desktop research, the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) and the Home Builders Federation (HBF) were quickly identified as major, high profile, self-proclaimed representative bodies for the planning profession and housebuilding industry. The literature also identifies these organisations as “key representatives” (Healey et al. 1988: 162). Significant segments of the planning profession, including planners in the public and private sectors, are members of the RTPI whilst the housebuilders who are members of the HBF account for the vast majority of new homes completed each year within England and Wales. Both organisations also contribute to national debates on the shape of planning policy meeting Government Ministers, responding to official consultations and presenting evidence to Commons Select Committees on planning matters. Each organisation is profiled below:

*The Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI)* is the sole organisation responsible for the professional certification of planners within the UK (RTPI, [n.d]). It has around 23,000 members making it the largest professional institute for planners in the world (RTPI, [n.d]). It has a number of interests including the promotion of planning as a discipline, enterprise and profession; contributing to national, regional and local debates on the shape of planning policy; supporting the continued professional development of existing planners and training future planners (RTPI, [n.d]). The RTPI lobbies on behalf of members, and the whole enterprise of planning, and firmly believes in the ‘value’ of ‘good’ planning. It recently submitted evidence to the DCLG Select Committees on regeneration (Parliament UK, 2011a) and the draft NPPF (Parliament UK, 2011b) and provided evidence and briefings to the House of Commons and the House of Lords on the Localism Bill 2010 (RTPI, 2011a and 2011b).

*The Home Builders Federation (HBF)* reports that its members “deliver around 80% of the new homes built each year” in England and Wales (HBF, [n.d]a). It has a membership of 112 housebuilders including many of the industry’s most recognisable names such as CALA Homes, Bovis, Bellway and Crest Nicholson (HBF, [n.d]b). It counts the three largest housebuilders (by volume of units built (Callcutt, 2007)) Taylor Wimpey, Barratt and Persimmon, as members, but also includes smaller and more specialised developers, such as those working within the retirement homes market. Lastly, it has contributed to recent debates on national policy providing evidence to the DCLG Select Committee on the draft NPPF (Parliament UK, 2011c).

Desktop research revealed both the RTPI and HBF featured personnel in policy-focused roles. These individuals considered and evaluated planning policy, reflected on its

implications for members and the planning profession / housebuilding industry and presented their profession's/industry's views on policy to policy-makers and others. They seemed, then, particularly well placed to provide data on housebuilders' attitudes towards, and planners' views on, the policy amendments from Objective 2. Consequently, at each organisation a senior member of staff engaged in a policy-focused role was identified and asked to participate in the research (Appendix 3). Noting their previously discussed qualities, interviews seemed a suitable method for exploring, in-depth, these individuals' views on the amendments.

### 6.3.3 SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS

The RTPI and HBF representatives were only thought liable to commit an hour to the interviews whilst there was a desire to provide sufficient 'space' within the sessions for views to be developed. Semi-structured interviews, rather than structured or unstructured interviews, seemed suited to addressing all points of interest - i.e. the policy amendments from Objective 2 - within the given timeframe whilst still providing interviewees with the opportunity to develop points of view.

The policy amendments steered the interviews. They related to policy's approach to 'RNR mix' and various other issues (discussed under Objective 2 and see Appendix 8). By exploring housebuilders' attitudes to, and planners' views on, all the amendments, even those unrelated to land use mix, the deliverability of amending policy in multiple ways could be considered.

The RTPI representative was asked to consider how the amendments might fit with the goals and concerns of the current planning system, and what, if any, objections they might generate. This representative largely focused on how planners and the planning system would view the amendments with only occasional comments on the potential views of other stakeholders. In hindsight, an interventionist approach from the author, interjecting to draw the representative's attention to how stakeholder X or Y might view a policy amendment, could have been useful. Of course, though, this makes the process very much interviewer-led. The HBF representative was asked to consider how housebuilders 'at large' would view the policy amendments. Both interviews were completed in 2011.

#### 6.3.3 (i) Analysing the interview data

As noted before, the interviews were recorded and transcribed (largely verbatim), with the transcripts annotated to indicate laughter etc. They were analysed using qualitative content analysis employing a part inductive part deductive approach. The policy

amendments provided a strong pre-determined steer to the coding process. Repeated reading of the transcripts, combined with ideas from the literature (Chapters 3 and 5), the author's original thoughts, and, for the RTPI interview, findings from the planning officer interviews, informed the identification of further codes within the text. The codes identified in this more inductive process related to various issues including attitudes to the planning system/planners, views on buyers'/residents' preferences and, particularly within the HBF interview, the subject of control (Appendix 1 for coding scheme). Though responding to the same policy amendments, the different views provided by the HBF and RTPI representatives led, occasionally, to different codes being identified in the two transcripts. As before, an Excel spreadsheet was constructed to support the coding process. A different section of coded text was allocated to each row. Against each section, separate columns noted the speaker, along with the code and theme against which it had been highlighted. Thus, the spreadsheet could be filtered by all these items supporting a systematic and rigorous exploration of the data.

### **6.3.3 (ii) Validity and reliability**

There are issues around assuming individual employees at the RTPI and HBF will or can access and reflect views and understandings common across the whole housebuilding industry and the whole planning profession. There may indeed be no common understandings and this might be especially true if the industry or profession is particularly diverse, as is the case with housebuilding (Callcutt Review, 2007). There is also a possibility that representatives chose to give personal views even though they were asked to comment as representatives of their respective industry/profession. Lastly, presumably due to their personal and professional links, duties, interests and responsibilities, the representatives appeared keen to provide complementary accounts of their industry and profession and these might have shaped their views on the TARAs' policy amendments. For example, with the RTPI representative apparently keen to identify planning as a force for good, and with the TARAs' amendments being, in effect, a criticism of current planning policy, there might have been a strong predetermined wish to find 'problems' with the amendments. Consequently, one might query how reliable the views are as an account of how planners more widely would view the amendments since this wider population might not be as concerned with promoting/defending the current planning system and policy. The HBF representative was keen to portray the housebuilding industry as a 'people pleaser', motivated to build products that matched buyers' preferences and met planners' requirements. This might have sat behind the representative's willingness to identify various third parties as the reason why housebuilders could not / would not support many of the TARAs' amendments. This perhaps raises questions about how far the representative's account is a reliable reflection of housebuilders' 'genuine' views.

To begin to address the above noted concerns, findings from the semi-structured interviews were compared with other studies which have explored housebuilders' and planners' attitudes to land use mix. Chapters 3 and 5 discuss these studies. In doing this, the goal was to see how far the representatives' views accorded with those of other planners and housebuilders and thus how far the semi-structured interviews might be considered a reliable account of attitudes common to various planners and housebuilders. In reporting the data from the semi-structured interviews, Chapter 10 reflects on this issue. However, with no other studies entirely mirroring the research, there are limits to how robust this assessment of reliability can be. The RTPI representative interview was also compared with the planning officer interviews (discussed earlier), again for the purposes of exploring reliability, and again Chapter 10 comments on this issue.

Despite concerns about the use of semi-structured interviews, this method seemed a more 'robust' means for exploring housebuilders' attitudes towards, and planners' views on, the policy amendments than various other techniques. For example, an alternative approach could have entailed a focus on inferring their attitudes and views. Planners' views on each amendment's possible 'fit' with current policy could have been inferred from an analysis of written policy and the planning officer interview data. Housebuilders' attitudes towards the amendments could have been inferred from an analysis of their completed residential schemes with attention focusing on how well these schemes reflect the amendments. However, there seemed to be obvious weaknesses to these approaches. For instance, a number of the policy amendments are not directly discussed within existing policy and were not mentioned in the planning officer interviews. Analysing housebuilders' completed schemes reveals the type of features that tend to be incorporated into new developments but these features are unlikely to be a direct reflection of housebuilders' preferences. Thus, comparing the policy amendments against these schemes would not seem a reliable means for identifying housebuilders' attitudes towards the amendments.

## **6.4 CONCLUSIONS**

This chapter has identified the various methods and techniques that were chosen to address the three objectives which steered the research. Each was selected because it appeared suited to the concerns of a given objective. For example, Objective 2's interest in identifying TARAs' preferences for policy's approach to 'RNR mix' was thought best addressed by holding focus groups with a selection of TARAs because the research had first become interested in these organisations on the basis of their behaviour as groups. It seemed appropriate then to select a method which allowed their study as groups. As discussed, the selected methods include a qualitative content analysis of planning policy,

semi-structured interviews with planning officers, semi-structured interviews with representatives of the RTPI and HBF, an analysis of planning applications and their associated decision notices and focus groups with a diverse sample of TARAs. In addition, in order to better understand the activities, interests and distribution of TARAs within communities, a supplementary concern of Objective 2, this chapter has explained how a detailed analysis, incorporating desktop research and discussions with various actors (e.g. council officers and councillors), was carried out on the population of TARAs within a single settlement (i.e. Southampton).

Like any study, the selected methodology and methods shape the findings discussed within this thesis. For example, perhaps peer-group pressure led TARA members in the focus groups to gravitate towards a single shared point of view and express relatively uncontroversial, conservative environmental preferences. An alternative method such as interviews, where peer group pressure was absent, might have prompted the expression of more controversial and diverse views. When presenting the research findings in Chapters 8 to 10, discussion reflects on the data shaping role of the methods, whilst in Chapter 11, some final thoughts on the implications of the selected methods and methodology are offered.

## TENANTS' AND RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATIONS IN THE RESEARCH

As discussed in Chapter 6, the research focused on TARAs operating in Southampton. This chapter comments on the volume, distribution and characteristics of Southampton's population of TARAs. The chapter moves on to describe the 11 TARAs who participated in the study with discussion touching on their aims, origins, membership and area of activity. The TARA members who participated in the focus groups are also introduced.

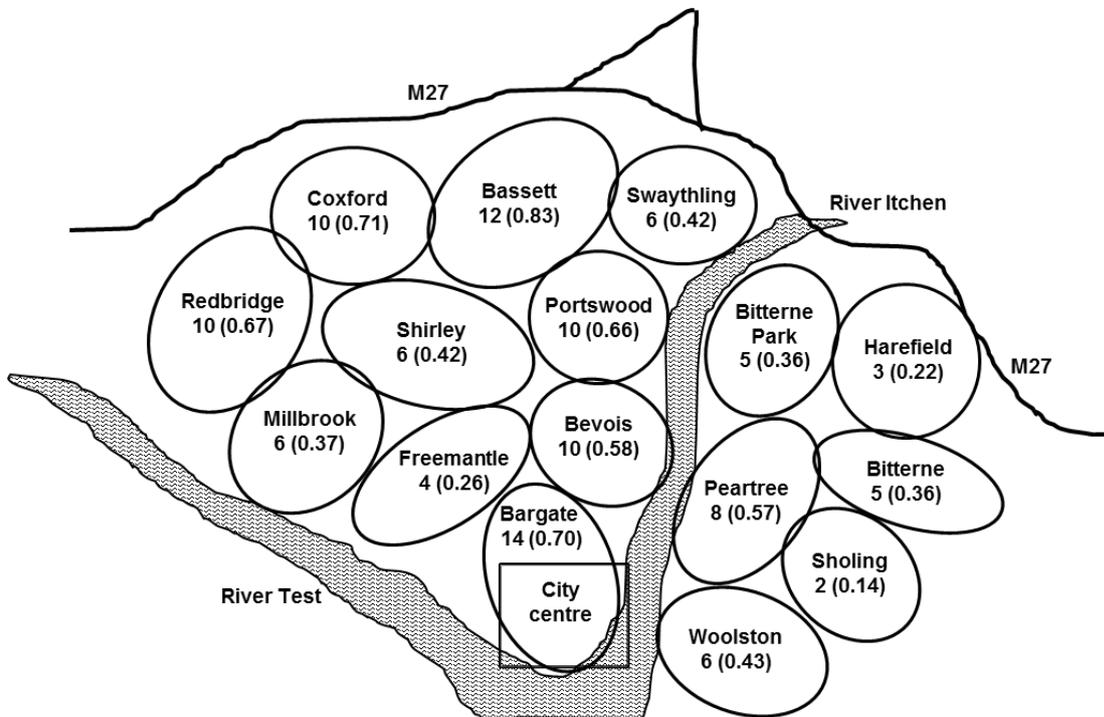
### **7.1 THE TENANTS' AND RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATIONS OF SOUTHAMPTON**

No single source of information on Southampton's TARAs exists. Instead, groups had to be identified and their characteristics discovered through reference to various sources including officers and councillors at Southampton City Council, voluntary group networks, community directories, archived local newspaper articles and funding databases (e.g. the National Lottery's database) (Appendix 6). In total, 120 TARAs were identified in Southampton in August 2010 (when the sampling frame was fixed). Whilst based on a detailed analysis, this figure is unlikely to be exhaustive. Some groups may have an extremely low profile and/or quickly emerge and disband making their identification difficult (Newton, 1976: 36). With Southampton estimated to have a population of 239,732 in 2010 (ONS, 2011b), a rate of 0.50 TARAs per 1,000 residents is identified. Few studies have attempted to identify all TARAs in a city and so the representativeness of this rate is unclear. Of the studies there are, Short et al. (1986: 205) identified 149 residents' groups in Central Berkshire which, set against a population of 127,722, gave a rate of 1.17 groups per 1,000 residents. Plus, Newton (1976: 34) sought to identify all voluntary groups in Birmingham and, of the 4,250 groups located, 24 were residents associations and 23 tenants associations (Newton, 1976: 197). Set against a population of just over 1.1 million in 1961, the date Newton (1976: 5) uses, this equates to 0.04 residents' groups per 1,000 residents. In a city the size of Birmingham, one might anticipate a larger number of TARAs and thus a higher rate. However, Newton (1976) admits his analysis, as with the analysis discussed here, is unlikely to be exhaustive.

## 7.2 THE DISTRIBUTION OF GROUPS

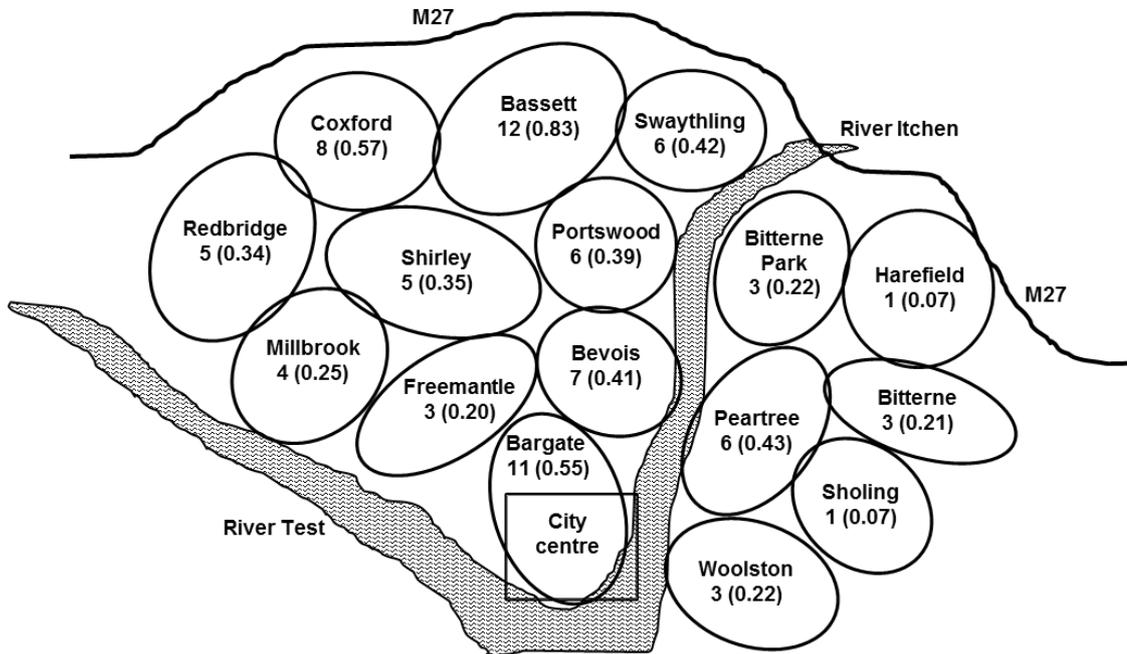
Across Southampton, the distribution of TARAs is uneven. There are clusters in some places and an absence in others. Concentrations are found in Portswood and Bassett wards, in the tightly packed terraced streets in parts of Bevois ward, inner city social housing estates in Bargate ward and across some of the outlying suburbs in Redbridge ward. In Coxford ward, a cluster of groups is found in individual sheltered housing schemes. In contrast, no groups were found in the new build apartment complexes in the city centre (in Bargate ward) whilst Sholing, Freemantle and Harefield wards featured very few. Short et al. (1986: 222) and Dalziel (2011) comment on the uneven spread of groups with the former claiming their distribution resembles a “patchwork quilt”. Figure 2 shows the number of TARAs, and the rate of TARAs per 1,000 residents, in each of Southampton’s electoral wards. Groups were allocated to wards using an online address-based ‘ward finder’ tool provided by Southampton City Council. Addresses from within a group’s area, usually the group’s contact address, were used. Difficulties in establishing the precise spatial boundaries of all groups precluded a map that plotted each group’s specific location within Southampton. The next diagram, Figure 3, refers to just those groups included in the sampling frame (84 groups).

**Figure 2: Distribution of TARAs across Southampton - number of groups and rate per 1,000 residents (shown in brackets) by electoral ward**



*Note: Three TARAs could not be allocated to an electoral ward - the areas they covered could not be established. Rate of TARAs per 1,000 residents based on ONS Mid-2010 Population Estimates for 2010 Wards (ONS, 2011b)*

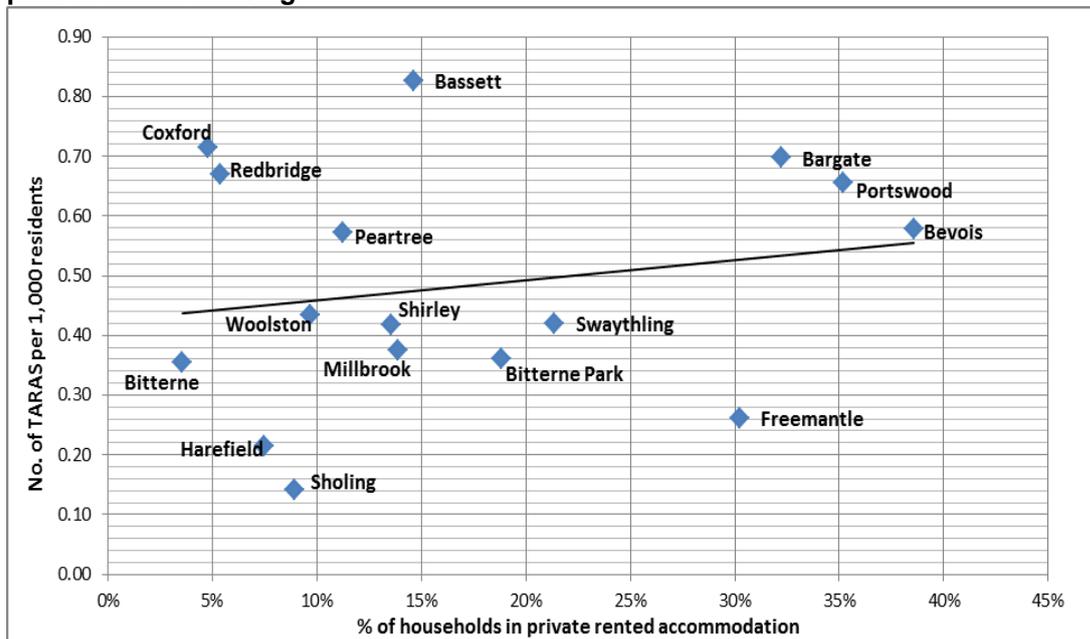
**Figure 3: Distribution of TARAs included in the sampling frame - number of groups and rate per 1,000 residents (shown in brackets) by electoral ward**



*Note: population data as before (ONS, 2011b)*

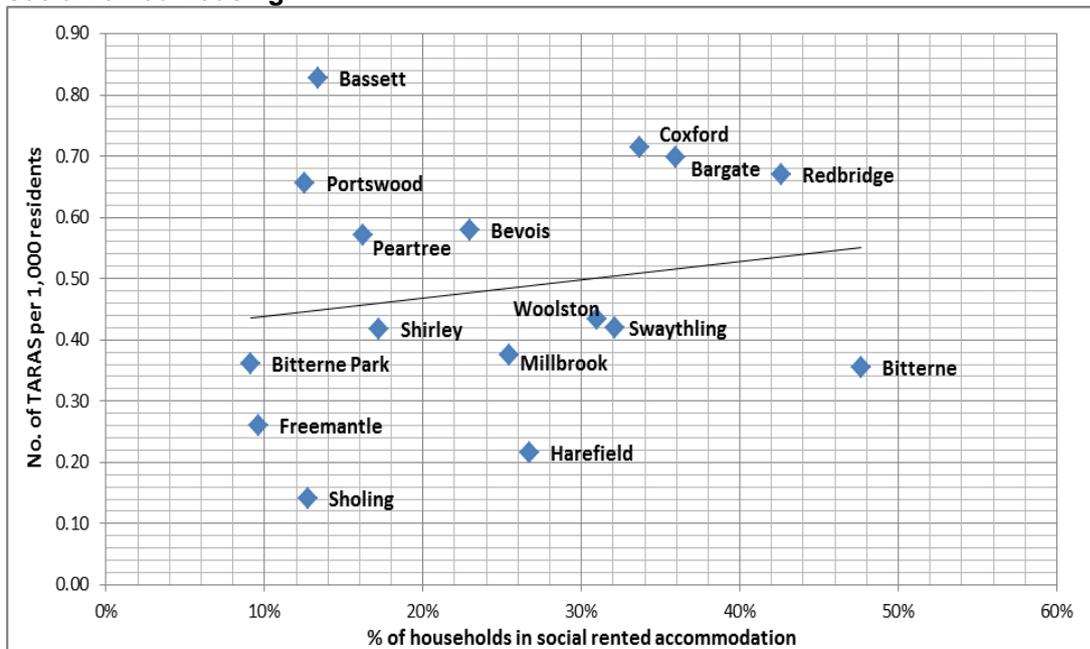
As Figure 2 shows, some wards have a higher and some a lower rate of groups per 1,000 residents than the citywide average (of 0.50). With parts of the literature, discussed in Chapter 4, suggesting certain socio-economic factors are associated with greater and fewer numbers of TARAs, these factors might explain the uneven distribution of groups. Parts of the literature suggest, for instance, that the number of groups can be high in social housing areas but low in areas dominated by private renters (Chapter 4). To explore these issues in Southampton, Census 2001 data was collected on the proportion of private renters and the proportion of social renters in each electoral ward. As Figures 4 and 5 show neither factor appears crucial in explaining the presence of TARAs. Both appear to have only a weak positive relationship with the issue. But, even finding a weak relationship between TARAs and private renters contradicts the literature's expectations. It is probable though, at least within the three wards with the highest proportion of private renters (Portwood, Bargate and Bevois), that homeowners, not tenants, are operating the TARAs. In these wards, many of the private housing tenants are students living in Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) (SCC, 2012) and, as discussed later, concerns about these tenants motivate many local residents' groups. A statistical model that considers and controls for the influence of numerous variables would shed light on what might be happening in all wards featuring (relatively) high rates of TARAs and larger proportions of private renters. This could be an area of future research.

**Figure 4: No. of TARAs per 1,000 residents against proportion of households in private rented housing**



Source: Data on % of households in private rented accommodation from Neighbourhood Statistics  
 Note: Rate of TARAs per 1,000 residents based on ONS Mid-2010 Population Estimates for 2010 Wards (ONS, 2011b)

**Figure 5: No. of TARAs per 1,000 residents against proportion of households in social rented housing**



Source: Data on % of households in social rented housing from Neighbourhood Statistics  
 Note: Rate of TARAs per 1,000 residents based on ONS Mid-2010 Population Estimates for 2010 Wards (ONS, 2011b)

Owing to a lack of information on participation in TARAs within Southampton, and its electoral wards (and/or other spatial scales), it is not possible to explore relationships between participation rates and demographic/socio-economic characteristics. It is noted, though, that the literature identifies several such relationships (Chapter 4).

### **7.3 THE ACTIVITIES AND INTERESTS OF GROUPS**

Information on activities and interests could only be identified for a small proportion of Southampton's 120 TARAs. For instance, very few, only nine in fact, had a functioning website from which to draw information. Where information was available, groups were all found to ultimately profess a concern for protecting and promoting the perceived 'interests' of their area. They had different understandings, though, of what these interests were and these understandings seemed to be related to conditions within, and the composition of, their local environment. For example, groups operating in residential areas near the city's two universities were particularly concerned about student HMOs. They objected to planning applications for new HMOs and lobbied the council for new planning regulations to prevent the spread of HMOs. They associated noise, anti-social behaviour, litter and car parking problems with concentrations of student HMOs. In contrast, other groups rarely, if ever, mentioned these properties. Many groups expressed a concern for supporting the wellbeing and/or protecting the interests of all residents within their area. In doing so, they seemed to be associating themselves with the 'public interest' not the private interests of group members. Several concerns were common to many groups. For instance, many professed an interest in on-street parking issues, noise, litter, anti-social behaviour and planning and development matters. Indeed, planning issues, typically an unwelcome development proposal, prompted the formation of many groups, including many of the groups included in the research (see later for details).

Groups engaged in a variety of activities. For instance, they could organise social activities for local residents and/or group members, prepare and distribute newsletters, engage in the planning system in various ways and/or lobby councillors and local MPs. A few groups worked with partners such as the council to develop new facilities for their area – a situation which suggests they resemble 'Getter' groups as defined by Short et al. (1986) (Chapter 4). It appeared these groups were more likely to be based in less affluent areas, but with information being patchy and limited, such generalisations are tenuous. Many groups engaged in the planning system to oppose development proposals and to try to influence development decisions. To this end, similar to findings in the literature (Chapter 4), groups could monitor planning applications, lobby councillors, meet with planning officers, object to planning applications, participate in consultation exercises on distinct planning policies (e.g. on HMOs) and make representations at the public

examination of local development plans. One group (from an affluent area) even engaged professional legal advice to represent its interests in planning matters. Noting their anti-development interests, none of these groups ever intervened to support new development; it seems that these groups resemble Short et al.'s (1986) 'Stopper' groups (Chapter 4). However, these anti-development groups were located in a variety of areas from affluent homeowner suburbs through to poorer social housing estates and mixed tenure estates. Consequently, in terms of membership, it seems that these groups differed from Short et al.'s (1986) 'Stopper' groups where membership mainly comprised homeowners. There is a long history of Southampton's TARAs engaging in anti-development activities. Dennis ([n.d]) reports that many TARAs worked together to protest against the development of an urban motorway in the early 1970s. Their efforts, including participation in a Public Inquiry, proved successful as the council eventually abandoned the project. Interestingly, Dennis ([n.d]) reports that for a citywide federation of TARAs, road building formed the initial and continuing concern with other forms of development being judged more acceptable (Dennis, [n.d]). Indeed, the Federation's headed notepaper featured the words 'build houses not roads' (Dennis, [n.d]). In terms of financing their activities, some groups operated a membership fee - a nominal amount totalling a couple of pounds per annum per household. Funding could also be accessed from official sources, such as Southampton City Council, whilst fundraising activities such as summer parties could be held.

## **7.4 THE GROUPS AND GROUP MEMBERS WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE RESEARCH**

A sample of 11 TARAs was assembled equating to 13% of the sampling frame. To bring anonymity to the data, the groups were provided with pseudonyms. Each was allocated a letter from A to K giving group names like 'Group A'. Participants were also given pseudonyms. They were provided with names thought appropriate to their gender, ethnicity and age with their real names being to some extent a guide. Appendix 9 lists the participants by their relevant TARA.

### **7.4.1 The group members who participated in the research**

An absence of socio-economic and demographic data on each TARA's membership (TARAs did not compile this information) precludes attempts to determine how far the members participating in the research represented each group's wider membership. Partly because of this issue, and partly due to concerns about how participants would respond to potentially intrusive questions on age, tenure, employment status etc., demographic and socio-economic data was not collected directly from participants. However, some volunteered information on their age, employment status,

professional background, tenure, household composition, shopping preferences, length of residence in Southampton and use of public transport. Where appropriate, this data was compared against the literature, discussed in Chapter 4, to see how far the participants reflected the 'typical' qualities of TARA members. However, because a conscious effort was made to assemble a diverse sample of groups, it was thought inappropriate to expect the participants to reflect every aspect of a 'typical' TARA member, particularly those relating to tenure and affluence. Noting this, attention focused on the extent to which participants reflected two qualities - one relating to age and one to length of residence – that are often associated with TARA members.

Overall, 46 TARA members participated in the focus groups and around 40% of these identified themselves as retirees. Further, some spoke about having grown up children and others about the use of their over 60s bus pass. Most appeared to be middle aged or older adults with a majority apparently in their 50s or 60s (it is appreciated, though, that a visual assessment of age is subjective and imprecise). In terms of age profile then, the participants seemed to reflect the typical qualities of a TARA member - past studies find members tend to be older adults (Chapter 4). Many participants reported living in Southampton their whole lives, or for many years, with many claiming to be long term residents of their current home. In terms of length of residence then, the participants again seemed to reflect a typical characteristic of a TARA member - past studies find members tend to be long term residents (Chapter 4). Other observed qualities of the participants related to gender and ethnicity. All were White, whilst 52% were female and 48% male. A lack of relevant contemporary studies means it is uncertain how far these characteristics are reflected in the wider population of TARA members.

#### **7.4.2 The groups who participated in the research**

Below, brief accounts of each group, and its geographic area of activity, are provided (see Appendix 10 for detailed socio-economic data). These accounts are based on information gathered from desktop research, from fieldtrips to each group's area, Census 2001 data and data provided by the groups themselves. Census data was collected at Output Area level using Neighbourhood Statistics (ONS, [n.d]a). In several cases, a group's boundary matched Output Area boundaries although for others the fit was poor. Where the fit was poor, the Census data could only hint at conditions within the group's area (Appendix 10 identifies the quality of fit between each group's area and its relevant Output Areas). Additionally, the age of Census 2001 data raises questions about its continued relevance and accuracy.

## **Group A**

Group A operates in a low-rise flatted social housing estate on the edge of Southampton city centre. There are small areas of communal open space and a nearby high street providing cafes, pubs, off-licences and convenience stores. It is a deprived area home to over 700 residents, the majority of whom live in properties rented from the council (around 70% of residents). Most properties fall into the lowest Council Tax Band (95% in March 2011). 7% of residents are long term unemployed or have never worked - the highest rate across all groups included in the research.

The group views all residents of the estate as members creating an estimated membership of 580 households. Around 40 people attend the group's regular meetings. The group is supported by council officers, it is known to the ward councillor and it has worked with the council and police to address various issues including crime and anti-social behaviour. In the past, it has unsuccessfully lobbied the council for a community centre. It produces a regular newsletter delivered across the estate and is part of an umbrella organisation that represents residents' groups based on social housing estates managed by Southampton City Council. The group was founded in 2004, initially emerging as a neighbourhood watch organisation. It morphed into a residents' group in order to respond to the wide range of problems residents experienced (no further information was provided on the nature of these problems). Within Group A, there is an elected committee of seven members. Regular committee meetings are held with guest speakers invited including council officers and police officers. Four committee members participated in the focus group - two males (Michael and Paul) and two females (Kathy and Carol). All appeared to be middle aged or older adults with two describing themselves as retirees.

## **Group B**

Group B covers a mixed tenure estate (social housing and owner occupiers) built in phases in the early 1970s along broadly Radburn principles with car parking separated from housing, footpaths rather than streets connecting many homes and plentiful public open space. Property is a combination of low rise flats for older adults, almost 30% of the population is aged 60 plus (one of the highest rates in the TARA sample), and modern (i.e. 1970s) terraced housing. The estate was built as a social housing scheme but, through Right to Buy, many properties are now in private ownership (45% owner occupiers, 50% social rented). It is located at the very edge of Southampton. One side of the estate is bordered by a large expanse of fields. The estate lies in a predominantly residential area approximately one mile from a local centre providing a supermarket and other shops.

The group views all residents of the estate as members giving an estimated membership of 540 households. It is concerned with local problems such as vandalism and crime and the limited provision of facilities for the estate's young people. The group holds regular meetings where invited speakers can include council officers and the police and it distributes a newsletter. The group is known to Southampton City Council and has a website. It is a member of the same city-wide umbrella organisation as Group A. The group was established in 2003 to oppose a nearby development of new homes. There were concerns about the scheme leading to 'over development' and its impact on traffic flows. There is an elected committee comprising eight members. Five committee members participated in the focus group - two males (David and Roger) and three females (Teresa, Christine and Wendy). All appeared to be in their 60s with four describing themselves as retirees.

### **Group C**

Group C is one of the four groups drawn from the same large, affluent, leafy suburb mentioned in Chapter 6. Within the group's area, properties are mainly detached houses (almost 30% of occupied properties), semi-detached houses (40% of occupied properties) and flats (30% of occupied properties). It is home to around 1,300 households, the majority of whom (just over 60%) are owner occupiers. It is a predominantly residential area with some small shops located on a high street a 20 minute walk away. The area is close to one of Southampton's two universities and features a large student housing complex. A small part of Group C's area overlaps with Group E's area.

Group C requires households to become members by paying a nominal subscription fee. There are presently 340 members in some 220 households. Thus, only 17% of all households within the group's area are members. The group's interests include car parking issues, traffic management, policing, planning applications, the provision of litter bins, fly posting, anti-social behaviour, late night noise, street repair and street cleaning. The group is known to Southampton City Council and is affiliated to a city-wide umbrella organisation that represents a number of residents associations operating in predominantly homeowner areas (different to the umbrella organisation Groups A and B belong to). It is part of a national lobby group that objects to concentrated populations of student HMOs in residential areas. In conjunction with nine other residents' groups (including Groups G and K), Group C is developing a neighbourhood plan (i.e. a local land use strategy) taking advantage of opportunities created through the Localism Act 2011 (see Chapter 11 for information on neighbourhood plans). The group has disbanded and reformed several times in response to perceived threats, particularly proposals to expand the size of the aforementioned student housing complex. Opposition to the construction of

this complex first prompted the group's formation in the early 1990s. The group has an elected committee comprising 12 members plus two representatives from Group E. It holds regular committee meetings. Three committee members participated in the focus group - two females (Dorothy and Angela) and one male (Mathew). All appeared to be in their 50s or 60s with two describing themselves as retirees.

### **Group D**

Group D covers the largest area of all groups included in the sample. The area is home to over 3,300 households and features a variety of housing types and a mix of mostly owner occupiers (around 60% of households) and private housing tenants (around 30% of households). The area includes one of Southampton's two universities and, consequently, a large proportion of the private housing tenants are students living in HMOs. It features a high street offering a number of shops, cafes, hot food take-aways and pubs. A number of these uses, plus places of worship, a primary school and local health centres, are distributed throughout the area.

Group D requires households to become members by paying a nominal subscription fee. Around 500 households are members so, although a large group, only 15% of all households within its area of activity are members. The group is particularly concerned with planning and development issues, especially the spread of student HMOs. It publishes a regular glossy newsletter for members and the wider community. It joins Group C in the same city-wide umbrella organisation of residents' groups and the same national lobby which opposes concentrations of student HMOs. It is known to Southampton City Council and the area's local councillors. Southampton's DMO and PO identified Group D as one of the most active community participants in planning matters. It was established in the early 1980s in response to concerns over various planning and development issues although current members could not specify the exact reason. It has a committee of 13 members that meets regularly. Three committee members participated in the focus group - two females (Suzanne and Michelle) and one male (Jim). All appeared to be in their 50s or 60s with one participant describing himself as a retiree.

### **Group E**

Group E covers a mixed tenure estate home to approximately 1,300 households. The majority of properties, 75%, are semi-detached houses with gardens. Purely in terms of property type, it largely resembles a traditional post-war British suburb. Originally built as a social housing estate, through Right to Buy a large proportion of homes (just over 40%) are now in private ownership. Around 40% remain as social rented properties. It is a

predominantly residential area but features a secondary school and a large area of relatively poor quality open space. It is rather deprived with 30% of residents in routine or semi-routine occupations whilst 4% are long-term unemployed or have never worked (the second highest rate across all groups).

The group views all residents of the estate as members creating an approximate membership of 1,300 households. The group has lobbied the council on various issues including street cleaning and surfacing, facilities for young people and road safety. It has had some success with these activities. Some roads have been resurfaced and a new road crossing installed. The group worked with various partners, including the council, to develop a funding application to attract investment to improve the aforementioned poor quality green space and provide new play facilities. The group is also interested in organising activities for the estate's children and young people. The group was established in the early 2000s but disbanded in 2005. It was re-established with an entirely new set of committee members (the current members) in 2009 following discussions with Police Community Support Officers who supported the idea of a local residents' group. It was therefore created largely in response to an external stimulus. There is an elected committee comprising 10 members. Committee members range in age from 16 to 68 with the youngest a junior committee member. Three committee members participated in the focus group - two males (John and Richard) and one female (Rita). All appeared to be in their 50s or 60s with two identifying themselves as retirees.

## **Group F**

Group F covers a predominantly residential area home to approximately 800 households living in a mix of housing types – 10% in detached houses, 25% in semi-detached houses, 30% in terraced houses and 35% in flats. Houses are provided at relatively high densities with little or no defensible space between the street and the front of properties. In many cases, the front door opens straight onto the street. Around 60% of households live in private rented accommodation with many being students in HMOs. This student population helps explain the extremely large proportion of young adults – almost 60% of persons are aged 20 to 29. This is by far the highest rate of young adults across all groups. The area is relatively close to the edge of the city centre and is bordered to one side by a high street offering several convenience stores, pubs and a small supermarket.

The group views all residents within its area of activity as members creating an estimated membership of 800 households. Group interests and activities are diverse though the presence and development of student HMOs is a notable concern. There is an interest in creating connections between all parts of the community, including the student

residents, and so community 'clean up' days and social events for the whole area are organised. The group has a website and holds regular meetings. It formed in 2010 largely in response to Southampton City Council's desire to see a residents' group within the area (why the council had this interest was not explained). Similar to Group E then, an external stimulus helped prompt group formation. There is a committee of eight members. Six committee members participated in the focus group - four females (Sue, Elizabeth, Joan and Kay) and two male (Douglas and Mark). Participants seemed to vary in age from 40s to 60s. Several mentioned their jobs, whilst no one reported being retired. In terms of age, Group F, along with Groups I and G, provided the most varied sample of participants.

### **Group G**

Group G is one of the four groups drawn from the same large, affluent, leafy suburb mentioned in Chapter 6. Group G's specific area of activity mostly comprises substantial detached houses with sizeable gardens, 65% of households lived in such properties, and apartments (23% of households). Just over 80% of households are owner occupiers and most properties, 75%, are located in the top six Council Tax Bands (Bands D to I). The area is home to around 370 households and is entirely residential. Shops and other facilities are located over a mile away. In terms of tenure and development pattern, Group G's area closely resembles a traditional 'leafy' British suburb.

The group requires residents to become members by paying a nominal subscription fee. It claims 190 households are members meaning that around 50% of all households within its area of activity are part of the group. The group holds regular committee meetings, has a website and possesses a range of interests, although HMOs, alongside planning and development matters, are a particular concern. As mentioned earlier, Group G is co-creating a neighbourhood plan with nine other residents' groups. The group formed in 2010 in response to an unwelcome planning application where the proposed development was thought 'inappropriate' for the area. Residents organised a public meeting to discuss strategies to object to the application and the residents' group emerged from this. The group has a committee comprising eight members. Nine people participated in the focus group – five committee members and four non-committee members (though the author had requested just committee members). Participants were five females (Janice, Judy, Cheryl, Rachel and Pamela) and four males (Neil, Martin, Thomas and Robert). Ages seemed to range from 40s to 60s with two participants mentioning they were retired.

## **Group H**

Group H covers a distinct residential community in Southampton city centre which covers a small number of historic streets and modern developments set back from the city centre's commercial heart. The area includes the odd pub, small office unit, place of worship, primary school and one small area of public open space. The dwelling stock mainly comprises flats (new build and relatively recent conversions), and 'modern' terraced housing from the 1980s. At the flats, one might anticipate a large proportion of residents to be private renters since many new build city centre apartments are often apportioned to this tenure (Unsworth, 2005, 2007). Some social housing is located within the area whilst Output Area data suggests a sizeable proportion of residents are owner occupiers (55%). However, with a very poor fit between Group H's boundaries and Output Area boundaries, it is difficult to draw firm conclusions about the area's socio-economic characteristics.

Group H requires members to join by paying a nominal subscription fee. It is estimated there are between 40 and 50 members. The group meets infrequently and only in response to defined issues such as concerns over a particular planning application. It has various interests including planning and open space provision. It was formed in the early 1980s with current members suggesting the prompt might have been an unwelcome planning application. There is a committee comprising eight members. Two committee members participated in the research - one male (Jeff) and one female (Margaret). Both appeared to be older adults with one in employment and one a retiree.

## **Group I**

Group I covers a reasonably large housing estate, located towards the edge of Southampton, which dates from the 1920s and reflects the principles of the Garden City movement. Parts of it still clearly demonstrate the stylized, semi-rural character and design favoured by this movement and, in light of this, it has been given Conservation Area status by Southampton City Council. The housing stock is varied featuring detached, semi-detached and terraced houses alongside a few flats. In several places, houses are situated around communal village greens. The estate is located in a mostly residential area. A very poor fit between the group's boundaries and Output Area boundaries precludes commentary on the socio-economic characteristics of the estate.

The group requires residents to become members by paying a nominal subscription fee. It estimates that around 200 households are members. The group is concerned with ensuring the estate maintains the qualities which first led it to gain

Conservation Area status. In fact, it was formed in 1992 in response to the estate gaining this status. There is a committee comprising nine members and regular committee meetings are held. Five committee members participated in the focus groups - three females (Julia, Diana and Linda) and two males (Ken and Will). All seemed to be in employment as many mentioned their jobs; none mentioned being retired. In terms of age, participants appeared to range from their 40s to 60s.

### **Group J**

Group J is one of the four groups drawn from the same large, affluent, leafy suburb mentioned in Chapter 6. It covers an area very similar to Group G's. Around 95% of households live in detached houses, 90% of residents are owner occupiers and 99% of properties are located in the top six Council Tax Bands (Bands D to I). Whilst a poor fit between the group's boundaries and Output Area boundaries means the precise accuracy of these figures is doubted, field trips to Group J's area suggests they provide a reasonable indication of local conditions. The group's area is wholly residential with shops and other facilities located over a mile away. Like Group G, Group J's area closely resembles a traditional, 'leafy' suburb.

The group requires households to become members by paying a nominal subscription fee. Around 82 households are said to be members. The group claims to operate to maintain 'standards' across the local area and to look after the interests of all residents. It formed in response to an unwelcome planning application where it was proposed to demolish a large detached house and replace it with a couple of smaller properties. Planning issues continue to be a noted concern. There is a committee comprising seven members that meets regularly. Four committee members participated in the focus group. Unique within the focus groups, all participants were male (Henry, Edward, Phillip and Frank). Three participants were retirees whilst the fourth was employed.

### **Group K**

Group K is one of the four groups drawn from the same large, affluent, leafy suburb mentioned in Chapter 6. It covers the smallest area of all groups included in the research extending to just two small residential streets. These streets are home to approximately 30 households. All properties are large detached or semi-detached houses with mature gardens. Owing to an extremely poor fit between the group's boundaries and Output Area boundaries, it is difficult to comment with confidence on the socio-economic characteristics of the area.

The group views all 30 households within its area of activity as members. It has a range of interests including residents' parking, traffic, HMOs and planning and development issues. The group formed to oppose council proposals to redevelop a nearby area of open space for housing (it is unclear if this space was eventually developed). There is a committee of five members although two of these (the participants) undertake the vast majority of work with 'group' meetings typically comprising just these individuals. The participants were both retirees, one male (Joe) and one female (Rose).

## **7.5 CONCLUSIONS**

120 TARAs were identified in Southampton in August 2010 which, when considered against Southampton's total population, gives a rate of 0.50 groups per 1,000 residents. How far this rate reflects the situation in other towns and cities is uncertain owing to a lack of contemporary comparable studies. Groups were unevenly distributed across the city. Some places, such as new build city centre apartment schemes, had no groups, whilst the suburban parts of Bassett ward had many (relatively speaking). There seemed to be a weak positive relationship between the presence of TARAs and the proportion of social housing and private housing tenants. The former relationship is anticipated by the literature but the latter is unexpected and seems to contradict the view, common within the literature, that TARAs are unlikely to form in private rented areas (Chapter 4). Common to all TARAs (where information was available) was a professed concern for protecting / promoting the perceived 'interests' of the local area but, between groups, views differed on what these interests were and it seemed conditions within, and the social composition of, a group's area played a role in this.

The 11 groups included in the research differed on a number of measures including age, size and scale of area covered. Plus, they operated in areas with differing socio-economic and spatial characteristics and demonstrated different levels of 'openness'. Some groups assumed all local residents were members, they advertised their existence through newsletters/websites and they developed relationships with external bodies. However, others kept a low profile (no newsletter etc.), required residents to actively become members by paying a subscription fee and had few 'outside' relations. Some though took on elements of both approaches being 'open' in some ways but 'closed' in others. Between groups, there was some overlap in origins, interests and activities. For example, many originated in response to an unwelcome planning application and many continued to engage in the planning system to object to unpopular development proposals. Groups' activities generally seemed to reflect those undertaken by Southampton's wider population of TARAs. Regarding the 46 TARA members who

participated in the research, on some measures they seemed rather similar. All were White, most were older adults with a large proportion being retirees, and many were long term residents of their area and/or of Southampton. In terms of age and length of residence, the participants reflected typical traits of TARA members (Chapter 4). However, by residing in areas that ranged from deprived to affluent, at least in terms of housing wealth, differences amongst the participants were noticeable.

The representativeness of TARAs was raised as an issue in Chapter 4. Given the profile of the committee members who participated in the research, in terms of age, economic activity, length of residence and ethnicity it seems unlikely that each group's committee will be representative of the area in which it operates. Further, on the occasions when only 15% or 17% of households in a group's area were group members, the representativeness of these groups in particular seems questionable. Lastly, for the groups operating in areas with many student HMOs, concern seemed to lie in protecting the interests of the non-student population (a point returned to in Chapter 9). Therefore, it seems these groups did not represent, or were not representative of, the interests of all local residents. Overall, in terms of their membership, and for some, the interests they promote, the TARAs included in the research do not stand as obvious beacons of representativeness. In the absence of detailed information on the membership dynamics etc. of all Southampton's TARAs, it is not, however, possible to comment on the relationship between the representativeness of the studied groups and the representativeness of all local groups.

AN ANALYSIS OF PLANNING POLICY'S APPROACH  
TO 'RESIDENTIAL NON-RESIDENTIAL MIX'

This chapter addresses Objective 1 of the research. It reports the findings of an analysis of planning policy's approach to 'RNR mix', and the associated though vaguer concept of MU, which primarily entailed an examination of written policy and interviews with planning officers. It discusses measures that facilitate and frustrate these patterns of development with commentary covering national, regional and local policy (Chapter 6 for policy sample). One section provides a detailed comparison of the approach found in three case study communities (Ashford, Epsom and Southampton). A recurring theme within the chapter is the relationship between planning policy as 'content' (statements of intent) and planning policy as 'process' (how it is interpreted and applied by decision-makers).

### 8.1 CELEBRATED CONCEPT

'RNR mix' and 'MU' are celebrated concepts within national, regional and local policy with both finding favour in the development plans of Ashford, Southampton and Epsom. Each seems to be conceptualised as a 'problem-free' form of development. Indeed, numerous beneficial outcomes, typically the same for each, are attributed to the practices with these largely reflecting the benefits identified in the policy of the 1990s and early 2000s (Chapter 3) (see later). For the South East Plan (GOSE, 2009), one of the six 'spatial planning principles' orientating the whole RSS concerns MU. This principle states that within the South East, "a continuing strategy of urban focus and urban renaissance" will be pursued partly through "accessible mixed use development" in the "region's network of town centres" (GOSE, 2009: 17). In affording MU such a central role, it seems regional policy makers accept Mace et al.'s (2007) assertion, discussed in Chapter 6, insofar as they believe fine grained mix 'makes sense' in the town and city centres of the South East. At the local level, the local authority planning officers believed it to be a self-evident, unquestionable 'good' to mix land uses. For Ashford's PO it was "good planning, obviously", whilst for Epsom's DMO it was "just ingrained within an officer" to seek mix at town centre sites.

Although a celebrated concept, similar to past policy (Chapter 3), a definitive explanation of MU was absent from both written policy and amongst planning officers. Indeed, the Use Class Order identifies MU as '*sui generis*' meaning that it falls outside the established Use Classes and lacks a prescribed definition in legislation (ODPM, 2005b).

Without such underpinnings, it might be difficult for written policy, and the officers implementing it, to impose any prescriptive definition. MU could refer to 'RNR mix', with Epsom's PO claiming that it necessarily constitutes mix between residential and some other use, but the qualitative content analysis of written policy revealed that it could also mean mix between non-residential uses. For example, Southampton's Local Plan allocated a large employment site for "employment-led MU" with offices, business, general industrial, storage and distribution prescribed (SCC, 2010: 121). Ashford's DMO queried, though, whether this constituted MU because all uses were 'employment'. This might suggest a certain 'distance' between officers and written policy (a point returned to later). Officers similarly discounted mix between different 'types' of dwellings arguing that all would, in effect, be the same use – residential. Whilst officers reported no 'working definition' of the concept, comments such as these suggest that at least informally there was a belief that MU involved mix between distinct uses. Ashford's PO appeared to add a further qualification. A scheme providing open space alongside housing was discounted because the open space was thought "ancillary" to the housing (Ashford PO). For this officer then, uses had to be distinct and independent. Amongst the officers, a further point of consensus was that MU involved at least two types of land use.

#### **8.1.1 Flexible preferences or a preference for flexibility**

Planning officers identified MU as a fluid concept with much of its meaning reformulated on a site by site, planning application by planning application basis. Within written policy, the concept was especially fluid in regards to spatial scale and integration between uses. It was used to describe individual buildings, where diverse uses were pressed close together, and entire new communities featuring loose association between uses. Similar to Rowley's (1998) conceptualisation then (Chapter 3), within policy MU did not have a single fixed state. Officers felt this flexible approach was appropriate because applications and sites had to be judged on their merits and a fixed definition would be unsuited to this task. Indeed, as a general point, officers favoured and were required to construct flexible policies and they interpreted and applied these policies in a flexible way. For these officers, 'flexibility' was fundamental to 'good' planning policies and so it was consciously built into new policies. This results in an innate flexibility to policy's preferences or, alternatively, an innate preference for flexibility within policy:

"...I mean more generally I would have thought that whilst obviously it's very important to have plans and to be able to set out and to give certainty to developers about what they can and can't do at the same point you, you're always going to need a degree of flexibility, you can't box everything completely simply you know, 'you'll do it like this, it has to be like this', you have to be open to the fact

that circumstances are going to potentially change particularly if you've got a document that's valid for 20 years or so but then part of the, part of the way that they're [i.e. policies] tested looks at or is supposed to look at the flexibility of the policies that you've got, to see whether there is room for manoeuvre" (Ashford PO)

When constructing a development plan and creating MU policies for individual sites, officers considered a site's 'potential', the needs and components of the surrounding area, national and regional policy and the interests of residents, stakeholders and developers. Through this, the meaning of 'MU', at any given site, emerged:

"...what eventually comes out as mixed use is part of a, sort of a, democratic discussion between the developer, the local authority and some local stakeholders..." (Ashford DMO)

Consequently, within a single plan, the concept of MU can take on different meanings at different sites – it is inherently fluid. When determining a planning application for a MU site, officers reported considering the nature of the application, the content of policy and, similar to before, the site's potential, the nature of the surrounding area and the wishes of residents, stakeholders and the applicant. Whilst this means written policy is a guide rather than a set of binding instructions, officers reported that it is not so malleable as to permit any type of development favoured by an applicant. If an applicant's proposal differed substantively from policy's expectations then there was "every chance" planning permission would be refused (Southampton PO). Ashford's planning officers referred to an application which had been refused for a MU site because it failed to satisfy written policy's requirements on integration between uses. For the planning officers, permitted MU development needed to echo, but did not have to be a carbon copy of, policy.

### **8.1.2 MU policy in development management decisions**

An analysis of planning applications and associated decision notices, for developments permitted and refused at sites and areas allocated for MU in Ashford and Southampton (Chapter 6 for method), confirmed the planning officers' assertions that approved development generally echoes written policy's aspirations. Approved applications were typically for uses that were identified within the MU site/area allocation policies. However, refused applications also tended to propose uses and use combinations included in these policies. Applicants seemed then to avoid submitting applications that veered wildly from the MU policies. Analysis of the decision notices for *approved* applications found the MU site/area allocation policies could be referenced when explaining why permission was granted, however, this was not always the case. The

decision notices included lists of Local Plan, Structure Plan (when active) and Core Strategy policies, and, to a lesser extent, national policies, showing why a proposed scheme was acceptable but these lists did not always mention the MU policies. Interestingly, the decision notices for *refused* applications never mentioned the MU site/area allocation policies. Instead, various material considerations, and the violation of other development plan policies, formed the grounds for refusal. A development's scale and massing, impacts on residential amenity, pedestrian and vehicular access, technical and design concerns (such as refuse and cycle storage arrangements) and the absence of required assessments (e.g. Flood Risk Assessment) tended to form the grounds for refusing planning permission. These factors were often linked to development plan policies, typically Local Plan, Core Strategy and Structure Plan policies. For example, in Southampton, an application for a MU scheme comprising residential and retail use was refused at a site allocated for MU partly on the grounds of inadequate natural lighting to the residential units. This was said to undermine residential amenity, an issue that was linked to policies 'CS13 Fundamentals of Design' in Southampton's Core Strategy and 'SDP1 Quality of Development' in the Local Plan. Both policies were said to be concerned with "creating attractive residential environments" (Nichols, 2010: 1).

The analysis of the planning application decision notices revealed the specific concept of MU failed to feature in arguments for either granting or refusing planning permission. Issues pertaining to the act of mixing uses were discussed, such as how a proposed development might affect neighbouring uses and how neighbouring uses might affect the development. But, issues such as whether the proposed development contained an appropriate number, arrangement and proportion of uses to qualify as MU, or whether/how the development could contribute to the achievement of MU across a site or area, were not mentioned. Note earlier, though, that Ashford's planning officers claimed an application was refused specifically because it lacked sufficient connectivity between uses to qualify as MU. When a MU scheme was proposed, decision notices did not comment on the desirability of the suggested mix or the 'benefits' of the proposed mix. The closest the decision notices came to making such assertions occurred when MU schemes were occasionally said to produce "regeneration benefits" - although these benefits were not defined (Rothery, 2008: 11). Where planning permission was granted, conditions placed on development also failed to engage with the concept of MU or the broader issue of land use mix. When a MU scheme was approved, conditions did not relate to the uses proposed, their arrangement or proportions; rather, conditions related to technical and design issues concerning the development and its construction such as permissible hours of construction work, acceptable construction methods and landscaping requirements. Of the applications studied, the one possible (and admittedly minor) exception to this rule concerned a MU scheme, proposed in Southampton, comprising residential on the upper

floors and ground floor commercial use. Although various conditions were attached to the permission, of interest here is the condition regarding use of the commercial space. This condition required the occupier of the space to retain an “active window display along the length of the shop frontages” (Lyons, 2011: 6). This condition ensured that, when viewed from the street, the scheme gave the impression of a mixed use development with an active ground floor use.

### **8.1.3 Plan-led discretionary system**

The flexibility and discretion which infuses policy’s approach to the concept of MU mimics the way planning policy as a whole is employed within the English planning system. As discussed in Chapter 2, the Planning Acts require planning applications to be determined in line with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise (Barker, 2006). Thus, whilst policy is the primary consideration, giving grounds to identify a plan-led system, there is a legal basis for the consideration of other ‘material’ factors and for choice and discretion in the application of the development plan - a situation implying the presence of a plan-led discretionary system. This contrasts with the situation in countries where a regulatory zoning system occurs where planning is “legitimised by the absence of discretion, not its presence” (Booth, 1999: 34).

### **8.1.4 Discretion in the interpretation of MU policy**

In identifying a plan-led discretionary system, it seems the discretion chosen and available to decision makers in the interpretation and implementation of MU policy is sizeable, and is noticeably greater than that available in policy areas like affordable housing and housing land allocations. Affordable housing is defined by PPS3 Housing as “social rented and intermediate housing, provided to specified eligible households whose needs are not met by the market” with ‘social rented’ and ‘intermediate housing’ defined further (DCLG, 2006a: 25). Whilst not comprehensive, the meaning of the term ‘affordable housing,’ in the context of planning policy, begins to be delineated. At the national (until recently abolished), regional and local levels, policy sets minimum thresholds, based on number of dwellings or site area, at which affordable housing will be required on a scheme. Policy in Ashford, Southampton and Epsom emphasises the need for schemes which exceed the threshold to provide affordable housing onsite. Through these definitions and requirements, policy specifies what affordable housing is, when it is required and where it should be located. Compared to the approach to MU, policy perhaps seems to leave decision makers with noticeably less opportunity for flexibility and discretion in decision making. Turning to policy on housing land allocations, local policy allocates numerous sites for housing (see later). At these sites, officers claimed applicants would have to submit an

extremely convincing case for any use bar residential because alternative uses would be understood as a marked departure from the development plan. Consequently, compared to the approach taken to MU sites, where housing land allocations were concerned, there seemed to be few opportunities for decision makers to exercise discretion in determining approved uses. Similar restraints on discretion were also observed at sites allocated or safeguarded for employment use.

### **8.1.5 MU as a 'descriptive / evaluative concept'**

As the discussion to date has established, MU is a fluid, ambiguous concept. However, amongst planning officers, it seems to contain some rather less movable components. These officers agreed, for instance, that MU involved at least two uses and the uses had to be distinct/qualitatively different (see earlier). Amongst these officers then, the beginnings of a (very) partial definition seemed evident. This, combined with the esteem in which the concept is plainly held by officers and written policy, suggests MU can be viewed as a 'descriptive / evaluative concept'. For Plant et al. (1980: 206), this is a concept which is both "empirically descriptive" and "normatively toned". It describes and presents the object of that description in a positive light (Plant et al. 1980)<sup>10</sup>. The planning officer interviews confirmed an idea emerging in written policy, that MU is a concept which both describes a variable type of development and presents this development in a positive light. Officers spoke about "proper mixed use" (Epsom DMO), "a decent mix" and being "disappointed" with certain mixes (Southampton PO). They sought the "right mix of uses" and mentioned the possibility of an "ideal mix" (Epsom PO). Comments like these suggest MU is about more than the simple inclusion and arrangement of uses suggesting, perhaps, that it stands apart from the general concept of land use mix. Indeed, the following exchange on providing open space alongside housing indicates how, for Ashford's PO, there was a difference between the 'technical' act of mixing uses and the 'special' concept of MU:

Ashford PO:...I know it is a mix of uses because it's not just residential, its got other land uses mixed in which is what you've picked up, but it is a, a slightly different definition really

Author: So within planning, things like open space to support residential, is that not really considered another use it's just considered

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<sup>10</sup> It is noted that with planning policy being normative, it is perhaps unsurprising to find normative-evaluative concepts within it.

Ashford PO: Well yeah, I would say, I wouldn't say that was mixed use, but technically it is a mix of uses.

Going further, for Southampton's PO, though being mock-serious as indicated by tone of voice, distinctions were drawn between different types of MU. There was MU and then there was the "exciting world of...mixed use development" with the types of use and the balance between these uses appearing to be factors separating one from the other:

"...if what you were after was essentially a residential development but they [a developer] proposed it with an element of commercial...then it, maybe it is a mixed use, I mean obviously it wouldn't be a, it wouldn't be a very large mix, it would be mostly residential with a shop (pause) I'd still argue it was a mixed use but maybe not under the exciting world of you know a mixed use development where you look at, where you're looking at providing offices and residential..." (Southampton PO)

## **8.2 MAKING THE CASE FOR MIX**

Within policy and amongst officers, frequently mentioned arguments for MU and 'RNR mix' included reducing the need to travel and supporting more sustainable modes of transport – sometimes these could be explicitly associated with efforts to tackle climate change. Studies which question the association between urban form and travel behaviour, noted in Chapter 3, have not then affected policy's belief in this relationship. Chiming with Barlow et al.'s (2002) findings (Chapter 3), 'sustainability' was an often cited benefit amongst the planning officers. These officers understood 'sustainability' in broad terms – it was a concept that encompassed concerns like reducing travel, economic viability and socially mixed communities. For officers and written policy, sustainability and land use mix were intertwined. A sustainable community required a mix of uses whilst a mix of uses was unquestionably a way to enhance a community's sustainability:

"...I mean if there's one area where you could say mixed use, mixing uses is key this is in the urban extensions...you know these are meant to be sustainable urban communities so self-contained almost so I guess the whole range of facilities will be part of what we're planning for" (Ashford PO)

"...the only kind of money that is available at the moment is through residential but what that obviously does mean is that you've got a large scale redevelopment that isn't a mixed use development so then how can that be sustainable?" (Epsom DMO)

“It is an obvious general rule that the more people that live in easy walking distance of public transport routes and local shops and services, the more likely they are to thrive. Without such facilities, neighbourhoods will not perform efficiently as sustainable communities, can become characterless and will depend heavily on the use of the private car” (ABC, 2008: 13).

Within retail centres, the creation and maintenance of vibrant, active places was frequently associated with the presence of land use mix. For officers, at these centres co-locating different uses was a necessary precursor to increased and sustained levels of activity and vibrancy. These factors were valued for themselves but they were also associated with successful local economies and creating a desired ambiance or ‘feel’:

“...when we were losing our commercial floorspace at quite a rate we were worried that we’d start seeing Epsom turn from like a vibrant, I’m using that word again, but town centre where it’s used for a multitude of purposes, you’ve got like people there for shopping, people working, people living there, people using sort of other facilities, and once you start getting rid of your commercial element and you’ve lost the workers you become more of a different almost a residential based town centre where during the day apart from shopping there’s not that much going on because I think the council believes sort of maintaining a good strong economy in the town centre is an important part of maintaining that town centre feel about it and its vibrancy” (Epsom PO)

Additionally, active, vibrant places were thought more secure as natural surveillance would occur. This was the only benefit mentioned by officers that was not explicitly discussed within written policy. Southampton’s Local Plan mentioned how converting empty space above retail units to residential use would bring “additional life and security to an area” but natural surveillance was not directly noted (SCC, 2010b: 77). Converting such space to residential use, and providing new residential space within retail centres, were also identified as mechanisms for addressing housing targets and/or meeting housing need.

Though often noted, ‘vitality’ and ‘vibrancy’ were poorly defined in both written policy and amongst planning officers. Indeed, Epsom’s PO felt it was “hard to define what viability and vitality actually is though [national policy] used to bang on about it the whole time”. Discussions with officers teased out general thoughts on meaning, with economic and social aspects thought probable, but understandings were still a little vague:

“...well it’s a standard phrase in [national policy] PPS 6 which is about you know the livelihood of town centres and the way they operate economically I think so its

mixing those two so making them places which are interesting to be in but also making them economically viable as well” (Ashford PO)

### **8.2.1 ‘Distance’ between written policy and planners**

As the comments on viability and vitality allude to, when written policy commented on mix officers sometimes seemed a little vague about, or unfamiliar with, the terms used and the claims made. This perhaps suggests there is a certain ‘distance’ between written policy and planning officers – an issue identified by Barlow et al. (2002) (Chapter 3). For example, Southampton’s Local Plan claimed that mixing uses could help “make adequate provision for the conduct of business in the 21st Century” but gave no explanation as to how this might occur (SCC, 2010b: 6). Southampton’s DMO seemed uncertain as to how mix could fulfil this function and could only speculate on the issue:

“I was just thinking that through really (pause) I guess in terms of, what that means I mean, I guess that’s starting to talk about you know modern, modern business approaches so things like live-work units are more of a sort of a sort of something we’re being asked to consider these days, so to allow people to live closer to where they work so I guess that’s what that means, I could be interpreting that in the wrong way but I think it’s the sustainability agenda, getting people living closer to where they work...” (Southampton DMO)

Further examples of officers’ unfamiliarity with words or claims within policy included a general fuzziness around the meaning of the terms ‘neighbourhood services’, ‘services and facilities’ and ‘local services’. There was also an interesting reluctance amongst officers to speculate on the content of these terms. This reticence is clearly illustrated in one officer’s comments on the potential meaning of the term ‘local services’:

“Well I’m just trying to think, I’m trying to remember if I can, what that was (pause) local services, I’m literally just pulling this off the top of my head... I mean local, I’m talking about very local to you or we’re talking about a neighbourhood and it depends on their [i.e. policy’s] definition of what a neighbourhood is really and how big it is (pause) I can’t, I can’t give you any specifics, it’s not really something I look at” (Epsom DMO)

### **8.3 PARTIALLY PROMOTED PRACTICE**

Though lauding the concepts, policy fails to promote MU and 'RNR mix' as the 'norm' in all environments and locations. In effect, they were partially promoted practices. Similar to the policy of the 1990s and the early 2000s, mix is actively encouraged in a few types of area whilst it is constrained in many others (Chapter 3). The approach in several 'types' of area, frequently referenced within policy, is discussed to highlight the approach's spatial variability:

#### **1. Retail centres (city, town, district, local, village centres) and Brownfield / regeneration, large/strategic and surplus public sector sites**

MU and 'RNR mix' are promoted most actively at these locations. Here, policy variously encourages MU buildings, providing flats above commercial premises, new residential schemes and creating/maintaining a diversity of uses. Similar to past policy (Chapter 3), all tiers of policy and the planning officers identified retail centres as the "best" (Ashford DMO) or "ideal" (Epsom DMO) location for mix, including 'RNR mix', because they featured public transport connections, higher densities and a concentration of uses and activity. However, at the local tier, aspects of policy restricted when and where 'RNR mix' could occur in these centres. For instance, policy in Ashford, Southampton and Epsom protected Primary Retail Frontages (the main high streets in retail centres) and/or ground floor retail space for retail use or 'active ground floor uses'. This effectively restricts opportunities for horizontal 'RNR mix' along a street frontage. Ashford's DMO argued these policies were necessary to support the sustainability of high streets claiming the loss of retail and other commercial uses to residential use precipitates the "death" of these environments. Interestingly, retail centres are unique within planning policy in being invested with this capacity to experience different 'states of health'. They can be 'vital' and 'vibrant', partly by providing a mix of uses, but equally they can be dead and 'dying'. PPS4 (DCLG, 2009a) encourages local planning authorities to carry out 'health checks' on urban centres appraising the diversity of uses, rent levels, pedestrian flows, commercial yields, vacancy rates etc. No other type of area is identified for such 'health checks'.

#### **2. Residential dwellings, sites, areas and communities**

In terms of land use mix, it seems planning policy's conceptualisation of the 'good' residential environment resembles the Functional City ideal (Chapter 3) and Purcell's (2001) 'suburban ideal' (Chapter 4). It promotes predominantly residential, peaceful environments, with pockets of green space, and minimal commercial activity and traffic. It

creates only modest opportunities for mix at individual dwellings/properties, housing sites, and new or existing residential areas and communities.

At individual dwellings and properties, where the impact on residential amenity is low, national, regional and local policy allows a modest degree of 'RNR mix'. All three tiers support 'home working', although at the local level this is only mentioned in Epsom's policy, whilst 'live work units' (premises featuring residential and business use), also attract cross-policy support, although at the local level these are only discussed in Southampton's policy. There are differences then between the three communities in the nuances of the approach to mix at individual dwellings; but each ultimately features policies that enable it to occur.

At larger housing developments, national and local policy requires or recommends open space provision. For instance, national policy PPS Ecotowns requires 40% "of the eco-town's total area" to be "allocated to green space, of which at least half should be public" whilst policy in Ashford, Epsom and Southampton set thresholds, based on number of dwellings, at which open space will be required at a site (DCLG, 2009c: 10). For example, Ashford's Local Plan requires "equipped open space" at sites of 15 plus dwellings (ABC, 2000: 158). Officers reported, however, that written policy's clear aspirations for open space provision were interpreted and applied somewhat flexibly, and with discretion. Southampton's PO noted, for instance, that onsite open space might not be sought at city centre schemes because the location may make this impractical:

"...there's a flexibility issue there that whilst, if a scheme meets the target, it meets the threshold that should be provided on site, we'll always try to provide open space on site but you only have to look at the city centre to know that there'll be a lot of circumstances where there's just not the space" (Southampton PO)

Southampton's, Ashford's and Epsom's Core Strategies include targets and indicators which assess the 'performance' of new housing developments. For Ashford and Epsom, one target is concerned with integrating new housing schemes with a range of services and facilities. For Ashford's Core Strategy, "100%" of "new residential development" should be "within 30 minutes public transport time of: a GP, hospital, primary school, secondary school, areas of employment; and a major retail centre" (ABC, 2008: 96). For Epsom's Core Strategy, "All major residential developments should be within 30 minutes public transport time of health, education, retail and employment facilities" (E&EBC, 2007: 48). Since planning policy, as noted earlier, claims mix is a prerequisite for sustainability and associates numerous benefits with it, one might have expected a more demanding target requiring greater integration between uses. In fact, the selected target is

not even demanding in a local context. Planning officers at both settlements claimed that the compact size of the developable area in Epsom and Ashford makes all places easily accessible within 30 minutes travelling time. Plus, since the target fails to specify a mode of transport, and different modes cover different distances in 30 minutes, it proves to be notably elastic in being able to support quite different degrees of integration between housing and non-residential uses. The elasticity of the target is further increased by the presence of a number of vague terms. For instance, there is mention of 'employment areas' and 'employment facilities', terms which planning officers claim refer to any type of use where employment activity occurs. Consequently, housing can be located 'near' a wide variety of uses and still satisfy this aspect of the target. Overall, the flexible, undemanding nature of the target makes it a good illustration of the way policy's praise for land use mix frequently fails to translate into an approach that actively encourages fine grained mix on the ground. For each community, a commitment to realising the presumed value of mix was not even the primary motive for the target. For Ashford, officers reported that the target was selected, and indeed the whole Core Strategy constructed, on the assumption that a new bus rapid transit service would be developed across the Borough. For Epsom, officers claimed that the target was included to ensure consistency with neighbouring authorities and the county council. Thus, a pragmatic response to perceived infrastructure capabilities (Ashford), and a desire or need for conformity with neighbours (Epsom), rather than a belief in the ideal of mix, grounded each community's target on distances between housing and services.

At new residential communities and urban extensions, national, regional and local policy promotes "genuine mixed use communities" (DCLG, 2009c: 8), "major mixed use development" (GOSE, 2009: 24) and "flexibly designed, mixed-use places of real character" (ABC, 2008: 30). Plus, under the heading "mixed planning uses", national policy reports that "wherever possible" planning authorities should identify gypsy and traveller sites which can operate as "mixed sites" where "mixed residential and business uses" occur (ODPM, 2006: 14). Consequently, in addition to identifying MU at the small spatial scale of an individual building (e.g. MU schemes), current policy, similar to past policy (Chapter 3), seems comfortable in attributing this concept to development patterns occurring at much larger spatial scales. In fact, MU at small or large spatial scales seems equally well regarded, even though the form that development takes differs markedly. At the level of individual buildings, policy supports pressing uses close together, whilst at larger scales all that is required is relatively loose integration. For example, national policy discusses 'MU communities' but only requires housing to be a ten minute walk from "neighbourhood services" and public transport facilities and within 800 meters of a primary school (DCLG, 2009c: 8-9). In Ashford, the proposed urban extensions will be 'MU places' but will feature a "polycentric design" where large areas of housing are arranged around a

High Street (Ashford DMO). At new communities, policy does not then encourage fine grained mix. Indeed, within the policy sample, such mix is only supported in Epsom's policy on the redevelopment, for residential use, of several former hospital sites. Here, there is support for converting former hospital buildings to community and small scale commercial use and developing the surrounding area for housing - a relatively close intermingling of residential and non-residential uses would result. However, such conversions were only supported, and thus fine grained mix facilitated, when the former hospital buildings could not be converted to residential use. Thus, fine grained mix was only supported as a pragmatic response to site conditions.

Established residential areas are rarely identified as suitable locations for mix but Southampton's Core Strategy claims "individual shops and local services such as doctors, schools and community centres will be encouraged throughout the established neighbourhoods" (SCC, 2010a: 19). Plus, the South East Plan supports the provision of business space in "less traditional locations such as the suburbs" arguing that it is one way of realising potential opportunities arising from changing accommodation requirements, although this claim is not expanded (GOSE, 2009: 50). More commonly though, a collection of national, regional and local policies preserve and reserve existing residential areas for continued residential use. These policies protect existing dwellings from wholesale change of use, require housing to be separated from polluting, potentially polluting, noisy and traffic generating uses, and direct 'main town centre uses' (retail, leisure, office, entertainment, arts, culture, intensive sport/recreation and tourism uses (DCLG, 2009b: 3)) to retail centres. Further, within Southampton's Local Plan there was support for relocating from existing residential areas businesses producing "a particularly detrimental impact" (SCC, 2010b: 74-75). However, owing to the high costs associated with this practice, Southampton's DMO claimed the policy went unused. Epsom's Local Plan also featured unused policies on land use mix. Epsom's planning officers claimed these policies were retained because DMOs liked having access to policies covering a plethora of eventualities when determining planning applications. Epsom's PO claimed the DMOs resisted attempts to delete largely unused policies with claims of "what would I do if it wasn't there" (Epsom's PO). The opportunity for DMOs to refer to formally adopted policies when determining planning applications arguably brings strength, transparency and credibility to the decision making process - issues of particular significance if a decision is appealed (Coupland, 1997b). This context perhaps explains why DMOs can be so concerned about retaining, what appear to be, largely unused policies.

For policy, measures which preserve and reserve existing residential areas for continued residential use are justified on the grounds of a) protecting residential amenity and b) supporting business. These objectives were repeatedly identified within written

policy and by the planning officers as major drivers of the planning system. For policy, directing businesses away from housing directs away the negative externalities which can be associated with commercial uses such as traffic and noise. Residential amenity is, then, protected. For business, policy argues that by separating businesses from housing, the likelihood of onerous restrictions, (designed to protect residential amenity), being placed on working practices is reduced. Business can, then, operate more freely. Lastly, directing and concentrating main town centre uses in retail centres is regarded as a way of enhancing and maintaining the vibrancy, sustainability and vitality of these centres and the businesses within them. Again, policy claims this supports business.

### **3. Employment sites, sites/areas protected for non-residential use or identified as being less suitable for housing**

Of all locations, the fewest opportunities for 'RNR mix' are found at properties, sites and areas protected for a specific non-residential use, a narrow range of non-residential uses or at places identified as being less suitable for housing development. National, regional and local policy protects places and spaces for a variety of non-residential activities and uses including waste management, mineral extraction, open space, sport, health and education whilst local and regional policy safeguards sites for employment use, typically industry and warehousing. Moving on, national policy identifies a variety of locations or 'types' of area as being less suitable for housing. For instance, PPG20 Coastal Planning identifies the Coastal Zone, a width of land extending seaward and inland from the coast line defined by "the geographic extent of coastal natural processes and human activities related to the coast", for 'coastal dependent uses' – a category which excludes housing (Department of the Environment and the Welsh Office, 1992: 4). PPS25 Development and Flood Risk, identifies land within Flood Risk Zone 3a, where flooding is a high probability, as unacceptable for housing, with it only being permitted in exceptional circumstances (DCLG, 2006b). Land in Flood Risk Zone 3b, the functional flood plain, is identified as completely unacceptable for housing, even in exceptional circumstances (DCLG, 2006b). Lastly, PPG24 Planning and Noise advises against residential development in locations falling into Noise Exposure Categories C and D (locations experiencing higher levels of noise) (ODPM, 1994).

For policy, the above measures are justified on the grounds of supporting business, addressing community needs, protecting the environment and enhancing residential amenity and safety. For example, policy claims spaces and places must be safeguarded for lower value business uses, such as warehousing, because otherwise they would be redeveloped for higher value uses such as housing, hampering the supply of business space and thus undermining business growth. Epsom's planning officers

were particularly concerned with this ‘threat’ (see later). To take another example, the South East Plan claims significant growth in the region’s waste management capacity is required to address the waste needs of the region’s and London’s populations (part of the capital’s waste is processed in the South East) (GOSE, 2009). Safeguarding sites for waste management facilities is identified as an “essential” mechanism for addressing this community need (GOSE, 2009: 126). As a last example, policy safeguards areas of existing open space in order to support and enhance the continued existence of these places and their constituent flora and fauna. Policy sees inherent value in protecting these natural environments (GOSE, 2009: 145). However, it also claims they perform certain environmental, social and economic “functions”, which support “quality of life” and this is said to make their protection additionally necessary (GOSE, 2009: 145).

#### **8.4 FOCUS ON LOCAL PLANNING POLICY**

Chapter 6 discussed the research interest in exploring whether similar approaches to mix were evident across dissimilar communities. An analysis of local policy and discussions with planning officers at Southampton, Ashford and Epsom revealed that, in terms of broad content, a generally similar approach to ‘RNR mix’, land use mix and MU occurs across three dissimilar communities. Appendix 11 provides a detailed comparison of each community’s policies on ‘RNR mix’. Across each community, mix is resisted in similar types of area whilst it is encouraged in similar types of area, sometimes through identical or very similar policies. For example, all three communities are seen to feature policies that retain/promote housing above shops and encourage a mix of uses in town/city centres. All also include ‘volume of town/city centre housing built’ as a performance indicator in their Core Strategies. Between the communities, very similar policies also safeguard employment sites, protect existing open space, require open space provision at larger housing developments, require the sequential approach to the location of main town centre uses and protect sites for housing development. There were, however, differences in the finer detail of each community’s approach and it seems that each settlement’s environmental context is partly responsible for this. For example, whilst each community features policies which facilitate mix at individual dwellings, for Ashford and Epsom, their partly rural nature means some policies reference isolated, rural dwellings. Overall, the general similarity in approach between the settlements indicates that communities featuring different development scenarios - high growth (Ashford), growth through brownfield redevelopment (Southampton) and growth constrained by the Green Belt (Epsom) – are not associated with substantially different approaches to mix. However, with only one example of each scenario considered, firm generalisations such as this are not possible. Further, whilst the similarity of approach suggests that a community governed by TARAs and communities governed by mainstream political parties adopt largely similar

approaches to mix, the small number of communities studied again advises against such broad conclusions.

The influence of national policy accounts for the strong similarity in approach between Ashford, Southampton and Epsom. National policy is the overall framework within and against which local (and regional) policy is constructed. It acts as a generic starting point from which regional and local policy-makers develop regionally and locally specific site and area policies. The planning officers emphasised how their locally-specific policy had to conform to national policy since to diverge from it would result in objections from the independent planning inspector who must approve each community's statutory development plan:

“...national policy has got to be the starting point and clearly you can't have local policy that veers from it you can bend the rules a bit which we have done but if you try and, if you try and have stuff that's outside national policy you won't get it through [i.e. past the planning inspector]” (Ashford PO)

Interestingly, Ashford's PO reported that Ashford's local policy consciously avoids repeating national policy with only locally-specific issues addressed. Consequently, when Ashford's Local Plan and Core Strategy prove silent on certain issues, including some related to land use mix, this could be because the points were thought adequately addressed in national policy. In contrast, in Southampton, local planning policy plainly repeats aspects of national policy. For instance, Southampton's Local Plan includes policies that require housing to be separated from noisy uses – a requirement that is similarly articulated in national policy PPG24 Planning and Noise (ODPM, 1994).

Whilst noting the similarity in broad approach, the three communities differed in the *emphasis* each placed on land use mix. This corresponds to findings in the literature where Rowley (1998) and others have found different communities attach differing degrees of importance to mix (Chapter 3). Between Southampton, Epsom and Ashford, there were differences in the number of policies that mentioned mix and the priority attached to mix within these policies. There were also differences in the number of benefits each attributed to mix. Of the three communities, Epsom appeared most reticent in its promotion of mix, particularly its promotion of MU. For instance, Epsom's Core Strategy featured only one policy that explicitly mentioned 'MU' and this only noted that housing in MU schemes would be 'encouraged' in accessible urban centres. In contrast, Southampton's Core Strategy claimed that development in a Major Development Quarter in the city centre would *only* be facilitated where it was “able to form part of a comprehensive high density mixed use scheme across the whole quarter” (SCC, 2010a: 26). For Ashford's Core

Strategy, an overarching 'vision' was identified for the town centre, urban areas and proposed urban extensions and this involved a focus on MU development (and higher densities). Additionally, whilst the Local Plans and Core Strategies for Ashford and Southampton identified numerous advantages to, and arguments for, mixing uses and 'RNR mix', policy in Epsom identified only a couple.

Interestingly, however, Epsom's planning officers were as positive as the planning officers in Southampton and Ashford were when it came to extolling the virtues of mix. Epsom's PO and DMO spoke about mix being essential for sustainability; they thought it was a necessity in retail centres and they were disappointed when it could not be achieved at several recently completed residential communities. Thus, it seemed that Epsom's planning officers were more enthusiastic about land use mix than were Epsom's development plans. Barlow et al. (2002) found something similar when examining officer and development plan support for MU (Chapter 3). The research suggests, then, that planning officers operating in different development scenarios and different political contexts can be equally supportive of mix but the development plans constructed in these differing scenarios / contexts can vary on this issue. Just for the communities studied, it seems development plans constructed in settlements experiencing a 'high growth' or 'growth through brownfield redevelopment' scenario, and featuring government by mainstream political parties, place greater emphasis on mix than do development plans constructed in communities featuring a 'growth constrained by the Green Belt' scenario and government by residents' associations. Unfortunately, the interviewed planning officers felt unable to comment on the role, if any, played by these scenarios and contexts in the construction of each community's policies on mix. Thus, one can only speculate on this issue by piecing together fragments of information from the officers, and identified within each community's development plans. This produced little if any information on, or insights into, the potential role of each community's political class. In fact, some officers seemed rather reluctant to comment on the approach to decision making taken by local politicians. More could be gleaned about the potential role of each community's development scenario. In the next section, speculation focuses on this issue.

#### **8.4.1 The role of the development scenarios**

The extensive presence of designated Green Belt land within Epsom might help explain the rather modest promotion of 'RNR mix' and MU within the Borough's development plans. At designated Green Belt land, Green Belt policy restricts the type of development that is possible (ODPM, 1995). It is only at 'major developed sites', these being large previously developed sites in the Green Belt, that opportunities for 'RNR mix' and MU seem likely since it is only here that there is obvious potential for significant new

residential and non-residential development (ODPM, 1995). This situation is borne out in Epsom's development plans. Within the large parts of the Borough designated as Green Belt, Epsom *only* promotes 'RNR mix' at several former hospital sites defined as 'major developed sites' (E&EBC, 2000). Also, Green Belt policy serves to restrict site availability across the Borough and this heaps pressure on Epsom's planners to identify and allocate sufficient sites to address the community's demanding housing targets (contained in the RSS). According to Epsom's PO, the authority "is desperate to try and ensure it can meet its housing target without having to make difficult decisions like Green Belt releases". Consequently, when officers compiled the Borough's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, they "literally pored over maps" and identified "any possible site" (Epsom PO). Given these pressures, it might be difficult for officers to allocate a site for MU or 'RNR mix' when it could otherwise be readily allocated to housing and therefore contribute to the Borough's housing targets.

In Ashford, it seems that the *particular approach chosen* for delivering a high growth scenario, rather than the high growth scenario per se, influenced the emphasis placed on mix. Ashford's planning officers reported that urban extensions and intensification within Ashford's existing built up areas emerged, through stakeholder workshops, research, data analysis and community consultation, as the preferred mechanisms for achieving a high growth future. Within the urban extensions, there was support for creating residential communities with local facilities rather than dormitory suburbs whilst in the built up areas, particularly the town centre, land use mix was identified as the preferred development pattern. Whereas in Epsom, Green Belt policy seemed to structure the options available to the local planning authority when it developed its approach to mix, in Ashford, it seems that decisions and preferences about how a high growth future *should* be delivered resulted in the *conscious selection* of a preferred approach to land use mix.

In Southampton, the relationship between the development scenario 'growth through brownfield redevelopment' and the city's approach to mix seems unclear. In fact, there may be grounds to query whether this scenario exerted *any* real influence. In Southampton, much of the emphasis placed on MU and 'RNR mix' stems from the approach taken in and around the city centre where numerous brownfield sites are allocated for this kind of development. However, rather than this allocation being determined by their brownfield status, it is arguable that these sites were allocated for MU because they were located in the city centre. As discussed earlier, written policy and planners highlight city/town centres as the ideal location for MU, and land use mix more generally. Consequently, perhaps the development scenario of 'city centre site availability',

rather than the scenario of 'growth through brownfield redevelopment', shaped decisions on, and the importance attached to, land use mix within Southampton.

## **8.5 INFLUENCES ON POLICY AND POLICY'S INFLUENCE ON THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT**

### **8.5.1 Influences on policy**

The planning officers provided general thoughts on the type of factors which can influence local planning policy with a diverse set of national, regional, sub-regional and local factors highlighted. Of these, ones that seemed liable to have some bearing on each community's approach to land use mix are discussed. Beginning with national factors, noted previously, and so it will not be rehearsed again, officers identified national planning policy as the overriding determinant of local policy. Moving on, the previous Labour Government's national Sustainable Communities Plan (ODPM, 2003b), and the public funding associated with it, would seem relevant to Ashford's approach to mix, although Ashford's planning officers failed to mention it. This plan identified Ashford as a Growth Area and thus created the policy and funding context within which a Core Strategy focused on growth through MU, urban intensification and urban expansion was created. The 'challenges' which led to the creation of the Sustainable Communities Plan, which in the South East included accommodating "the economic success of London and the wider South East", would also then seem indirectly relevant to Ashford's approach to mix (ODPM, 2003b: 46). The influence of government planning inspectors was noted by several planning officers as their role in making binding recommendations on a community's Core Strategy was highlighted. In Ashford, this resulted in the Core Strategy being amended to include additional 'search sites' for further MU urban extensions. Moving on to regional factors, officers emphasised the influence of the South East Plan and, in particular, its regional housing targets. Officers claimed these targets prompted communities to allocate a large number of sites for housing. A result of this is that at the allocated sites the scope for land use mix is limited. As for sub-regional factors, the influence of London was emphasised by Epsom's planning officers. Epsom's proximity to London was said to make it extremely popular with house buyers and housebuilders and the planning authority had become increasingly concerned about the rapid loss of employment land and premises to residential use. In response, policies safeguarding employment sites had been constructed. At these sites, policy restricts opportunities for 'RNR mix'. At the local level, a variety of economic, social, environmental, infrastructure and political factors appeared to inform policy. Housing need, land values, planned transport infrastructure, site availability, community consultation, including consultation with residents' groups, existing local policies (such as the Community Strategy), the views

of elected members and the views of planning officers were all identified, by the planning officers, as influences on policy, and, perhaps then, its approach to mix. Ashford's officers were unusual though in identifying a single factor – the provision of a high speed bus transport system – as an overriding or key determinant of all local policy. Officers in Epsom and Southampton did not invest any single factor with such importance.

### **8.5.2 The influence of policy**

Planning policy's influence on the built environment, including residential environments, seems variable with its impact dependent on a collection of changeable economic, social (e.g. public attitudes to policy) and political (e.g. councillor attitudes to policy) factors, and the flexible way in which it is interpreted and applied by decision makers when planning applications are decided (an issue discussed earlier). Amongst economic, social and political factors, economic issues appeared particularly important. Southampton's DMO noted, for instance, how prohibitive costs made it unaffordable to apply a policy on the relocation of bad neighbour uses from residential areas (discussed earlier). Also, in Epsom, officers reported that, contrary to policy, new residential communities had been permitted without any onsite services and facilities because the developers behind these schemes claimed there was a lack of occupier interest in the non-residential units. This latter example highlights how policy's capacity to influence the built environment is dependent on the market's interest in the built environment. Said at the outset, in Chapter 1, policy is a framework of spatial governance. Of itself, it does not initiate and deliver development. Instead, it provides a body of guidance and regulation against which development proceeds (or fails to proceed). Market factors and market actors (e.g. the availability of finance, occupier demand, development economics, developers' business models etc.) are the crucial components in initiating development and, as the example from Epsom illustrates, they shape the path development takes, potentially moving it away from that signposted by policy. A finding that emerged from the planning officer interviews was that, in development, whilst planning policy can be set aside, as was the case in Epsom, it is far harder to set aside market factors and market actors.

## **8.6 CONCLUSIONS**

An analysis of written policy, combined with interviews with planning officers, reveals that planning policy celebrates MU and 'RNR mix', with many benefits attributed to each, but only promotes these practices in a handful of locations. This is largely consistent with the approach found in policy from the 1990s and early 2000s (Chapter 3). Policy considers the 'blanket' presence of land use mix in all types of area a threat to residential

amenity and business success. 'Good' residential environments are seen to have minimal land use mix being predominantly residential with pockets of green space, limited commercial activity and rather loose integration between housing and non-residential uses. In these areas, the fundamental 'paradigm shift' in planning policy that Louw and Bruinsma (2006) identify, as discussed in Chapter 3, does not seem to have occurred. However, turning to the approach taken in town/city centres, a paradigm shift does seem evident. Only a few decades ago, policy saw these locations as sites of purely commercial activity. Since the 1980s/90s though, and continuing in present day policy, the ideal town/city centre is conceptualised as a place teeming with different land uses with residential, office, retail, leisure, cultural and tourism uses all happily co-existing. At these locations, Grant (2002) seems correct in identifying within policy 'the mantra' of land use mix.

The approach to land use mix appears largely consistent across national, regional and local policy. That national policy is the starting point for regional and local policy is the obvious explanation for this. Differences though were evident in the volume and detail of guidance provided by each tier. As one might expect, national policy was found to focus on broad principles whilst local and regional policy provided the finer detail. Across local policy, whilst the approach within three dissimilar communities was broadly similar, there was some difference in precise execution. Each community's unique context, such as its environmental characteristics, appeared to account for this difference. More noticeable was a difference in the emphasis placed on mix, particularly MU. Epsom's development plans dedicated the least policies and attributed the fewest benefits to MU. However, Epsom's planning officers appeared no less positive about MU than were the planning officers in Ashford and Southampton. This, plus other issues like officers being unfamiliar with certain terms/claims in development plans, suggests that at times there might be a certain 'distance' between written policy and planners in their understandings of, and/or approach to, land use mix. Overall, the research indicates that communities featuring different development scenarios and different political contexts are *not* associated with equally different approaches to mix.

In content and application, policy's approach to land use mix, and particularly its approach to MU, is intentionally flexible and features vague, elastic terminology. Regarding MU, officers claimed much of the concept's meaning was reformulated on a site by site and/or application by application basis and merit was found in this fluidity. Although few 'permanent' aspects of the concept were evident, amongst the planning officers a couple of 'less movable' items were identified, and this suggests the beginnings of a partial definition. This definition, plus the esteem in which the concept is plainly held (by policy and planners), suggests MU can be viewed as a normative/evaluative concept. It describes a variable type of development and presents this development in a positive light.

Like past policy (Chapter 3), current policy does not seem to identify any disadvantages to MU.

Notable, though expected, was the finding that there was no seamless continuum between policy's approach to land use mix, planning decisions and approved development. Various social, economic, environmental and political factors, plus decision-maker discretion, were seen to influence both how policy was interpreted, and the extent to which its aspirations were realised in completed development. However, whilst policy's approach to mix did not provide a set of binding instructions, officers claimed, and an analysis of planning applications confirmed, that it provides a solid steer in decision making. At least for sites allocated for MU, approved development was generally found to accord with the 'spirit' if not the 'letter' of this policy.

## PLANNING POLICY AND THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF TENANTS' AND RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION MEMBERS

This chapter addresses Objective 2 of the research. It reports findings on TARAs' attitudes towards, and preferences for, planning policy's approach to 'RNR mix', as revealed in a series of focus groups. It draws on the findings in Chapter 8 where policy's approach to land use mix was discussed. The chapter explores how far TARAs' environmental preferences, and their conceptualisation of the 'good' residential environment, correspond with the conceptualisations and preferences found within policy. It is suggested that instances of overlap, where preferences align with policy, indicate occasions where policy might (when reflected in the built environment) support the QoL of TARA members. The chapter also considers TARAs' attitudes towards, and experiences within, the planning system and reflects on the interaction and participation that occurred within the focus groups.

### **9.1 TENANTS' AND RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATIONS' ENVIRONMENTAL PREFERENCES**

Discussion begins by exploring the TARAs' environmental preferences, most of which relate to the design and composition of residential environments. Commentary reflects on the issues, values and influences which appear to shape these preferences. To help illustrate the group's preferences, towards the end of this section, several schematic diagrams reflecting the ideal towns/cities created by a number of the TARAs during Exercise 3 of the focus groups (Chapter 6) are presented. Designs that proved particularly good at clearly illustrating common/notable preferences were selected for inclusion.

#### **9.1.1 Proximity to non-residential uses**

Groups did not desire residential areas to be completely devoid of, and far removed from, all 'everyday' services and facilities such as shops, health centres and schools. Participants favoured providing these items in some proximity although not the immediate vicinity of their homes. Comments such as, "we would like all these facilities but we'd like them handy but not on our doorstep", capture this point of view (Kathy, Group A). Participants wanted their homes to be 'insulated' from non-residential uses by a 'buffer' of purely residential properties. Groups could differ in the 'depth' of buffer

favoured, as measured by the time taken to walk across it, but, overall, the majority preference was for one requiring a 10 to 15 minute walk. Whether groups operated in MU areas or single use residential areas, all generally favoured this type of environment.

TARAs' preferences for a form of rough grained mix within residential areas finds support in planning policy where housing is encouraged within walking distance of various everyday services (Chapter 8). However, policy also includes targets that enable very loose integration. Policy for Epsom and Ashford only required new housing developments to be within a 30 minute public transport journey of a range of facilities. For policy to better match TARAs' preferences, such targets could be removed or amended. Policy also facilitates relatively fine grained mix by, for instance, supporting the distribution of occasional non-residential uses across established residential areas – this aspect of policy is returned to later.

Distinct from the other TARAs, and in contrast to planning policy, Groups J and G, which operated in exclusively residential areas remote from most facilities, felt it preferable to position most everyday services a car journey from housing. It was commented, “we don't need, we don't wish to have them [services] close because we get in our cars” (Thomas, Group G). Interestingly, these groups qualified their comments by noting that all group members, and all residents within their area, owned a car. Other groups actively disliked such reliance on the car with most participants valuing the opportunity to walk to nearby facilities. In fact, some participants favoured locating unobtrusive employment uses within walking distance posing comments like, “well I always say wouldn't it be nice to walk to work 10 minutes away, that's what everybody wants isn't it” (Michael, Group A). In Groups A and E, low levels of car ownership and low incomes were said to combine to make walking a particularly important mode of transport for residents. Personal preferences for walking, and concerns about residents' economic difficulties, appeared then to shape TARAs' preferences for, what might be termed, 'walkable' residential areas. However, certain other factors and values seemed relevant to this preference.

### **9.1.2 The case for 'walkable' residential areas**

The preferences and values which lay behind TARAs' support for walkable neighbourhoods arguably point to the features and traits they identify as essential components of the 'good' residential environment. For instance, for Group F, “breaking up” residential areas with the occasional non-residential use was a way of creating “a sense of community” (Douglas, Group F) and a “personality” within an area (Mark, Group F). It was also seen to support residents' wellbeing since living in areas devoid of all

services/facilities was considered “soul destroying” (Joan, Group F). For Group F, these views formed arguments for locating services within residential areas and constituted preferences for how residential environments ought to be i.e. what the ‘good’ residential environment ought to contain/deliver.

Lying behind the preference for locating certain individual facilities within residential areas, namely primary schools, health centres and the occasional shop, there appeared (amongst other things) to be an *expectation* that these facilities were *inevitably* found in these areas. Comments from Group C illustrate this view, “when you’re talking about schools right, primary schools are expected to be local” (Dorothy, Group C). Expectations about the type of uses which ought to be present in residential (and other) areas therefore seemed to influence attitudes on neighbourhood design. For instance, in Group G, Janice commented, “you would expect” to include schools, health centres and open space in new build communities arguing, “you’d expect those in the development brief”. Roger in Group B felt “you would expect” cinemas and leisure centres in town centres rather than residential areas and indeed he, and all groups, rejected locating these uses in residential areas. In Group F, Douglas expected a concentration of shops in city centres noting, “it is a city centre I suppose so you’d expect a lot of shops and things” but in residential areas only the odd shop serving a “local need” was expected and indeed supported – by Douglas and groups more widely. As discussed next, these expectations sometimes appeared to rest on both perceived norms and participants’ experiences within the existing built environment.

Participants would often refer to Southampton’s built environment when discussing what they would expect to find, and what ought to be included, in an ‘ideal’ town/city, when completing the ‘ideal’ town/city exercise in the focus groups (discussed in Chapter 6). Thus, it seemed their expectations emerged, at least in part, from their own experiences within the local built environment. Participants referenced this local built environment when deciding which uses to include in their ideal town, where to locate these uses and the number of each to incorporate. Participants’ expectations also, however, seemed to be shaped by the ‘norms’ they perceived in the world around them. For example, when Group I was creating its ideal city (Figure 9), a cathedral was proposed for the city centre because this was said to be the ‘norm’. Within the group, Linda noted, “you’d expect to have a city centre church in fact you’d have to have a cathedral wouldn’t you to be a city?” She argued Southampton was a city “for some bizarre reason because we haven’t got a cathedral but normally a city has a cathedral”. With expectations appearing to inform certain preferences, and these expectations being based on norms and experiences, one might understand these preferences as ‘bounded preferences’ - they are ‘bound’ by perceived norms and actual experiences. Being

'bound' in such ways perhaps results in an innate conservatism in some of the TARAs' preferences, an issue returned to later.

A preference for 'convenience' often seemed pertinent to the TARAs' desire for walkable neighbourhoods, particularly when the issue was locating small shops in walking distance of housing. A "handy" local shop (Suzanne, Group D) was widely appreciated, even by those groups (Groups J and G) where notable separation between housing and non-residential uses was favoured. Indeed, Group J believed the closure of their area's only local shop "would have quite a significant [negative] impact on quite a few people round here" (Henry, Group J). Groups' ideal towns/cities often featured local shopping centres in proximity to areas of housing (see Figures 6, 7 and 9). Groups felt it far preferable for everyday essentials to be available in a shop a walk away rather than a drive away. Beyond this being simply more convenient, in Group E reducing travel was itself an argument for including such uses near housing. Here, mirroring claims within planning policy, John reported that providing residential and non-residential uses in close proximity reduces travel and this, in turn, reduces a community's "carbon footprint" (John, Group E). He felt it was important for new developments to be planned around such considerations. This participant and planning policy were united, then, in identifying minimising carbon emissions as an aspiration for a 'good' residential (and wider) environment. Certain other environmental or 'green' concerns were mentioned by groups. There was strong support for the provision of recycling points (e.g. bottle banks) with Group I, for instance, including many in their ideal town (Figure 9). Solar panels, mini-wind turbines and green space provision were also supported by some. Interestingly though, given the volume of political and press attention it receives, the subject of climate change was never explicitly mentioned when groups discussed environmental or 'green' issues. Additionally, for those groups favouring separation between housing and non-residential uses, no mention was made of the environmental impacts that might be associated with driving to remote facilities. Indeed, this preference, and many others, appeared to exist in a form of isolation where consequences or ramifications were left unexplored. Issues did not seem to be 'joined up' so groups could hold a preference for remote facilities but also support 'green' behaviours such as recycling on the basis that these were 'good' for the environment. They never made the connection, or at least they failed to verbalise the connection, that car-dependent patterns of development are not good for the environment.

### **9.1.3 Appropriate and inappropriate non-residential uses to include with housing**

Touched upon above, and in line with policy (Chapter 8), whilst also reflecting Purcell's (2001) findings (Chapter 4), relatively unobtrusive services and facilities serving

everyday needs, which create minimal disturbance in the form of traffic, parking, noise, anti-social behaviour and pollution, were thought acceptable uses to place within a 10 to 15 minute walk of housing. Health centres, local shops and home based businesses were all considered acceptable. Plus, public transport connections (typically bus stops) and, despite their potential for noise, traffic and on-street parking problems, schools were thought compatible. Certain participants felt schools were an essential component of a 'community' as Jim in Group D commented, "they are integral to a, to an identifiable community". Groups' ideal towns/cities often included these uses in proximity to areas of housing (e.g. Figures 7 and 9). In terms of the noise arising from schools, and more generally from children playing, whilst most participants claimed to enjoy this sound, they suggested that some residents found it objectionable. However, perhaps the group setting made participants feel uncomfortable admitting to a personal dislike of such noise. References to 'other residents' might have been a 'safe' way for participants to express an opinion they believed others would judge negatively. One participant did, however, report favouring an environment free from the sound of children playing, although he claimed this preference had altered over time. Whereas once he liked living in an environment with other families, now his children had left home, he valued the peace and quiet associated with the absence of families with children:

"...when I was younger with younger children it was nice living with other families with younger children because those [family-friendly] facilities were available because the demand was there actually now getting older it's quite nice to live in a community where the children aren't there because it is quiet and peaceful and I think, yeah, I think, I say some of my views from the past would be different now." (Henry, Group J)

All groups attached huge value and importance to the idea and experience of 'peace and quiet' with it being equally prized by groups operating in outlying suburbs, where participants identified a peaceful environment, and groups operating in the city centre, or in areas where noisy uses or occupants were reported. Unquestionably, peace and quiet was viewed as an essential component of the 'good' residential environment. As noted in Chapter 8, policy also values peace and quiet in residential areas and supports separating housing from noisy and 'bad neighbour' uses and minimising the presence of uses liable to cause a disturbance. For some of the participants in the suburban TARAs, the pursuit of peace and quiet was said to have been a key prompt for their move to the area. In Group C, for instance, participants described themselves as "cul-de-sac people", which meant, "peace and quiet, you don't, you just want to be in your own, you want to just know who's around you" (Mathew, Group C). Within the group, Mathew claimed to have "very specifically chosen the house so that it was remote from

workplace, office...local services” because this matched his preference for a peaceful environment. The other participants in Group C disputed, however, Mathew’s suggestion that the area was remote. Noting that local shops were a 20 minute walk away, these participants claimed the area was well connected. Thus, participants demonstrated quite different understandings of space and distance, an issue which occurred in several focus groups. For groups operating in areas with noisy uses, noise was a concern. Group D, for instance, mentioned how it had strongly objected to an application to extend the licensing hours of a local nightclub partly on the grounds of noise. Further, the members of Group H, though based in the city centre, had no desire to move further into the centre’s shopping and entertainment district partly because of concerns over noise.

Although strongly favoured, on occasion, and amongst a minority of participants, the preference for peace and quiet could be superseded by certain other desires. Whilst favouring peace and quiet, a couple of participants supported locating pubs, cafes and small supermarkets within walking distance of housing when most participants opposed these on the grounds of noise and disturbance. For example, in Group E, Rita felt cafes would provide jobs whilst small supermarkets would sell goods at affordable prices. She pressed for the inclusion of a small supermarket in proximity to areas of housing in the group’s ideal town/city (Figure 10). Economic and employment concerns appeared then to challenge the value placed on peace and quiet. Interestingly, such economic and employment concerns were only mentioned in Groups A and E and, as mentioned before, they operated in rather deprived areas where issues of unemployment and low incomes were apparent. For Roger in Group B, and Kay in Group F, pubs were an important community focus and place for social interaction and both were concerned by the number closing across Southampton’s residential neighbourhoods. The value placed on peace and quiet was perhaps then challenged by the value placed on interaction between residents. However, Roger and Kay discussed ‘local community pubs’ and these might very well be small scale, relatively quiet uses.

#### **9.1.4 Interaction, relationships and ‘community’**

Establishing relationships and interaction between residents was of interest to several groups, with a number organising social events for members and/or the wider community whilst Groups A and E were attempting / had attempted to create community centres / facilities to provide places for community interaction. However, this was not a regularly mentioned issue. If groups identified the presence of relationships and interaction in their area, they were valued. For example, in Group I participants spoke positively about the “neighbourly” quality of their area (Julia, Group I) whilst Group H suggested that their area had “as much privacy as you want but then you’ve got as much

cooperation and social life as you want so it's very balanced in that respect" (Margaret, Group H). The members of Group F had an interest in building 'community spirit' within their area and held social activities to try to establish connections between residents. However, it was commented that, though crucially important, achieving this community spirit was difficult:

"And the question is what if anything should we place near housing but I think the thing you want to place most which you [the author] haven't got on your list [included in Exercise 1 in the focus group] and which you can't manufacture or plan for is the community spirit and getting that going is a really hard thing" (Mark, Group F)

Where there was a perceived absence of social interaction between residents this could be viewed as problematic, with Joe in Group K when describing his area claiming, "I can't stand it, never did like it, it's extremely convenient...[but] there's no community life". However, within the same group, Rose was content with the lack of interaction noting, "I have to say I'm a person who's quite happy to just sit and read". Though holding this view, Rose was sufficiently interested in interacting with others to join a TARA, be a pivotal member of this TARA (along with the Chair) and attend the focus group. Of relevance to the research interest, groups saw the built environment as a tool for engineering both more and less social interaction and this influenced their views on the inclusion of certain uses in residential (and other) areas. For instance, Group F claimed small areas of open space could function as "congregation spaces" and supported their provision in residential areas largely because of this (Elizabeth, Group F). Equally, Group H included a large area of open space in its ideal town/city because it would form a place "where everybody will come into contact with other people" (Margaret, Group H) (Figure 11). As a last example, groups felt that a local parade of shops provided a space for neighbours to meet and interact and this formed part of the reason why they were favoured by a majority of participants (see later).

Linked to the issue of interaction and relationships is the (contested) concept of 'community'. Whilst some groups mentioned the word 'community' occasionally, in Group J it cropped up frequently. Within this group, it peppered the conversation of two participants in particular - Henry and Edward. The professional backgrounds of these participants, both having worked in local government, Henry in senior management and Edward as a planner, perhaps helps explain their routine use of the word. In local (and national) government, the term 'community' features regularly in the language used to discuss and respond to a variety of issues from health to planning to crime. Socialisation into the professional discourses present within local government has perhaps meant that

these participants have adopted the term as an almost mundane part of their everyday vocabulary. Henry's and Edward's frequent use of the word might not then inevitably denote a greater concern for 'community' (howsoever the concept is defined). However, within the rejected method of quantitative content analysis, because frequency equals significance (Chapter 6), this interpretation would have been reached. The basic premise of this technique would seem too blunt to recognise the potential for factors other than significance to account for the frequent presence of particular words in text and speech.

### **9.1.5 Green, spacious environments**

Across the majority of groups, and similar to Purcell's (2001) findings, there was a strong, common preference for green space provision in residential areas. In fact, green space was the most popular non-residential use to place in proximity to housing. Participants claimed green space supported mental and physical health and wellbeing, made areas attractive, provided places to relax, formed spaces for social interaction and acted as a focal point within a community. Access to green space was thought essential for children and families. There was, though, some concern that open space can become a site for anti-social behaviour and noise. Such concerns prompted Group I to include a police presence in the greenway they included in their 'ideal' city (Figure 9). Southampton was thought well supplied with areas of public green space. Participants claimed to feel 'lucky', 'blessed' and 'spoilt' by the levels of provision. The value placed on green space was evident in the ideal town/city exercise as groups frequently included numerous examples of the use. Several groups claimed their ideal town/city would be encircled by a Green Belt, Groups A and I included a 'greenway' that bisected the settlement whilst Groups E and G spoke about using green space as a 'buffer' to separate (and insulate) housing from various non-residential uses. For reference, Figures 7 and 8 show the ideal towns/cities constructed by Groups A and G. Though planning policy encourages the provision of green space at new residential schemes, and protects existing areas of open space (Chapter 8), the TARAs' strong preference for bountiful greenery in urban environments perhaps demands that it goes further and makes the provision of green space mandatory at all housing developments.

Although favouring green space, Groups C and J were distinct in arguing that access to private gardens could supplant the need for public open space. Group C suggested that it is in areas without private gardens that support for shared green space will be greatest. However, Group C's view was not borne out by the research findings. Groups operating in areas where properties lacked private gardens, and groups operating in areas where most dwellings had private gardens, were (bar Groups C and J) equally likely to favour the provision of public open space. Group K, for instance, which operated

in an affluent, leafy suburban area where all homes had mature gardens, suggested that public and private open space were equally necessary, but claimed they served different functions. It was suggested private gardens provided a personal space for relaxation over which the householder had dominion (for instance, they could choose to plant flowers), whilst public open space provided a place for valuable social interaction:

“You can relax in it [the garden] you might put flowers in it kids can play football in it but of course they don’t interact with anybody else other than the family and so on and I think an open space whereby you can spread your wings a bit as a child or an adult is useful so I think they’re different” (Joe, Group K)

Besides favouring areas of public open space, groups had a more general preference for open and spacious environments in both residential and other types of area. Groups were displeased by the perceived propensity for property developers to build high density schemes, with Group G commenting, “the way they keep building, it’s flats upon flats upon flats and without these green spaces” (Judy, Group G). Groups felt Southampton city centre had become “overdeveloped” through the provision of new build flats with Group I claiming parts of it were now so “boxed in I mean the sun light goes” (Will, Group I). Developers and the planning system were blamed for encouraging this practice with Group A suggesting, “this is where town planning is failing people, people need space” (Kathy, Group A). Groups A and C felt planners should encourage low density family housing, with Mathew in Group C commenting, “we’re hoping that we will get back to people having gardens again...and that national policy won’t deprive the next generation of gardens”. There was a common view that higher density development creates health and social problems and so should be avoided. Participants felt residents needed space to “just be themselves” (Michelle, Group D) whilst “living conditions...have made people sicker because everyone’s living on top of each other and they feel pressured and stressed” (Kathy, Group A). Interestingly, in Group F, when presenting this view, Mark actively associated it with a police officer friend who was said to be based in a deprived, inner city London Borough. Perhaps this was an attempt to ‘legitimise’ the view by establishing it as a concern common to social actors outside TARAs. However, one may question whether this police officer really would identify all community ‘problems’ and ‘tensions’ as the result of high density living conditions, as Mark suggests. Perhaps Mark gave an edited or embellished account of the officer’s view in order to add credence to his own thoughts as he personally felt high densities were extremely problematic. Whatever may be the truth, it is interesting that Mark purposefully chose to associate his view with a third party:

“I’ve got a mate who was a copper in Brixton for 15 years and he said...if you could get, because people are packed in so tight, if you could just spread them out, bring them to places where you have open spaces, all the tension disappears and it is too much concentration gives too many problems and it’s giving people space to you know be themselves and have space around without being boxed in” (Mark, Group F)

Amongst groups, spacious, green environments were not only preferred, they seemed to be idealised. Beyond limited concerns about the potential for anti-social behaviour and noise in areas of public open space, groups were silent on the potential for these environments to ever generate problems. Groups felt these environments benefited everyone, by, for instance, supporting everyone’s health and wellbeing, and were suited to, and favoured by, the vast majority of people. Issues like the potential for low density development to deliver insufficient homes to address housing need, an argument policy, planners and politicians make for high density housing, were never mentioned. It would seem this idealised environment closely resembles the ‘suburban ideal’ Purcell (2001) identified amongst residents’ groups in North America (Chapter 4), whilst it also reflects the preference for suburban environments that the literature associates with numerous British (and other) households (Chapter 5).

#### *Adaptive preferences*

Spacious, low density environments were equally preferred amongst groups operating in high density areas, such as Group A, and lower density suburban areas, such as Groups C and B. This relates to an interesting aspect of the findings. Groups were found to hold preferences for conditions and activities which members had experience of, for example, groups in high density areas commented on life within high density environments, and for conditions and activities which they had not, for example, long-term suburban residents commented on the experience of living in city centres. Groups also spoke about items that were present within their areas of activity and favoured, items that were present and disliked and items that were absent from these areas. For example, several groups mentioned public transport - a facility that was highly valued - with certain groups commenting positively on an existing bus service (Group J), negatively on an existing bus service (Group B) or noting the total absence of a local bus service and the dissatisfaction this caused (Group A). There had been a concern, discussed in Chapter 2, that the research might only capture adaptive preferences, i.e. preferences that were adapted, or formed in response, to the environments in which the TARAs’ operated. However, with groups expressing preferences for items that were absent from their areas of activity (e.g. no bus service), and reporting dissatisfaction with

items that were present (e.g. a poor bus service), it seems this concern was not borne out in the research. It did not seem as though the TARAs' preferences were all adapted to conditions within their immediate environment.

Whilst perhaps not adapted to a TARA's immediate environmental context, the TARAs' environmental preferences might have been adapted to certain other contexts and factors. For example, as noted earlier, certain preferences seemed to be 'adapted' to (or 'bound' by) participants' expectations. Also, participants' perceptions of 'inevitable' outcomes seemed to shape and temper their views. To explain, in a couple of groups it was noted that students 'had' to live somewhere and this resulted in, or was associated with, a preference for the minimal presence of student HMOs rather than the more extreme scenario of their complete absence. Confirming Healey et al.'s (1988: 155) views on the nature of interests, it seemed that for the TARAs, some preferences were formulated and "defined within a social context", however, as mentioned earlier, some preferences appeared to be constructed in a kind of vacuum where consequences and context were left unconsidered. Where preferences were structured to reflect an identified social context, such as the inevitable presence of student households, the association between these preferences and TARAs' interests and desires might be questioned. If these preferences are more about an external context than the groups' own preferences, their satisfaction might do little to enhance the QoL of TARA members.

#### **9.1.6 Separating uses and 'contentious' uses**

Uses such as waste management, large offices, nightclubs, late-night bars, industry, warehousing, hotels and large supermarkets were opposed in residential areas on the grounds of, variously, noise, traffic, pollution, parking problems and anti-social behaviour. In the ideal town/city exercise, the wish to separate these uses was obvious with all groups locating waste management facilities, and several directing employment uses, to the settlement boundary or beyond. Group I's ideal city formed a clear example of this approach (Figure 9). Also, some groups were loath to include more than one or two employment areas in their ideal town/city, however, others included many (see Figures 8 and 10 for these divergent approaches). In Group E, Rita redesigned the group's first attempt at an ideal town in order to create a community of two halves, one featuring housing, schools, health centres and local shops and the other employment, leisure and waste management facilities (Figure 10). The rest of the group was content with this new design. Neil in Group G commented on the desirability of such a design noting, "I would make one side of the town residential and the other side sort of all the other things...like factories, tips". The design produced by Group G (Figure 8) seems to echo this idea with housing restricted to one side of the settlement.

Groups spoke about concentrating or 'boxing' employment and waste management facilities together, with Joe in Group K claiming this preference was associated with his background in engineering – "I mean I'm an engineer so I think in boxes". Mark in Group F used the planning terminology of 'zoning' to describe this preferred practice:

"I quite like the idea of having a more employment zone, maybe with the waste management and industrial type things and then a greener area and a shopping area, I quite like the zoning, well Mr Box Man likes putting things in areas" (Mark, Group F)

The interest in separating and creating 'zones' of different types of use, and including green spaces as buffers between less compatible uses, is an established approach within post-war planning as found within the Functional City ideal (Chapter 3). Given the ideal's longevity, the support the TARAs show for it might suggest that they hold a preference for a relatively traditional, conservative style of urban development. Thus, a conservative tone to certain preferences might be identified where 'conservative' means a disposition towards 'traditional' views and designs (with 'traditional' meaning established norms/designs etc.). This 'preference for the conservative' or 'conservative preferences' might also be detected in the value placed on creating buildings that blend in with their surroundings. This was a common preference across all groups. Indeed, aesthetics and appearance were issues returned to throughout the focus group discussions indicating that vistas and visual amenity mattered to the TARAs. Group A wanted "unification we don't want new stuff to stick out like a sore thumb, we want it to be in keeping with the rest of the place" (Kathy, Group A). Taking this preference to the extreme, in Group G, there was an interest in burying new development, masking it entirely from view - "a sort of nice low level office set and then maybe industrial things underground buried into a hillside" (Robert, Group G). Elsewhere, the relative 'attractiveness' of a development and its impact on pleasing views were factors referenced by groups when considering the desirability of certain uses and their appropriateness in certain locations.

### *Religious spaces*

Though not considered an inappropriate use, religious spaces proved relatively contentious items for inclusion in residential areas and in settlements more generally. Their 'treatment' formed a particularly interesting aspect of the focus group discussion. Initially suggested by a participant in Group A as a preferred use to include in an ideal town, subsequent groups disagreed on the need for religious spaces. A minority of

participants felt places of worship were unnecessary but this view was challenged by others who argued that, whilst group members may themselves not attend religious service, it was necessary to cater for those that did. Groups did, ultimately, include these uses in their ideal towns/cities but there was no common view on where they should be located. Some groups placed them close to housing, some near places of work or in the town/city centre whilst others positioned them near areas of green space. Figures 6, 8, and 9 illustrate some of the diverse approaches taken. In Group C, pragmatism rather than any religious concerns determined the location. It was argued that by placing religious spaces near schools, car parking problems could be alleviated as a single car park could be shared by the users of both facilities. There was an interest in providing spaces for different faiths, with Groups I and F favouring multi-faith venues. This might suggest groups were genuinely interested in catering for a variety of faiths within society. However, it might be the result of participants within a group setting, and/or when engaging with an outside audience (the author), consciously constructing and projecting an image of acceptance and tolerance. Religious spaces were broached in a particularly interesting way in Group J. Here, the group jettisoned the religious element from these venues. It was commented that, "people aren't as religious as they used to be" - a view shared by participants in all groups - and so these spaces were included "more as community facilities" than religious venues (Edward, Group J). It is anticipated that if the focus groups had been carried out with 'religious' individuals, a different approach to religious spaces might have occurred. Group I commented on this issue, suggesting that if the focus groups had been conducted in parts of Southampton where large Muslim populations are present, (when sampling, unsuccessful attempts were made to engage with groups in these areas) greater priority would have been attached to these facilities

#### **9.1.7 Neighbourhood design – the physical arrangement of land uses**

Conflicting with certain aspects of planning policy but matching others, within residential areas TARAs favoured congregating acceptable (see before) non-residential uses in local centres. Most generally disliked the idea of dotting these uses in and amongst areas of housing although this was not always borne out in the ideal towns/cities they created (e.g. see Figures 10 and 11). Policy shows some support for scattering the odd local service in established residential areas whilst it strongly favours a sequential approach to the location of main town centre uses, with retail centres considered first. Perhaps for policy to better match TARAs' preferences, it could be amended to prevent services and facilities being interspersed with housing. The TARAs' opposition to scattering facilities links to their preference for living in enclaves of exclusively residential properties, discussed at the beginning of the chapter. Plus, they felt local centres served as focal points within communities, created a space for social interaction, supported

multi-purpose trips, formed “an attraction” (Henry, Group J) and helped generate “a sense of community” (Diana, Group I). Also, it was thought more convenient and safer to focus uses in a single place rather than spread them out across an area. There were concerns about the volume of traffic, and potential for road accidents, particularly ones involving children, if drivers were forced to crisscross an area to access dispersed facilities. Lastly, a couple of groups spoke about the potential for the ‘feel’ of residential areas to change if a large number of widely dispersed non-residential uses occurred. Confirming these various preferences and views, when attitudes to the arrangement of land uses in a large new residential development were explored, in Exercise 2 in the focus group, most participants favoured a design that featured a local centre surrounded by purely residential properties (three design options were presented). The design option which lacked a local centre and only featured widely dispersed non-residential uses was rejected by all participants (see Chapter 6 for the exercise and Appendix 7 for the design options).

Whilst clearly finding local centres appealing, participants were concerned about the potential for these centres to become a focus for anti-social behaviour and/or suffer economic decline with groups pointing to centres in Southampton which were seen to have suffered this fate. Group H was particularly concerned about the viability of local centres and questioned the sustainability of including numerous district and local centres in a settlement. The ideal city/town designed by this group reflected this view with no retail centres provided outside the town/city centre (Figure 11). The issue of viability also surfaced when groups discussed the type of commercial activities they wanted to see within a local centre. Groups tended to support small, independent shops with some participants reminiscing about a time when many such shops were within walking distance of their home. Groups noted, though, that their own and society’s preferences for supermarket shopping had driven these independent traders out of business and so their presence within a local centre was thought unlikely or unsustainable. Recognition of a wider social and economic context therefore shaped groups’ views on the liable end-occupiers of local centres.

#### *Different designs in established and new residential areas*

For Groups J and G, retaining the exclusively residential enclaves favoured by the majority of groups was considered especially important in existing residential areas. For these two groups, an explicit distinction was drawn between the approach thought suitable in established residential areas and the approach thought suitable in new residential areas. Including non-residential uses in established residential areas would “detract from sort of the quality of the area I think rather than enhance it” (Henry, Group

J), “degrade it” (Edward, Group J) and be generally “inappropriate” (Neil, Group G). Similar to planning policy then, these groups favoured conserving and preserving the predominantly residential character of established residential areas. It was strongly felt that non-residential uses should be incorporated from the start of a development not added in later:

“...if it’s an existing residential area such as this then I think it’s wrong to even try and shoe horn in any [new services]...you just don’t add it in after in an established area but fine to plan it from the outset...” (Pamela, Group G)

For Group G, in existing residential areas, residents had specifically chosen a predominantly residential location. It would therefore be inappropriate to add in non-residential uses since this would transform the environment into something which departs from residents’ original choices and preferences. However, in new residential areas, where the uses were included from the start, residents were assumed to have consciously ‘bought into’ the environment on offer. Comments from Groups J and G illustrate these views:

“...I think there’s a massive difference between starting afresh with new communities and building into existing communities...because you’re starting afresh and people are buying in so they know what they’re getting from the start” (Edward, Group J)

“...most people move to this top end area [the group’s area] because they don’t have those services and facilities because if we wanted them we’d go elsewhere...if anyone moves into an area that has these facilities it’s because they want to move there and that’s what they want, but we don’t so you shouldn’t try to add them in [within the group’s area]” (Cheryl, Group G)

Encapsulated in Cheryl’s (Group G) view are two issues pertinent to the perspective of several other groups. First, the view seems to assume that residents have substantial freedom and choice over where they live, with choices being a direct reflection of, or being based squarely on, preferences.

#### *Freedom and choice in house moves*

Several groups appeared to believe that households choose areas and properties based on the property’s/area’s fit with their preferences in a largely constraint-free environment. Participants, especially those in groups operating in the more affluent

areas, spoke about seeking out and purposefully choosing to live in their present area. For the groups operating in less affluent areas, there were also references to people choosing where they lived. In Group A, for instance, Michael claimed to have deliberately moved from one social housing estate to Group A's area for a quieter life with better car parking facilities whilst in Group B, it was suggested the location of services and facilities within an area was important because this can inform residents' housing choices:

“...I think the infrastructure and the things you put in are most important because then people can choose where they go and choose where they live...” (Roger, Group B)

Across all groups, there were few references to the potential for things other than housing/area preferences, such as work or family ties, to shape or indeed constrain housing choices. In the more affluent groups, only the most deprived sections of society seemed to be thought vulnerable to obvious constraints on realising their housing/area preferences. For example, in Groups G and I discussion focused on the restrictions on choice perceived amongst social housing tenants:

“It may not be down to them [i.e. a household] if it's social housing they don't get a choice and in that sense it's not fair if they don't like it [the house or area]” (Linda, Group I)

Constraints brought about by house price affordability were acknowledged, although they were mentioned only occasionally. For example, in Group G Robert noted “you can only buy the house to the level that your income is so you might be forced to live in a certain area”. In Groups J and G high house prices were given as the reason why young families were largely absent from their areas whilst in Group K Joe claimed his house was the best he could afford in proximity to his place of work. Regarding work, the general absence of references to places of employment being a constraint on, or determinant of, housing choices might have been linked to the fact that a large number of participants were retirees (Chapter 7). This age profile might also help explain the limited mention of house price affordability. Participants did not match the demographic profile of typical first time buyers. Had they done, perhaps this issue would have been mentioned more often.

Although not identified as a ‘constraint’ by any group, it is arguable that participants' conservative views on the suitability of particular types of environment for particular types of household constrained where individuals felt *able* to live. Discussed in more detail later, city/town centres were only thought suitable for young, childless “yuppies” (Roger, Group B). It is unlikely, then, that the participants would consider

moving to a city centre. Comments from Group J capture most participants' views on these locations:

“...if you can choose then generally you'll live in the city centre when you're younger, I used to live in the city centre, and then you move out as you get older because it suits a young person, a young couple to have a flat when they're near the bars and work.” (Edward, Group J)

Compared to the groups based in the more affluent areas, the groups operating in more deprived areas were more likely to identify constraints on their own housing choices. Even here, though, constraints were rarely mentioned and were not discussed by all. To provide an example, David in Group B claimed a lack of 'motivation' and limited financial resources explained why group members were so reluctant to live in a town or city centre commenting that “if we were motivated and had got a lot of financial backing” they might hold different views. Interestingly, in Group A, whilst participants did not identify constraints on their housing choices, they were highly dissatisfied with their homes with Kathy claiming they were “not fit for human habitation”. That the participants continued to live in their homes despite holding such negative views perhaps suggests some type of constraint is occurring - otherwise one might expect these individuals to simply move out. However, perhaps the group setting, the tone of discussion that emerged and the fact that participants' all lived in the same type of property created an environment conducive to participants sharing their 'housing horror stories'. Possibly, this led to participants exaggerating their unhappiness. The group setting might have also influenced participants in the more affluent groups and produced a reluctance to admit to any constraints on housing choices. Of course, this is speculation. It is debateable whether researchers should always assume some deeper, hidden level of meaning exists in participants' responses which they consciously or unconsciously seek to mask or suppress. This can quickly progress into a much bigger debate about the nature of knowledge and the nature and status of knowledge produced through research. (Chapter 2 briefly explains the philosophical foundations of the research.)

#### *Respecting the choices and preferences of existing residents*

The second issue captured in Cheryl's (Group G) view is the belief that residential environments should reflect the choices and preferences of existing residents, as perceived by the group. (It was inappropriate to include non-residential uses in established residential areas because, Cheryl claimed, the existing residents had not chosen to live in such an environment). A number of groups seemed to adopt this type of perspective but it is perhaps debateable whether these groups 'knew' the preferences

and choices of all existing residents plus, as shall be seen, there was some selectivity over who was considered an existing resident and therefore whose choices and preferences were thought 'worthy' of respect.

As noted in Chapter 7, groups could consist of a small number of active members. Committees seemed to be biased towards middle aged and older adults whilst when households had to actively join a group (by paying a subscription fee) only a small proportion could choose to do so. The extent to which groups exhibiting these characteristics can be assumed to 'know' the choices, interests and preferences of all residents within their area of activity seems questionable. Group E directly addressed this issue with John noting that whilst the group assumed young people desired a youth club this might not be the case:

“...people's perception of what other people want is sometimes erroneous, you know we perceive that the kids want something to do just because we think they need to do something but that may not be what they want...(John, Group E)

In truth, instead of desiring residential environments to reflect the preferences and choices of all existing residents, it seemed groups wanted residential environments to reflect the choices and preferences of just the active members of the group. Indeed, all groups had demonstrated an interest, as indicated by their past activities (Chapter 7), in 'controlling' the preferences and choices of environmental uses and users that conflicted with those of the group. The action taken by a number of groups on student HMOs forms an interesting example of this. These groups disliked the growing presence of student HMOs in their areas and objected to applications for further HMOs. They perceived their areas as sites of contested space hosting struggles between themselves and a collection of perceived foes – students, HMO developers, HMO landlords and sometimes local authority planners (if they granted permission for new HMOs). Interestingly, Groups A and B, though unaffected by student HMOs, identified struggles between students and non-students. In Group B, it was bemoaned that “half the city consists of students, everywhere you go its students taking over the pubs” (Wendy, Group B) whilst in Group A, students and non-students were seen to be locked in competition over access to a local doctor's surgery. The legitimacy of the students' claim to the surgery was contested with one participant portraying students as 'thieves' depriving the non-student population of what is 'rightfully' their facility:

“...what I think we're saying is the University really ought to get themselves sorted out with somewhere that their students can go so they don't rob us of our [health care] facilities” (Kathy, Group A)

For the TARAs affected by student HMOs, the landlords and developers behind these properties were seen to be abdicating all responsibility for the behaviour of their tenants, failing to maintain their properties, 'cramming' students into houses and redesigning homes so they become unsuitable for future 'family' use. Students were said to degrade "the essential character" of an area (Joe in Group K) and undermine the "quality of life" of existing residents (Angela, Group C). A "clash of lifestyles" was identified between the student and non-student population (Janice and Martin, Group G). Using emotive language, in Group G it was claimed the "influx of young people" had created "student ghettos" and "the residents are very sorry to live there" (Neil, Group G). It is interesting that here Neil only appeared to identify the non-student population as 'residents'. Indeed, when discussing existing residents, some groups separated this population from the student population and their concerns did *not* seem lie in protecting and promoting the choices and preferences of the student population. Pertinent to the issue of representativeness (Chapter 4), for some TARAs at least, it seemed their concerns did not lie in representing the interests of all the residents within their area.

The groups affected by student HMOs felt that only small student households which 'behaved' as "normal" (Jim, Group D) or "ordinary" (Mathew, Group C) families were acceptable (though no attempt to define a normal or ordinary family was made). Besides holding a preference for exclusively residential areas, it seemed, then, that some groups preferred areas that were exclusive of certain 'types' of resident, or at least concentrations of certain types of resident. In Group J, Henry's preference for an area without families with young children (noted earlier) could be another example of this preference for 'exclusivity'. Also, within Groups E and B, there was some support for separating housing for the very old, suggested as those aged 80 plus, from family housing because the sound of children playing was thought to irritate very elderly residents.

The TARAs who participated in the research are not alone in identifying student households, and the landlords and developers of student properties, as 'threats' and 'problems'. A growing literature on the subject of studentification, a term describing the affect of large numbers of university students moving into established residential areas leading to a raft of social, economic and physical transformations (Smith, 2005), finds that the long-term residents of these neighbourhoods can often object to this process and seek to halt it through participation in protest politics (Hubbard, 2008; Smith and Holt, 2007, Smith, 2008; Sage et al., 2012). This literature finds that studentification can lead to social and cultural conflicts between the incoming student population and the existing resident population with the latter suffering heightened levels of 'community anxiety' (Sage et al., 2012). Matching the identified concerns of the TARAs, this existing

population associates problems such as noise, anti-social behaviour, litter and a decline in the quality and upkeep of the local environment with student households, while an incompatibility of lifestyles between students and non-students is reported (Hubbard, 2008; Smith and Holt, 2007). Again, similar to the TARAs included in the study, this literature finds that existing residents would prefer houses to be occupied by families, rather than by students, with students identified as 'others' – they are seen to possess the quality of 'otherness' as they stand apart from, and are thought different to, the population of existing residents (Hubbard, 2012).

It has been claimed that the process of studentification has “spawned a critical politics in the UK”, with campaigns launched and protest groups organised, at the local, regional and national scale, to alleviate the negative impacts of the process and harness any positives it might bring (Smith, 2008: 2542; Hubbard, 2012; Smith and Holt, 2007). In some areas, long term residents are found to organise into action groups to both challenge the process of, and tackle the problems associated with, studentification (Hubbard, 2012). Of particular interest to the research, Hubbard (2012: 331) found that some of these groups have chosen to call themselves 'residents associations'. Though opposition to student households was never identified as the primary motive for group formation, as the discussion to date has shown, several of the TARAs included in the research spent much time and effort opposing student HMOs and so objections to these properties might have featured in their 'creation story'.

Standing apart from much of the studentification literature, Hubbard (2012) argues that this process can actually be benign. He claims that in areas featuring large numbers of student households, relationships between the student and non-student population can, in fact, be positive. Thus, there can be studentification without an associated anti-studentification politics. Hubbard's (2012) analysis does not, however, seem relevant to Southampton. Here, it seems that conflict, tensions and protest politics are characteristic of, rather than being a possible occurrence within, areas experiencing studentification.

### *House prices*

Amongst the TARAs where it was an issue, the noted interest in minimising the presence of student HMOs did not appear to stem from concerns over house price depreciation. Only Michelle in Group D discussed the potential for HMOs to affect property prices claiming they would devalue surrounding homes. However, within the same group, Jim challenged this interpretation arguing that student HMOs increased house prices and were acting to make the group's area less affordable for young families.

Since the literature often identifies concerns over property prices as *the* explanation for resident group action and formation, see Chapter 4, it was interesting to observe how infrequently house prices were mentioned. Aside from Group D's discussion, on only two further occasions were impacts on house prices discussed with Edward in Group J and Will in Group I both suggesting that prices might fall if certain uses were placed in proximity to housing (respectively, a hot food takeaway and office unit). In addition, as mentioned before, a couple of participants discussed how the relationship between income and house prices can constrain housing choices. The limited comments on house prices might indicate a reluctance to discuss the subject in a group setting or perhaps a lack of interest in property prices. Saunders (1980) though would presumably argue (Chapter 4) that the limited mention of property prices is as expected. He would suggest that these groups had consciously concealed their true concern for house prices by referencing other issues such as 'QofL'.

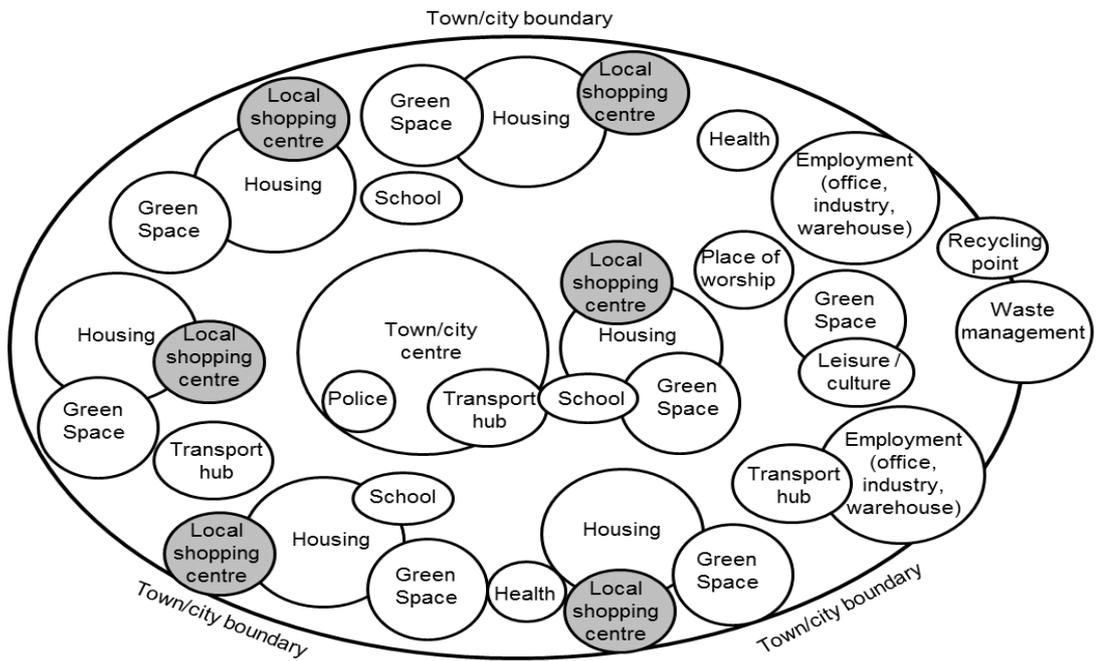
### **9.1.8 Town and city centres**

To conclude the discussion on TARAs' environmental preferences, it is interesting to reflect on the groups' almost unanimous rejection of town and city centres as desirable places to live – a view which emerged during Exercise 2 in the focus group, when the TARAs discussed policy's approach to land use mix within town/city centres (see Chapter 6 for the exercise). The groups' strong preference for a peaceful, green, spacious environment underpinned and explains this view. Surprisingly, even those groups based within or on the edge of Southampton's city centre were keen to disassociate themselves from this centre with Group H, for instance, claiming to live in an "urban village" not the city centre (Margaret, Group H). Only Joe in Group K actively identified the city centre as a desirable place to live but claimed this had only become his view since his children had grown up and left home.

In addition to personally rejecting town/city centres as places to live, groups rejected these locations as family-suitable environments. Group A suggested that town planners were "off their heads" to even think about encouraging families into city centre flats (Michael, Group A). Groups strongly believed that families with children needed homes with gardens and public open space and felt city/town centres were usually incapable of providing this. Group J claimed only families who were "trapped" due to economic circumstance would reside in a city/town centre (Henry, Group J). Ultimately, only childless young people, with a reasonable income, who wanted to be near bars and places of work, were thought suited to city/town centres. Indeed, participants claimed that when they were young adults they might have been attracted to these environments if today's town/city centre attractions had been available. Though just this narrow

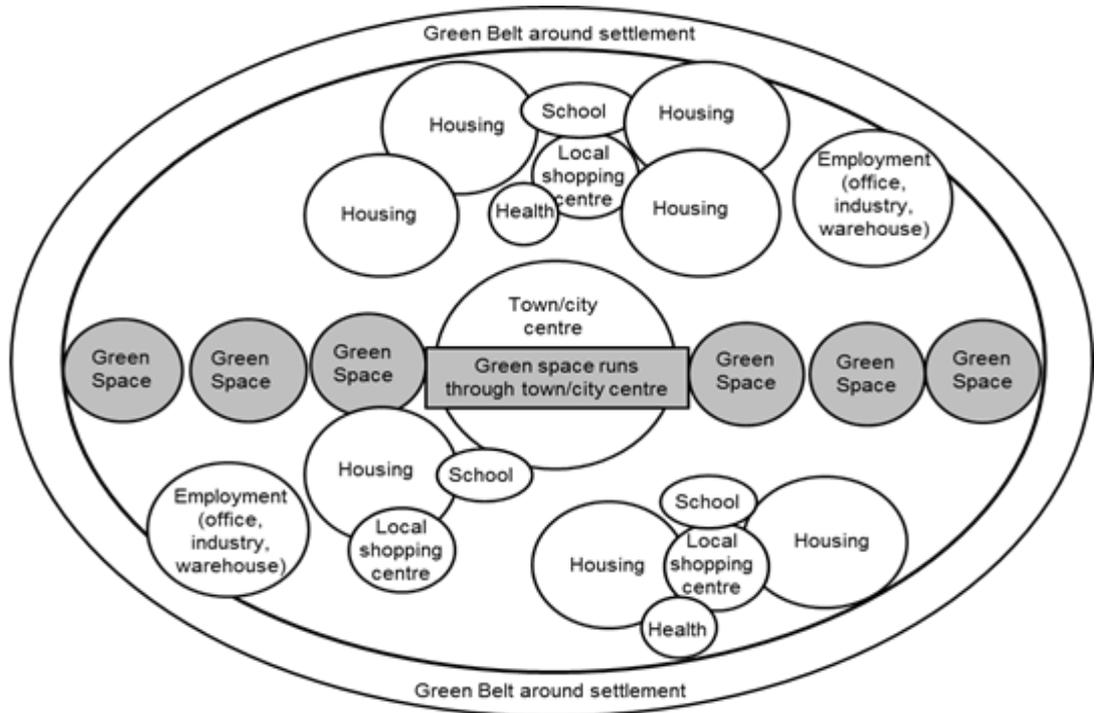
demographic was thought suited to these locations, groups still favoured the provision of town/city centre housing. Similar to planning policy, which claims land use mix in city centres creates vibrancy and vitality, these groups felt that where housing was absent, centres were “barren and dead” (Mark, Group F), “ghost towns” (Jim, Group D) and “soulless” (Joe, Group K). Finding that TARAs’ assumed families were only suited to suburban houses with gardens, whilst town/city centres were only suited to young, childless professionals, is perhaps further evidence of a relatively conservative tone to their views. Bar a few exceptions (e.g. central London), it is not the ‘norm’ (within England) to find families with young children living within town/city centres (Chapter 5).

**Figure 6: Group K's 'ideal' town/city - Emphasis on frequent provision of shopping centres**

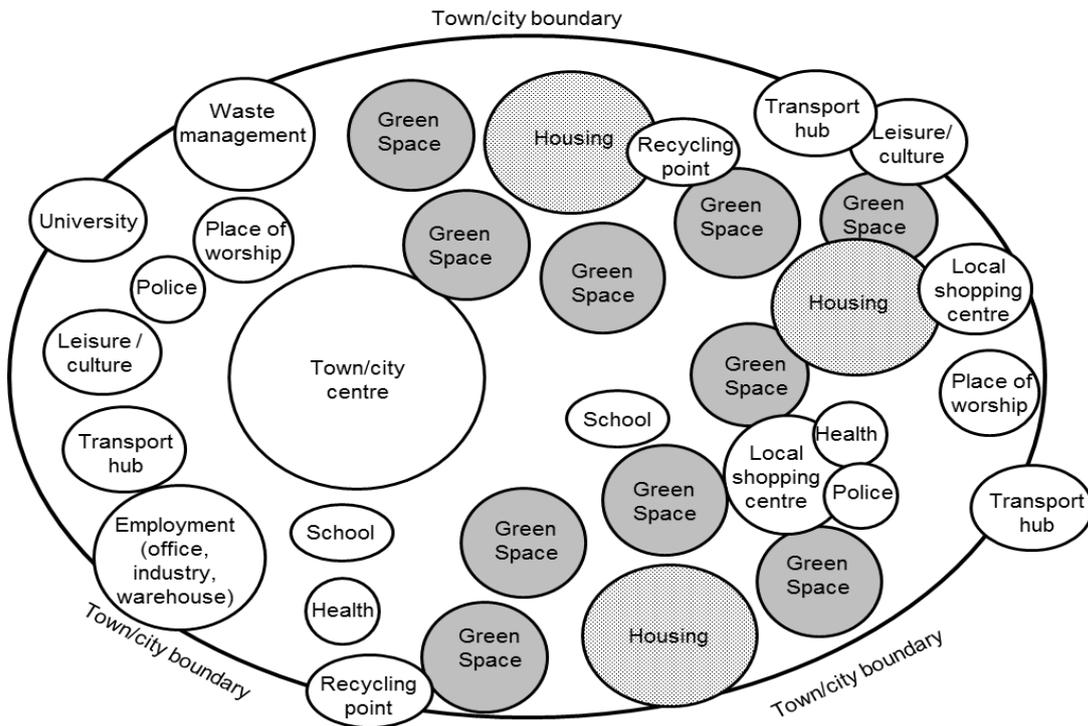


*Notes: This and all ideal town/city diagrams included in the chapter are not to scale. The ideal towns/cities produced by the TARAs were not as crowded with land use discs since the discs were, proportionally, much smaller than the total area covered by this settlement.*

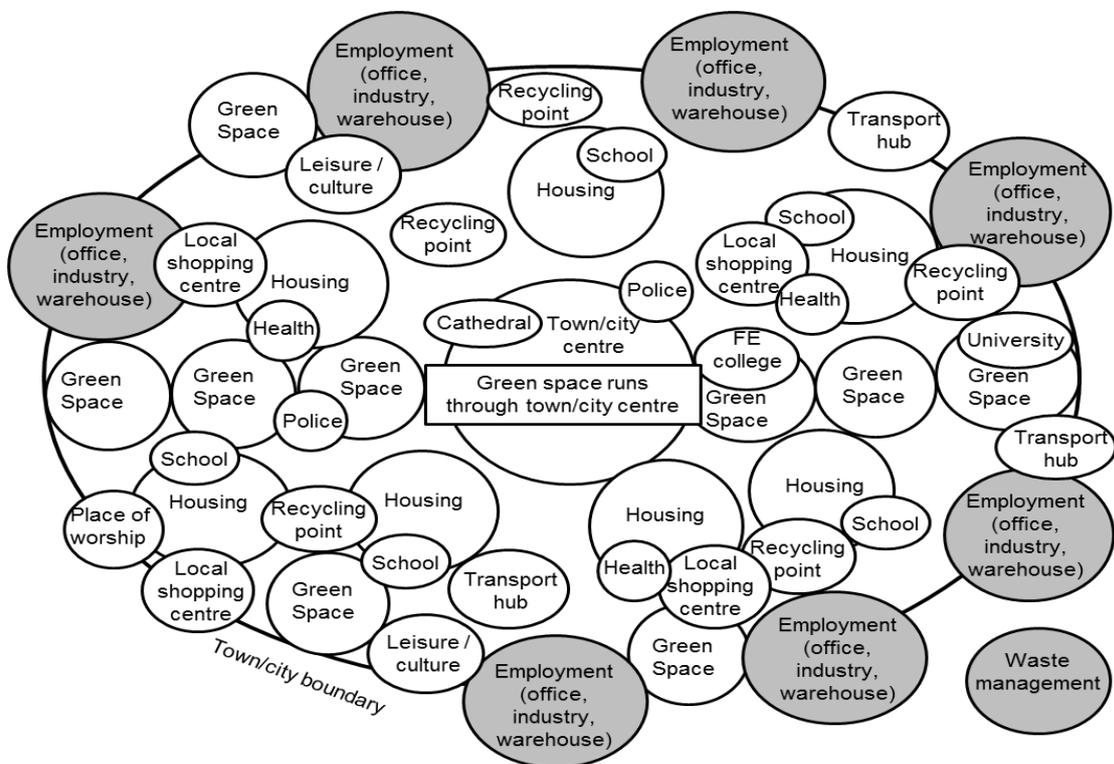
**Figure 7: Group A's 'ideal' town/city - Emphasis on provision of a greenway**



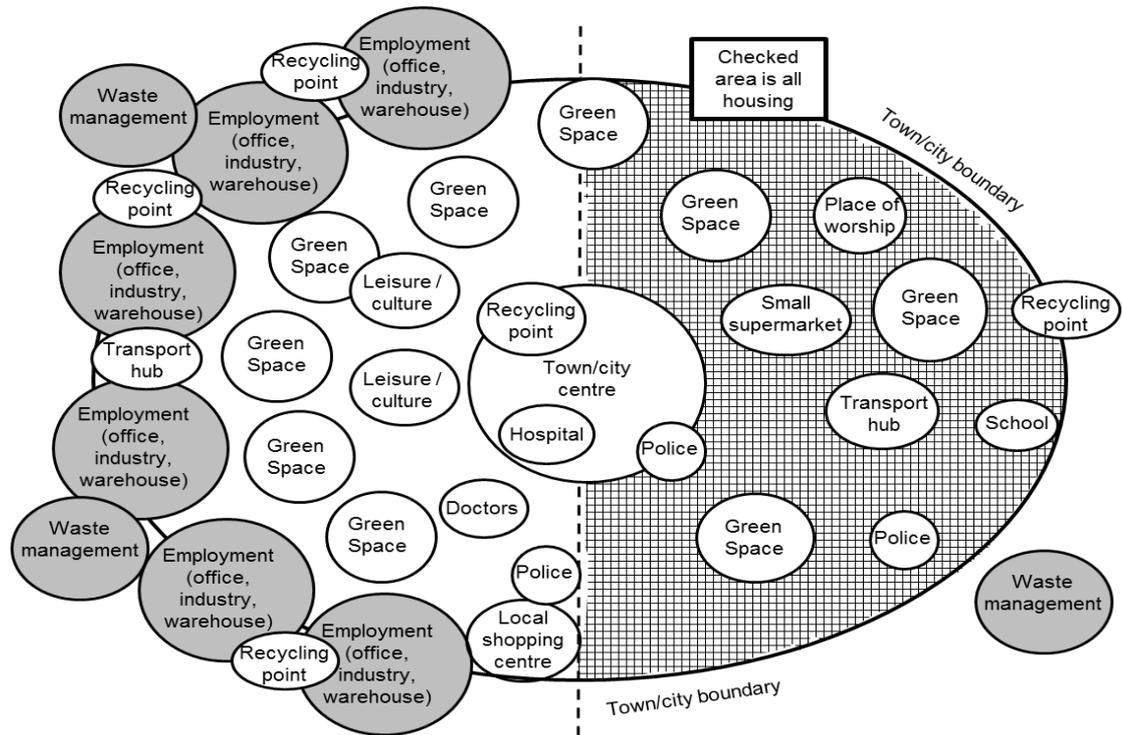
**Figure 8: Group G's 'ideal' town/city - Emphasis on green space 'insulating' areas of housing**



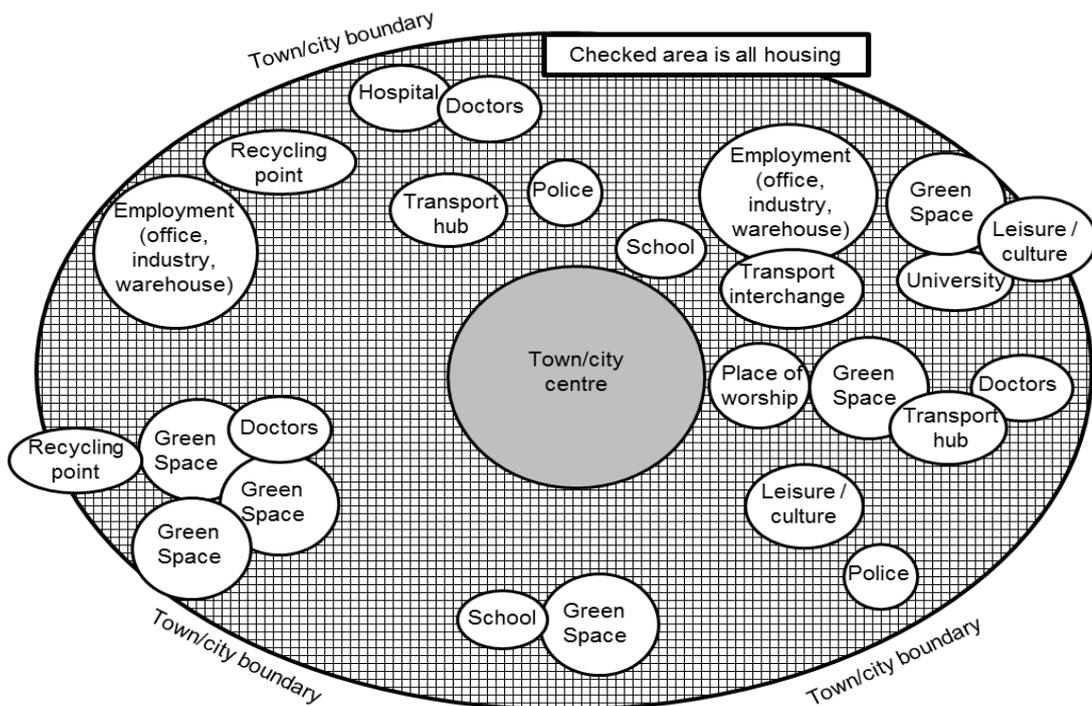
**Figure 9: Group I's 'ideal' city - Emphasis on employment and waste management pushed to / beyond settlement boundaries**



**Figure 10: Group E's 'ideal' town/city - Emphasis on employment and waste management entirely separated from housing**



**Figure 11: Group H's 'ideal' town/city – Emphasis on the absence of further retail centres in addition to the town/city centre**



## **9.2 TENANTS' AND RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATIONS AND THE PLANNING SYSTEM**

Attention now turns to TARAs' attitudes towards, and experiences within, the planning system. The TARAs were not prompted to discuss these issues and indeed, as Chapter 6 demonstrates, the research method was not designed to capture information on them. They were brought up 'independently' by a number of groups. They are discussed here because they seem directly relevant to the research's overarching interest in the relationship between planning policy and QofL.

### **9.2.1 Attitudes to planners and planning decisions**

As the discussion to date has demonstrated, policy's approach to mix seems to conform to a number of the TARAs' preferences. However, policy can be interpreted and applied in a flexible and discretionary way (Chapter 8). Therefore, the extent to which its interpretation in planning decisions will accord with TARAs' preferences will differ on a site by site, application by application basis. Indeed, policy may not even be a deciding factor in some planning decisions if material considerations are seen to supersede it. A number of the TARAs could report instances when aspects of planning policy had been set aside and 'non-conforming' development (i.e. development that conflicted with policy) permitted. For example, Group H described a scenario where development had been permitted that exceeded planning guidelines on building heights. This guidance was said to be found in Southampton City Council's planning document 'The North-South Spine' (SCC, 2004). The group felt the developers behind the scheme had imposed their preferences on the council as they 'rode over' the policy document:

"...there was this thing called the North-South Spine Strategy and it said there wouldn't be, you know, all the buildings along the High Street would be in keeping, they would have thin fronts and they would go up three maybe four floors and they, what have they built? But floors six, seven, eight, nine, ten, so we did object on the basis of the density, not that we were opposed to the flats but you know they did seem to be excessive and absolutely against what they had put in their planning guidance but you know the developers seemed to ride over what the council themselves were saying" (Jeff, Group H)

The author's analysis of the North-South Spine document (SCC, 2004) revealed no guidance on building heights. The perception then that developers' preferences had overridden policy seems, in this instance, to be based on incorrect information. However, the observation of such perceptions indicates that TARAs can identify developers as privileged parties within the planning system able to bend or circumvent policy to suit their interests. Evidence of this assessment was found in several of the focus group

discussions. However, when it came to their own position in planning decisions, matching perceptions noted within the literature (Chapter 4), the TARAs reported feeling “powerless” (Michael, Group A) and marginalised. Perhaps predictably, the planning officers at Southampton, Epsom and Ashford did not recognise this analysis. These officers spoke about balancing interests and, in regards to TARAs, they claimed to actively consult these groups whenever proposals came forward in their areas of activity. However, they did note that whilst some TARAs were keen and competent participants in the planning system, understanding how the system worked and how best to ensure their views were heard, others were not.

Group C was one of the TARAs most convinced of the presence of an unjust or unfair planning system (*vis-à-vis* residents’ groups). For example, the group was adamant that planning permission for a particular development in their area had been “stitched up” between the council and the developer and the group was “very upset...because it’s business interests come before us” (Mathew, Group C). It was commented:

“It’s stitched up at council level we know it is, so if it’s business coming into an area the planners will change policy to encourage business at a cost to the local residents, which we wonder why are we paying rates?” (Mathew, Group C)

The veracity of Group C’s claims would be hard to establish and indeed one assumes they would be rejected by the council. Also, the act of granting planning permission for a development to which TARAs object, and/or granting planning permission for a development that conflicts with an adopted development plan does not, of itself, prove the decision making process to be biased in favour of applicants. Decision makers are at liberty to set aside policy when material considerations indicate this is appropriate – to do so is not an indication of untoward behaviour on the part of the council. However, a number of the TARAs seemed to believe it was. Further, Group C’s view rests on the assumption that all local residents share the group’s concerns. Thus, where the group objects to development and believes it represents a ‘cost’ to local residents it is assumed all residents will adopt this position. This links to issues about the representativeness of TARAs in terms of their membership and concerns (Chapter 4). With just 17% of local households being members, and with it originating to oppose the presence of certain residents (students at a halls of residence) (Chapter 7), just how far Group C represents this area, its total population and all local interests, seems questionable.

In Group K, a distinction was drawn between council officers and councillors when it came to bias and partiality in planning decisions. Council officers were thought more amenable to business interests whilst councillors were thought supportive of

residents. Group K (though more accurately the Chair who was responsible for most 'group' activity) consciously chose to bypass council officers and deal directly with elected members:

“Well I don't actually go to the officers I go to the councillors because I think they, if you can get them on side then they will enforce the clout, I mean I've given you evidence before of how the planning officers were on the side of [name of a local business] with the conversion and also the mobile phone mast...” (Joe, Group K)

Whilst reporting a 'better' relationship with councillors than with council officers, Group K, though operating in an affluent area with members describing themselves as middle class, did not identify anything approaching the shared community of interest that Saunders (1980) reported in Croydon between middle class residents groups and Conservative party councillors (Chapter 4).

### **9.2.2 Attitudes to developers and the local planning authority**

Besides their preferences and interests being seen to trump those of TARAs, developers were seen to build schemes that served their own interests rather than those of local residents, even when residents' views had been actively sought:

“...we've got a massive redevelopment site at [name a local place] which is the site of the old shipyards and when they did the survey what local people wanted there were houses with gardens and the very sort of thing we're talking about with open space and of course they didn't get it because that wasn't what the developers wanted to do and you know it was all high-rise and sort of fairly dense housing...” (Jim, Group D)

Similar to the comments above, Group A identified the potential for divergence between developers' preferences and those of residents. Thus, in building to suit their own ends, it was felt developers failed to serve the needs and interests of residents and the wider city:

“...what I'm finding is it's not necessarily what we want in the city, it's the developers and how much they're prepared to pay the city to have the land and that's the other problem, what's happening is that we don't have a lot of say over what comes into our city because it's taken over now by private firms etc. who, who they all sit there and decide well they almost decide as to what they want to put here sometimes” (Michael, Group A)

Groups considered Southampton City Council guilty of disregarding, or failing to properly engage with, residents' preferences, even when those preferences had been actively sought. Group A claimed a council run consultation on a new car parking scheme had been designed in such a way that residents were unable to object. There was a more general concern about consultation being a superfluous exercise as the council could disregard the findings and simply allow developers to build whatever they preferred:

“...I'm worried about, you know, like most people this is back to ticking boxes again, so let's consult with people and say we've consulted but then we'll go back to see the developer and say yes you can go ahead with what you wanted anyway” (Michael, Group A)

Group H, for instance, reported that the council allowed a development to go ahead which had been rejected by a majority of residents in a consultation. When the group requested the consultation responses for review, the council said it had misplaced them. Whilst it is not possible to verify the claims of Group H, or the accusations made by the other groups, it is interesting to observe how negative some of the groups were about the local authority. Whilst 'blaming the council' is perhaps part of the British national culture, the finding becomes additionally interesting when considered in the context of Stoker et al.'s (2004) work on social capital amongst voluntary organisations in Southampton (plus Stockport, Glasgow and Birmingham). Stoker et al. (2004: 401) surveyed various voluntary organisations, including “local and neighbourhood community based associations”, in these four local authorities. Of interest here is that they explored groups' perceptions of their relationship with local government. In each local authority area, groups were asked to respond to the statement, ‘there is a high level of trust between our organisation and the city council’ (Stoker et al., 2004). Across the four authorities, Southampton had the lowest proportion of groups agreeing with the statement, 36% of groups, and the highest proportion disagreeing with it, 22% of groups (Stoker et al., 2004). Interestingly, certain theories identify trust or faith in public institutions (like local government) as a component in QoFL. For example, Stiglitz et al.'s (2009: 50) domain based model of QoFL (discussed in Chapter 2) identifies trust in public institutions as an issue in the broader concept of ‘political voice’ and highlights ‘political voice’ as an “integral dimension of the quality of life”. TARAs' suspicions of, and low levels of trust in, the local planning authority might then have a bearing on the QoFL of TARA members.

### 9.3 PARTICIPATION AND ENGAGEMENT WITHIN THE FOCUS GROUPS

Discussion concludes by considering the participation and behaviour of the TARA members within the focus groups. Barbour (2007) claims it is essential to comment on these issues when reporting focus group data. The section considers the way participants framed their points of view, the way they responded to the views of others and the way they interacted with each other.

#### 9.3.1 A collective voice or a collection of voices?

Whilst noting the tendency for focus group discussion to move towards consensus (Barbour, 2007), Chapter 6 questioned whether TARAs would emerge as a single collective voice or a diverse collection of voices. A dynamic process, shifting between agreement and disagreement was ultimately observed within the focus groups but, overall, a tendency towards consensus was noted. However, whether this was due to the focus group method, or whether it indicated a genuine similarity of opinion between participants, was uncertain.

In terms of consensus, participants could explicitly state agreement with one another's views or, through their body language, denote agreement by nodding when another was speaking. Participants could also work collectively incorporating and building upon one another's comments. Groups A, F and I were particularly disposed to doing this. A discussion from Group I, when participants were deciding where to locate green space in their ideal city, illustrates how groups collectively constructed ideas:

Ken: How about a green area around the centre, central facilities?

Julia: A nice radial path

Ken: So you can sort of

Linda: Meandering greenways

Will: And a fountain (laughs)

Ken: So when you've done your shopping you can go out and sit in the park

Julia: I'm liking a part with a kiddies play area by the shops

Diana: With a café

Consensus could also emerge, though rather infrequently, when participants actively altered their views to accord with those of another. This could be an instant reconfiguration of a view or the view could alter following a period of discussion. For

example, in Group K, Joe altered his views on the preferred design of a new neighbourhood concluding, “well having talked this out I think I would go for this design [referring to one of the three options for the design of a large new residential area] because it’s a compromise”. Participants could, however, remain attached to views which diverged from those of others creating instances of disagreement. These disagreements tended to be around isolated issues, such as the actual distance between a group’s area and local facilities (Groups B and C); the appeal of cul-de-sacs (Group F) or the impact of student HMOs on house prices (Group D). For many other issues, such as the value placed on peace and quiet, the need for plentiful green space and the desirability of exclusively residential areas, agreement was evident.

### **9.3.2 Discussion topics**

Between groups, there were differences in the types of issues raised and the way in which issues were interpreted and it seemed a group’s immediate physical, economic and social context informed this. For example, Groups C, D, F and K spent time discussing student HMOs but Groups A, B and H largely failed to mention these properties. The former set of groups operate in areas where student HMOs are present, or there have been applications submitted, whilst the latter set are unaffected by such dwellings. Further, as noted earlier, only Groups A and E brought up issues of employment, low incomes and the affordability of goods when explaining why certain land uses and neighbourhood designs were favoured. Out of all the TARAs, these groups operated in the most deprived areas. However, these various contexts would not seem to be the sole determinant of how and what issues were presented. For example, whilst certain groups operating in established leafy suburbs suggested the provision of private open space supplanted the need for public open space, other groups in this same environmental setting felt there was a need for both forms of space. If, say, a group’s environmental context was largely responsible for the way issues were conceived, one might expect groups from broadly similar areas to hold broadly similar views – clearly on the issue of public open space this did not occur.

### **9.3.3 Framing points of view**

Participants did not present their views and preferences as those of the wider TARA and only occasionally claimed to speak on behalf of their wider ‘community’ or area. For example, in Group J, when discussing the unsuitability of established residential areas for workshops, it was noted, “it’s not what this area would appreciate, unless I’m mistaken” (Frank, Group I) whilst in Group D, an application to extend a nightclub’s license was said to “cause a lot of community disquiet, I have to say” (Jim, Group D).

There were comments such as, “speaking with local residents” (Jim, Group D) and, “a lot of local people have said” (Kathy, Group A), implying that participants were reflecting the views of a wider canvassed community, but these were rare. Individuals instead presented their views as personal thoughts and opinions. With each group typically established, at least on their professed analysis, to protect and promote the interests of their local area, (Chapter 7), it had been anticipated that individuals and groups would be inclined to present their views as those of the wider area or community.

Participants would, at times, explain or present their views by identifying with specific roles, societal groups or experiences, a scenario which had been predicted (Chapter 6). Some participants would, for example, identify their views with past or present professional roles. For instance, in Group B, Christine claimed that her focus on choosing the ‘correct’ location for health centres in the ideal town/city exercise was related to her background in nursing - others within the group agreed with this assessment. For a couple of participants, identifying with professional roles seemed designed, at least in part, to establish the individual as an ‘expert’ and this was further enhanced by the participant referencing specialist knowledge gained through this role. For instance, in Group D, Roger referred to a background in education and then spoke, sometimes at length, about the behaviour of children in schools, teacher workloads and the reasons why schools can be reluctant to operate extended opening hours. In Group J, Edward’s assumed role of ‘town planning expert’ at times constrained group discussion. He could dominate the conversation whilst others in the group would defer to his opinion and seemed hesitant to volunteer their own. Edward was eager to highlight a professional background in town planning from the very outset readily stating during the initial introductions, “I probably should declare at the start of this that I am actually a planner” (Edward, Group J). Throughout the focus group discussion Edward would specifically mention how ‘planning’ would understand a subject.

Associating preferences and views with a particular generation was a practise common to many groups. Participants often defined themselves, and each other, as older adults, being ‘of a certain age’, being ‘seniors’ and/or retirees and would present or explain their views and preferences as those of ‘an older generation’:

“...but don’t forget I come from an age where women stayed at home so I’m not talking as a woman who goes out to work each day so I’m not quite sure I’m going to be a good candidate for this project.” (Rose, Group K)

It was believed that an older generation’s views and preferences would differ from those of a younger generation since each was at different life stages and so had different

interests and needs. In particular, groups suggested families with children would have quite different interests and views from their own. Comments in Group B help capture this perspective:

“I think you need two opinions don't you, you need the younger people and then the older people, for your [the author's] project, yes to get both sides because I think we're all slightly prejudiced because we're all set in our ways probably whereas younger people.” (Teresa, Group B)

In Group K, views were explicitly associated with being middle class, “you are talking to middle class people here though you know” (Rose, Group K). It was suggested only certain types of resident, middle class residents, would be able to afford regular trips to, and therefore sustain, local coffee shops and restaurants and so they would be more appropriate in middle class areas. For this group then, different classes, by way of their differing economic situation, were assumed to practise different behaviours. Interestingly, perhaps, class was not mentioned by any other group.

Besides different ages (and in one group different classes) being associated with different perspectives and preferences, at times groups discussed the possibility that everyone held different preferences:

“...but you know obviously we're all different aren't we so, preferences, we prefer to be in this type of area others will prefer to be in a high rise block...” (Phillip, Group J)

Perhaps this understanding of preferences, views and interests explains why participants were often reluctant to present their thoughts as representative of those of a whole area or community. However, it was interesting that whilst many participants understood their views and preferences as peculiar to a specific generation, or informed by a past or current professional role, they claimed membership of groups that professed a concern for the interests of quite diverse, in terms of age/occupation, areas. On a participant's own assessment then, assuming they identified this diversity, views and interests which diverged from their own would be seen to exist. Participants seemed able then to reconcile what seems irreconcilable. They recognised that they held distinct interests but felt comfortable claiming membership of, and being key players within, groups which professed a concern for protecting the 'mass' interests of a whole community. However, such reconciliation might not prove necessary. For some groups, the selectivity over who was identified as an 'existing resident', with students, for instance, excluded, meant that

there was no requirement to accommodate the potentially divergent interests of certain groups within the 'community interests' they claimed to represent.

## 9.4 CONCLUSIONS

In numerous instances, it appears planning policy's approach to 'RNR mix' coincides with TARAs' preferences. In terms of land use mix, it seems policy and TARAs hold a largely similar conceptualisation of the 'good' residential environment. For both, it is a peaceful, quiet environment, where residential use dominates, pockets of open space occur and non-residential uses, serving a local need, are located within walking distance. Noisy, traffic generating and polluting uses are expunged. In some ways, this seems to be a rather 'traditional' imagining of the 'good' residential environment. It is interesting here to note Healey et al.'s (1988: 245) suggestion that the State, through planning and various other avenues, intervenes to promote "the quality of the environment, *particularly as interpreted by those asserting traditional images of the environment*" [emphasis added]. An overlap is also identified between TARAs and policy in the conceptualisation of the 'good' town/city centre. Both believe these should be active, MU places with residential communities in the commercial core. However, TARA members were loath to live in these environments themselves and could identify only a narrow demographic of 'suitable' occupants. According to the principles of preference-satisfaction theory, these similarities in preferences and aspirations suggest several areas of policy might have the potential to support (when reflected in the built environment) the QoFL of TARA members.

However, for some issues, policy seemed to encourage development that diverged from TARAs' preferences. On the subject of land use mix, for three issues in particular there appeared to be an obvious distance between the development output favoured by many TARA members and that permitted / made possible by policy. To enhance policy's ability to support TARAs' QoFL, attention could focus on amending the approach in these three areas. To this end, three policy amendments are identified:

1. *Require the mandatory provision of green space at all housing developments.* The majority of groups strongly favoured a plentiful supply of green space in residential (and other) areas. Whilst planning policy supports green space provision at new residential schemes, it could go further. Currently, this space is only required at larger schemes and there is flexibility around whether onsite provision is sought.
2. *Discourage the widespread dispersal of new services and facilities across established residential areas.* Groups favoured the creation and maintenance of enclaves of exclusively residential properties whilst in Groups G and J preserving

and conserving established residential areas in their existing state was a major concern. Planning policy safeguards existing residential areas and limits opportunities for the provision of non-residential uses within them. However, the odd piece of policy allows the occasional facility to be established. Actively discouraging this practice across all policy might better address a key preference amongst some TARAs.

3. *Avoid targets that support locating residential development some distance from everyday services and facilities.* Groups favoured congregating ‘appropriate’ non-residential uses in local centres and placing these within a 10 to 15 minute walk of housing. In addition, groups also favoured locating public transport connections (usually bus stops) within walking distance of housing. Policy supports placing housing in walking distance of services, facilities and public transport. Plus, at major residential schemes, it favours the inclusion of a local centre. However, Ashford’s and Epsom’s Core Strategies include targets that only require housing to be within 30 minutes travelling time of various facilities (such as a GPs and a primary school). To better support TARAs’ preferences, such targets could be removed or amended to support closer integration between residential and non-residential uses.

In Chapter 10, the deliverability of these three policy amendments, and various other amendments identified from an analysis of the TARAs’ environmental preferences, is explored. Interestingly, for the TARAs themselves, when environmental preferences were discussed it seemed these could sometimes originate in a kind of vacuum where consequences, ramifications and issues of deliverability were left unconsidered. However, at other times, wider social and/or economic contexts, and issues of deliverability, *did* appear to be recognised and referenced.

Turning now to TARAs’ experiences within the planning system, several groups reported feeling powerless and marginalised. There was a view that developers’ preferences and those of the council superseded the preferences of residents and TARAs. Unsurprisingly, groups were unhappy with this perceived situation. They felt the right and proper scenario would be for their preferences, and residents’ preferences, though presumably only when these accorded with those of the group, to take priority to those of developers in planning decisions. Healey et al. (1988: 245) suggest, though, that “well organised community and environmental pressure groups (defending established images of urban and rural environments)”, a category that seems to include at least some of the TARAs included in the research, are already a privileged party within the planning system. On this analysis, the TARAs’ desire for preferential treatment within planning

decisions has already been realised. However, Healey et al. (1988) note that certain other powerful interests, such as the mineral extraction industry, the agricultural industry and knowledgeable and well-connected property developers can readily defeat residents' groups on planning matters.

When reflecting on the environmental preferences discussed within this chapter, the effect of the focus group method on the collected data must be considered. It is uncertain, for instance, whether the examples of agreement identified within the focus groups indicate genuinely similar preferences between participants or whether the recurring consensus was a function of the focus group method (Chapter 6). Further, the focus on preferences, the use of planning policy as the discussion material, the group setting and the style of moderation might have all encouraged the expression of rather 'conservative' views and preferences. Perhaps it also made participants reluctant to discuss issues like constraints on their housing choices.

## THE DELIVERABILITY OF AMENDING POLICY TO SUPPORT THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF TENANTS' AND RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION MEMBERS

This chapter addresses Objective 3. It explores the deliverability of amending planning policy's approach to land use mix so that it might better support the QoL of TARA members. As discussed in Chapter 6, the research adopts an, for want of a better term, 'outside in' approach to assessing the deliverability of the policy amendments identified in Objective 2. Here, attention rests on the attitudes, orientation and approach of external institutions, systems and parties, rather than on the costs, social affects, environmental impacts etc. of the amendments themselves. For the research, and for this chapter, the main concern is whether two external parties in particular would 'deliver' the amendments - the planning system and the private sector housing building industry.

As discussed in Chapter 6, for the purposes of the research, particularly deliverable amendments were identified as those which reflect the goals and concerns of the current planning system, prove uncontroversial, and gain widespread support from the housebuilding industry (Chapter 6 provides the rationale for these three criteria). Semi-structured interviews with representatives from the HBF and RTPI provided the data with which to assess the policy amendments against these criteria. Within this chapter, focus rests on the three policy amendments summarised in the conclusions to the previous chapter. That chapter suggested that these amendments could enhance policy's ability to support the QoL of many TARA members. However, where appropriate, the chapter also considers the deliverability of several additional policy amendments (see Appendix 8 for all the amendments discussed).

### **10.1 POLICY AMENDMENT: MANDATORY ONSITE OPEN SPACE PROVISION**

For the RTPI representative, providing open space at all housing schemes was an "ideal" that many residents would favour and that would deliver a variety of benefits to individuals and the wider environment:

"...it's an ideal if you like (pause) you know open space is really good from so many perspectives you know not just, for people's health but also for things like preventing surface water runoff preventing flooding and all that sort of thing carbon capture..." (RTPI representative)

It was suggested that “a lot of local authorities” would “recognise” the TARAs’ policy amendment with the suggestion appearing to be that most local authorities were already attempting to realise something similar to this ‘ideal’ (of including open space at all housing schemes). Consequently, it was implied that the TARAs’ amendment reflected something similar to planning’s current approach - the amendment was already being delivered to some extent by the planning system.

### **10.1.1 Championing planning policy**

Identifying local authorities as actors concerned with realising an ‘ideal’ is consistent with the RTPI representative’s attempts to portray policy, the planning system and planners as positive, largely infallible entities. Throughout the interview, each was defended, praised and rarely criticised. Only occasionally was planning seen to make “mistakes” (RTPI representative). Further, it was claimed these mistakes had been caught and were being rectified. Intractable conflicts between competing interests, a constantly evolving political landscape, mutating public attitudes, plus environmental threats, were introduced in an apparent and sometimes direct attempt to demonstrate the difficulties confronting policy makers and perhaps to justify or excuse any mistakes that did arise. For example, the representative felt policy’s restrictive approach to car parking (one of the TARA’s policy amendments favoured a generous approach to car parking provision at new dwellings) had been a mistake because a) it had failed to reduce levels of car ownership, its aim, and b) it had created disputes between neighbours over access to car parking spaces. However, it was claimed good intentions underpinned the approach, such as reducing car use in order to reduce carbon emissions. The argument seemed to be that because policy was only trying to protect the environment, one should not judge its failings and/or unintended consequences too harshly. To take another example, the RTPI representative suggested policy had made an error in placing such emphasis on high densities, (one of the TARAs’ policy amendments favoured only permitting low density development in predominantly residential areas), because the result had been excessively crowded urban environments. Again, though, it was claimed policy had adopted this approach for good reasons, namely to reduce land take and protect the countryside. It was claimed policy makers had now recognised the problem of “town cramming” and were refashioning the present approach to reduce the emphasis on density. Aside from these occasional unforeseen ‘mishaps’, the representative thought policy was generally performing well. Commenting on the overall approach to ‘RNR mix’, it was claimed policy had “got the balance right” (RTPI representative). Interestingly, when defending policy, the representative often employed the pronoun ‘we’ so he was not just defending some external body of policy it seemed he was defending himself and his own actions as a planner:

“...I actually think we’ve pretty much got the balance right with sort of current planning policies with the way the Use Classes work and so on that you know you have some commercial uses defined by their ability to co-exist with residential uses you know I think that’s quite clever (laughs)...” (RTPI representative)

Since policy was thought to be performing well, perhaps unsurprisingly, many of the TARAs’ policy amendments were rejected by the RTPI representative. They were judged objectionable in ‘planning terms’ with a series of negative outcomes associated with their delivery. They were variously seen to undermine sustainability, be divisive, fail to reflect how people actually or ‘naturally’ live and be unhelpfully rigid. For one amendment, the representative even identified the underlying motive as negative making it hard to accept as a legitimate or credible measure. To explain, with certain TARAs interested in preventing concentrations of particular ‘types’ of resident (namely students) and separating certain kinds of household (e.g. students and non-students) (Chapter 9), a policy that supports these activities might be thought to gain favour. When the RTPI representative was presented with a policy amendment that proposed such activities he immediately claimed to “side with the mixed communities thing because you need to learn to live with different types of people”. He went on to present the amendment as an idea borne out of a concern for creating “ghettos”. He queried the content of this motive arguing that the next step might be segregation based on skin colour:

“...and you know if it was, if we were putting students into ghettos of just students then I’m not sure that that necessarily is beneficial” (RTPI representative)

“...I mean if you separate students out from families then how far do you go? Do you separate, I don’t know, whites from blacks all that kind of thing?” (RTPI representative)

By undermining the credibility or legitimacy of the concerns behind the policy amendment, it perhaps becomes easier to dismiss. The RTPI representative’s attempt to seemingly undermine the legitimacy of the TARAs’ concerns and preferences, (and indeed residents’ concerns and preferences), was a notable characteristic of the interview and is returned to later.

### 10.1.2 Balancing interests

Returning to the policy amendment, whilst identified as an “ideal”, the RTPI representative felt a hypothetical policy that required open space provision at all housing schemes would generate certain “downsides”. First, it was felt unhelpfully rigid because, like the planning officers in Chapter 8, flexible planning policies were prized and thought essential for the successful functioning of the planning system. Second, it was thought land take would be greater because dwellings would be widely spaced and this might result in greater encroachments into the countryside. Third, it was thought scheme viability could be compromised because developers would be able to deliver only a modest number of units per site:

“...on the downside of it is the more open space you require, the, the more land a development’s going to need to take up to provide the same amount of housing or whatever use and also the more marginal the viability of the development so there’s a balance to be struck and, (pause) it’s sometimes very difficult to achieve that balance...” (RTPI representative)

Highlighted in the quote, but repeated throughout the interview, the RTPI representative was adamant that planning decisions and the planning system more generally should achieve “balance” between competing interests and competing issues. Indeed, it became a running joke within the interview how frequently the term ‘balance’ was mentioned: “it comes back to balance and I’ll stop saying balance [laughs]... we’re saying the b word quite a lot [laughs]” (RTPI representative). A policy that required onsite open space provision at all housing schemes was thought to blunt a tool for achieving an acceptable balance between different interests and issues and so it would not sit well within the current planning system.

### 10.1.3 Open space costs money

Contrary to the literature’s suggestion (Chapter 5), housebuilders did not seem to be particularly amenable to, or flexible about, providing onsite open space. According to the HBF representative, the housebuilding industry perceived examples of open space as “voids”, additional unrecoverable costs and lost profits - views not picked out in the literature (Chapter 5). However, buyers and residents were seen to favour its generous provision. Consequently, the HBF representative was unsurprised by the tone of the TARAs’ policy amendment:

“...generally if you, if you look at sort of general housing developers yes open space is a great idea but it all costs money, if you don't develop on a piece of land it still costs you money to buy it so of course housebuilders seek to minimise open space and voids and generally residents seek to maximise them...” (HBF representative)

For the HBF representative, funding the ongoing maintenance of open space at new residential schemes was a notable problem. There was said to be an emerging reluctance amongst local authorities to adopt such space and take on the associated maintenance costs. Further, in the event that they were adopted, the financial contribution required from developers was said to be prohibitive, sometimes covering a 20 to 25 year period of maintenance work. Owing to these issues, it was claimed housebuilders were increasingly requiring home buyers to contribute to an open space maintenance fund. Contrasting with this representative's comments, a continued willingness to adopt open space was identified within Southampton's, Ashford's and Epsom's planning policy with each community only requiring from developers a financial contribution covering a 10 to 15 year period of maintenance work. For the HBF representative, it was claimed that requiring buyers to contribute to the cost of maintaining open space had reduced support for this amenity. It was noted, “suddenly people become less happy with having lots and lots of open space on the estate because they're having to pay for its maintenance” (HBF representative). Interestingly, though, in a study on housing preferences, Leishman et al. (2004: 12) found a majority of buyers supported the principle of paying towards a maintenance contractor to manage any onsite open space at new housing estates.

Besides issues around funding ongoing maintenance work, the HBF representative claimed housebuilders were worried about recovering the costs associated with the provision of open space. It was felt open spaces may make properties 'easier' to sell but whether they created additional value was unclear. Indeed, it was remarked that few items were associated with a price premium:

“...there's very little actually that gives you a premium...we're kind of price takers rather than price makers and it's quite difficult to actually sell things on a premium...open space might be the only, the only exception to that and you might be able to say well this is next to the public open space and that will remain the public open space forever and ever, whether people believe you or not [about the open space remaining permanently as open space] I don't know” (HBF representative)

Whilst individuals might proclaim a preference for open space provision, the HBF representative claimed this did not translate into a guaranteed willingness to pay more for its presence. This representative dismissed studies which have suggested there is a correlation between proximity to open space and higher house prices as flawed or inconclusive. He spent some time deconstructing a study by CABE, 'Does Money Grow in Trees' (CABE, 2005), demonstrating weaknesses with the method which, he suggested, undermined the central claim - that proximity to open space increases house prices. In the author's own analysis of this study, significant issues were identified with the method and these did seem to undermine the veracity of the central claim. Most notably, the study's claim that it compared very similar properties that differed only by their distance to an area of open space, and so house price variations could be attributed solely to this variable, appears tenuous. Properties did in fact differ across a number of measures including age, size, quality, views and the nature and quality of the surrounding area.

#### **10.1.4 'Tradable' preferences**

For the HBF representative, the preference for open space articulated by home buyers appeared to be viewed as a 'tradable' preference. It was assumed home buyers would sacrifice or trade this preference for some 'higher priority' item such as cheaper housing costs in the form of a lower sales price and/or lower or no contribution to an open space maintenance fund. Overall, scepticism of home buyers' preferences for open space, uncertainty about the potential to recover costs invested in its provision, plus issues around maintenance arrangements, led housebuilders to oppose a hypothetical policy amendment that mandated open space provision at all residential schemes.

#### **10.2 POLICY AMENDMENT: DISCOURAGE THE DISPERSAL OF NON-RESIDENTIAL USES ACROSS ESTABLISHED RESIDENTIAL AREAS**

For the RTPI representative, a policy that discourages the distribution of non-residential uses amongst housing in established residential areas fails to reflect "the way people live in residential areas" and, partly because of this, the TARA policy amendment that espoused such an approach was rejected. Studying its content, this view seems to suggest that the RTPI representative felt policy should respond to people's actual behaviours and preferences. Indeed, the RTPI representative felt policy was already adapted to the way people and communities "naturally develop". Throughout the interview, though, this representative suggested policy and planners should, and at times did, seek to change or set aside residents' known preferences and behaviours. Statements from this representative therefore seemed to confirm the TARAs' suspicions

(Chapter 9) that residents' and TARAs' interests can be pushed aside in planning matters.

From the RTPI representative's comments, there emerged several examples of planning's and planning officers' apparent willingness to overlook or modify residents' desires and behaviours. For example, it was said that planning policy had encouraged higher density development even though planners knew residents favoured lower density environments. Indeed, it was suggested that many residents would welcome the aforementioned policy amendment that required housing development in predominantly residential areas to be low density. Further, it was claimed that planning had encouraged developers to provide family housing in town/city centres even though British families were known to show little interest in living in such locations. Again, it was suggested that there would be much understanding amongst residents of a policy that avoided encouraging families into town/city centres – the TARAs had suggested such a policy. Also, it was said to be “a truism for all planning” that “people like not to notice new development”, and so it was assumed that many people would support a policy amendment that required new development to blend in with its surroundings – again the TARAs had suggested such a policy. However, this representative felt that policy should (and did) go against popular feeling and support standout designs, particularly if they facilitated environmentally sustainable technologies. Lastly, commenting on the TARAs' policy amendment which proposed a ban on infill apartment development in established residential areas, it was thought potentially desirable, in order to address housing need, to create plans that promoted such development even though the residents of these areas were thought likely to resent it. Indeed, it was felt an amendment banning such infill development would receive strong support from these residents. Unlike certain TARAs then (Chapter 9), the RTPI representative did not hold with the view that planning should prioritise the choices and preferences of existing residents. This goes back to the earlier point that this representative thought it essential for planning to consider and balance various competing interests rather than be beholden to any particular set. This orientation resulted in amenability to adapting established residential environments to accommodate new forms of demand and need:

“...you might want to plan to meet that demand [for smaller units] rather than plan to protect the character of the existing area but that's always going to be very emotive because the people who live in those areas they want to protect their interests, that makes them sound really selfish I don't mean to (laughs), but whether that's from an altruistic protect the character of our area perspective or a you know, avoiding, impacts on their house prices or whatever, which obviously

planning isn't intended to (laughs) to address, but those are the concerns of the people that live in those sorts of areas..." (RTPI representative)

### 10.2.1 Deconstructing residents' preferences

The RTPI representative's particular understanding of residents' preferences and interests perhaps explains the observed willingness to set them aside in planning decisions. For this representative, residents' opposition to the development of apartments in established residential areas was, as the above quote highlights, understood in largely economic terms. Homeowners in these areas were thought particularly concerned with maintaining the value of their property. However, similar to Saunders' (1980) (Chapter 4), they were seen to mask this interest by identifying and promoting other concerns. The 'legitimacy' of residents' objections to development therefore seemed to be disputed and this perhaps makes it easier to set them aside:

"...people often, they recognise that, that the, the impact on house prices isn't a legitimate planning concern they'll use all kinds of other reasons but that's often at the heart of it but you know if people feel that their amenity is threatened in whatever way then they're going to be unhappy..." (RTPI representative)

A further example of this representative's particular interpretation of residents' preferences emerged when discussing policy on town/city centre family housing. It was claimed that British families had "a different mindset" to their Continental counterparts. It was suggested that they did not "see town centres as an option, as a choice option if they're forced into it then they'll end up there", but life in these environments is "not the choice it is for people living in Paris or Amsterdam or Barcelona or places like that" (RTPI representative). Consequently, the mindset of British families, rather than any 'real' concerns they might have about life within town/city centres, was seen to explain their disinterest in setting up home within these environments. Since it is 'all in the mind', it perhaps becomes 'easier' to create policies that encourage these households into these locations. Relative to the representative, the local authority planning officers (Chapter 8) did not indicate a similar willingness to push aside residents' and/or TARAs' preferences. In fact, commenting on TARAs' preferences, these officers claimed groups successfully communicated their interests and these were actively considered in planning decisions. For example, Epsom's PO claimed, "we like to think that they've [the TARAs] got a good relationship with us so they can come and see us....and they know that you've listened to them". Perhaps for the RTPI representative, this questioning or doubting of the 'legitimacy' of residents' interests and objections was part of the reason why little time was spent discussing them when commenting on the TARAs' policy amendments. As

noted in Chapter 6, attention focused on how the planning profession would view the amendments and what the objections to the amendments might be in 'planning terms'.

### **10.2.2 The appeal of land use mix**

Returning to the TARAs' policy amendment, the RTPI representative felt that over time non-residential uses "organically" emerge within established residential areas in response to residents' needs. It was thought inappropriate and objectionable to try to discourage this from occurring, as the policy amendment would. Plus, it was suggested that "scattering...businesses and other uses within residential areas" brought certain "benefits" such as supporting social interaction (RTPI representative). There was, however, support for tackling "un-neighbourly uses" in these areas with the representative arguing that they should be "rooted out" and "sorted out" (RTPI representative). It is interesting here to reflect back on the views of Southampton's DMO, Chapter 8, on the economic barriers to relocating bad neighbour uses from residential areas. This officer argued that such actions were unaffordable but the RTPI representative appeared to find them entirely feasible. Perhaps this difference in opinion occurred because the RTPI representative is removed from the 'front line' of planning and the day-to-day implementation of policy. This is relevant to the issue discussed in Chapter 6 where concerns were expressed about the extent to which the RTPI representative's views may reflect the views of the wider planning profession.

According to the RTPI representative, car use might increase if policy actively discouraged the occasional occurrence of everyday services and facilities in residential areas. It was felt a 'zoning' type approach would lead to residents travelling beyond their immediate area to meet day-to-day needs. This would increase carbon emissions and, ultimately, undermine environmental sustainability. There were also concerns that a zoning approach would undermine social sustainability because zoning "doesn't encourage interactions between neighbours" (RTPI representative). It was claimed these 'interactions' were essential for 'sustaining' a community. However, the way in which they did this was not specified whilst the way land use mix facilitated such interactions was not really explained. Lastly, there were concerns about the amendment's lack of flexibility:

"....it's not practicable anyway because that's not the way that people live really (laughs) they always end up doing different things you know on an ad-hoc basis and we have to have the flexibility to you know allow for those kinds of things" (RTPI representative)

Unlike the RTPPI representative, the HBF representative supported the TARAs' amendment on curtailing the presence of non-residential uses in residential areas. Reflecting findings in the literature (Chapter 5), it was claimed housebuilders "always" preferred segregating land uses commenting, "we always zone areas we would never pepper pot" i.e. scatter non-residential uses across a residential area (HBF representative). Consequently, a policy that helped create and maintain single use residential areas would be favoured.

For the HBF representative, one of the "biggest problems" facing the housebuilding industry was the need to provide reassurances to home buyers that the new residential schemes they were buying into would remain in predominantly residential use in perpetuity. Housebuilders assumed home buyers favoured exclusively residential areas and required or desired certainty over the future use of these areas. Since the TARAs' policy amendment would provide this, housebuilders supported it:

"...I think we generally support that [the policy amendment] I think we generally, one of our biggest problems is, is trying to explain to people or comfort people I suppose that what they're buying into isn't going to change radically over time and I think that's what people are most afraid of... if you went into a, a predominantly residential area you would want it to stick as a predominantly residential area over time..." (HBF representative)

For the HBF representative, whilst home buyers might proclaim an interest in living in areas with various services and facilities in close proximity, in truth, this is not what they want:

"...what you have to do is create an environment that people want to live in and without doubting all these people that you've spoken to there's a difference between what people say they want and what they actually want and what they actually do and what they actually support... there's lots and lots of things that people like the idea of but they don't actually want to see them next to their house..." (HBF representative)

As with the preference for open space provision, proximity to services and facilities appeared to be understood as a 'tradable' preference that buyers would forego in order to achieve some higher valued 'item'. This representative implied that housebuilders were able to distinguish between buyers' deep-seated preferences and their more 'tradable' preferences. Within policy and economic constraints, demonstrating adherence to the 'preferences perspective' (Chapter 5), housebuilders were said to construct environments

and properties that matched buyers' deep-seated preferences. If they failed to do this, they would simply go out of business:

“...don't forget people that have built houses, the reason there are still housebuilding companies out there is because they actually make product that their customer wants if you don't you go out of business it's as simple as that...”  
(HBF representative)

### **10.2.3 Creating certainty through control**

To reassure home buyers about the future use (and nature) of the areas they were buying into, housebuilders were said to create new homes contracts, signed by buyers, that outlined terms and conditions on the acceptable use of the home / estate:

“...when we're selling people a product we like to give them the reassurance that things aren't going to change very much and that's frequently demonstrated through various restrictions which the planning system doesn't necessarily put on things, but housebuilders put on quite a lot of conditions on the sale of a property and it's really to protect the amenities of other residents...” (HBF representative)

The contracts were said to specify things like, the kind of vehicles that can be parked outside a property, and where and when (and even if) washing can be hung out to dry. The assumption seems to be that if left 'uncontrolled' residents will make undesirable changes to an area or engage in behaviours that harm the amenity of others. Their behaviour must then be conditioned so that it conforms to a housebuilder's conceptualisation of 'good' behaviour. In some instances, this conceptualisation seemed very 'particular'. For example, the HBF representative, in reporting several reasons as to why balconies were not included with every apartment (one of the TARAs policy amendments favoured this), a key issue involved concerns over the way residents use these spaces. It was claimed balconies can be used in 'strange ways' with 'strange' appearing to denote 'incorrect'. For the housebuilding industry, a 'strange use' appeared to occur when a resident failed to consider the appearance and appeal of their balcony to passers-by:

“Yeah the problem with flats with balconies...they always look quite nice but people use them in a very strange way because people see them as an extension of their inside rather than what they look like from the outside, you've only got to go down, oh there's a fantastic development of flats just outside of Marylebone here in London, where they've all got balconies and on these

balconies some people have made quite an effort and they've got little trees and pots and stuff like that and other people have got their balcony full of kids' plastic toys and stuff, so some people see them as an opportunity for open space other people see them as storage..." (HBF representative)

The above views on balconies, combined with the earlier noted concerns about vehicle parking and hanging out washing, suggests that housebuilders are interested in creating neat, manicured environments and will exercise control, through terms and conditions in contracts, to achieve these ends. Lying behind the desire to create such environments might be an interest in satisfying buyers' perceived preferences. However, a further motive might be protecting the value of their assets. Large sites can take several years to develop and perhaps housebuilders assume, or have discovered, that a manicured appearance across the completed portion of a site supports sales across the uncompleted portion.

Amongst housebuilders, the interest in control extended (perhaps predictably) to an interest in retaining complete control over their development sites. The HBF representative claimed housebuilders were extremely reluctant to apportion parts of their sites to third parties to develop primarily because this would entail giving up some control. In such instances, different parts of the site could progress at different, uncoordinated speeds. It was reported that the development and/or management of non-residential uses at a site can be handed over to third parties. A wish to avoid ceding control to these parties formed a reason why developers were often disinclined to provide services and facilities at their schemes:

"...what we don't like is leaving areas that don't get developed at the same time and of course we can control when we build the houses because that's what we do but we can't control when people build local centres because we have to give that to somebody else to develop so even if we developed it, and frequently we do,... then you've got to give it to someone else to manage and run and then you have to find a tenant and we give that to somebody else as well..." (HBF representative)

Interestingly, it seems the interest in control proves only temporary. It only persists whilst the housebuilder is directly involved in a site. The HBF representative claimed housebuilders were "not in the game to manage long term the developments that we develop". Thus, the responsibility for enforcing terms and conditions on resident behaviour, contained in new homes contracts, rests with the residents of a completed scheme, not with the housebuilder. Residents are then both subject to, and the enforcers

of, these contracts. However, as the representative claimed the ultimate sanction for infringement of the contract is only a reprimand from the Courts the real control available to residents seems limited.

### **10.3 POLICY AMENDMENT: AVOID TARGETS SUPPORTING LOOSE INTEGRATION BETWEEN HOUSING AND EVERYDAY SERVICES**

The RTPI representative supported the general principle of locating housing within walking distance of everyday services, facilities and public transport. This was seen to enhance the sustainability of an area and reduce the need to travel. However, it was claimed residents had to be “realistic” about the number and range of services that could be located within walking distance since a long “shopping list” was “never” going to be viable as the population would be too small to support it (RTPI representative). It was also felt residents could not expect all housing to be within walking distance of a concentration of services although building at higher densities would maximise the proportion that were.

Placing housing in areas served by public transport was favoured. However, where the TARAs supported a policy that required all residential areas to have public transport, the RTPI representative thought it acceptable to allow some housing in locations without this facility. It was said PPG13 Transport implies “that you shouldn’t allow development where there isn’t access to public transport” (RTPI representative). It was suggested this had “caused a lot of people in villages a great deal of difficulty” because it had prevented the provision of much needed housing and employment development (RTPI representative). The representative felt that to support the sustainability of rural communities housing should, on occasion, be permitted in locations where “public transport is just never going to happen”. However, again indicating this representative’s concern for defending policy, it was argued that “a light turning of the tide” had occurred with policy now evolving (although a time period was not specified) to allow development in locations without access to public transport. Looking at the recent NPPF (DCLG, 2012: 9), perhaps a light turning of the tide can be detected. It explicitly engages with the idea that opportunities for sustainable transport provision differ between rural and urban areas, that different communities require different transport solutions and that whilst preferable to locate development near sustainable transport networks, it is not always “reasonable” to do so.

Overall, whilst it was thought desirable and consistent with planning’s current goals to locate housing in proximity to everyday services and public transport, the RTPI representative felt this was not always possible and policy had to be sufficiently flexible to

accommodate instances when it was not. Removing or preventing targets that enable housing to be located some distance from these facilities was thought liable to reduce this flexibility and so the TARAs' policy amendment was not identified as an entirely appropriate fit with the current planning system.

As mentioned, the HBF representative, mirroring the literature's findings (Chapter 5), reported that housebuilders were reluctant to provide services and facilities onsite at new schemes. It was thought buyers placed little emphasis on the presence of such items and residents differed in how willing they were to live near them. Plus, as noted, the provision of such uses was associated with an unwelcome loss of site control because their construction can be passed on to third parties. Housebuilders were not seen to be particularly interested in 'branching out' and developing non-residential uses themselves with the HBF representative noting, "most housebuilders are housebuilders they build houses [laughs] the clue's in the name". In a similar vein, housebuilders had no interest in funding or providing public transport services at their completed schemes, but public transport provision was often said to be raised by planning authorities when schemes were proposed. Housebuilders thought public transport providers should provide public transport whilst housebuilders should stick to building houses:

"...we're not public transport providers and therefore we can facilitate public transport but we can't make people use it and it, it really, we don't see that it's down to us as housing providers to provide transport as well it's surely down to transport providers to provide public transport... we would much rather that public transport was a commercial decision and nothing to do with us and therefore all we do is design streets and road layouts, so transport corridors that allow public transport to permeate development, but we shouldn't be providing it" (HBF representative)

Though generally disliked, it was claimed that housebuilders would provide services and facilities at their schemes when there was a perceived "requirement or need" deriving from poor access to current facilities. However, what constituted 'poor access' was not defined. The HBF representative also claimed services and facilities were provided when they were requested by policy or a local planning authority. For this representative, housebuilders were painted as the biddable servants of policy and planners providing whatever services and subsidies, and developing in whatever style and location, they requested. It would seem negotiation on these points rarely if ever occurred:

“...we just do what we’re told frankly if we’re told we can’t build in rural areas then much as we’d like to we won’t bang our heads against the wall too often because people will just turn round and say you can’t build in those areas, fine we’ll go and build where you say we can build...” (HBF representative)

“...what we do is we give the local authority whatever they want and if the local authority has got a policy on it we’ll meet that policy and if they haven’t we’ll do whatever we want...” (HBF representative)

This assessment of the relationship between housebuilders and the planning system seems, however, to stretch plausibility. Noted in Chapter 2, sections of the literature identify market forces and developers as powerful actors in property development and dispute the comparative influence of planning. Chapter 8 found that policy could be adapted to suit developers – in Epsom developers were allowed to deliver entirely residential schemes when policy had required land use mix. Plus, the protracted negotiations and renegotiations that can occur when planning obligations<sup>11</sup> are finalised would seem to confound claims that housebuilders gamely provide whatever a local authority requests (Monk et al. 2006; DCLG, 2006c; Samuels, 2012).

Similar to the RTP1 representative, the HBF representative rejected the idea that housing should only be permitted in locations served by public transport. The whole emphasis that policy places on conveniently located public transport was challenged. It was claimed this focus was “a fashionable statement” built on a misunderstanding of residents’ preferences and behaviours:

HBF: It’s nonsense, it is total and utter nonsense, it’s just a fashionable statement of its time

Author: What’s a fashionable statement?

HBF: This whole idea that we should plan solely around public transport because people don’t like cars, people love cars absolutely adore them and if we took that to its ultimate limit we’d knock down all of those rural villages because people shouldn’t be allowed to live there because they don’t have public transport connections to them...

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<sup>11</sup> Planning obligations are agreements or undertakings (decided when planning applications are determined) that see an applicant commit to providing certain items (e.g. financial contribution, services, environmental improvements), or to agree not to do certain specified ‘things’ (e.g. working hours could be restricted), in order to make the proposed development acceptable in planning terms (ODPM, 2005c)

It was claimed policy's focus on providing public transport at new developments had resulted in commercially unviable transport services. These services closed once any subsidy paid by the housebuilder ends. There was scepticism and criticism of policy's overall approach to encouraging public transport use. It was claimed the focus on restricting car parking provision had not reduced car ownership and nor had it increased public transport use. This was because such policies had not tackled the "real issue" (HBF representative). For the HBF representative, the real issue was that "public services don't exist that give them [residents] an alternative to the car".

### **10.3.1 Critiquing planning policy**

The HBF representative's rather negative analysis of policy's approach to public transport spilled over into views on various other branches of policy. Discussed in Chapter 5, DWA et al. (2009) also found developers readily criticised aspects of planning policy. This criticising was in marked contrast to the aforementioned championing of policy undertaken by the RTPPI representative. The HBF representative claimed, for instance, that policy's focus on increasing densities "was kind of a smoke and mirrors trick brought about by the last government" to enable it to deal with challenging housing targets without developing large swathes of the countryside - a measure likely to provoke public opposition. Further, it was claimed policy's focus on an 'urban renaissance' in town and city centres, by way of developing town and city centre residential communities, had occurred "for the wrong reasons" (HBF representative). For this representative, "it was done pretty much to protect Greenfield land release not to create better urban environments for people" (HBF representative). The representative spoke about the Urban Task Force report *Towards an Urban Renaissance* (1999) - discussed in Chapter 3 - and its "dream of the, you know, a café society a la Barcelona" and reported attendance at numerous presentations on 'the new urban renaissance'. However, the representative seemed to feel that this 'dream' had either been exploited by Government to serve a particular end (protect Greenfield land), or it had been constructed to validate Government's pre-existing desire to protect Greenfield land. Lastly, policy's requirements on higher densities and limited car parking provision were said to prompt housebuilders to deliver schemes at densities and with parking allowances that displeased home buyers. Thus, in these instances, policy was seen to act to hinder housebuilders' attempts to deliver environments that matched buyers' preferences (and might then support their QoL).

Overall, the housebuilding industry's reluctance to provide services/facilities onsite, combined with its amenability to providing housing some distance from public transport, identifies a hypothetical policy amendment which constrains opportunities for

the delivery of housing in locations some distance from services/facilities as unpopular with industry actors.

#### 10.4 CONCLUSIONS

For the RTPI representative, support for current planning policy, and a view that the TARAs' policy amendments might deliver undesirable outcomes, resulted in most of the amendments being identified as both objectionable 'in planning terms' and a poor fit with the current planning system. There were concerns they could compromise social and environmental sustainability, be overly rigid and, in some instances, prove impractical. In terms of being accepted into the current planning system, the deliverability of amending planning policy's approach to land use mix, so that it might better support the QofL of TARA members, seems limited. In terms of inciting objections, from the RTPI representative's perspective, several of the amendments were actually thought liable to gain widespread support from residents. The amendments on building design, low density development and banning apartment-led infill development were, for instance, all thought liable to gain approval. However, other stakeholders' views on the amendments were not explored and so it is not possible to draw firm conclusions on their potential for controversy. Thus, it is not possible to assess their deliverability against the criterion of 'widespread acceptability'. According to the HBF representative, housebuilders would reject most of the TARAs' policy amendments and so, in terms of being readily reflected in new housing schemes, the deliverability of amending planning policy's approach to land use mix, so that it might better support the QofL of TARA members, seems limited. Of the three amendments that orientate the chapter, only the amendment concerned with preserving residential areas for purely residential use was thought likely to gain industry support. It was thought the amendment would prove conducive to creating environments that address home buyers' perceived preferences for both certainty and predominantly residential areas. Housebuilders, in accordance with the preferences perspective (Chapter 5), were identified as actors crucially concerned with creating products and environments that address residents' and buyers' preferences. They were thought able to differentiate between deep-seated and more tradable preferences and they built products to address the former. In contrast, the RTPI representative seemed to suggest planning could and should set aside residents' preferences to achieve goals such as addressing housing need or supporting environmental sustainability.

Within this chapter, when reporting data from the RTPI and HBF interviews, questions emerge about exactly *whose views* are being presented, and just how *reliable* are these views. Both interviewees employed the pronoun 'we' in their answers appearing to frame their views as something more than purely personal perspectives. The HBF

representative's views on housebuilders' attitudes to land use mix, though perhaps less so on open space provision, appear consistent with attitudes attributed to developers in the literature (Chapter 5). There are, then, perhaps grounds to assume that the HBF representative's views reflect some of the housebuilding industry's 'public' views on mix. However, this representative seemed to suggest that housebuilders are the biddable servants of planners and policy rarely if ever negotiating on planning requirements. The lengthy negotiations which can occur over planning obligations suggest, though, that this account is unreliable. Beuschel and Rudel (2009), (Chapter 5), found a similar discrepancy between housebuilder rhetoric and behaviour. Whilst housebuilders claimed to readily deliver schemes featuring green technologies, mature trees and new/retained open space, they found it was usually only at the behest of the local planning authority that they included environmentally sensitive measures (Beuschel and Rudel, 2009). How far the HBF representative reliably described the behaviour of housebuilders might then be questioned. Regarding the RTPPI representative, at times this individual's views matched those identified in the planning officer interviews (Chapter 8). For example, the planners and the representative emphasised the need for flexible planning policies. However, on occasion their opinions differed. The representative seemed, for instance, to find relocating bad neighbour uses from residential areas feasible but Southampton's DMO thought it unaffordable. Further, the RTPPI representative keenly championed the planning system and planners throughout the interview as largely infallible forces for good. Working for planning's main professional body, this representative clearly had a vested interest in presenting such an image but would all planners be so resolutely positive about their work and profession? Overall, it is a little uncertain how far the RTPPI representative's views formed a reliable account of the views and behaviours practised across the planning profession.

## CONCLUSIONS

In this final chapter, discussion broadens out to offer general observations on the relationship between planning policy and the QofL of TARA members. It also provides concluding remarks on the implications of using preference-satisfaction theory to understand QofL and of employing the selected methods and methodology. Lastly, the wider relevance of the research, the study's major contribution and future areas of analysis are considered. In addressing these points, discussion picks out a number of the research's key findings, although for detailed comments on these findings attention should turn to Chapters 7 through 10.

### 11.1 OVERARCHING CONCLUSIONS

A primary overarching conclusion is that *the relationship between planning policy and the QofL of TARA members is dynamic and dependent upon a variety of factors*. It changes when policy and legislation are revised or replaced and when TARAs, as a population or individually, and other interest groups, choose or gain new or greater roles within the planning system. It depends on these factors and the nature of the wider social, environmental, economic and political context, contexts which themselves can give rise to policy revisions and the generation of new and different opportunities for interest groups to engage in the planning system. For example, a national political context promoting localism (to what extent is discussed later) has led to the introduction of new legislation on neighbourhood planning which is creating new opportunities for particular interests, such as TARAs, to engage in plan making. If TARAs construct plans that address their preferences, the implementation of these documents (through development management decisions) might enhance the QofL of TARA members. The relationship between policy and members' QofL might then be altered. However, depending on the way these plans revise policy, they might also alter the relationship between various other interest groups and policy with the QofL of these groups perhaps being affected.

A further overarching conclusion is that *the relationship between planning policy and TARAs has the potential to affect both parties. TARAs can affect policy, policy can affect TARAs, and either scenario might affect the QofL of TARA members*. Concerning the affect TARAs' can have on policy, TARAs have an opportunity to inform the content of planning policy by participating in the plan-making process. Noted in Chapter 7, TARAs in Southampton contributed to consultation exercises which accompanied the preparation of

development plans and distinct planning policies. Plus, several TARAs were found to be working together to develop a neighbourhood plan. The literature, however, suggests that TARAs rarely engage in plan-making claiming that participation is most common at the development management stage, when schemes are proposed and planning applications decided (Chapter 4). Whilst they did participate at the plan making stage, Southampton's TARAs reported that here, and in other planning contexts, they felt marginalised and powerless relative to developers and the city council. Whether or not one accepts this analysis, the influence TARAs have over the content of policy is checked by the presence of multiple rival factors and interests all competing to shape policy's direction. Some of these have a legally enshrined status. The Planning Acts, for instance, require reference to national policy when local and regional policy is created. Various additional factors, such as local environmental conditions, local politicians, national, regional and local economic challenges, current and planned infrastructure and community consultation were identified in Chapter 8 as further influences on policy's content. With a reported reluctance to engage in plan-making, experiences of powerlessness when they do engage and multiple interests contesting what influence they may gain, it seems TARAs possess only modest abilities to structure policy to suit their preferences, and perhaps then, support their QofL.

Turning to policy's impact on TARAs, the research suggests this occurs, or more accurately is initiated, at the development management stage when planning applications are decided. Planning policy can shape the built environments inhabited by TARAs because it forms a key reference point in planning decisions (Barker, 2006). After examining and comparing policy's aspirations and TARAs' preferences for the built environment, it seems that, in a number of instances, there is an overlap (Chapter 9). Therefore, it seems policy might be conducive to supporting the QofL of TARA members and, by constructing residential environments that faithfully reflect this policy, places and spaces capable of supporting this QofL could be created. In terms of land use mix, policy and TARAs appeared, for instance, to hold largely similar conceptualisations of the 'good' residential environment and the 'good' town/city centre. The 'good' residential environment was seen to comprise mostly residential properties, interspersed with areas of green space, with most noisy, commercial and traffic generating uses excluded and 'everyday' facilities, located in a local centre, positioned within walking distance. In some ways, this ideal perhaps resembles a traditional, 'leafy' British suburb. Interestingly, past studies have found TARAs, and residents more generally, frequently favour, and/or report high levels of satisfaction within, suburban environments (Chapters 4 and 5). Turning to the 'good' town/city centre, policy and TARAs both favour environments hosting a mix of uses including housing. Both valued the presence of residential communities in the commercial core claiming it was 'good' to retain activity in the centre beyond the normal

working day. However, despite these instances of overlap, because policy is a starting point for negotiation and is not a set of binding rules (Chapter 8), there is no guarantee that its aspirations, including those which coincide with the TARAs' environmental preferences, will be reflected in completed development. Whilst associated, planning policy and planning's development management function are not bound together in a single unbroken continuum. This creates the possibility that each aspect of the planning system might have a different relationship with TARAs and, consequently, perhaps with the QoL of TARA members.

*A final overarching conclusion concerns the research's contribution to debates on the equity of planning.* Discussed in Chapter 2, policy-makers routinely claim that the planning system operates in "the public interest" (ODPM, 2005a: 15), balancing and addressing a multiplicity of interests to improve outcomes for all. The local authority planning officers (Chapter 8) and the RTPI representative in particular (Chapter 10) shared this view with all reporting that efforts were and should be made to consult, engage and balance disparate interests when creating policy and determining planning applications. *From the perspective of policy-makers and planners then, the planning system is an equitable system. However, the research finds that from the perspective of TARAs the planning system is viewed as anything but equitable.* As noted earlier, when TARAs did engage in the planning system they reported feeling powerless and marginalised with planning decisions seen to favour developer, business and council interests. These groups did not, though, seek equal treatment in planning decisions - they appeared to desire preferential treatment.

All TARAs wanted their local area to reflect, to some degree, their choices and preferences. They had views on how this area ought to be developed / protected, and lobbied councillors and objected to planning applications etc. to steer decisions to reflect these views (Chapter 7 and 10). This was particularly evident in views on, and actions taken against, student HMOs. Overall, it seemed that where planning decisions were concerned, if TARAs' interests conflicted with those of another environmental use or user, TARAs wanted the greatest weight to be attached to their interests. The apparent 'intolerance' for environmental uses and users that depart from the group's preferences seemed, in some groups, to be linked to views about household mobility. A couple of groups seemed to believe that only the poorest in society experienced constraints on household mobility. Consequently, it was thought households should select an area and home that already satisfies their needs and should move elsewhere if the current home or area falls short. For these groups, the view seemed to be that residents should adapt to areas, rather than areas be altered retrospectively, through the introduction of new services and facilities for instance, to suit new residents (Chapter 9).

## 11.2 IMPLICATIONS OF THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

Understanding QofL in terms of preference-satisfaction theory led to a research design focused on exploring TARAs' preferences for, and attitudes towards, planning policy. The research findings therefore only 'make sense' and say something about QofL within the context of this theoretical model. Further, the findings will take on potentially different meanings in different interpretations of preference-satisfaction theory. In "unrestricted actual desire theory", as discussed in Chapter 2, the satisfaction of *any* preference affects QofL (Scanlon, 1993: 186). The research revealed that TARAs held particular environmental preferences – e.g. they favoured green, predominantly residential, quiet environments (Chapter 9). In unrestricted actual desire theory, satisfying these preferences would enhance the QofL of TARA members. Since the research finds that policy satisfies TARAs' preferences on various occasions, this interpretation of the theory would suggest that policy has the potential (when reflected in the built environment) to support the QofL of TARA members. Turning to a more 'restrictive' interpretation of the theory, within 'informed preference theory', discussed in Chapter 2, only 'informed' preferences are judged relevant to QofL. These being the preferences an individual would hold after "full consideration and if she was fully informed" (Hamlin, 2012: 855). A number of the TARAs' environmental preferences seemed to be created in a vacuum with no obvious consideration of their consequences. Informed preference theory might, then, struggle to view findings on policy's compatibility with these preferences as an indicator of its relationship to the QofL of TARA members.

The methods and methodology employed within the research introduced a framework that shaped the type of data collected and the findings that were assembled. This framework helped illuminate certain issues whilst others remained, or may have remained, in the shade. For example, through focus groups, insights into the environmental preferences that TARA members construct within a group setting were revealed. However, the preferences TARA members might hold away from this group context remain 'hidden'. The framework also acts to in some ways limit, and in some ways enable, what the research can say about the relationship between planning policy and QofL. The use of a qualitative approach, employing small samples, prevents, for instance, firm generalisations on the nature of this relationship. However, this same approach allowed the research to investigate views, attitudes and preferences for/towards policy in a style and level of depth that would not have been possible within, say, a survey. It enabled the research to provide rich, detailed comments on certain permutations of this relationship from the perspective of particular actors.

### **11.3 WIDER RELEVANCE OF THE RESEARCH AND THE STUDY'S MAJOR CONTRIBUTION**

The research updates and expands understanding on several understudied topics and an understudied population (TARAs). It features the novel use of a method (focus groups) and comments on one interest group's relationship to planning at a time when the planning system is undergoing significant change. Viewed in its entirety, perhaps it is in suggesting answers to the vexed question of what should be civil society's role in the planning system that the major contribution of the research lies. These various points are discussed below.

The research involved extensive analysis of TARAs operating within Southampton. Approximately 120 TARAs were identified within the city creating a rate of 0.50 groups per 1,000 residents (Chapter 7). A detailed database was compiled identifying the origins, activities, interests and areas of operation of these groups. This exercise revealed that groups were unevenly distributed across the city with concentrations found in some places but a complete absence of groups in others. The findings also revealed that groups had varying interests and capabilities. Some, for instance, were well versed in the mechanics of local government, accessed official funding streams, undertook a range of activities and regularly participated in local decision making. Alternatively, some had a very low profile - they rarely engaged with local government and undertook few activities. Maintaining the status quo was the concern for some whilst redeveloping an area to provide new facilities was of interest to others. These findings signal that, at least where residents groups are concerned, areas will be differently orientated, in terms of interests, skills and experience, to take advantage of opportunities emerging through the Government's Big Society and localism agendas. The findings also prove useful as a much needed contemporary companion piece to the small number of dated studies which micro-map residents' groups in individual locations. Key amongst these are Short et al.'s (1986) detailed listing of groups in Central Berkshire and Newton's (1976) extensive cataloguing of voluntary organisations in Birmingham (Chapters 4 and 7). By considering the thesis in conjunction with these studies, a detailed account of the number, distribution, interests and activities of residents groups in different geographies can be built up whilst comparisons between contemporary and historical contexts become possible.

Analysis of the literature on TARAs indicates that focus groups have not been used, to any noticeable extent, with these organisations. In fact, within the wider social sciences literature, the use of focus groups remains relatively new and fairly limited when compared to methods like interviews and surveys (Kreuger and Casey, 2000, Silverman, 2000). Within the research, the method was successfully employed with a diverse sample

of TARAs and with groups of different size ranging from two to nine participants (Chapter 6). TARA members seemed ready to share and compare views and engage in a lively focus group discussion. Given the success of the method, according to the research interest, it is suggested that in future, research on TARAs should consider the use of focus groups.

The research updates and expands the literature's understanding of policy's approach to land use mix. Making a novel contribution, unlike past studies which frequently focus on a single layer of policy and consider only written policy, the research considers the approach found in national, regional and local policy and examines written policy's approach and the approach practised by planning officers (Chapter 8). The research found that whilst policy and planners celebrate land use mix it was actively promoted in only a handful of locations, most obviously town/city centres. In contrast, residential areas were thought largely unsuited to mix. A consistent approach to mix was identified across national, regional and local policy whilst a broadly similar approach was found in three dissimilar (in terms of development and political context) communities. However, within these communities, the emphasis placed on mix, especially MU, differed. Similar to previous studies, across all tiers of policy, MU lacked a precise definition with planning officers reporting that much of the concept's meaning was reformulated on a site by site, application by application basis. This conceptual fluidity was praised by planners with malleable planning policies being far preferred to rigid ones. Many of the arguments given for mix replicated those found in past policy with reducing the need to travel, supporting more sustainable modes of transport and building vibrancy and vitality cited often. In fact, the research found that in many ways policy's current approach to land use mix appears largely unchanged from the approach found in the policy of the 1990s and early 2000s (Chapter 3).

Owing to revisions and changes to national and regional policy, the research is based, in part, on outdated policies. The Localism Act 2011 revoked the legislation which enables the production of new RSSs whilst Government has stated its intent to abolish all existing RSS (though this has yet to be done). Against this background, the status of the South East Plan - analysed in the research – in planning decisions is uncertain. The NPPF, published in March 2012, replaces virtually all national PPSs and PPGs - many were analysed within the research. Appendix 2 notes the status of the national policies included in the policy sample as of May 2012. As the policy landscape continues to evolve, the relevance of the research will alter. *However, analysis of the NPPF suggests that the research findings still have currency in terms of reflecting national priorities on, and the national approach to, mix.* The NPPF adopts a largely similar approach to mix as that found in the now defunct PPSs and PPGs. There continues, for instance, to be support for

MU developments, a sequential approach to the location of main town centre uses, the safeguarding of sites for specific employment and industrial uses, providing housing in proximity to services and locating residential schemes in town and city centres (DCLG, 2012).

The decision to analyse the use of MU policy in development management decisions enables the research to make an interesting contribution to ongoing debates about certainty and predictability in planning decisions. The Callcutt Review (2007), and both Barker Reviews (2004 and 2006), found that the development industry claims uncertainty and unpredictability pervades these decisions. However, studying planning applications and decision notices relating to sites and areas allocated for MU, the research found that decisions tended to accord with the development plan. Decision notices often referred to plan policies to justify granting or refusing planning permission (Chapter 8). This would seem to suggest that these decisions were characterised by a measure of predictability.

As noted, the research presents findings on the relationship between TARAs and planning policy (and to an extent the wider enterprise of planning) at a time when the planning system is experiencing significant change. When the research began in 2008/09, it was, predictably, unclear which party would govern the UK after the 2010 General Election. In the build-up to the election, the Conservatives, who had been polling well (Glover, 2008), issued various statements and policy green papers highlighting a wish to devolve, decentralise and transfer power to 'local people'. See the policy papers, Control Shift - Returning Power to Local Communities (Conservative Party, 2009a), Strong Foundations – Building Homes and Communities (Conservative Party, 2009b) and Open Source Planning (Conservative Party, 2010). These documents all argued for a change in the planning system claiming that it needed to be driven from the bottom-up with individual residents, residents associations, communities, parish councils and local authorities creating development plans and directing planning decisions. No regional control, and only minimal central control, was proposed. These publications indicated that a Conservative government would provide substantial new planning powers to TARAs and other local groups in plan-making and development management. Since the 2010 election, the Liberal Democrat-Conservative Coalition Government has published and enacted policy and legislation intended to reform the planning system. However, it seems the substantial planning powers anticipated for TARAs in 2008/09, have not materialised.

Considering the policy and public finance landscape in early 2012, it seems the opportunities and 'rights' for participation in the planning system provided to groups like TARAs are constrained and poorly resourced. For instance, Government's much

trumpeted initiative of Neighbourhood Development Planning, introduced by the Localism Act 2011, offers little scope for TARAs and others to construct the kind of policy they might want. Under this initiative, 'qualifying bodies' (discussed shortly) have the right to "initiate a process for the purpose of requiring a local planning authority in England to make a neighbourhood development plan" or neighbourhood development order (Localism Act 2011: 360). A plan sets out a land use development strategy for a neighbourhood (a flexible geographic area) whilst an order outlines permitted uses and automatically grants planning permission for development which accords with it (DCLG, 2011b). If the plan or order gains more than 50% of the vote in a local referendum, conforms to local, national and EU policy, and passes an independent examination, it must be adopted by the local planning authority and it becomes part of the statutory development plan (DCLG, 2011b). TARAs have the capacity to meet the conditions necessary for groups to be identified as 'qualifying bodies', although they may need to complete certain steps to comply with the Act's requirements. For example, they may need to adopt a written constitution or ensure that they have 21 members (Localism Act 2011). Research by the author found that, besides the TARAs taking forward a neighbourhood plan in Southampton, residents' groups have indeed been identified as, or included within, the qualifying bodies taking forward plans in a number of communities including ones in the Wirral, Crawley, Milton Keynes, the London Borough of Enfield, the Mole Valley and Teignbridge<sup>12</sup>. Under neighbourhood planning, qualifying bodies are only allowed to construct plans that reflect the principles of national policy, as outlined in the NPPF, and the numerous policies that feature in a local planning authority's development plan. There are tight restrictions then on what can and cannot feature in a plan. Importantly, they cannot be a mechanism for refusing development, as explained in the Government's Impact Assessment on neighbourhood planning:

"Moreover, in order to guarantee that neighbourhood planning cannot lead to a lower rate of growth, a neighbourhood plan will only be able to advocate an equal or greater quantity of growth in housing or economic development than is established in the [local authority's] development plan" (DCLG, 2011c: 10)

Further, if a TARA wants to construct a plan it must first gain approval from the local planning authority which evaluates an organisation against the Localism Act 2011, and decides whether to recognise it as a qualifying body (Localism Act 2011). Only organisations identified as such can develop a plan (Localism Act 2011). The local planning authority also evaluates and chooses whether to accept proposed areas as 'neighbourhood areas'. The Localism Act 2011 does not then provide TARAs (and others)

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<sup>12</sup> The author analysed bid documents that were submitted by qualifying bodies to the DCLG and were selected as pilot communities to trial neighbourhood planning in the first, second and third waves of the Front Runner Communities initiative.

with the right to *construct* a neighbourhood plan, rather it provides a right to “initiate a process” (which could be quite protracted) which might (but might not) eventually result in a local planning authority adopting a neighbourhood plan or development order (Localism Act 2011: 349).

Moving from policy to funding, as discussed in the Spending Review 2010 (HM Treasury, 2010), overall local government funding will be cut by 28% over a four year period meaning, inevitably, that fewer staff and resources will be available to support communities wishing to pursue neighbourhood planning (and indeed to support many local government functions). Further, the four organisations selected by Government to support communities undertaking neighbourhood planning were only provided with a 12 month funding agreement, although initially a two year funding agreement had been mentioned (DCLG, 2011d, Millar, 2012a; Green, 2011). With this funding agreement expiring on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012, Government has so far (in late April 2012) agreed to provide only temporary funds to these organisations (Millar, 2012b). With only modest support available from local government and the organisations tasked with assisting those creating neighbourhood plans, perhaps only those communities with ‘in-house’ resources and relevant skills and experience will be able to pursue a plan. Indeed, this seems to be the case in Southampton. Only TARAs operating in one of the most affluent areas of the city are, so far, developing a plan (Chapter 7). These groups all have a history of engaging with the planning system, typically to oppose individual planning applications. The research engaged with three of these groups. Committee members in the groups tended to be professionals or retired professionals with several having a background in planning. Participation in neighbourhood planning within Southampton seems then to be very much biased towards affluent, educated groups with previous experience of the planning system.

Given the political rhetoric which accompanied the launch of neighbourhood planning, it is interesting to reflect on the relatively limited opportunities to shape outcomes that it actually seems to offer. When launched, Government Ministers were keen to claim that devolving power to communities and community groups would defuse the adversarial nature of planning and deliver ‘better’ development outcomes (Clark, 2011). It seemed that Government was subscribing to the view, which Friedmann (1011) claims characterises parts of the civil society literature, that civil society, of which community groups are a part, is inherently ‘good’ and always produces ‘just’ outcomes. Taken in its totality, the research perhaps begins to question the wisdom of this assumption. It found that involving certain sections of civil society in planning decisions might actually encourage unsustainable outcomes which produce and/or reproduce social, spatial and/or economic inequalities.

As discussed in this chapter, TARAs were seen to be unevenly distributed and unevenly 'equipped', in terms of size, resources, knowledge etc., to engage in the planning system. Though restricted to a focus on these organisations, this finding perhaps suggests that the presence, capacity and interests of civil society will differ between areas. Therefore, some areas might be visibly and competently represented by associations and groups drawn from this sphere when planning (and other) matters arise, but others areas might not. Areas with a robust and vigorous civil society might, in pursuing their own self-interest, successfully repel unwelcome development proposals and planning policies which, following a path of least resistance, might 'gravitate' towards areas without such local structures and organisations (Saunders, 1980; Scott et al., 2012; Kirby, 1982). Certain areas may, then, be disproportionately affected by unwelcome and/or controversial policies and development.

Of interest, the research found that the membership of TARAs was biased towards older adults and long term residents, whilst there was some selectivity in the 'kind' of resident that groups sought to 'protect' through their campaigns and activities. Again, whilst focusing on TARAs, these findings perhaps suggest that, within an area, some sections of the community will be better 'represented' by the local manifestations of civil society than will others. Indeed, some sections of the community might be labelled 'undesirable' and this civil society could act to exclude them. Within the research, it was found that some TARAs tried to exclude, or at least limit the presence of, students in HMOs. Thus, when planning matters arise and when planning decisions are made, whilst some sections of the community may be visibly and competently represented, other sections may, for want of a better word, be invisible. Without representation, these invisible sections of the community might be disproportionately affected by planning (and other) decisions. Whilst before it was suggested that involving civil society in planning decisions might encourage inequalities *between* areas, this set of findings perhaps suggest that its inclusion could encourage inequalities *within* areas.

Finally, as discussed in this chapter, the research found that TARAs identified the traditional post-war British suburb as the ideal residential environment. They felt planning and housebuilders should promote such environments whilst existing examples should be preserved. Discussions with representatives from the planning profession and house building industry suggested, though, that the social, environmental and economic sustainability, and indeed viability, of only producing such environments, and always acting to preserve them, is questionable. Though again derived from a focus on TARAs, this finding perhaps indicates that civil society, in pursuing its own preferences, might promote potentially unsustainable planning and development outcomes.

Taken together, the preceding analysis suggests that when ascribing civil society a role in the planning system one must be conscious of, and perhaps then include appropriate safeguards to minimise, opportunities for the promotion of 'unjust' and/or unsustainable outcomes, such as outcomes which disproportionately affect, either negatively or positively, particular geographic, social and/or cultural units.

#### **11.4 FUTURE AREAS OF STUDY**

A number of further areas of study emerge from the research - three are discussed here. First, certain TARA members appeared able to hold environmentally friendly preferences and be environmentally aware, but also possess less sustainable preferences and practice less sustainable behaviours (Chapter 9). Environmentally friendly preferences and behaviours are understood here as those which aim to minimise negative impacts on the natural world (Kollmuss and Agyeman, 2002). Within the literature on environmentally sustainable behaviour, a key issue is the divergence between knowledge and behaviour. Individuals are aware of environmental problems and the behaviours which create them but they continue to practice these behaviours regardless (Kollmuss and Agyeman, 2002). The introduction of neighbourhood planning provides an opportunity to explore whether environmental awareness translates into environmentally friendly policies when residents and businesses construct plans free, to a degree, from the intervention of planning officers (where professional duties require a focus on such issues). Future research could select a number of communities taking forward neighbourhood plans and explore the type of policies each creates focusing on their environmentally friendly credentials. The genesis and evolution of these policies could be explored through discussions with those involved in their creation and/or through the observation of the policy formation process. At the same time, research would consider the levels of environmental awareness amongst those engaged in the planning process. How levels of environmental awareness relate to the type of policies produced could then be investigated.

The research found that amongst the large number of TARAs identified in Southampton, many had a demonstrable interest in planning and development matters. Some groups had been set up in response to unwelcome planning applications, whilst objecting to development proposals and lobbying councillors on planning matters were activities common to many (Chapter 7). However, planners reported that groups can be differentially interested in, and capable of engaging with, the planning system (Chapter 9). Against this background, an interesting issue for future research could be exploring why certain TARAs have chosen to engage with the new initiative of neighbourhood planning and why many have not. As noted, in several communities taking forward neighbourhood plans, the qualifying bodies feature TARAs, either alone or in partnerships with others.

Research could focus on a selection of these communities, comparing and contrasting the TARAs that have engaged in the initiative with similar TARAs (in terms of size, socio-economic profile etc.) which have not. Such research might point to features that make community groups more and less likely/inclined to participate in certain kinds of local governance activities. With national policy and legislation emphasising the 'local', such research could prove useful to those interested in developing partnerships with community groups or facilitating governance activities at the local level. The research might identify the type of community groups that are most receptive to, and/or interested in, such activities and those which may require more support / a more concerted approach.

A last area of future research relates to Epsom and its unique political profile. Aside from the occasional comment in Rallings and Thrasher (2003), the Borough and its political heritage, being governed by residents associations since the early 1970s (see Chapter 6), has not, it would seem, been subject to any dedicated scholarly research. Why a community has remained attached to independent representatives when, for decades, the trend in local government has been the rise and subsequent dominance of mainstream political parties seems an inherently interesting subject (Rallings and Thrasher, 2003). Future research could investigate local politics within Epsom and within other communities where resident association councillors exist. Such research could explore the characteristics, interests, alliances and activities of the resident association councillors and their affiliated associations. The findings would seem particularly pertinent to current political concerns and debates about transferring power to local groups and about how such groups are best placed to make decisions affecting local areas.

## APPENDICES



CODING SCHEMES

**QUALITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS OF THE WRITTEN POLICY SAMPLE**

1. Policy's orientation to 'RNR mix'

- a. Pro-spatial mix
- b. Potentially pro-spatial mix (e.g. mix supported but uses not specified)
- c. Anti-spatial mix
- d. Pro-temporal mix (e.g. supports change of use between residential and non-residential)
- e. Potentially pro-temporal mix (e.g. supports change of use but uses not specified)
- f. Anti-temporal mix

2. 'RNR mix'

- a. Locations where 'RNR mix' is supported
  - Town/city centres / retail centres
  - Surplus public sector land / brownfield sites
  - Other
- b. Locations where 'RNR mix' is constrained
- c. Acceptable uses to mix with housing
- d. Unacceptable uses to mix with housing
- e. Distances between housing and non-residential uses
  - Close (as indicated by policy text)
  - Distant (as indicated by policy text)
  - Specific distance mentioned (in meters, travelling time etc.)
- f. Scale at which 'RNR mix' is promoted / facilitated

- g. General attitude to 'RNR mix'
- h. Rationale / motives for 'RNR mix'
- i. Targets on 'RNR mix'
- j. Reasons to restrict 'RNR mix' / problems that can arise from it
- k. Conflicting policies on mix (the inclusion in a single document of policies that support 'RNR mix' and discourage 'RNR mix')
- l. Achieve 'balance' between housing and employment

### 3. Mixed use

- a. General attitude to MU
- b. Locations in which MU is promoted
- c. Scale at which MU is promoted / facilitated
- d. Integration between uses (fine – rough grained mix)
- e. Number of uses involved
- f. Types of uses involved
- g. Benefits associated with / rationale for MU

### 4. Influences on policy

- a. National / regional / local policy
- b. Economic / markets
- c. Environmental concerns
- d. Housing need / demand
- e. Infrastructure
- f. Site conditions

### 5. Features of an 'ideal' residential environment

- a. Protect / provide residential amenity
- b. Public transport

- c. Everyday services in walking distance
- d. Minimal commercial activities in and amongst housing
- e. Limited traffic
- f. Open space / play space
- g. Limited noise
- h. No polluting / potentially polluting uses
- i. Make 'best' / 'efficient' use of land
  - I. Provided on brownfield sites / surplus public sector land
  - II. Densities
- i. Safeguard from change of use / demolition
- j. Socially mixed
- k. Affordable housing

6. Features of an 'ideal' town / city centre

- a. A mix of uses / mix of activities / MU
- b. Concentration of activity / uses / focal point for commercial uses
- c. Housing
- d. Active ground floor uses on main shopping streets
- e. 'Healthy' (carry out health checks on these locations)
- f. Vibrancy and vitality
- g. Defined quarters / sections
- h. Site of major development projects
- i. Part of a network/hierarchy of retail centres
- j. Public transport

## **QUALITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS OF THE TRANSCRIPTS OF THE PLANNING OFFICER INTERVIEWS**

### 1. Decision making process

- a. Flexible
- b. Negotiation

### 2. Relationship with developers

- a. Attitudes towards developers
- b. Developers' interaction with the council

### 3. 'RNR mix'

- m. Locations where 'RNR mix' is supported
  - Town/city centres / retail centres
  - Surplus public sector land / brownfield sites
  - Other
- n. Locations where 'RNR mix' is constrained
- o. Acceptable uses to mix with housing
- p. Unacceptable uses to mix with housing
- q. Attitude to mix
- r. Rationale / motives for mix
- s. Barriers to mix
- t. Targets on mix
- u. Reasons to restrict mix
- v. Conflicting policies on mix

### 4. Influences on policy

- a. Community
- b. Politicians

- c. National / regional / sub-regional / local policy
- d. Economics/market
- e. Developers
- f. Planning inspectors
- g. Infrastructure
- h. Green belt

5. Flexible policy

- a. Vague terminology
- b. Elastic targets

6. Planners unfamiliar with written policy

- a. Planners unwilling to speculate on policy's meaning

8. Mixed use

- a. Site by site / flexible definition
- b. Scale at which MU is promoted / facilitated
- c. Integration between uses (grain of mix)
- d. Number of uses involved
- e. Types of uses involved
- f. Rationale for mixed use
- g. Attitude to MU
- h. Locations where MU is favoured

9. TARAs

- a. Attitudes towards TARAs
- b. Experience of working / engaging with TARAs
- c. Awareness of local TARAs

- d. TARAs' attitudes towards the council / planners

#### 10. Policy's influence (shaped by)

- a. Markets / developers' interest
- b. Costs of implementing policy
- c. Political support

### **QUALITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS OF THE TRANSCRIPTS OF THE TARA FOCUS GROUPS**

#### 1. Aesthetics

- a. Buildings should blend in
- b. Visual appeal as a determinant of building/use location

#### 2. 'Ideal' residential environments

- a. Different approaches in new and older areas
- b. Local centres
  - Positive qualities
  - Negative qualities
- c. Land uses to include with housing
  - Local shops / small supermarkets
  - Health centres
  - Primary schools
  - Unobtrusive places of work
  - Religious spaces
    - Contentious / source of disagreement
    - Factors to consider in selecting a location
  - Public transport
  - Open space
    - Benefits

- Include with all housing
- Include in town / city centres
- Green buffers between employment and housing
- Public and private open space
- Anti-social behaviour / noise

d. Land uses to separate from housing

- Anything noisy / generating traffic / parking issues / likely to create anti-social behaviour
- Workplaces, offices, factories
- Larger supermarkets
- Cultural / leisure facilities / bars / restaurants
- Waste management

e. Low density not high density development

f. Scattering non-residential uses across residential areas

- Positive qualities
- Negative qualities

g. 'Walkable' communities

3. Rationale for mixing and separating uses

a. Reasons to mix non-residential uses with housing

- Convenience
- Builds sense of community
- Supports multi-purpose trips
- Creates a focal point in an area
- Provides jobs
- Reduces the need to travel
- Can provide more affordable goods (if uses are shops – creates competition)

b. Reasons to separate non-residential uses from housing

- Antisocial behaviour
- Aesthetic reasons
- Alters the feel of a place
- Degrades an area / undermines property values
- Noise / pollution / parking / traffic / traffic accidents
- Viability of non-residential uses

#### 4. Environmental concerns

- a. Green space for plants and animals
- b. Solar panels / wind turbines
- c. Reduce travel to reduce carbon emissions / walk don't drive
- d. Recycling

#### 5. City / town centres as places to live

- a. They hold no appeal
- b. Convenient location
- c. Appeals to the young and people without children
- d. Dirty / noisy / no parking facilities / anti-social behaviour
- e. No green space
- f. Not suitable for families
- g. Good to have residents in city centre to maintain activity after working day
- i. Over-developed with flats
- j. City centre groups disassociate themselves from the city centre

#### 6. Community and social interaction

- a. Important to build bonds between neighbours
- b. Groups lobby the council for community space in their area
- c. The built environment engineers more / less social interaction
- d. Participant's area is neighbourly / is not neighbourly

#### 7. Contested space

- a. Conflicts between permanent residents and students / landlords of student HMOs
- b. Conflicts between permanent residents and noisy uses

#### 8. Housing choices

- a. Constraints on housing choices

b. Participants chose their home

#### 9. Property prices

a. House price affordability

b. Concerns about impacts on property prices

#### 10. Participants' views on their area

a. Negative

- Housing conditions are poor
- No public transport
- Noisy
- No sense of community

b. Positive

- Public transport
- Sense of community
- Peaceful
- Desirable place / best place

#### 11. Mixing lifestyles

a. Does not work

b. Should separate certain households

- Permanent residents and students
- Families with children and certain households

#### 12. Southampton city council and property developers

a. Suspicious of the council /developers

b. Developers build what they want

c. Planners favour developers

#### 13. Influences on preferences

a. Expectations about the built environment

b. Experiences in the built environment

- References to Southampton's built environment

c. Participants' background / context:

- Age / generation
- Professional background
- Class
- Household type (e.g. with young children / without children)
- Access to a car

14. Interaction within the focus group and presenting views

- a. Instances of agreement
- b. Instances of disagreement
- c. 'Experts' dominating discussion
- d. Turn taking when contributing / participants' inviting others to contribute
- e. Participants' questioning one another's views
- g. Humour between participants

15. Policy amendments directly suggested by groups

- a. Generous approach to car parking provision
- b. Require balconies with flats
- c. Prevent new build apartments in established residential areas
- d. Do not have policies that encourage families into town / city centres

**QUALITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS OF THE TRANSCRIPTS OF THE HBF AND  
RTPI REPRESENTATIVE INTERVIEWS**

1. Land use mix

- a. Views on zoning
- b. Views on pepper potting non-residential uses amongst housing
- c. Views on local centres in residential areas

2. Open space provision

- a. Provision is an ideal / good
- b. Provision can cause problems (e.g. unrecovered costs, increase land take)

- c. No price premium

### 3. Socially mixed communities / mix of housing types

- a. Should have mix
- b. Questioning the motives behind separating households
- c. Housebuilders not particularly concerned with the issue

### 4. Public transport

- a. Not essential for all housing to have public transport
- b. Access to public transport is desirable
- c. People prefer to use their cars
- d. Housebuilders should not be involved in public transport

### 5. Densities

- a. Different types of area suitable for different densities
- b. Buyers expect different densities in different areas
- c. Low densities could increase pressures on land supply
- d. Policy has driven higher densities not the market

### 6. Control

- a. Of development sites
- b. Of residents' behaviour at new schemes
- c. Policy controls development and developer behaviour

### 7. Planning policy, planning system and planners

- a. Forces for good
- b. Flexible policy
- c. Planners don't understand markets / development
- d. Planners / policy create 'problems'

- e. Planning is working to resolve past mistakes
- f. Policy's motives are doubted / questioned
- g. Policy's motives are good
- h. Policy drives markets
- i. Planning has to balance / contend with many factors / stakeholders

#### 8. Housebuilders

- a. Like to negotiate with the planning authority
- b. Provide whatever local authorities request
- c. Build to meet buyers' preferences (preferences perspective)
- d. Constrained by planning policy

#### 9. Residents' / buyers' preferences

- a. Housebuilders understand these preferences and seek to address them
- b. 'Tradable' preferences / genuine preferences
- c. Planning can/should sometimes set these preferences aside / try to change them

*Appendix 1b*

EXAMPLE SPREADSHEET CONSTRUCTED WHEN CODING POLICY AND  
INTERVIEW DATA

The following table is an excerpt from the Excel spreadsheet created when coding the planning policy sample. It gives an indication (not exhaustive) of the way an excerpt from Ashford's Core Strategy was coded. Similar spreadsheets were created for the coding of the planning officer interviews and the semi-structured interviews with representatives from the planning profession and housebuilding industry.

Quote from policy	Policy document	Specific policy	Tier of policy	Date of document	Type of text - policy or explanatory	Theme	Code	Sub-code
Ashford town centre will be the future focus of substantial and concentrated mixed use development, incorporating retail, residential, employment, education, leisure and cultural uses. (ABC, 2008: 17)	Ashford's Core Strategy	CS3 Ashford Town Centre	Local	2008	Explanatory	Policy orientation	Pro-spatial mix	
Ashford town centre will be the future focus of substantial and concentrated mixed use development, incorporating retail, residential, employment, education, leisure and cultural uses. (ABC, 2008: 17)	Ashford's Core Strategy	CS3 Ashford Town Centre	Local	2008	Explanatory	'RNR mix'	Locations where 'RNR mix' is supported	Town/city centre / retail centre
Ashford town centre will be the future focus of substantial and concentrated mixed use development, incorporating retail, residential, employment, education, leisure and cultural uses. (ABC, 2008: 17)	Ashford's Core Strategy	CS3 Ashford Town Centre	Local	2008	Explanatory	'RNR mix'	Acceptable uses to mix with residential	
Ashford town centre will be the future focus of substantial and concentrated mixed use development, incorporating retail, residential, employment, education, leisure and cultural uses. (ABC, 2008: 17)	Ashford's Core Strategy	CS3 Ashford Town Centre	Local	2008	Explanatory	Features of an ideal town/city centre	A mix of uses / MU	

Appendix 2

CONTENT OF NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY GUIDANCE, PLANNING POLICY STATEMENTS AND CIRCULARS

The national PPSs, PPGs and Circulars studied within the research are identified in Table A. The table presents their content/concerns and their status in May 2012, the most recent date when writing. The next table, Table B, presents the national PPSs, PPGs and Circulars excluded from the policy sample and explains their content/concerns<sup>13</sup>.

**Table A: National planning policy included in the policy sample**

Policy	Adopted	Indicative content	Status in May 2012
<b>PPGs and PPS</b>			
PPS 1 Delivering Sustainable Development	2005	The document sets out overarching planning policies on the delivery of sustainable development through the planning system. It includes policies on a range of issues including the location of development, economic and housing development, transport, energy use and protection of the environment. Relevant to the subject of 'RNR mix', it includes policies that promote providing services and infrastructure to support housing, that encourage placing housing in locations that reduce the need to travel, that promote mixed use development and that support converting existing buildings to residential use.	Replaced by NPPF in March 2012
PPS Eco-towns – Supplement to PPS 1	2009	The document is a supplement to PPS1. It sets out a range of minimum standards on the design and development of eco-towns. These standards are said, within the document, to be more challenging and stretching than would normally be required for new development. Relevant to the subject of 'RNR mix', it includes policies which require housing to be located within 800 meters of primary schools and a 10 minute walk of neighbourhood services and public transport, it discusses the need for eco-towns to be 'genuine mixed use communities' and requires large areas of eco-towns to be set aside for public open space.	Adopted
PPG 2 Green	1995 (revised)	The document outlines the definition, value, purpose and use of Green Belts and	Replaced by NPPF in

<sup>13</sup> Information on the 'status' (active/replaced/cancelled) of policy documents in May 2012 was identified at two DCLG websites [online] <http://www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/planningsystem/circulars/planningcirculars/> [viewed throughout May 2012] and [online] <http://www.communities.gov.uk/archived/general-content/planningandbuilding/planningpolicystatements/> [viewed throughout May 2012]

Belts	March 2001)	discusses permitted and non-permitted development within the Green Belt. Policies note how 'most development' including housing and most forms of non-residential development are inappropriate in the Green Belt. Consequently, relevant to the subject of 'RNR mix', PPG2 policies serve to make large areas of land (i.e. land designated as Green Belt) largely unsuitable for new residential and non-residential development and thus for new 'RNR mix'.	March 2012
PPS 3 Housing	2006	The document provides guidance on planning for market and affordable housing. It defines the concept of affordable housing, includes targets on affordable housing provision, housing densities and the provision of housing on brownfield sites. It outlines factors to consider when selecting suitable locations for new housing developments. Relevant to the subject of 'RNR mix', it promotes mixed use development that includes housing on surplus public sector land, promotes providing housing in locations with community facilities and access to jobs, services and facilities and encourages the inclusion of open space in new housing developments. Supporting temporal 'RNR mix', it supports considering the potential to reallocate industrial and commercial sites to housing	Revised in June 2011 and replaced by NPPF in March 2012
PPS 4 Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth	2009	The document sets out policies on economic development. It covers development across a range of uses – business, public and community and main town centre uses (retail, office, leisure, tourism and cultural). It sets out guidance for economic development in town/city centres and rural areas, for constructing plans that promote economic growth, for determining planning applications for economic uses and for providing car parking at non-residential uses. Relevant to the subject of 'RNR mix', it includes policies that promote live-work units, flats above shops and other main town centre uses in retail centres and the close provision of housing, employment, retail and services in rural areas. It also promotes patterns of development that reduce the need to travel and supports diversifying uses in declining retail centres. Potentially aiding temporal mix, PPS4 supports reallocating land to an alternative use where there is lack of need for the current use, providing new uses at vacant/derelict buildings and redeveloping buildings in the countryside for housing. Potentially reducing opportunities for 'RNR mix', PPS4 supports focusing and concentrating main town centre uses in retail centres (the sequential approach to main town centre uses) and protecting existing services and facilities in centres from change of use/demolition.	Replaced by NPPF in March 2012

<p>PPS 9 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation</p>	<p>2005</p>	<p>The document sets out policies on the protection of biodiversity and for geological conservation. It discusses a need for local planning authorities to identify sites of importance for biodiversity and include policies within their development plans that protect any areas which are not already provided with statutory protection. Such policies create areas that are inappropriate for housing and most other forms of development. Like PPG2 then, policies in PPS9 create areas where new residential and new non-residential development is unlikely and thus where new 'RNR mix' is unlikely.</p>	<p>Replaced by NPPF in March 2012</p>
<p>PPG 13 Transport</p>	<p>2001</p>	<p>The document includes guidance that is concerned with integrating transport and planning at the national, regional and local levels. It provides guidance on how transport issues should be factored into planning decisions when creating development plans and when determining planning applications. Relevant to the subject of 'RNR mix', it includes policies which encourage land use mix, arguing this can reduce the need to travel, plus it supports protecting local shops near housing and home working. It includes policies which promote mixed use development in and around town centres (where precise uses are not specified) and in rural areas it favours focusing housing, services, facilities and local transport in service centres so residents can easily access these facilities. Potentially constraining opportunities for 'RNR mix', PPG13 includes policies which favour concentrating retail, leisure, health and main town centre uses in retail centres and supports separating housing from freight generating uses.</p>	<p>Revised in Jan 2011 and replaced by NPPF in March 2012</p>
<p>PPG 15 Planning and the Historic Environment</p>	<p>1994</p>	<p>The document provides guidance on the approach to take at listed buildings, conservation areas, historic battlefields, World Heritage Sites, historic parks and gardens and the wider historic landscape when constructing development plans and determining planning applications. Relevant to 'RNR mix', it includes policies that promote providing flats above shops in Conservation Areas in town centres, plus, potentially supporting spatial and/or temporal 'RNR mix', it includes policies which support introducing new uses at historic and listed buildings and at disused churches. Perhaps limiting opportunities for such mix, PPG15 also includes policies that support retaining the original use at listed buildings where possible.</p>	<p>Replaced by <i>PPS5 Planning for the Historic Environment</i> (March 2010). This was then replaced by NPPF in March 2012</p>
<p>PPG 16 Archaeology and</p>	<p>1990</p>	<p>The document sets out policies on archaeological remains on land, and how they should be preserved or recorded in</p>	<p>Replaced by <i>PPS5 Planning for</i></p>

Planning		urban settings and within the countryside. It gives advice on the handling of archaeological remains and discoveries under the development plan and control systems, notes the weight they should be given in planning decisions and the use of planning conditions on archaeological issues. It advises that where nationally significant remains are concerned the aim should be to preserve these remains in situ and there should be a presumption against development that might harm this objective. At such sites, opportunities for new residential and non-residential development might be constrained and so to then would be opportunities for new 'RNR mix'.	<i>the Historic Environment</i> (March 2010). This was then replaced by NPPF in March 2012
PPG 17 Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation	2002	The document sets out the approach local planning authorities should take to the provision and maintenance of open space and recreation facilities. Relevant to 'RNR mix', it includes policies that promote providing open space, sports and recreation facilities at new housing developments, either through new facilities or the upgrading of existing facilities. Perhaps constraining opportunities for 'RNR mix', PPG17 includes policies which support focusing and concentrating more intensive sports facilities in retail centres and/or at locations that are accessible by public transport whilst it favours protecting open space from development thereby limiting opportunities for new residential and non-residential development, and thus for new 'RNR mix'.	Replaced by NPPF in March 2012
PPG 19 Outdoor Advertisement Control	1992	The document sets out guidance on outdoor advertisements including guidance on how to deal with planning applications for such development. Relevant to 'RNR mix', it identifies poster advertising as inappropriate development in residential areas. If poster advertising is considered a land use, a debateable issue, the document would limit opportunities for 'RNR mix' between housing and poster advertising in residential areas.	Replaced by NPPF in March 2012
PPG 20 Coastal Planning	1992	The document outlines policies for the coastal areas of England and Wales. It identifies the Coastal Zone (defined in Chapter 8) as being inappropriate for housing and other uses which do not require a coastal location. Consequently, across the Coastal Zone, PPG20 makes it unlikely for housing to be combined through new development with non-residential uses.	Replaced by NPPF in March 2012
PPS 22 Renewable Energy	2004	The document sets out guidance on the development of renewable energy facilities with renewable energy identified as that which occurs naturally and repeatedly in the environment (wind, water, sun and biomass). It includes guidance on the position of renewable energy facilities relative to other	Replaced by NPPF in March 2012

		land uses. Relevant to 'RNR mix', it includes policies which support including on-site renewable energy developments in residential schemes and it supports separating housing from anaerobic digestion facilities.	
PPS 23 Planning and Pollution Control	2004	The document provides guidance on how local planning authorities can integrate their land use planning processes with plans and strategies for the control, mitigation and removal of pollution. Guidance on the location of polluting or potentially polluting land uses relative to other land uses is provided. Relevant to 'RNR mix', it includes policies which support separating housing from polluting and potentially polluting uses.	Replaced by NPPF in March 2012
PPG 24 Planning and Noise	1994	The document provides guidance to local planning authorities on the use of planning powers to minimise the adverse impact of noise. It outlines factors to consider when determining planning applications for noise-sensitive developments and for uses which generate noise, it explains the concept of noise exposure categories for residential development and gives recommendations on appropriate levels for exposure to different sources of noise. Plus, it advises on the use of conditions to minimise the impact of noise. Relevant to 'RNR mix', PPG24 supports separating noise sensitive uses, a category that includes housing, from noisy uses.	Replaced by NPPF in March 2012
PPS 25 Development and Flood Risk	2006	The document includes policies outlining how flood risk should be taken into account when constructing development plans and determining planning applications so that inappropriate development in areas of flood risk is avoided and development is directed away from areas of greatest flood risk. It discusses the concept of Flood Risk Zones and explains the uses which are permitted at land allocated to each Zone. Relevant to 'RNR mix', it identifies housing as an inappropriate use for sites identified as being within Flood Risk Zone 3b and claims housing is only permitted at sites identified as Zone 3a if the 'Exception Test' is passed. Opportunities for new development to create 'RNR mix' at sites allocated to either of these Flood Risk Zones would, then, be limited.	Replaced by NPPF in March 2012
<b>Circulars</b>			
Circular 03/07: Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007	2007	The document provides an outline of the system of advertisement control, includes advice about advertisement applications to local planning authorities, appeals to the Secretary of State, and features guidance on how to deal with unauthorised advertisements. Relevant to 'RNR mix', it includes information on the type of advertisements at residential dwellings that	Adopted

		have 'deemed consent' (where planning permission is not needed). Plus, the Circular reports that poster advertising is out of place in any predominantly residential area and should not normally be allowed. However, it reports that at MU areas some poster advertising may be acceptable.	
Circular 04/07: Planning for Travelling Showpeople	2007	The document defines who showpeople are, explains the need to identify 'plots' for these people and describes the types of plots needed. It provides guidance on assessing the need for plots and notes that the need (target) identified in the RSS must be translated into a local planning authority's development plan. It advises on identifying plots within development plans, including the community in these decisions and the process for determining applications for new plots. Relevant to the subject of 'RNR mix', the document implies that all plots for travelling showpeople need to be designed to enable residential and business uses to co-exist. Further, it reports that when selecting locations for plots, the accessibility to existing local community facilities, infrastructure and services, including public transport, should be considered.	Replaced by <i>Planning Policy for Traveller Sites</i> (March 2012)
Circular 01/06 (ODPM): Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites	2006	The document contains guidance on how local and regional planning authorities should assess the need for new gypsy and traveller caravan sites and engage the community in planning decisions on the location of these sites. Relevant to 'RNR mix', the document encourages planning authorities to identify in their plans gypsy and traveller sites that are suitable for mixed residential and business uses. Also, the document advises local planning authorities to consider locations in or near existing settlements with access to local services first when choosing sites. Constraining opportunities for 'RNR mix', it claims mixed sites are not permitted on rural exception sites.	Replaced by <i>Planning Policy for Traveller Sites</i> (March 2012) and NPPF (March 2012)
ODPM Circular 03/2005 Changes of Use of Building & Land - The Town & Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987	2005	This document provides a guide to the Use Classes Order as amended by Statutory Instrument 2005/85. Relevant to 'RNR mix', it identifies and explains the different Use Classes and notes how MU is <i>sui generis</i> and discusses how changes of use within a Use Class do not require planning permission, and thus temporal mix within a Use Class is possible without planning permission.	Adopted – small parts replaced by <i>Circular 08/10: Changes to Planning Regulations for Dwelling houses and HMOs</i>
Circular 06/05: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation - Statutory Obligations and	2005	The document provides administrative guidance on the application of the law relating to planning and nature conservation. Relevant to the issue of 'RNR mix', it discusses how planning authorities should normally refuse applications at Internationally	Adopted

Their Impact Within the Planning System		Designated Nature Conservation Sites – a scenario which constrains opportunities for new residential and non-residential development to occur at these locations and thus for new 'RNR mix' to occur.	
Circular 10/05: Permitted Development Rights for Antennas	2005	The document provides guidance on permitted development rights for antennas. Relevant to the subject of 'RNR mix', it identifies the size and number of antennas than can be attached to dwelling houses under permitted development rights and where on the house these can be located. If antennas were identified as a type of non-residential use, a debateable issue perhaps, such policies would be seen to facilitate 'RNR mix'.	Adopted
Circular 04/00: Planning Controls for Hazardous Substances	2000	The document provides guidance on the operation of the consent procedure for hazardous substances. It takes forward guidance contained within an EU Directive on this issue. Relevant to the subject of 'RNR mix', the Circular requires that planning authorities seek to maintain appropriate distances between establishments containing hazardous substances and residential areas when constructing development plans.	Adopted

**Table B: National planning policy excluded from the policy sample**

Policy	Adopted	Indicative content	Status in May 2012
<b>PPGs and PPSs</b>			
PPS Planning and Climate Change - Supplement to PPS1	2007	The document sets out how planning should contribute to reducing emissions and stabilising climate change whilst taking into account its unavoidable consequences. It talks about creating development that minimises carbon emissions and promotes walking and cycling but does not explicitly engage with the idea of placing residential in close proximity to non-residential uses. It did not then contain information directly relevant to explanations of policy's approach to 'RNR mix'.	Replaced by NPPF in March 2012
PPS 7 Sustainable Development in Rural Areas	2004	The document outlines the approach to development in rural areas. For example, it sets out the approach to take to rural housing development and rural economic development. Sections of the document had contained information that was relevant to explaining policy's approach to RNR mix – the economic development sections. These spoke about things like concentrating housing, services and facilities in existing rural centres and ensuring new housing had	Replaced by NPPF in March 2012

		access to local facilities. However, these sections were replaced by PPS4 in December 2009. PPS4 was included in the policy sample (see Table A).	
PPG 8 Telecommunications	2001	The document provides guidance on planning for telecommunications development including radio masts and towers, antennas of all kinds, radio equipment housing, public call boxes, cabinets, poles and overhead wires. Nothing directly pertinent to explanations of policy's approach to 'RNR mix' was identified within the document – e.g. it did not mention distances between telecommunications equipment and housing or safeguarding sites for such equipment.	Replaced by NPPF in March 2012
PPS 10 Planning for Sustainable Waste Management	2005	The document includes policies on sustainable waste management including guidance on locating new facilities. It says the impact of waste management facilities on sensitive receptors should be considered but does not specifically discuss housing and the spatial relationship between this use and waste management facilities. It did not contain information thought directly pertinent to explanations of policy's approach to 'RNR mix'.	Adopted
PPS11 Regional Spatial Strategies	2004	The document sets out the process for creating RSSs and the required content of RSSs. It is then a document about the mechanics of creating a policy document; it does not provide guidance on the development of the built and natural environment. It was not then seen to contain information directly pertinent to explanations of policy's approach to 'RNR mix'.	Replaced by <i>Policy Statement on Regional Strategies</i> (Feb. 2010).
PPS 12 Local Spatial Planning	2008	The document sets out the process for creating LDFs and the required content of LDFs. As above then, it is a document about the mechanics of creating a policy document; it does not provide guidance on the development of the built and natural environment. It was not then seen to contain information directly pertinent to explanations of policy's approach to 'RNR mix'.	Replaced by NPPF in March 2012
PPG 14 Development on Unstable Land	1990	The document provides guidance on the effects of instability on development and land use, it considers the responsibilities of different stakeholders when land instability issues occur, discusses the need for land instability to be taken into account in the planning process and how it might be treated in development plans and when applications are decided. It contained no information on the subject of land use mix, or on safeguarding sites for a single use, and so was not considered relevant to explanations of policy's approach to RNR mix.	Replaced by NPPF in March 2012

PPG 18 Enforcing Planning Control	1991	The document outlines the powers to enforce planning control that were given to local planning authorities in the Planning and Compensation Act 1991. It is a document concerned with a process within the planning system, enforcing planning controls - it does not contain guidance on the design and development of the built and natural environment. It was not then found to contain information relevant to explanations of policy's approach to 'RNR mix'.	Replaced by NPPF in March 2012
<b>CIRCULARS</b>			
Circular 08/09: Arrangements for Handling Heritage Applications - Notification to the Secretary of State (England) 2009	2009	The circular discusses a Government Direction which removes the requirement, noted in Circulars 01/01 and 09/05, for a local planning authority to always notify the Secretary of State of applications for listed building consent which it is minded to grant. The Directive only requires planning authorities to notify the Secretary of State when applications are objected to by English Heritage or one of the National Amenity Societies. It is a document about processes within the planning system. It does not provide guidance on the design and development of the built environment and so lacks information pertinent to the subject of 'RNR mix'.	Adopted
Circular 07/09: Protection of World Heritage Sites	2009	The document sets out guidance on the level of protection and management required at World Heritage Sites (WHS). It sets out the aims/objectives for WHS, how they should be maintained and protected and discusses the need for and content of WHS management plans. It identifies WHS status as a key material consideration in planning decisions. It is a document concerned with a process within the planning system. It lacks information pertinent to the subject of 'RNR mix'.	Adopted
Circular 03/09: Costs Awards in Appeals and Other Planning Proceedings	2009	The document sets out guidance on the award of costs regime. Where a planning decision is appealed, one party may be ordered to meet, in full or in part, the costs incurred by another party in the course of the appeal. The Circular provides guidance on the principles underpinning decisions on the award of costs. It is a document about processes within the planning system. It does not provide guidance on the design and development of the built environment. It lacks information pertinent to the subject of 'RNR mix'.	Adopted
Circular 02/09: The Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction	2009	The document defines many of the terms and conditions mentioned within a Government Directive that requires local planning authorities in England to consult the Secretary of State before granting planning	Adopted

2009		permission for particular kinds of development. It does not provide guidance on the design and development of the built environment. It lacks information pertinent to the subject of 'RNR mix'.	
Circular 04/08: Planning-related Fees	2008	The document provides guidance on planning fees in England and the method for calculating them. These are fees that planning authorities charge for handling applications for planning permission, approving 'reserved matters' following the granting of outline planning permission, and for altering or removing conditions imposed on planning permissions. It is a document about a process within the planning system and lacks guidance on the design and development of the built environment. It lacks information pertinent to the subject of 'RNR mix'.	Adopted
Circular 01/08: The Compulsory Purchase (Inquiries Procedure) Rules 2007	2008	The document explains rules on inquiries into Compulsory Purchase Orders. It is a document about a process within the planning system and lacks guidance on the design and development of the built environment. It lacks information pertinent to the subject of 'RNR mix'.	Adopted
Circular 02/08: Standard Application Form and Validation	2008	This document provides guidance on changes to planning legislation that introduced a standard application form for planning applicants and set out new requirements on the information applicants must provide with their applications. The Circular provides guidance on the use of the new standard application form for planning permission and other associated consent regimes and includes guidance on the information applicants must provide so that a local planning authority can determine the validity of the application. It is a document about a process within the planning system and lacks guidance on the design and development of the built environment. It lacks information pertinent to the subject of 'RNR mix'.	Replaced by <i>Development Management Policy Annex: Information requirements and validation for planning applications</i> (April 2010)
Circular 01/07: Revisions to Principles of Selection for Listed Buildings	2007	The document sets out the principles and statutory criteria that the Secretary of State uses to determine whether a building should be listed. It is a document about a process within the planning system. It lacks information pertinent to the subject of 'RNR mix'.	Replaced by <i>Principles of Selection for Listing</i> (Dept. Culture, Media & Sport, March 2010)
Circular 04/06: Planning Inquiries Into Major Infrastructure Projects: Economic Impact Reports	2006	The document offers guidance to local planning authorities and Government Offices on the type of advice to provide to applicants that may have to prepare an economic impact report (EIR) because their application has been designated a major infrastructure	Adopted

		project. It provides guidance on what is expected in an EIR. It is a document about certain processes and required assessments within the planning system. Nothing relevant to the subject of 'RNR mix' was identified within the circular.	
Circular 02/06: Crown Application of the Planning Acts	2006	The document provides guidance for local planning authorities in England on dealing with planning applications by the Crown following commencement of the relevant section of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 which ends the Crown's immunity from the Planning Acts. It is a document about certain revised processes within the planning system. Nothing relevant to the subject of 'RNR mix' was identified within the circular.	Adopted
Circular 02/06: Changes to Planning Regulations for Casinos	2006	The document provides guidance on the planning regulations for casinos. It reports how Statutory Instrument 220/06 amended the Use Class Order to remove casinos from the D2: Assembly and Leisure use class and made them <i>sui generis</i> . It provides guidance on how unimplemented permissions for casinos should be treated and the use of conditions on casino development. It is a document about certain processes within the planning system. Nothing relevant to the subject of 'RNR mix' was identified within the Circular.	Adopted
Circular 01/06: Guidance on Changes to the Development Control System	2006	The document provides guidance on changes to the development control system including guidance on local planning authorities' powers to make local development orders, changes to the outline planning permission process and the requirement for design and access statements to accompany applications for particular types of development. It is a document about certain processes within the planning system and does not include information on the design and development of the built environment. Nothing relevant to the subject of 'RNR mix' was identified within the Circular.	Adopted
Circular 09/05: Arrangements For Handling Heritage Applications - Notification To National Amenity Societies Direction 2005	2005	This document updates Circular 01/01: Arrangements for Handling Heritage Applications - Notification and Directions by the Secretary of State by adding the Twentieth Century Society to the list of 'National Amenity Societies' which must be notified about certain planning applications at listed buildings. It is a document about processes within the planning system and does not include information on the design and development of the built environment. Nothing relevant to the subject of 'RNR mix' was identified within the Circular.	Adopted

Circular 08/05: Guidance on Changes to the Development Control System	2005	The document outlines a number of changes to the development control system introduced by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. These changes relate to issues including the power to decline to determine applications, the duration of permission and consents, and the duty to respond to consultation. The Circular outlines processes and aspects of the planning system, it does not provide guidance on the design and development of the built environment. Nothing relevant to the subject of 'RNR mix' was identified within the circular.	Adopted
Circular 07/05: Planning Inquiries into Major Infrastructure Projects Procedures	2005	The document sets out procedures for handling major infrastructure project inquiries in England. Major infrastructure projects are defined as planning applications for a development which the Secretary of State thinks is of national or regional importance. It outlines a process; it does not provide information on the design and development of the built environment. Nothing relevant to the subject of 'RNR mix' was identified within the Circular.	Adopted
Circular 05/05: Planning Obligations	2005	The document provides guidance on the use of planning obligations under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as substituted by the Planning and Compensation Act 1991. It does not provide information on the design and development of the built environment. Nothing relevant to the subject of 'RNR mix' was identified within the Circular.	Replaced by the NPPF in March 2012
Circular 02/05: Temporary Stop Notice	2005	The document provides guidance on the use of temporary stop notice provisions included in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. It outlines a process; it does not provide information on the design and development of the built environment. Nothing relevant to the subject of 'RNR mix' was identified within the Circular.	Adopted
Circular 06/04: Compulsory Purchase and the Crichel Down Rules	2004	The document provides guidance on the use of compulsory purchase powers and the disposal of surplus land in England acquired by, or under the threat of, compulsory purchase. The Circular outlines a process; it does not provide information on the design and development of the built environment. Nothing relevant to the subject of 'RNR mix' was identified within the Circular.	Adopted
Circular 06/03: Local Government Act 1972 General Disposal Consent (England) 2003 - Disposal of Land for Less than the Best	2003	The document provides guidance on how local authorities and other public bodies should dispose of surplus land / property in light of changes to legislation which means that public bodies do not have to seek the consent of the Secretary of State to dispose of land/ property at less than the best	Adopted

Consideration that Can Reasonably be Obtained		consideration, except in certain situations. The Circular outlines a process; it does not provide information on the design and development of the built environment. Nothing relevant to the subject of 'RNR mix' was identified within the Circular.	
Circular 02/02: (ODPM): Enforcement Appeals Procedure	2002	The document sets out procedures for handling enforcement appeals in England. It is a document about a process within the planning system and does not include information on the design and development of the built environment. Nothing relevant to the subject of 'RNR mix' was identified within the Circular.	Adopted
Circular 01/01: Arrangements for Handling Heritage Applications - Notification and Directions by the Secretary of State	2001	This document provides guidance on the identification and protection of historic buildings, conservation areas and other aspects of the historic environment. Amongst other things, it identifies the process for notifying English Heritage of applications affecting listed buildings and the cases when several specified National Amenity Societies should be notified. It is a document about certain processes within the planning system and does not include information on the design and development of the built environment. Nothing relevant to the subject of 'RNR mix' was identified within the Circular.	Adopted
Circular 03/99: Planning Requirement in Respect of the Use of Non-mains Sewerage Incorporating Septic Tanks in New Development	1999	The document provides guidance on the use of planning controls on non-mains sewerage and the factors to consider when assessing applications for these items. Nothing relevant to the subject of 'RNR mix' was identified within the Circular.	Adopted
Circular 02/99: Environmental Impact Assessment	1999	The document provides guidance on the process and content of EIAs and the type of developments liable to be subject to an EIA. The Circular sets out various processes within the planning system and the content and requirement for certain assessments; it does not include guidance on the design and development of the built environment. It was not found to contain guidance relevant to the subject of 'RNR mix'.	Adopted
Circular 10/97: Enforcing Planning Control - Legislative Provisions and Procedural Requirements	1997	The document sets out powers available to local planning authorities to enforce planning control. It includes a number of annexes providing information on matters like planning contravention notices; enforcement notices, appeal procedures, stop notices, breach of condition notices and lawful development certificates. It is a document setting out various processes and procedural tools within the planning system; it does not include guidance on the design and	Adopted

		development of the built environment. It was not found to contain guidance relevant to the subject of 'RNR mix'.	
Circular 11/95: The Use of Conditions in Planning Permissions	1995	The document updates a Circular from 1985 on planning conditions. It contains recent guidance on the use of conditions in respect of transport, retail development, contaminated land, noise, affordable housing, design and landscape, 'granny' annexes, staff accommodation and access for disabled people. It reiterates existing guidance on the purpose and nature of conditions, and on when they should be applied. It is a document about a process within the planning system. It was not found to contain guidance relevant to the subject of 'RNR mix'.	Adopted
Circular 15/92: Publicity for Planning Applications	1992	The document sets out the legislative requirements for publicising planning applications. It is about a process within the planning system and does not provide guidance on the design and development of the built environment. It does not contain information relevant to policy's approach to RNR mix'.	Adopted

### Appendix 3

## INVITATIONS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH

### LOCAL AUTHORITY PLANNING OFFICERS

The head planner or a senior planning officer at Southampton, Ashford and Epsom was contacted first by telephone and then through a follow up email (shown below). Attached to this email was a copy of the information and consent form shown in Appendix 4.

Dear [*name of head planner / senior planning officer*],

#### **Research on planning policy's approach to combining residential and non-residential uses**

As we discussed on the phone, I am conducting research at Southampton University looking at planning policy's approach to combining residential and non-residential uses. This research is being completed for the award of a doctorate qualification (a PhD).

I have been studying national planning policy, The South East Plan and, at the local level, your local authority's Core Strategy and Local Plan picking out aspects of policy which relate to the theme of land use mix. I would like to speak to a planning officer to discuss my interpretation of this policy and explore the influences and motivations that helped shape the approach found in local policy. To this end, I would like to organise informal interviews with a Planning Policy Officer and a Development Management Officer based at [*name of the recipient's local authority*] and hoped you could recommend individuals within your team.

I would expect each interview to last a maximum of 1.5 hours, but I would of course work around the time commitments of the planning officers. To aid participation, I would hope to conduct the interviews at each planning officer's place of work, if this is agreeable. Prior to each interview, I would provide an outline of the talking points I hope to cover. There is no requirement though for officers to prepare anything before the interviews.

With planning policy changing all the time, academic studies on the content of policy can quickly become outdated. This is true for studies on policy's approach to land use mix. Many were completed in the 1990s and early 2000s. My research will update current knowledge and provide an account of the approach found in contemporary policy.

Besides an interest in planning policy, within my research, I am also interested in tenants' and residents' associations and how they participate in the planning system and, ultimately, what their views might be on policy's approach to land use mix. Investigating this latter issue will be a future area of primary research. Noting these groups can regularly participate within the planning system, I'd be keen to find out planning officers' thoughts on, and experiences of, engaging with these groups. I would therefore also like to explore this issue in the interviews.

To provide further information about the research I have attached an information sheet and consent form which sets out further details of the project. The planning officers participating in the interviews would be asked to sign this consent form.

If you have any questions or comments about the research please do not hesitate to contact me by email or post (address details below).

*[For this and all invitations, the author's signature and address details followed]*

## TENANTS' AND RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATIONS

The following text was sent as a letter and/or email to the Chair/Secretary of approximately 50% of the TARA sampling frame. Included with this invitation was an information sheet – shown on the next page.

Dear [*name of Chair / Secretary of the TARA*]

### **Tenants' and Residents' Associations - University Research Project**

I am working on a research project at Southampton University where I am engaging with residents' and tenants' associations based in Southampton to explore attitudes towards the way we should plan and design our neighbourhoods.

I want to work with groups to identify the key features of an 'ideal' neighbourhood, paying particular attention to the preferred physical characteristics of an area. I have included an information sheet providing further details of the research. I am very keen to include your group – [*name of the TARA*] – in my research.

Taking part is a great opportunity for your group to discuss any issues of concern or any ambitions you might have for your area and for these to be brought to the attention of a wider audience as I hope to present my findings in various contexts and arenas. By taking part, your group will also be contributing to a unique academic study.

I am writing because I would like to invite members of the group, ideally Committee members, to take part in a focus group to discuss thoughts on how we should plan and design our neighbourhoods. I would like to hold a focus group with members in the next couple of months. The focus group would last about an hour and we would choose a date, time and venue that is as convenient as possible for those wishing to take part.

I would really appreciate it if you could mention my research to the rest of the group, particularly Committee members, and let me know if there might be any interest in taking part. I would be more than happy to meet with you and the rest of your group to explain the research further and answer any questions. I would really appreciate it if you could respond to let me know either way if there is any interest in taking part in the research. I have provided a stamped self-addressed envelope for this purpose.

## Information sheet provided to tenants' and residents' associations

**Katherine Brookfield**

**PhD Research Project: LAND USE**



### **THE PROJECT**

In addition to providing the housing in which we live, our neighbourhoods can also incorporate a variety of different property and land uses, from shops to cafes, open space to transport hubs, offices to workshops, schools to health centres – plus many more.

For my PhD at Southampton University, I am researching how land can be used for different purposes within neighbourhoods, focusing specifically on the role planning policy plays in this.

Part of the research involves understanding local residents' views on different types of land use, different combinations of land use and attitudes towards the guidance on land use contained within planning policy.

### **YOUR VIEWS MATTER!**

Recognising the representative role that tenants' and residents' associations play, I want to involve these groups in my research. I hope to include several groups from locations across Southampton.

For each group taking part I will organise a 'group discussion' (sometimes known as a focus group) involving 5 or 6 Committee members. The group discussion will be an opportunity for people to discuss, share and compare views on certain aspects of land use and planning policy. Please note that there is absolutely no need for anyone taking part to have any prior knowledge of land use issues or planning policy. Hopefully those taking part will find the group discussion an interesting and enjoyable experience – that will be my goal!

I would look to hold the group discussion at a place and time that is convenient to those taking part.

I am currently trying to find out if there is any 'in principle' interest amongst members of tenants' and residents' associations in taking part in the research. If you are interested, please get in touch and I can explain the research further. If you would like, I can attend a future Committee meeting to explain the research and answer any questions.

### **HOW TO GET IN TOUCH**

If you would like to take part, or require any further information on the research, please contact me by email or post:

*[Address and email details followed]*

## **HBF AND RTPi REPRESENTATIVES**

The following email was sent to the HBF representative, almost exactly the same email was sent to the RTPi representative with just a few sentences, and the penultimate paragraph, altered to refer to the RTPi and its activities / interests. Attached to each was a copy of the relevant combined information sheet & consent form shown in Appendix 4.

Dear [*name of HBF representative*]

I am working on a research project at Southampton University looking, in part, at issues around localism, planning policy and the design and development of residential environments.

The coalition Government's emerging localism agenda outlined in the Localism Bill 2010 and elsewhere, recommends that new planning powers be transferred to community groups through initiatives like Neighbourhood Development Planning and the Community Right to Build. Against this background, it seems pertinent and interesting to begin to explore community groups' attitudes towards aspects of existing planning policy since these groups might be the architects of future policy.

To this end, a series of focus groups have been held with a diverse range of community groups, many of whom already take an active role in planning matters. In these sessions, attitudes to existing policy were explored. Groups tended to agree with many of the aims and much of the content of planning policy. However, on a few occasions there was some divergence between groups' preferences and policy's requirements. Responding to these points of divergence, a small number of new policy scenarios and amendments were constructed – these sought to adapt policy so that it better addressed groups' preferences.

I would like to explore attitudes towards these policy scenarios with representatives from the house building industry as I recognise that there are strong interactions between policy and industry. I appreciate that industry's views on policy really matter.

Recognising that the Home Builders Federation is "the voice of the home building industry" in England and Wales, and noting your policy-focused role at the HBF, I thought it would be very interesting to explore your thoughts on these policy amendments. I hoped you would be able to provide insights on the HBF's and, by extension, the housebuilding industry's views, on the policy amendments. To this end, I would like to organise an informal interview to discuss the policy scenarios.

I would expect the interview to last about an hour and I would look to work around your time commitments to choose a convenient time and date. Prior to the interview, I would provide brief information on the policy amendments. However, no pre-interview preparation is needed. If you have any further questions about the research please do not hesitate to get in touch, my address details are found below.

## Appendix 4

### COMBINED INFORMATION SHEETS AND CONSENT FORMS

A combined information sheet and consent form was provided to and signed by each type of participant with different forms created for each type of participant.

#### **PLANNING OFFICERS: RESEARCH INFORMATION AND INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM**

Address for all correspondence:

*[Author's address and email details provided]*

**Research title: Mixing housing with other land uses – the approach of planning policy and the views of tenants and residents associations**

#### **Background information**

Katherine Brookfield ('the researcher') is completing research for an academic qualification, a PhD, at Southampton University. The findings from her research will be used for academic purposes only.

Within her research, Katherine is looking at planning policy's approach to mixing residential and non-residential uses and the views of tenants' and residents' associations towards this approach.

To date, the research has involved study of national policy, The South East Plan and, at the local level, *[name of interviewee's local authority]* Core Strategy and Local Plan. In studying this policy, the aim has been to extract information which explains policy's approach to mixing residential and non-residential uses looking at things like preferred distances between uses, preferred use combinations, the benefits of mixing residential and non-residential uses and preferred locations in which to mix uses.

#### **Involving Planning Officers**

For the next stage of the research, the intention is to discuss with planning officers the interpretation of planning policy's approach to mixing residential and non-residential uses

developed by the researcher from the analysis of planning policy. To do this an informal interview with a planning officer at [*name of interviewee's local authority*] is proposed.

In the interview, issues to be discussed will include:

- The accuracy of the researcher's interpretation of policy's approach to mix
- The motivations and influences behind policy's approach to mixing residential and non-residential use (political, market, community support etc.?)
- What is meant by 'mixed use' (does your planning department have a definition?)
- The activities of tenants' and residents' associations in respect of planning matters (a later stage of the research will explore tenants' and residents' associations' views on policy's approach to mix)

The interview will last approximately 1.5 hours. The researcher intends to visit the interviewee's place of work to carry out the interview, assuming this is agreeable. So that all comments are noted, the intention is to tape record (audio-record) the interview.

To ensure anonymity and to support confidentiality, when writing up the findings of the interview, interviewee's real names will not be used and a generic job title such as 'Planning Officer' will be supplied.

The interviewee's employer (e.g. [*name of interviewee's local authority*]) will be identified in the write up. An interviewee's comments will therefore be attributed to 'a planning officer at [*name of interviewee's local authority*]'.

**PLANNING OFFICERS: RESEARCH INFORMATION AND INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (print name), agree to take part in the research project 'Mixing housing with other land uses – the approach of planning policy and the views of tenants and residents associations' being carried out by Katherine Brookfield as part of her PhD qualification.

Please tick each box to demonstrate your consent to take part in the research:

**Tick**

	I consent to take part in an interview for the above described research
	I consent to the interview being tape recorded (audio-recorded)
	I consent to anonymised quotes from the interview being used in Katherine's thesis and future publications and presentations
	I understand that I can refuse to answer particular questions within the interview
	I understand that I can withdraw from the research at any time up until the interview takes place and that I can withdraw from the interview (end the interview) at any time without any penalty

There are two copies of the consent form (which is comprised of 2 pages). Please sign both copies. One copy is for you to retain for your records. Please return the second copy to Katherine (correspondence details are shown at the top of the first page). Please contact Katherine with any questions or comments you might have.

**The project is under the supervision of: Any concerns or complaints can be directed to:**

*[Contact details for PhD supervisor Professor John Mohan provided]*

*[Contact details for the Head of Research Governance Corporate Services at the University of Southampton provided]*

Participant's signature		Date	
Researcher's signature		Date	

## **TENANTS' AND RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATIONS: RESEARCH INFORMATION AND FOCUS GROUP CONSENT FORM**

Address for all correspondence:

*[Author's address and email details provided]*

**Research title: Mixing housing with other land uses – the approach of planning policy and the views of tenants' and residents' associations**

### **Background information**

Katherine Brookfield is completing research for an academic qualification, a PhD, at Southampton University. The findings from her research will be used for academic purposes only.

Within her research, Katherine is looking at town planning policy, 'land use' and the views of tenants' and residents' associations on land use.

Land use - land can be 'used' for many different purposes and functions according to how it is developed. For example, if houses and flats are built on a piece of land we can say it is being 'used' for housing, has a residential function or is in residential use. Other 'uses' for land include shops, offices, restaurants, cafes, bars, workshops, factories and recreation space - plus many more.

Planning policy produced by the local Council, and by others, sets out how land should be used within a neighbourhood, town or city. This planning policy might reserve some pieces of land for housing, some for shops and some for offices, plus many other uses. The idea is that within an area reserved for a particular use, the only type of new building allowed there is building for that use. Existing buildings already in that use should be protected and not converted into another use. However, in some places, areas might be reserved for several different uses. For example, an area might be reserved for housing and shops. We might call these areas 'mixed use areas'. In her research, Katherine is interested in exploring planning policy's views on mixed use areas, and, in particular, policy's views on mixing housing with other land uses – e.g. mixing housing with shops, offices, workshops etc.

## **Involving tenants and residents associations**

For part of her research, Katherine wants to explore tenants and residents associations' views on planning policy's approach to mixing housing with other land uses. To do this, members of tenants and residents associations will be invited along to a focus group where policy's approach to mixing housing with other land uses will be discussed. A focus group is a group discussion where a small number of people share and compare thoughts and ideas on a particular topic.

If a tenant's and residents' association chooses to take part in the research, a focus group will be specially set up. Between 5 and 6 Committee members from the group will be invited along to the focus group. Katherine will chair the discussion and everyone will be encouraged to contribute opinions on things like:

- What type of uses could or should be mixed with housing?
- How far would you like to live from certain uses – from shops, schools, public transport etc?
- In your ideal neighbourhood, where would you put housing and where would you put other land uses?
- What, if any, are the benefits and disadvantages of mixing housing with other types of land use?

Committee members do not need any prior knowledge of planning policy to take part in the focus groups. All that is needed is a willingness to share and compare thoughts and views.

The focus group will last approximately 1.5 hours.

So that everyone's comments are noted, Katherine would like to tape record (audio-record) the focus group.

**TENANTS' AND RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATIONS: RESEARCH INFORMATION AND FOCUS GROUP CONSENT FORM**

The aim is to hold the focus group near people's homes so they don't have to travel far. If you have any suggestions for a suitable venue (a local community centre maybe), please make a note in the space provided below.

To ensure anonymity and to support confidentiality, Katherine will not identify individuals by name within her research. It is also asked that individuals taking part in a focus group respect the confidential nature of the discussion.

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (print name), agree to take part in the research project 'Mixing housing with other land uses – the approach of planning policy and the views of tenants and residents associations' being carried out by Katherine Brookfield as part of her PhD qualification.

Please tick each box to demonstrate your consent to take part in the research:

**Tick**

<input type="checkbox"/>	I consent to take part in a focus group for the above described research
<input type="checkbox"/>	I consent to the focus group being tape recorded (audio-recorded)
<input type="checkbox"/>	I consent to anonymised quotes from the focus group being used in Katherine's thesis and future publications and presentations
<input type="checkbox"/>	I understand that I can refuse to answer particular questions within the focus group
<input type="checkbox"/>	I understand that I can withdraw from the research at any time up until the focus group takes place and that I can withdraw from the focus group whilst it is still running without any penalty

Focus group venue suggestions (address, phone number etc): \_\_\_\_\_

Please advise if you require any special access arrangements: \_\_\_\_\_

There are two copies of the consent form. Please sign both copies. One copy is for you to retain for your records. Please post the second copy to Katherine at the address shown on the first page. Please contact Katherine with any questions or comments you might have.

**The project is under the supervision of:**      **Any concerns or complaints can be directed to:**

[Contact details for PhD supervisor Professor John Mohan provided]

[Contact details for the Head of Research Governance Corporate Services at the University of Southampton provided]

Participant's signature		Date	
Researcher's signature		Date	

## **RTPI AND HBF: RESEARCH INFORMATION AND INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM**

Below is the information sheet and consent form provided to, and signed by, the HBF representative. Almost exactly the same information sheet and consent form was provided to the RTPI representative, references to the HBF were, of course, replaced by references to the RTPI.

Address for all correspondence:

*[Author's address and email details provided]*

**Research title: Mixing housing with other land uses – the approach of planning policy and the views of tenants and residents associations**

### **Background information**

Katherine Brookfield is completing research for an academic qualification, a PhD, at Southampton University. The findings from her research will only be used for academic purposes.

Within her research, Katherine is looking at planning policy's approach to mixing residential and non-residential use, and the views of tenants' and residents' associations towards this approach. The aim is to explore the extent to which policy satisfies the preferences of tenants' and residents' associations.

Research has involved identifying planning policy's current approach to combining uses and then holding focus groups, with a diverse sample of tenants' and residents' associations, to explore attitudes towards this approach.

To identify policy's approach, policy documents have been studied and interviews with planning officers completed. Policy documents were reviewed in January 2010. Documents studied include the Local Plans and Core Strategies in place at three diverse communities in South East England, the South East Plan and numerous PPGs, PPSs and Circulars in place in January 2010 including PPS1, PPS Ecotowns, PPS3, PPS4, PPG13, PPG15, PPG17, PPG20, PPS22, PPS23, PPG24, PPS25 and Circular 03/2005.

In many instances, the tenants' and residents' associations appeared comfortable with policy's approach; however, in a few areas there was some divergence between the requirements of policy and certain group or group member preferences. Wishing to address these points of divergence, a small number of policy amendments and new

policy scenarios were constructed. These sought to remodel policy so that it better satisfies group and group member preferences.

In speaking to the HBF, the aim is to explore the house building industry's broad views on subjects like the 'feasibility', 'viability', and 'deliverability' of the suggested policy amendments and scenarios.

### **The interview**

The interview will last around an hour. If you agree, the preference is to tape record it so that nothing is missed. An indication of the interview talking points is provided in the accompanying document 'HBF Interview Talking Points' (separate file emailed in conjunction with this consent form) [*this is the same set of talking points provided to the RTPI representative – it can be found in Appendix 8*].

### **Anonymity**

To ensure anonymity and to support confidentiality, when writing up the findings, your name will not be used. However, the name of your organisation will be mentioned. You will be referred to as 'a representative from the HBF.'

**HBF AND RTPI: RESEARCH INFORMATION AND INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (print name),  
 agree to take part in the research project 'Mixing housing with other land uses – the  
 approach of planning policy and the views of tenants' and residents' associations' being  
 carried out by Katherine Brookfield as part of her PhD qualification.

Please tick each box to demonstrate your consent to take part in the research:

**Tick**

	I consent to take part in an interview for the above described research
	I consent to the interview being tape recorded (audio-recorded)
	I consent to anonymised quotes from the interview being used in Katherine's thesis and future publications and presentations
	I understand that I can refuse to answer any questions within the interview
	I understand that I can withdraw from the research at any time up until the interview takes place and that I can withdraw from the interview (end the interview) at any time without any penalty

There are two copies of the consent form (which is comprised of 2 pages). Please sign both copies. One copy is for you to retain for your records. Please return the second copy to Katherine. Please contact Katherine with any questions or comments you might have.

**The project is under the supervision of:**      **Any concerns or complaints can be directed to:**

*[Contact details for PhD supervisor  
 Professor John Mohan provided]*

*[Contact details for the Head of Research  
 Governance Corporate Services at the  
 University of Southampton provided]*

Participant's signature		Date	
Researcher's signature		Date	



## TALKING POINTS FOR THE PLANNING OFFICER INTERVIEWS

The following talking points guided the interviews:

- The community's approach to 'RNR mix' – the accounts below were discussed
- Influences on the development of policy
- Role/influence of national and regional policy
- Definition of MU
- Involvement of TARAs in the planning system

The accounts of policy's approach, as sent to the planning officers, are provided below:

### ASHFORD

#### **Ashford – Local Plan and Core Strategy policy relevant to the issue of combining residential and non-residential use**

For speed you might only want to read the text **in bold**. The intention is to use this account as the main talking point in our meeting. In the meeting, the aim will be to check how far this broad understanding corresponds to the way you interpret and apply policy.

***At the following locations combining residential and non-residential use is, to some extent, supported or allowed:***

#### **1. Urban centres**

**Combining residential and non-residential use, and mixing uses more generally, is actively encouraged in Ashford Town Centre. There is support for mixed use development featuring housing, employment, educational, leisure and cultural uses and for retaining a supply of housing in the centre, as new schemes must re-provide the same amount of any 'lost' housing. The Core Strategy contains a performance target concerned with city centre housing provision. The Local Plan identifies various town centre and edge of centre sites for a mix of uses or mixed use schemes that include residential and various non-residential uses.**

*Relevant policies:*

#### Core Strategy

- CS3 Ashford Town Centre
- Spatial strategy target for CS1(f) Guiding Principles and CS3 Town centre

#### Local Plan

- Site 4 Vicarage Lane car park / former Bus Depot – could provide a mix of town centre uses including leisure, entertainment and residential development

- Site 7 Park Street – retail development with either office or residential above
- Site 9 Land at Victoria Road – could include small amount of residential in a mixed use scheme, alongside uses like hotel, office, and leisure
- Site 3 Dover Place and Tannery Lane – mix of town centre uses perhaps including residential
- Site 2 Technical College, Elwick Road – (edge of town centre site) education and arts facility proposed, but office and residential are also thought appropriate, though residential is only identified for a specific portion of the site
- Site 6 Corner of East Street and the Ring Road – (edge of town centre site) a residential and office scheme is an option
- HG17 Loss Of Housing In Ashford Town Centre (Ashford town centre)

#### *Spatial scale of mix*

Policy supports mix at individual schemes / properties (e.g. Site 7 policy)

Policy supports mix across whole sites (e.g. Site 4 policy)

#### *Use combinations*

Policy supports combining residential with uses including retail, office, hotels, education, arts facilities, leisure, 'main town centre uses', employment

## **2. Large sites**

**Combining residential and non-residential uses is actively encouraged at large sites.**

**At large sites, the Core Strategy states that a planning objective concerned with providing “a mix of residential, employment, community and other local services that together help create a well-served community, capable of providing locally for many of its needs” will be applied – Core Strategy CS1: Guiding Principles**

## **3. Residential dwellings, housing sites and urban extensions**

**Mix is supported to some extent at these different types of property and area:**

### **3a. Residential dwellings outside settlements**

**Mix is supported at individual dwellings located outside existing settlements, as there is opportunity for small scale employment uses in the curtilage of a dwelling -**

Local Plan: RE4 B1 Uses Within Residential Curtilage (countryside) and RE3 New Employment Buildings In Tenterden And The Rural Areas (Tenterden / Rural Areas)

### **3b. Housing sites**

**Mix across new housing sites is supported. Varying according to scheme size, at schemes of 15+ dwellings policy requires the inclusion of open and children’s play space, community, leisure and cultural facilities. The Local Plan allocates various sites for housing and at these requires the inclusion of open space/ play space. The Core Strategy (on p96) includes a target where 100% of new residential development is to be within 30 minutes public transport time of: a GP, a hospital, a primary school, a secondary school, areas of employment; and a major retail centre.**

#### *Relevant policies:*

##### Core Strategy

- CS18 Meeting the Community's Needs
- Target for policies CS1(I,L) Guiding Principles and CS15 Transport (p96)

#### Local Plan

- LE5 Equipped Public Open Space (Borough wide)
- LE7 Play Facilities (Borough Wide)
- LE8 Leisure Facilities (Borough Wide)
- Site 24. Ashford Hospital
- Site 16. Bushy Royds
- Site 20. Singleton

#### **3c. Urban extensions / new residential communities**

**Mix of a sort is supported at the proposed urban extensions. An objective is to create “flexibly designed, mixed-use places of real character” where residential is the main use (p30 of the Core Strategy). Development will be centred on a local high street that should be within 800 meters of most housing (p13). Plus, there will be “useable open spaces and a range of local commercial, retail and community facilities within the development area in order to provide local services and job opportunities and a sense of place and neighbourhood as well as potentially reducing the need to travel” (p13). Such guidance might suggest that non-residential uses will be dotted amongst housing (does it?).**

*Relevant policies:*

#### Core Strategy

- CS2 The Borough Wide Strategy – supporting text pages 12-13
- CS5 Ashford Urban Extension

*Use combinations*

Housing and transport connections, local commercial, retail, community facilities, local services, employment / jobs

**Can you think of any more locations where mix is allowed / supported?**

***Aspects of policy that resist / complicate combining residential and non-residential use***

**1. Sites allocated for residential / mostly residential use (few opportunities to include non-residential use would therefore occur)**

Local Plan policies (each refers to a site allocated for housing):

- Site 10. Victoria Road (West) and Victoria Crescent
- Site 39. Lower Queens Road
- Site 42. South Stour Avenue and Eastmead Avenue
- Site 53. Ragstone Hollow, Aldington
- Site 65. Land at Molloy Road, Shadoxhurst
- Site 67. Woodland View, Wittersham

- HG5 Sites Not On The Proposals Map (Ashford, Tenterden, Charing, Hamstreet and Wye)

## **2. Protect existing dwellings and residential areas from change or use and/or demolition**

HG16 Protection of Existing Housing (Borough wide)

## **3. Sites allocated for non-residential use (few opportunities to include residential use would therefore occur)**

Local Plan policies (each identifies a site for a non-residential use or uses):

- Site 11. South Park – site identified for sports/leisure uses
- Site 15. Orbital Park – light industrial
- Site 26. Land to the north of the M20 at Bockhanger – business park
- Site 27. Eureka Science and Business Park - business park
- Site 43. Land for Park and Ride
- Site 45. Tenterden Town Station and land adjacent – employment uses & car parking
- Site 46. Vehicle Repair Premises, Station Road – employment use
- Site 51. Rolvenden Station –engineering and car parking
- Site 51A. Land south east of Rolvenden Station – storage
- Site 57. Site of former Chilham Sawmills, Chilham – roadside facilities / employment
- Site 60. Ashford Road, High Halden - employment
- Site 68. Former Council Depot, Churchfield Way, Wye – small scale employment use

## **4. Separate residential use and certain non-residential uses**

Local Plan ET7 Bad Neighbour Developments (Borough wide) – separate residential from bad neighbour uses

## **5. Protect existing employment sites / allocations from redevelopment to another use**

- Core Strategy CS6: The Rural Settlement Hierarchy - Opposes development that would create a net reduction in the amount of usable and viable employment space available at sites within or adjoining a village.
- Core Strategy CS7: The Economy and Economic Development - Protects existing employment sites/allocations which might not be carried forward but have yet to be identified within the Core Strategy for other uses as the local authority awaits its comprehensive review of employment land availability.

## **6. Focus and concentrate certain non-residential uses in certain locations (and thus reduce the possibility of locating these uses in residential areas)**

- CS16 Retail - Major new retail development will be located in Ashford town centre
- CF20 Nurseries and Crèches (Borough wide) – nurseries and crèches should be located at local centres or schools

- CF19 New Health Care Centres (Ashford) – new health centres for major housing schemes should be provided at local centres
- SH2 New Retail Schemes in Out-of-Centre Locations (Ashford and Tenterden) – confirms commitment to sequential approach to locating retail uses and creates ‘obstacles’ (need to score well in an impact assessment) which must be overcome in order for out of centre sites to be accepted.
- ET7 Bad Neighbour Developments (Borough wide) – direct bad neighbour uses to existing industrial sites
- ET3 Ashford ‘Employment Core’ (Ashford) – locate high density, office-type business development within the Ashford Employment Core, except in certain situations. Plus small-scale, service office uses which attract visiting members of the public, (e.g. banks, solicitors, insurance agents, building societies) should be located in Ashford town centre or local centres

***Reasons for combining uses / combining residential and non-residential use***

- **At large sites a mix of residential, employment, community and other services helps create a well-served community capable of providing locally for many of its needs** - CS1: Guiding Principles
- **Including services and facilities in the planned urban extensions creates a sense of place and neighbourhood, develops character within an area and can reduce the need to travel and reliance on the car** - CS2 The Borough Wide Strategy
- **Including public transport routes, local shops and services helps neighbourhoods to function as sustainable communities** - CS2 The Borough Wide Strategy
- **A mix of uses in a town centre can support the local economy and encourage further investment, support vitality and viability and make the centre more attractive to a wider range of people** - CS3 Ashford Town Centre
- **Providing housing in the town centre will support the achievement of Ashford's housing targets** - CS3 Ashford Town Centre
- **At new housing developments, providing mixed use places featuring a range of activities will help create strong communities and quality places** - CS4 Ashford Urban Area
- **Retaining housing in Ashford town centre helps preserve a relatively sustainable mix of land uses and helps promote vitality** - Local Plan HG17 Loss of Housing in Ashford Town Centre (Ashford)
- **A large, higher density site with a mix of residential and non-residential uses could support the development of a Combined Heat and Power system** - Local Plan Site 13. Cheeseman’s Green
- **A mix of housing and employment uses alongside a range of related facilities can constitute a sustainable form of development** - Local Plan Site 22. Land at former Rowcroft and Templar Barracks, Ashford
- **Including local shops in residential areas can reduce the need to travel** - Local Plan, introduction to the policies on Shopping

### ***Reasons for not combining residential and non-residential use***

- **Negative impacts on residential amenity** - Local Plan ET7 Bad Neighbour Development (Borough wide); ET8 Variety of Size and Type of Premises (Ashford); CF12 Freestanding Telecommunications Masts (Borough wide); Site 17. Park Farm, Kingsnorth
- **Bad neighbour uses can undermine the perception of an area** - Local Plan ET7 Bad Neighbour Development (Borough wide)
- **Employment sites can be targeted for redevelopment to higher value uses so they need to be protected** - Core Strategy CS6: The Rural Settlement Hierarchy
- **Focusing several services / similar services at a single location can reduce the number of separate trips made, reduce use of the car, help to establish a focal point for a community, reduce the demand for new land and reduce the costs involved in development and allow for the co-management of services** – Core Strategy CS18 Meeting The Community's Needs; Local Plan RE15 Location of Agricultural Services (Borough wide); Local Plan LE8 Leisure Facilities (Borough wide); Local Plan CF19 New Health Care Centres (Ashford)

### **EPSOM AND EWELL**

#### **Epsom and Ewell - Local Plan and Core Strategy policy relevant to the issue of combining residential and non-residential use**

For speed you might only want to read the text **in bold**. The intention is to use this account as the main talking point in our meeting. In the meeting, the aim will be to check how this broad understanding corresponds to the way you interpret and apply policy.

***At the following locations, mix between residential and non-residential use is, to some extent, supported or allowed:***

#### **1. Urban centres**

**Policy actively promotes combining residential and non-residential use, and mixing uses more generally. Policy supports combining housing with retail and other main town centre uses and Use Class B1. Policy supports mix within a single building (flats above shops), within a scheme (mixed use scheme) and across the whole town centre.**

*Relevant policies:*

#### Local Plan policies

- EMP3 Employment – business schemes in the business areas of Epsom town centre should have a mix of uses including residential where appropriate
- EMP11 Upper Floors In Shopping Centres – should retain housing above shops in shopping centres
- EMP4 Employment – large schemes at shopping centres should include a mix of uses (uses not specified)

#### Core Strategy policies

- CS14 Epsom Town Centre – the town centre should be a focus for housing and various activities and should feature a diversity of uses

- CS8 Broad Location Of Housing – promotes mixed use development, where residential features, in the town centre

*Use combinations*

In urban centres policy supports combining housing with retail (EMP11); main town centre uses (EMP3 and CS14) and B1 use class (EMP3)

*Scale of mix*

Policy supports mix within a scheme (EMP3 Employment), within a single building i.e. flats above shops (EMP11 Upper Floors in Shopping Centres) and across the whole town centre (CS14 Epsom Town Centre)

**2. Residential properties, sites and communities**

**Policy supports / allows a degree of mix between residential and non-residential use within these various locations:**

**2a. Mix at a dwelling**

**Policy provides opportunities for mix within a residential property - home working is supported and there is scope for the erection of stables within the curtilage of a residential property**

Home working supported - CS11 Employment Provision (Core Strategy)

Opportunity for the erection of stables – DC20 Development Control (Local Plan)

**2b. Mix at a new housing development**

**Policy requires the inclusion of open space at new housing developments (according to scheme size) and sets a target of major housing developments to be within 30 mins public transport time of various services and facilities**

Require open space - Policy CS 4 (Open Spaces and Green Infrastructure) (Core Strategy)

30 minutes public transport time target - Policy CS 16 (Transport and Travel) (Core Strategy)

**2c. Mix across a new community (at the hospitals cluster)**

**Policy supports providing local centres at the new communities planned for the Hospitals Cluster and encourages the conversion of certain existing hospital buildings to commercial use when conversion to residential is not appropriate.**

*Use combinations*

Policy supports combining housing with open space, home working, stables and commercial uses in residential areas

**3. Non-strategic employment sites**

**Policy supports making large B1, B2 and B8 developments of 1,000 sq ft. plus mixed use in nature and encourages the inclusion of residential where this is appropriate – EMP6 Employment (Local Plan)**

*Use combinations*

Policy supports combining housing with industrial, business and warehousing / storage at non-strategic employment sites

***Aspects of policy which hinder mix between residential and non-residential use in principle or at particular locations***

**1. Sites allocated for housing – HSG3 Housing (Local Plan)**

**2. Existing residential areas are protected from any loss of housing or change of use to non-residential – EMP2 Employment and HSG14 Housing (Local Plan)**

**3. Existing residential areas are not suitable for business, industrial or warehouse/storage development** (EMP2 Employment) or hotel development (TOR2 Tourism) (Local Plan)

**4. Safeguard strategic employment sites** at Nonsuch, Longmead and Epsom town centre and Ewell village centre for employment – EMP2 Employment and EMP5 Employment (Local Plan)

**5. A sequential approach is taken to the location of major shopping developments** - SH2 Shopping (major new retail development) (Local Plan)

**6. Controls are placed on the type of home working allowed at dwellings in residential areas.** Developments that involve frequent visitors etc. should be located at commercial or mixed use areas - DC1 Development Control (Working From Home) (Local Plan)

***Benefits of combining residential and non-residential use and providing housing in the town centre***

- Reduces the need to travel – CS8 Broad Location Of Housing (Core Strategy)
- Safeguards the character of the town centre and limits the demand for land for new housing elsewhere in the Borough - EMP3 Employment (Local Plan)

***Benefits of not combining residential and non-residential use***

- Protecting sites for employment prevents their redevelopment to residential - Policy CS 11 (Employment Provision) (Core Strategy)
- Protecting existing residential supports housing need and housing targets & helps maintain the character of residential areas - HSG13 Housing (Retention Of Existing Housing Land and Buildings) (Local Plan); EMP2 Employment (Location Of Employment Development) (Local Plan)
- Hotels in residential areas can change the character of the area - TOR2 Tourism (Local Plan)
- Businesses in residential areas can affect residential amenity – DC1 Development Control (Working From Home) (Local Plan)
- Stables next to houses can impact on residential amenity by way of noise, smells etc. - DC20 Development Control (Private Stables In Residential Curtilages) (Local Plan)

## SOUTHAMPTON

### **Southampton - Local Plan and Core Strategy policy relevant to the issue of combining residential and non-residential use**

For speed you might only want to read the text **in bold**. The intention is to use this account as the main talking point in our meeting. In the meeting, the aim will be to check how this broad understanding corresponds to the way you interpret and apply policy.

***At the following locations combining residential and non-residential use is, to some extent, supported or allowed:***

#### **1. Urban centres**

**Combining residential and non-residential use, and mixing uses more generally, is actively encouraged in urban centres. There is support for combining housing with main town centre uses / leisure / conference / entertainment / visitor and cultural uses plus community and health facilities. Mix is supported across whole sections of the city centre (major development quarter) and within individual buildings as sites are allocated for mixed use schemes featuring residential and non-residential uses (certain MSA policies).**

*Relevant policies:*

#### Core Strategy

- Approx. 5,400 new dwellings in the city centre - CS1 City Centre Approach
- Mix of uses across major development quarter - CS2 Major Development Quarter
- Residential can be provided above active ground floor uses - CS3 Town, District and Local Centres, Community Hubs and Community Facilities

#### Local Plan

- Residential permitted on upper floors - REI4 Secondary Retail Frontages, REI5 District Centres, REI6 Local Centres
- City and town centres likely to provide greatest opportunities for converting space above shops to residential - H1 Housing Supply
- Major sites and areas identified for mixed use – e.g. MSA11 Land at Ocean Way, Maritime Walk and fronting Alexandra Docks; MSA7 144 - 164 High Street; MSA10 Mayflower Plaza

#### *Spatial scale of mix*

Within individual buildings and at individual sites – e.g. certain MSA policies (Local Plan)

Across whole sections of the city centre - CS2 Major Development Quarter (Core Strategy)

#### *Use combinations*

Housing and community facilities, leisure, conference, entertainment, offices / business, retail tourist, visitor and cultural uses - CS2 Major Development Quarter (Core Strategy)

Housing and leisure, conference, entertainment, retail, tourist, visitor and cultural uses - CS1 City Centre Approach (Core Strategy)

Main town centre uses, health centre, leisure / entertainment – in the various MSA policies (Local Plan)

## **2. Residential properties, sites and neighbourhoods**

**Mix is supported to some extent at these different types of property and area:**

### **2a. Residential dwellings**

**Mix is supported within individual dwellings, as there is opportunity for part of a dwelling to be developed for nursery use provided impacts on residential amenity are not excessive**

Nursery development in dwellings - L4 Nursery Provision (Local Plan)

### **2b. Housing sites**

**Mix across new housing sites is supported with policy requiring the inclusion of open space and children's play space (according to scheme size).**

At new estates, include open space - CLT5 Open Space in New Residential Developments (Local Plan)

At new estates, include children's play space - CLT6 Provision of Children's Play Areas (Local Plan)

### **2c. Neighbourhoods**

**Mix is supported across existing neighbourhoods with the occasional local service or facility judged acceptable whilst parts of St Mary's are identified for mixed use development which includes residential.**

Mixed use at St Mary's - MSA12 St Mary's Area (Local Plan)

Occasional non-residential use in established residential areas – Section 4.3 'The Spatial Strategy' (introduction chapter) from the Core Strategy

#### *Spatial scale of mix*

Individual property - L4 Nursery Provision (Local Plan)

Across new housing estate - CLT5 Open Space in New Residential Developments and CLT6 Provision of Children's Play Areas (Local Plan)

Across an established residential area - MSA12 St Mary's Area (Local Plan) and 'Chapter 4 Spatial Strategy and Policies' on p 19 of the Core Strategy

#### *Use combinations*

Housing and nursery provision - L4 Nursery Provision (Local Plan)

Housing and main town centre uses - MSA12 St Mary's Area (Local Plan)

Housing and open space and children's play space - CLT5 Open Space in New Residential Developments; CLT6 Provision of Children's Play Areas (Local Plan)

Housing and shops plus individual local services like schools, health centre, community facilities 'Chapter 4 Spatial Strategy and Policies' on p 19 of the Core Strategy

## **3. Previously developed land**

The council may support live work units - H2 Previously developed land (Local Plan)

## **4. Major brownfield regeneration site (Woolston Riverside)**

Mixed use regeneration is supported that combines housing with B1 and B2 employment, leisure and community uses - MSA18 Woolston Riverside, Victoria Road (Local Plan)

## **5. Locations with good access to public transport**

Mixed use development providing living and working uses is supported - SPD1 Quality of Development (Local Plan)

## **6. New development in 'appropriate locations'**

Policy supports creating adaptable buildings and sees value in creating development with a mix of uses (and building types and styles) - CS13 Fundamentals of Design (Core Strategy)

***Aspects of policy that resist combining residential and non-residential uses***

**1. Areas of the city centre are identified for office development where more office development will be encouraged and loss of office space resisted** - RE15 Office Development Areas (Local Plan)

**2. Should separate housing from:**

**Noisy uses** - SDP16 Noise (Local Plan)

**Polluting or potentially polluting uses** - SDP18 Hazardous Substances (Local Plan)

**3. At Test Lane, a green buffer of open space should be provided between housing and proposed employment development** - CLT7 Provision of New Public Open Space (Local Plan)

**4. Should focus and concentrate certain non-residential uses in particular locations:**

- **Night time uses in designated night time zones** - CLT 15 Night Time Uses in Town, District and Local Centres (Local Plan)
- **Non-residential development in urban centres** - CS3 Town, District And Local Centres, Community Hubs And Community Facilities (Core Strategy)
- **Office development in the city centre office districts** - CS8 Office Location (Core Strategy)

**5. Should protect the following sites / properties for non-residential use:**

- Sites at two existing schools for **school expansion** - L2 School Expansion Sites (Local Plan)
- Two university areas for **university expansion** - L6 Southampton Solent University and L7 The University of Southampton (Local Plan) and CS11 An Educated City (Core Strategy)
- **Primary retail frontages for retail and A2, A3, A4 or A5 uses** - REI3 Primary Retail Frontages (Local Plan)
- **Specific employment sites for continued employment use** - REI9 Major Employment Sites; RE10 Industry and Warehousing; REI Light Industry; MSA19 Test Lane South (Local Plan) and CS6 Economic Growth; CS7 Safeguarding Employment (Core Strategy)
- Three wharves and quays for **development reliant upon wharfage or access to the water** - REI12 Industry Reliant Upon Wharfage and Port-related Uses (Local Plan)
- Innkerman Road and Johns Road for **a new library** - MSA15 Woolston Library (Local Plan)
- A set of sites allocated for **mixed use development which excludes residential** - MSA17 Antelope House, Bursledon Road; MSA14 Land Adjacent to Dock Gate 10 and the Norman Offer site; MSA9 Lower High Street; MSA2 Southampton Central Station (Local Plan)
- Shamrock Quay for **water related businesses, ancillary B1 and B2 uses and A1, A2, A3, A4 and A5 uses** - REI13 Shamrock Quay (Local Plan)
- The port for **port related development** - CS9 Port of Southampton (Core Strategy)

**7. Allocate and safeguard sites for housing - H1 Housing Supply (Local Plan)**

**8. Relocate businesses which have a particularly detrimental effect on residential amenity from residential areas - H2 Previously Developed Land (Local Plan)**

**9. Protect existing housing and resist pressures to convert dwellings to commercial use - H6 Housing Retention (Local Plan)**

#### ***Reasons for combining uses***

- New city centre development is **important to the city's and the region's growth** and new housing development in the city centre is a key part of this development - CS1 City Centre Approach (Core Strategy)
- Mixed use development can **help meet the needs of different parts of the city** – 'Chapter 1 - Introduction' in Local Plan
- Mixed use development is one way to **make adequate provision for the conduct of business in the C21st** – 'Chapter 1 - Context for the Plan - City Strategy - Enterprise and Innovation' in Local Plan
- Mixed use development can **make the most of the potential for higher densities and intensive activity at locations with good access to public transport** - SPD1 Quality of Development (Local Plan)
- Converting empty space above shops to residential use **contributes to the supply of housing and brings additional life and security to an area** - H5 Conversion to Residential Use (Local Plan)
- Mixed use development **ensures the successful regeneration of brownfield sites** - MSA18 Woolston Riverside, Victoria Road (Local Plan)
- Mixed use can **reduce the need to travel and it can make places more attractive by active use** - 'Mixed use' in the glossary in the Local Plan
- Placing local centres near housing **supports walking** - RE15 District Centres (Local Plan)
- Diversity of use at district centres helps to **sustain and enhance centres** - RE15 District Centres (Local Plan)
- Combining uses can **support the commercial viability of a scheme** – CS7 Safeguarding Employment Sites (Core Strategy)

#### ***Reasons for not combining uses***

- Need to retain residential use to **ensure structure plan targets are met** (Local Plan)
- Safeguarding sites for employment use promotes **global competitiveness, ensures that the benefits of prosperity are shared by all, reduces pressure on employment sites for their redevelopment to housing or other uses, ensures the supply of a variety of sites to meet the needs of business, supports local employment and ensures the economic targets of the South East Plan are met** - 'Enterprise and Innovation' introduction in Local Plan, RE10 Industry and Warehousing (Local Plan); MSA14 Land Adjacent to Dock Gate 10

and the Norman Offer Site (Local Plan) and CS7 Safeguarding Employment (Core Strategy)

- Protect ground floors in urban centres for active uses as this can **attract visitors to pass through the centre** - MSA7 144 - 164 High Street (Local Plan)
- Separate housing from polluting and potentially polluting uses in order to **protect residential amenity and to protect business from excessive constraints** - SDP18 Hazardous Substances (Local Plan)
- Focus night time economy uses in designated zones in order to **protect residential amenity** - CLT 15 Night Time Uses in Town, District and Local Centres (Local Plan)



## *Appendix 6*

### INFORMATION SOURCES ON SOUTHAMPTON'S TENANTS' AND RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATIONS

To identify TARAs in Southampton, and learn about their characteristics, activities and area of operation, various individuals and organisations were contacted (sometimes with meetings subsequently held), and various documents, databases, websites etc. were reviewed. Below, key sources of information on the TARAs are listed:

- Southampton City Council's Neighbourhood Services Division - works with local community organisations. Met with staff and reviewed the Division's website.
- Southampton City Council's Tenant Participation Unit - supports residents' groups at council housing schemes. Reviewed the Unit's website and met with staff.
- Local councillors – all were contacted (responses not received from all though)
- Leader of Southampton City Council – met with the leader
- Various reports, consultation documents and meeting minutes produced by or for Southampton City Council on a range of topics including rights of way, planning, housing and drinks licensing. Key documents used included:
  - 'Report of the Solicitor to the Council on the Review of the Council's Statement of Licensing Policy' (2007) – this was presented to the Council's Licensing Committee on 14.11.07. The report includes two appendices listing a range of consultees contacted as part of the review process. A large number were TARAs.
  - Southampton Housing Strategy 2007 – included a list of consultees contacted during the preparation of the strategy, many were TARAs.
- Southampton Local Plan Deposit Inspector's Report, 2005 - Appendices contained a list of individuals and organisations who made representations on the Local Plan, a number were TARAs
- Searched archived news stories from the local paper, Southampton Echo (articles dating back to 1999 can be searched online) using the key words 'residents associations'

- Keyword searches using the internet search engine Google and the words 'residents associations Southampton'
- Local MP John Denham – contacted his office for details of local TARAs
- TARAs included in the research – these groups were asked about any local groups that they were familiar with
- National Organisation of Residents Associations – contacted to explore membership amongst Southampton's groups
- Local registered social landlord Swaythling Housing Association – contacted about groups operating at the estates it manages
- Southampton Voluntary Services Directory
- Southampton Voluntary Services Membership List Aug 2007
- Hants Fish - Directory of Children's Services for Hampshire (a Google search had found a residents association within this directory)
- Evolve website – provides information about voluntary and community services within Hampshire and the Isle of White
- Big Lottery Fund – searched the grants database for any grants to TARAs in Southampton
- Companies House – searched the database of registered companies using the key words 'residents associations Southampton' and 'residents Southampton'
- Thornhill Community Directory 2007 – lists voluntary and community groups within the Thornhill area of Southampton (a more recent version could not be found)
- Bittern Park Info website – provides information about community groups within the Bittern area of Southampton
- TARAs' own websites – a small number of groups had their own website
- Umbrella organisations representing multiple TARAs in Southampton – contacted for information on member groups

## *Appendix 7*

### VISUAL AIDS USED IN THE FOCUS GROUPS

As discussed in Chapter 6, three exercises were completed within the focus groups. The visual aids used in each are presented and discussed below:

#### **EXERCISE 1 - SUITABLE USES TO PLACE NEAR HOUSING**

An A3 sheet of paper was provided to each participant containing the following (brightly coloured) text:

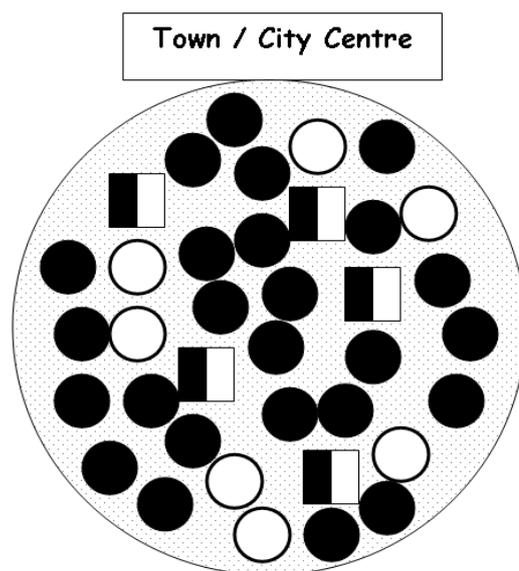
**What, if anything, should we place near housing?**

- Work places - Offices, workshops, warehouses, factories etc.
- Home based businesses and live / work units (properties with dedicated living space and working space)
- Local services - Health centres, schools, nurseries, community centres etc.
- Leisure and tourism facilities, cultural attractions, hotels and conference centres
- Shops
- Open space – parks, children’s play space etc.
- Public transport - Bus stops, train stations etc.
- Restaurants, cafes and bars

## EXERCISE 2 - THE PHYSICAL DESIGN OF RESIDENTIAL ENVIRONMENTS

Discs were provided to each participant that demonstrated, in diagrammatic form, the type of land use mix planning policy could encourage in three different 'types' of residential environment (identified in Chapter 6). The discs provided to participants were around 40% larger than those shown here and they were brightly coloured.

### Town / city centre

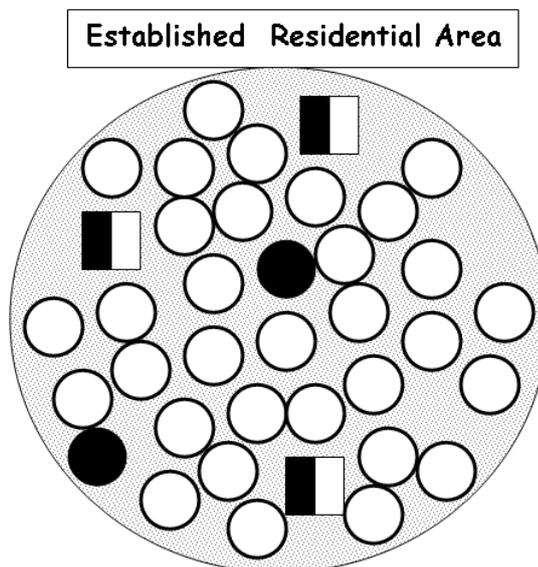


In the discs provided to participants, instead of the dots and squares being black and white as shown here they were blue and white – this rule applies to all discs included here. For the above disc, it was explained to participants that the blue dots (shown here as black) were non-residential uses such as shops, offices, bars, cinemas, restaurants, nightclubs, museums, theatres, galleries, whilst the white dots (also shown here as white) were housing. The squares were explained as individual developments that included examples of residential and non-residential use. To help participants picture this kind of development, schemes matching this description within Southampton city centre were mentioned.

For this and all diagrams, it was explained that the aim was to show the general proportions of residential and non-residential uses and their arrangement in relation to one another. Groups were asked to avoid becoming too concerned with the spacing between the dots, and the overall number of dots and squares, included in the diagrams. This was to steer participants away from a focus on development density although this issue often surfaced within the focus group discussions. The diagram represents guidance contained in national (PPG13, PPS4), regional (The South East Plan), and local policy

(Southampton, Ashford and Epsom's planning policy). All support including and/or retaining housing in town / city centres (see Chapter 8).

### Established residential area



For the above disc, it was explained to participants that the blue dots (shown here as black) were small scale non-residential uses providing a 'local' service such as convenience stores, doctors' surgeries and primary schools or a 'non-intrusive' office use generating minimum traffic. The white dots (also shown here as white) were identified as housing. The squares were explained as residential dwellings that featured a non-residential use like a nursery or small office.

The diagram reflects guidance contained in national, regional and local policy. PPG13 supports using residential properties for home working. The South East Plan identifies offices as a potentially acceptable use in suburban areas and supports home working. Southampton's Core Strategy comments that the occasional non-residential use providing a local service, such as schools, shops and health centres, can be dispersed across established residential areas. Southampton's Local Plan allows nursery provision in residential dwellings as long as the impact on neighbours is minimal. Epsom and Ewell's Local Plan supports home based businesses whilst the Borough's Core Strategy supports home working.

## Large new residential area / community

Looking within policy, three alternative approaches to the design of large new residential areas were identified. All were presented to the participants. Besides discussing their views on each diagram, participants were asked to identify their most and least preferred design and explain the reasons for this. The majority preference was for design B followed by design A. Design C was rejected by all participants.

### Large new residential area / community (A)

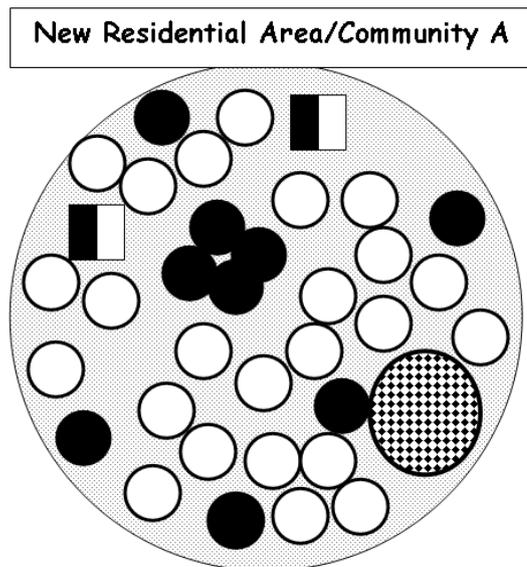


Diagram A reflects guidance contained within Epsom and Ewell's Local Plan for the redevelopment of several former hospital sites. At these sites, policy requires redevelopment for residential use with new residential communities created. Existing hospital buildings are to be retained and, whilst policy encourages converting these to residential use where possible, where it is not possible, conversion to commercial and community use is supported. With new build housing developed around these retained hospital buildings, the potential for fine grained mix between housing and non-residential uses occurs. At one site, policy discusses the need for a 'local centre' hosting a small number of local services with a small supermarket, hairdressers and video store mentioned. The approach taken at this site is reflected in the diagram. Diagram C reflects the approach taken at the other sites (where no local centre is required). Lastly, policy requires open space provision at these developments. The diagram also reflects guidance contained in national, regional and local policy on appropriate non-residential uses to include in residential areas. This guidance was outlined before when the 'established residential area' diagram was discussed.

For the above disc, it was explained to participants that the blue dots (shown here as black) were small scale non-residential uses providing a 'local' service, such as a local shop or community centre. The cluster of blue dots was identified as a local centre providing a small number of non-residential uses providing a local service. The white dots (also shown here as white) were identified as housing. The patterned oval was a green oval in the participants' discs and it was identified as an area of open space.

#### **New residential area / community (B)**

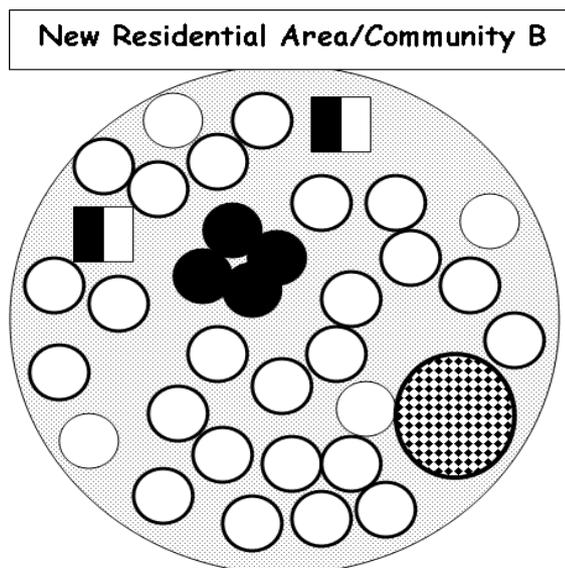


Diagram B reflects guidance contained in Ashford's Core Strategy as interpreted by Ashford's planning officers. The Core Strategy identifies two urban extensions and reports that these developments will be anchored around a local high street. Ashford's planning officers reported that non-residential uses would be focused at the high street and this would be encircled by housing development. At these locations, policy also requires the provision of public open space. As with Diagram A, Diagram B reflects national, regional and local policy on appropriate non-residential uses to include in residential areas (as discussed earlier).

For the above disc, it was explained to participants that the cluster of blue dots (shown here as black) formed a local centre hosting small scale non-residential uses providing a 'local' service, such as local shops, hairdressers etc. The white dots (also shown here as white) were identified as housing. The patterned oval was a green oval in the participants' discs and it was identified as an area of open space.

### New residential area / community (C)

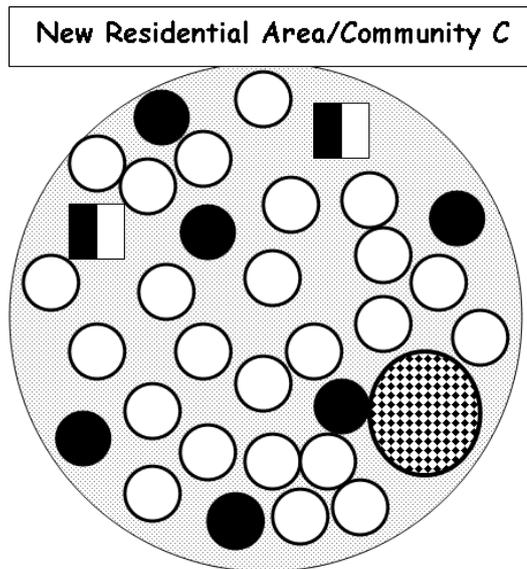


Diagram C reflects the second approach to new residential communities found in Epsom's planning policy. Diagram A reflected the first approach and the commentary for that diagram is pertinent here. However, in this second approach, there is no requirement for a local centre and so in this diagram there is no concentration of black dots. The diagram also reflects national, regional and local policy on appropriate non-residential uses to include in residential areas.

### **EXERCISE 3 – 'IDEAL' TOWN / CITY**

For this exercise, on a piece of A1 card, a large oval was drawn. It was explained to groups that this represented the boundary of an ideal town/city. Participants were then provided with a number of land use discs. These were small discs in different colours featuring the names of different land uses. Multiple discs for each land use were produced. Participants were asked to work together to design an ideal town / city by placing the land use discs within / around the town / city boundary. They were asked to think about where these discs should be placed within the town / city and about how many of each disc they should include within their town / city. During Exercise 3, groups were encouraged to suggest other land uses not presented by the author. These additional uses were added to the set of discs presented at the next focus group. By the final focus group, the following set of land use discs had been created. The initial set of land uses presented in the first focus group (carried out with Group A) is highlighted in italics:

- *Town / city centre*
- *Local shopping centres*

- *Open space*
- Places of worship
- Police station
- Leisure / cultural / sports facilities
- *Health facilities*
- *Education facilities*
- *Waste management facilities*
- Recycling facilities
- *Employment site / use*
- Transport centres / nodes (public and freight transport)
- *Housing* – some groups opted not to use this disc and instead identified all the area within the town/city boundary as housing. They then inserted non-residential uses amongst this housing (see Chapter 9 for examples of this approach).



## *Appendix 8*

### TALKING POINTS FOR THE SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS WITH THE ROYAL TOWN PLANNING INSTITUTE AND THE HOME BUILDERS FEDERATION

The following policy amendments were developed from an analysis of the TARA focus group data. In the RTPI and HBF semi-structured interviews, each amendment was discussed.

1. In existing predominantly residential areas, discourage the widespread distribution, through change of use or infill development, of services and facilities
2. Require the mandatory provision of green space at all housing developments
3. Amend policy to remove targets (found in some development plans) which support locating housing some distance from services and facilities in order to encourage a scenario where housing is always within walking distance of regular public transport and everyday services - ideally these services should be concentrated in a local centre
4. In established residential areas, prevent infill development / conversions that introduce new apartments
5. Require balconies and/or terraces at all apartments
6. Only support / permit patterns of low density development in residential areas
7. Avoid policies that seek to encourage families into town and city centres (e.g. mixed communities including families should not be a goal for town and city centre policies)
8. Require new development to blend in with its surroundings
9. Allow generous car parking allowances at flats and houses (much more so than policy currently allows)
10. Support an approach that separates student households from non-student households by, for example, severely restricting the presence of student HMOs in established residential areas and/or directing university accommodation far away from residential areas



Appendix 9

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

<b>Group</b>	<b>Participant</b>	<b>Gender</b>
Group A	Kathy	Female
Group A	Michael	Male
Group A	Paul	Male
Group A	Carol	Female
Group B	David	Male
Group B	Roger	Male
Group B	Teresa	Female
Group B	Christine	Female
Group B	Wendy	Female
Group C	Mathew	Male
Group C	Dorothy	Female
Group C	Angela	Female
Group D	Jim	Male
Group D	Suzanne	Female
Group D	Michele	Female
Group E	John	Male
Group E	Richard	Male
Group E	Rita	Female
Group F	Douglas	Male
Group F	Sue	Female
Group F	Elizabeth	Female
Group F	Joan	Female
Group F	Mark	Male
Group F	Kay	Female

Group G	Neil	Male
Group G	Martin	Male
Group G	Thomas	Male
Group G	Janice	Female
Group G	Judy	Female
Group G	Rachel	Female
Group G	Robert	Male
Group G	Cheryl	Female
Group G	Pamela	Female
Group H	Jeff	Male
Group H	Margaret	Female
Group I	Ken	Male
Group I	Julia	Female
Group I	Diana	Female
Group I	Will	Male
Group I	Linda	Female
Group J	Henry	Male
Group J	Edward	Male
Group J	Phillip	Male
Group J	Frank	Male
Group K	Joe	Male
Group K	Rose	Female

*Appendix 10*

**SOCIO-ECONOMIC DATA FOR THE SELECTED  
TENANTS' AND RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATIONS**

The next table identifies socio-economic data for the 11 TARAs (Groups A to K) included in the research. Within the table, 'Level 4/5 Qualification' refers to a First Degree, Higher Degree, NVQ levels 4 & 5; HNC; HND; Qualified Teacher Status; and a Qualified Medical Doctor, Dentist, Nurse, Midwife or Health Visitor. Council Tax data is from March 2011 whilst all other data in the table is from Census 2001

Item	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
No of Out Areas associated with the group's area	3	5	10	27	11	8	3	1	2	1	1
Quality of fit: Output Areas & group's area of activity	Rather poor	Ok	Good	Good	Good	Good	Ok	Very poor	Very poor	Very poor	Very poor
Total population	722	1,368	4,490	8,134	4,025	3,052	841	232	496	329	287
Number of households	441	614	1,283	3,347	1,369	971	374	125	227	141	120
% of persons aged 0 to 19	19%	25%	34%	18%	33%	15%	16%	16%	22%	17%	18%
% of persons aged 20 to 29	15%	12%	26%	33%	20%	58%	10%	18%	11%	12%	21%
% of persons aged 60 & over	20%	28%	15%	20%	13%	8%	33%	22%	23%	26%	34%
% of dwellings: Detached	0%	5%	27%	16%	2%	9%	65%	2%	19%	94%	31%
% of dwellings: Semi-detached	5%	15%	40%	31%	74%	25%	3%	8%	41%	6%	6%
% of dwellings: Terraced	5%	47%	2%	10%	18%	32%	10%	26%	34%	0%	0%
% of dwellings: Flats	90%	32%	31%	43%	6%	34%	23%	64%	6%	0%	63%
% households : Owner Occupiers	11%	45%	62%	56%	42%	36%	82%	55%	85%	93%	74%
% of households: Private renters	13%	3%	21%	34%	14%	58%	6%	10%	9%	5%	23%
% of households: Social housing tenants	73%	50%	15%	8%	41%	5%	11%	31%	6%	0%	0%
% of dwellings in Council Tax Band A	95%	30%	6%	11%	4%	33%	12%	36%	0%	0%	1%
% of dwellings in Council Tax Bands D to I	0%	0%	32%	39%	4%	14%	72%	44%	81%	99%	57%
% of persons aged 16-74 never worked & long term unemployed	7%	3%	2%	1%	4%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%	0%
% of persons aged 16-74 with Level 4/5 qualifications	15%	6%	26%	39%	12%	22%	32%	31%	37%	38%	41%

Appendix 11

LOCAL PLANNING POLICIES ON 'RESIDENTIAL NON-RESIDENTIAL MIX'

The following table identifies policies relevant to 'RNR mix' taken from Ashford's, Epsom's and Southampton's Core Strategies and Local Plans. Within the table, crosses indicate where a community's development plan includes a given policy.

**Local Plan and Core Strategy policies relevant to 'RNR mix'**

Nature of policy / target	Ashford	Epsom	Southampton
<b>Retail centres</b> <i>Policy enabling 'RNR mix'</i>			
Require large business uses in the Business Areas of the town centre to have a mix of uses including residential where appropriate		X	
Retain / provide residential above shops in retail centres	X	X	X
Require large office schemes at retail centres to include a mix of uses (uses not specified)		X	
Promote residential development in the town / city centre	X	X	X
Volume of residential units built in the town / city centre is a performance indicator in the Core Strategy	X	X	X
Promote various activities and a diversity of uses / a mix of uses across the town / city centre	X	X	X
Promote / encourage MU development including residential in the town / city centre	X	X	X
Sites specifically allocated for a mix of uses or 'MU' and residential is explicitly mentioned	X		X
<b>Retail centres</b> <i>Policy complicating 'RNR mix'</i>			
Sites allocated for a mix of non-residential uses or non-residential MU development	X		X
Amount of retail floorspace lost to other uses in the town centre and local retail centres is a performance indicator in the Core Strategy		X	
Number of community facilities lost / gained in retail centres is a performance indicator in the Core Strategy			X
Resist loss of offices in Office District in town/city centre	X		X

Retain Primary Retail Frontages and/or ground floor retail space for continued retail use	X	X	X
<b>Brownfield and large sites / developments</b> <i>Policy enabling 'RNR mix'</i>			
Live/ work units supported at brownfield sites			X
Brownfield / regeneration sites allocated for 'MU development' and residential is explicitly mentioned	X		X
Require large business, general industrial, storage / distribution developments at non-strategic employment sites to be MU and include residential where possible		X	
Require a mix of uses including residential at large sites	X		
<b>Residential dwellings, sites, areas, communities &amp; urban extensions</b> <i>Policy enabling 'RNR mix'</i>			
Support home working		X	
Support live/work units			X
Allow the establishment of a nursery in part of a dwelling providing the impacts on residential amenity are minimal			X
Allow small scale employment development in the curtilage of isolated rural dwellings	X		
Allow stables to be erected in the curtilage of isolated rural dwellings		X	
Require open, recreation and/or play space at larger residential developments	X	X	X
Major / all residential development to be within 30 minutes public transport time of various services and facilities - forms a performance indicator in the Core Strategy	X	X	
Retain and enhance the number and distribution of facilities in rural communities including village shops, post offices, schools and GP surgeries – forms a performance indicator in the Core Strategy	X		
When redeveloping existing areas of housing for a mix of uses, an equivalent number of residential units must be re-provided		X	
Provide a local centre at large new residential communities	X	X	
Promote a mix of uses (Epsom) / MU (Ashford) at large new residential communities	X	X	

Support conversion of retained, historic buildings to non-residential use at a new residential community (creates close intermingling between the surrounding housing and these conversions)		X	
Encourage the occasional individual shop / local service, to be located throughout established residential areas			X
<b>Residential dwellings, sites, areas, communities &amp; urban extensions</b> <i>Policy complicating 'RNR mix'</i>			
Sites allocated for exclusively residential use	X	X	X
Protect existing residential areas from demolition and change of use	X	X	X
Prevent the establishment of business, general industrial and storage / distribution uses in established residential areas		X	
Require home working that generates numerous visitors to be directed to commercial and MU areas		X	
Consider opportunities to remove existing bad neighbour uses from residential areas / Separate residential from bad neighbour uses / Locate new bad neighbour uses at existing employment sites	X		X
Make residential areas one of the last places to consider when selecting locations for 'main town centre' uses. Employ a sequential approach to area selection that begins with town / city centres	X	X	X
Separate residential from noisy uses			X
Separate residential from polluting / potentially polluting uses			X
Include a green buffer to separate residential from employment uses			X
<b>Sites / areas safeguarded for non-residential use</b> <i>Policy complicating 'RNR mix'</i>			
Safeguard employment / strategic employment sites for continued / new employment use	X	X	X
Loss of employment land to other uses is a performance indicator in the Core Strategy	X	X	X
Loss of tourism, community, recreation, sports, children's play, leisure, cultural, school and adult education, youth, health, public service and community facilities is a performance indicator in the Core Strategy	X		
Safeguard specified sites for 'community' uses e.g. education, library, sports	X		X

Safeguard specified sites for Park & Ride schemes / car parking	<b>X</b>		
Protect and enhance new and existing recreation areas, open space and natural habitats	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
Allocate specified brownfield / regeneration sites for 'MU development' where residential is not mentioned			<b>X</b>

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