

## BUILDINGS: Community Issues

When buildings are constructed or land is developed, the potential impact on both the local community and the environment has to be considered.

### Urban planning

Urban planning is the process of designing and planning a community to meet the needs (both now and in the future) of those who live and work there. It is vital to make sure that a wide range of issues are planned for, including population growth. Other issues include:

- **Aesthetics:** The look and feel of the design is important.
- **Safety:** This includes safety from natural disasters, such as land erosion and also crime and defence issues.
- **Transport:** There should be transport links supplying the community so that people, goods and services can travel in and out easily.
- **The environment:** This includes planning for pollution and noise, and ensuring that there are enough outdoor green spaces, including parks and gardens.
- **Light:** The amount of natural light that reaches the community and how much non-natural light is needed to balance the needs of those living and working there, bearing in mind the environmental factors of light pollution.
- **Urban decay:** If the planning process is not well managed and the area is uncared for, then urban decay sets in and crime can follow (e.g. businesses close, damage to property is not fixed and roads are left undeveloped). Good urban planning and regeneration schemes can help to prevent this and make the area comfortable and enjoyable to live in, which helps promote a community spirit.

### Green and brownfield sites

In the UK we have what is called a 'greenbelt policy'. If a site is designated as 'greenbelt' it cannot be built upon; the land is preserved in its natural state. When we refer to new building on a 'greenfield site' it means land being developed that was previously used for agriculture (e.g. farming).

A brownfield site is land that has already been developed but can now be redeveloped to serve another purpose. This land has usually been used for commercial or industrial purposes but is now being turned into a residential area.



### Did you know?

In England there are 640sq km of land designated as 'brownfield'. That is equivalent to more than 61,000 football pitches!