The broad strategy

OVER the next twenty years, land has got to be found for 3½ million people, and for 1 million of these, at least, it will mean moving out of London. Population change on this scale will make a heavy impact on the South East; and the need is to plan it so that the result is a better distribution of people and jobs.

No plan at all?

2. The alternative to a plan deserves consideration, for there are plausible arguments for doing nothing. If there were no positive efforts to guide the movement of population and to control the growth of employment, London would become an even stronger and an even larger magnet than it is today. Even more offices would be built in the central area, calling for more housing and more transport for the workers in them. A phenomenal rate of growth could be expected in the ring immediately surrounding London, which is already experiencing the fastest rate of population and employment growth in the whole country. This outer ring will in any event have to find land to house its own strong natural increase, for migrants drawn in by its own young and expanding industries, and for London workers who cannot find homes in the capital.

3. It is sometimes argued that the situation would be self-correcting; that in such circumstances the cost of housing and travel would rise to such an extent that this would have to be reflected in wage increases; and that these wage increases in turn would damp down the demand for labour,

which would become progressively harder to get.
4. Such a prospect would be intolerable, inefficient and expensive. In so far as homes for the extra population drawn to the London orbit had to be found on the periphery, there would need to be very large cuts in the green belt. Whatever may be the arguments against retaining the green belt in its present form, a continuous urban sprawl of this character would pose enormous problems of communications. It would not simply be a question of adding substantially to the cost of improving the suburban rail services; the road problems arising out of this growth, when multiplied by the increase in traffic that has to be faced, would be enormous. One lesson of the Buchanan Report is that, as the continuous built-up area becomes larger, so the traffic problem becomes more difficult and expensive to solve.

The overspill approach

5. The practical arguments against allowing the growth of the South East to spread where it will, or even encouraging more concentration in London, are very strong; but simply to reject these philosophies does not produce a new one. Before the war, the growth manifested itself as a simple outward sprawl from London. The revulsion against this produced the green belt and the first new towns. Great benefits have flowed from this double conception of containment coupled with planned overspill. Hundreds of square miles of countryside around London have been saved; and scores of thousands of London families have been given new homes in a better environment. If the problem were static, or one of only moderate growth, this would have been enough. London could remain much as it is, and the new towns would provide the elbow room needed to get rid of overcrowding in the capital. But London is not static.

6. The present conception of new towns and town expansion schemes as receptacles for London overspill is not adequate to deal with this situation. They receive the overflow; but do nothing to turn off the tap. If we go on as we are—perhaps stepping up the programme a little to receive more overspill—little will be done to change the nature of the problem. London will continue to be the most attractive centre in the whole of the South East, and in the whole of the country.
7. More employment growth in London is likely. The consequences of that growth must be planned for in and around London. But a big change in the economic balance within the South East is needed to moderate the dominance of London and to get a more even distribution of growth. Employment is the key, but many firms are unwilling to go to places which they regard as unsuitable for the conduct of their business.

Growth away from London

8. What is needed is the creation of conditions in which expansion can take place well clear of London. One important need is to draw growth —and particularly commercial growth—away from London. Towns that can do this will, among other things, help to absorb London's overspill. But their function would be wider than that of the existing new and expanded towns.

The aim should be to develop centres of growth alternative to London; only so can we ease the intensity of the pressure on London and the outer metropolitan region. Towns which are themselves centres of commerce and industry could make a large contribution to national prosperity and rising standards of living. They would generate new growth, some of which could be hived off to strengthen the economies of other regions. The biggest of these growth centres would rank as cities of the future.

9. From the point of view of employers, these centres should be places whose advantages are comparable with those of London, and where business is likely to flourish. For people who must leave London and for migrants coming into the South East, these places should offer the prospect of a good job, pleasant surroundings and a better life than could be expected in the crowded capital.

10. To be effective these centres would have to be large and strong. Obviously it would take time before their influence is felt. But they offer the best chance of checking London's continual growth.

Normal growth in the South East

11. All this implies a policy of planned schemes of expansion to provide jobs and homes. But a large part of the population growth in the South East will not require the deliberate development of growth centres. For the greater part of the population growth, the ordinary planning machinery for allocating land to meet foreseeable needs can function satisfactorily, as long as the planning authorities are given warning in time of the size of the population increases to be dealt with in their land budget. Allocations of housing land can then be made by them, for the most part in the form of the normal growth of towns and villages, and, as will be seen, this is the manner in which the greater part of the growth expected in the South East is likely to be dealt with.

12. The largest single element to be provided for in this way is the natural increase of the *local* population. Every county in the South East will have its share of this. In Chapter 15, estimates of natural increase, county by county, are given which will help the responsible authorities to make the necessary allocations. The planning authority itself will know best how to distribute this increase within its area, having regard to the local pattern of population movement and physical limitations. These are not the concern of this Study for they are local, rather than regional problems, although they will present their own difficulties in some places.

13. Local allocations in development plans will have to be stepped up to meet two particular needs beyond those of local natural growth. The first is migration for retirement. This will affect only a few counties, and there is no reason to expect the pattern of the past to change. Much of this type of migration has been concentrated on seaside towns, and its effect on the population structure of these places has been to alter the balance of births and deaths to a marked degree. Some seaside towns, in fact, can expect a fall in population by natural change, rather than an increase.

14. The other big requirement will fall primarily on the planning authorities in the outer metropolitan region. This is to provide housing land for the workers who cannot find homes in the conurbation itself. Some of these will be people moving privately out of London; others will be migrants drawn directly into the outer metropolitan region by the employment opportunities offered by London. Allocations of land for this purpose will need to be aligned with railway capacity (see Chapter 8), and the extent of the provision that needs to be made is discussed later (Chapter 15).

Planned expansion programme

15. But the development plan allocations of the local planning authorities will not normally deal with two important components in the population increase: these are a large part of the overspill from London and migrants for work.

16. Under existing policies, planned expansions —i.e. new towns and town expansion schemes— would expect most of their intake to be overspill from London. But leaving migrants out of the reckoning merely assumes a continuation of the currents which draw people to London and draw them away again as overspill. There are bound to be migrants; but if some of them can be brought into expansion schemes, they can be diverted from London altogether.

17. It was estimated in Chapter 6 that there would be an overspill of more than 1 million people by 1981. It is difficult to say what proportion of these will make their own arrangements to move out, many of them as commuters. In the short and medium term, it is not likely that there will be any great change from the current rate of movement of this kind, which is thought to be about 7,000 households, or roughly 20,000 persons a year. There is still growth to come in London which will hold workers within commuting range. In the long run, the diversion of employment to new centres of expansion should reduce the flow; but their effect is unlikely to be strongly felt until the 'seventies. For the moment, there is no solid reason for assuming any radical change in the rate, and, on this basis, out of the million overspill about 400,000 would move under their own arrangements, and will need to be provided for in the ordinary land allocations of the local planning authorities.

18. In broad terms, therefore, and allowing for the fact that the calculation of 1 million overspill is probably an under-estimate, this would leave at least 600,000 overspill from London to be provided for in planned expansion schemes during the period 1961–81.

19. To these must be added migrants for work— well over three-quarters of a million. This would give nearly 1½ million as the total population to be accommodated in planned expansion schemes. But of these, over a quarter of a million will be able to go into the existing new towns or into town expansions which are already under way or firmly planned (this figure does not allow for any further expansion of new towns beyond their present designated areas). New schemes, and extensions of existing ones, would therefore be needed to provide for nearly 1¼ million people.

20. It is not suggested that this should be taken as a firm target, and that schemes should be put in hand forthwith to absorb that number. Many of the figures going into the calculations are tentative; trends may well be modified; and important new light may be thrown on the pattern of population growth before a lot of money is spent on any scheme. There have been surprises in the past about population changes, and there may be others in the future.

21. Rather is it suggested that a broad figure of 1 million to 1¼ million provides a reasonable basis for considering the *scale* of operations that needs to be attempted, and can act as a guide in the preliminary sifting of places that offer prospects for expansion. The idea would be, after consultation with the local authorities concerned, to produce a list of schemes approximating to this total, and to put schemes in hand, and vary the pace of building, as needs are confirmed. Individual schemes would continue after 1981.

22. Nor is it desirable, at this stage, to try to label too firmly the people who will come to live in these places, for the movements of population which take place are very complex. The main point is that there should be a coherent programme of planned growth, well away from London, broadly on this scale.

Planned expansion schemes

THE planned schemes of expansion would have two main objectives: to get population and employment away from London, and to supplement the normal land allocations of the local planning authorities by providing for about one-third of all the population growth expected in the South East by 1981 (roughly 1¼ million people).

2. In selecting places there is no need to stick rigidly to the artificial boundary of the Study area. As well as choice of places, there should be a choice of methods and machinery—new towns, expansions of existing towns: starting new schemes and building up on ones already under way. There are the alternatives of a few big developments or a lot of small ones.

3. In practice, the choice is sharply narrowed. It is not a question of dotting new towns here and there on a blank map; much of the South East is intensively developed and, more important, it will have to accommodate a great deal of natural growth as well as these expansion schemes. It is essential to try to even out the distribution of the growth, as far as the facts will allow.

General strategy

4. Above all, the schemes must be successful. This sounds obvious, but it needs to be said. If the new centres are to exert a genuine pull on London and are going to provide homes for over 1 million people by 1981, they cannot be chosen by negative criteria. This means that places

should be chosen for expansion which will have a firm prospect of rapid, sound and prosperous growth, and, above all, the ability to attract commerce and offices from London. It is no use choosing places simply because they need rejuvenating; or because there is dereliction to be cleared; or because the land is poor. That is not to say, on the other hand, that places which need rehabilitation should not be chosen as growth centres, if they have the necessary advantages, or that bad farmland should not be built on in preference to good, where there is a choice.

Size

5. The first and dominating factor then is a reasonable chance of success. The second is size, and the two things are closely linked.

6. Practical limitations are very important here. The number of places where there is room for a big new town is small; the number of places where such a town could be expected to prosper is even smaller. There may also be some limitations on the speed at which any particular scheme can go. The experience of the current new towns suggests that it is difficult to sustain a building rate of more than about 1,500 houses a year. There are some indications that beyond this they might run into trouble. This is not just a question of building capacity, although availability of labour is important; indeed, an ambitious new scheme, providing a large site for operations, might give industrialised building techniques the opportunity to build houses faster than ever before in this country. The difficulties have lain more in planning a properly balanced programme of investment for growth on such a rapid scale. In theory, it should be easy; but in practice, things may get out of hand. Housing must keep in balance with jobs, and the rate of industrial and commercial development may restrain the programme of housebuilding. Moreover, there are social difficulties. A rapid build-up produces an unbalanced structure, with too many families of the same age and background, leading to a series of bulges that may take several generations to even out.

7. There is clearly no absolute limitation here. Improved management techniques may overcome many of these difficulties and, where a big expansion scheme is based on a large existing town, this will provide the ballast of an existing, stable community. But there is clearly some limit to the pace of growth in any one scheme, and this, combined with the fact that it will take several years to get a big expansion planned and under way, means that homes for 1¼ million people cannot be provided by 1981 in two or three very big schemes alone. This is a point of general application; it is not possible to define a single 'optimum' form of solution (whether chosen by financial, economic or social criteria) and concentrate on that. Given the magnitude of the task, and the physical facts as they are, a variety of methods need to be used.

8. Subject to this general reservation, big schemes are better than small ones. Large schemes have all the advantages when it comes to providing employment. Small expansions do not readily attract big firms; and the small ones which go to them are at best unlikely to grow fast in aggregate. Only a big town can provide enough school-leavers to meet the recruitment needs of office firms. The bigger the town the more chance there is of finding local industrial or commercial firms that could grow, given the necessary freedom and the stimulus of an expansion scheme.

9. There are other advantages. Generally speaking, the cost per head of providing basic services should fall with increasing size. And only bigger towns—say 100,000 plus—can support a first-class shopping centre, a full range of urban services, a complete educational system and a

variety of entertainments; these things are necessary, not only in their own right, but also because they influence the decisions of employers.

10. There is also the question of administrative and technical effort. A lot of small schemes are an extravagant way of using the very limited numbers of skilled staff who are qualified to plan operations of this kind. With the exception of one or two of the larger schemes the current town expansion programme has produced results, in terms of quantity, that do not adequately reward the effort that has been put in by central Government and by local authorities at the sending and receiving ends. The availability of qualified staff may well prove to be a limiting factor on the execution of the whole Study and it is essential that their skill should be concentrated where it will produce most results.

11. On the other hand, there must be some upper limit beyond which it is not realistic to plan. Limits may be set by the physical capacity of the chosen site and, over any given period of time, by the rate of growth that can be achieved. Nobody can know what is to be the final size of any new town started over the next few years; but the initial target should be large, so that something worthwhile is produced. At the most promising sites allowance should be made in the initial plans for further long term growth up to the scale of a major city.

12. Rather different considerations arise with expansion of a large existing town. Physical limitations may be much more important, and cost per head of additional population may change sharply as the scheme passes points at which major additions to the public services become necessary. The stage at which a big reconstruction of the town centre becomes necessary will also be critical. In this context the traffic needs are crucial.

13. To sum up, the advantages lie with large schemes; but it is impossible to put the whole expansion programme into, say, two or three new towns of half a million each. They would not produce nearly enough houses in time. Equally, a pepper-potting of small schemes is undesirable. It would be unworkable administratively; and would not produce the strong concentrations needed to pull growth from London.

14. So what is wanted (which is conditioned by what can be done) is a balanced programme with a few really big schemes and a number of large to medium sized expansions also. Some should be new towns and some expanded towns, because the two methods are to some extent complementary. New towns are a straightforward and well-tried method, particularly suited to settlement of population and industry within a limited period of years. But for some years they do not provide the pool of labour for office work; and this should be looked for initially in well-established large towns.

Choice of location

15. The areas chosen for growth should lie in places where both industry and commerce can be expected to thrive, and communications, are a vital factor. Any employer will seek first-class links with London and other large markets and centres of industry. There must be easy access to the heads of international communications—the ports and the airports. Primary importance attaches to road communications, for experience in the new towns shows that these are what employers look for first. But rail may have a bigger part to play if the new forms of goods services now being developed prove to be attractive.

Communications in the South East

16. The whole of the South East benefits from the key position of London in the national communications network (see Fig. 18). The roads and the main railway lines radiate from the capital on their way to the Channel ports; to Wales and the West Country; to the Midlands and Lancashire; to Yorkshire, the North East and Scotland. In doing so, they pass through practically every part of the South East; and only East Anglia is less well served.

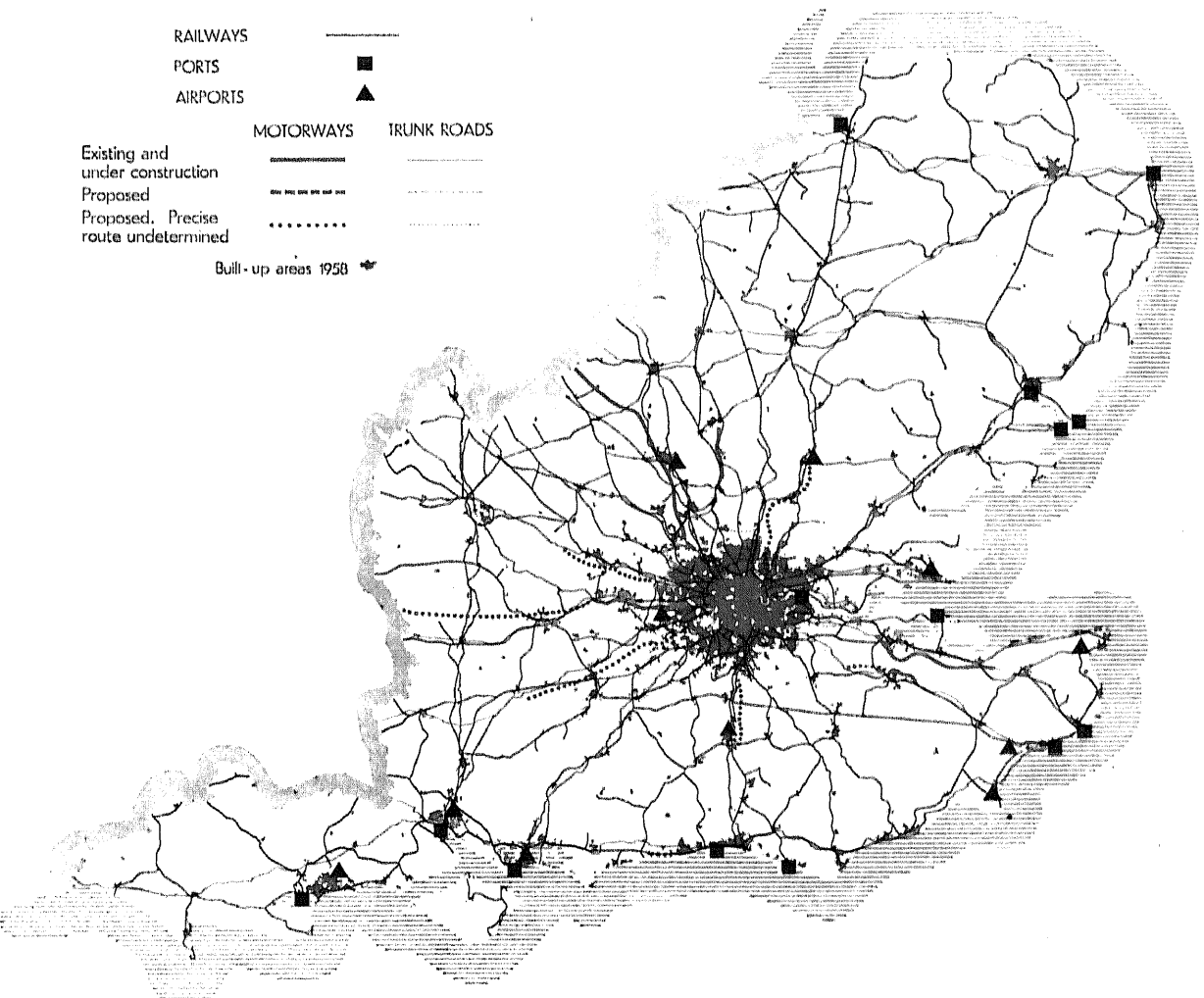

Fig. 18. Communications
The railways shown are those in use in August 1963: the roads include proposals approved by October 1963

17. RAIL. For rail, London is the centre of the national system (see Figs. 19 and 20). Whatever difficulties there may be in finding enough places for the daily tide of commuters into the capital, there will be no shortage of medium and long range capacity to serve London and the towns in the South East lying on or near the main lines. Some services and the rail network itself may be cut back; but the proposals in the Beeching Report[1] are unlikely to have more than a minimal effect on the expansion programme suggested.

18. In the present climate, it is not realistic to expect major new railway developments in the South East. An exception to this is, however, the proposed Channel Tunnel, which offers prospects of improved communications with the Continent, not only from the South East, but from the country as a whole.

[1] *The Reshaping of British Railways* (H.M.S.O., £1)

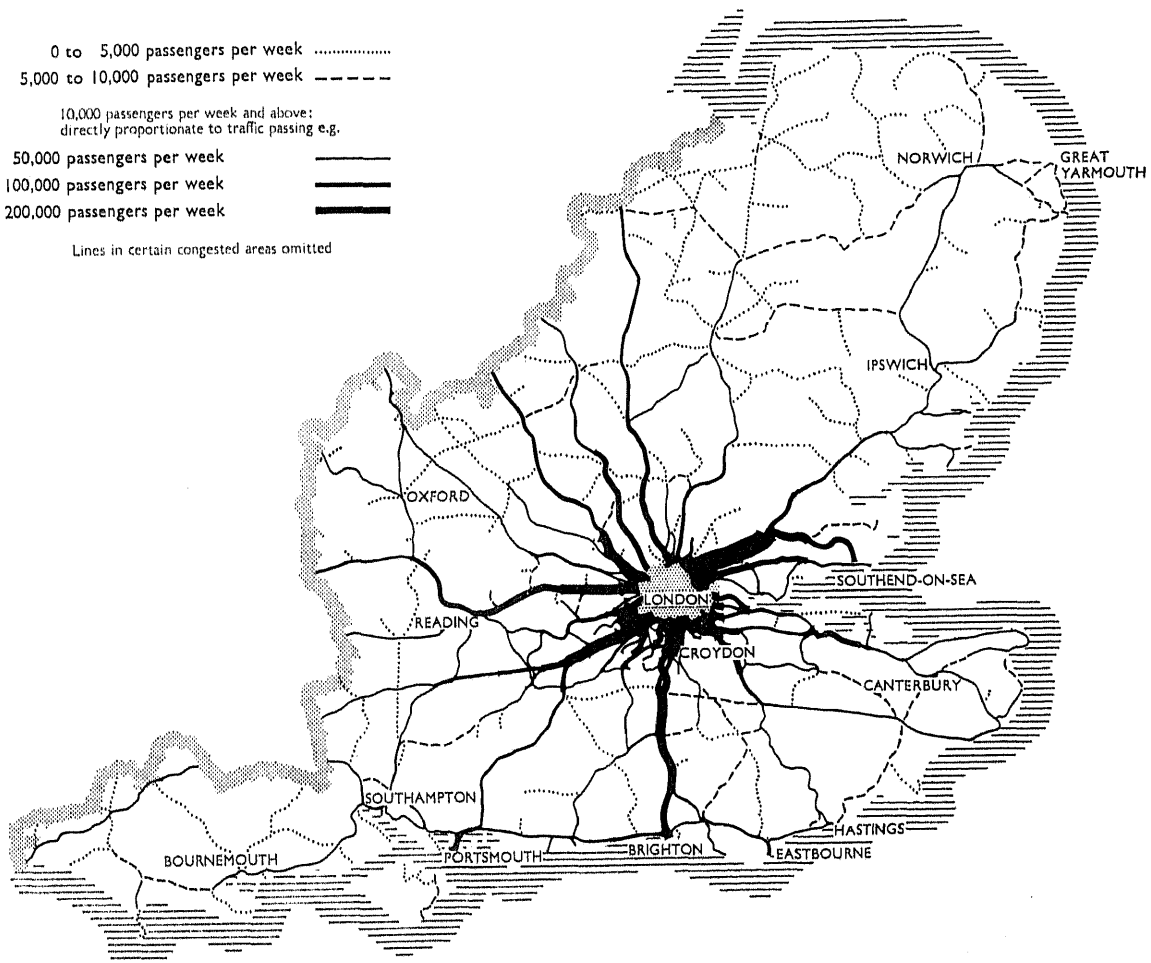

Fig. 19. British Railways: density of passenger traffic 1961
Derived from *The Reshaping of British Railways* by permission of the British Railways Board

19. ROADS. As with the railway system, the road network radiating from London lends strength to the whole of the South East. There are over 1,500 miles of trunk road in the Study area. Since 1955, nearly 80 miles have been completely reconstructed or been improved, and 50 schemes, each costing over £100,000, have been carried through. 70 more schemes are planned and should be authorised over the next five years—some have already started—and these will improve 116 more miles of trunk road. These are concentrated on the most heavily used radial roads from London, such as the A1 (Great North Road), A3 (Portsmouth), A12 (Ipswich) and A40 (Oxford and South Wales).

20. Nearly 100 miles of motorway have been provided in the South East, comprising part of the London–Birmingham motorway, the Medway motor road, by-passes at Maidstone and Stevenage, and sections of the London–South Wales motorway (M4) at Slough and Maidenhead. In addition, a 13-mile length of the M4 is

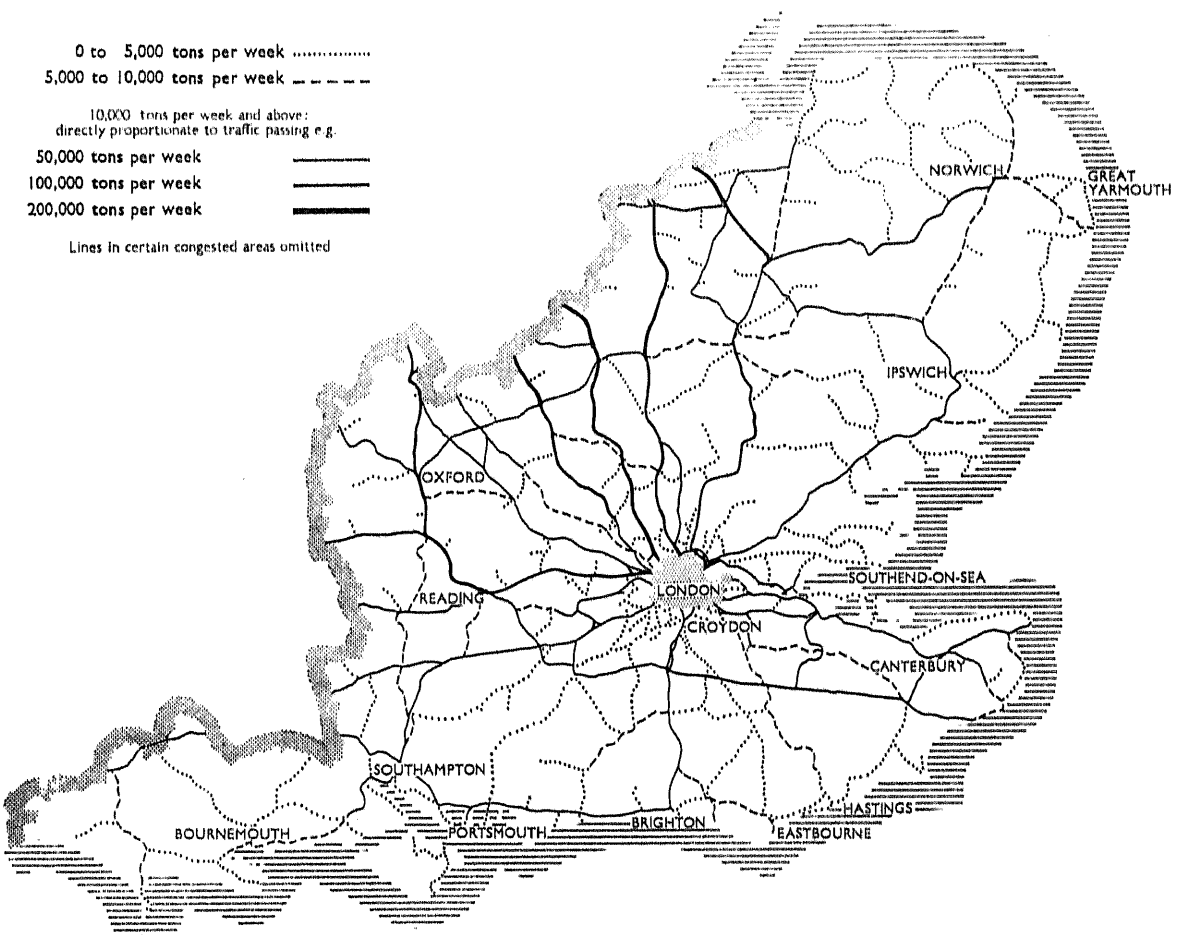

Fig. 20. British Railways: density of freight traffic 1961
Derived from *The Reshaping of British Railways* by permission of the British Railways Board

under construction between Chiswick and Langley and planning for the rest of this motorway is well advanced. New motorways are planned from London to Crawley, to Basingstoke and to Bishop's Stortford, and more by-passes to motorway standard will be built.

21. In selecting places for growth, these improvements in road communications will be of the first importance. The Bishop's Stortford motorway and the improvements to the A12 will give the south eastern corner of East Anglia much better access to London; while the South Wales motorway will bring added economic strength to areas west of London, giving them easy and rapid communications with the port of Bristol, as well as with London and the coalfields and industries of South Wales.

22. These are the prospects offered by present road plans; but in producing an overall pattern of future growth in the South East it is necessary

Fig. 21. Trunk roads: density of traffic 1961

Compiled from the Ministry of Transport's Trunk Road Traffic Census. The volume of traffic (represented by the width of the lines) is the average for a 16-hour day over the period 21st - 27th August 1961

to look further ahead still. The national motorway system, which will total 1,000 miles by the early 'seventies, is designed to provide the basic network for the main flows of long distance commercial and industrial traffic in the country. The road programme is also planned to relieve and renew existing main roads where they are heavily overloaded. (Traffic densities on trunk roads in the South East are shown in Fig. 21.)

23. Since the war, it has so far been essential to deal first with those main routes which carry the greatest volume of industrial and commercial traffic, on which the economy depends. But, since these main routes must serve the present pattern of urban and industrial development, concentration on them inevitably tends to perpetuate that pattern. As the basic motorway network nears completion, and planning of another generation

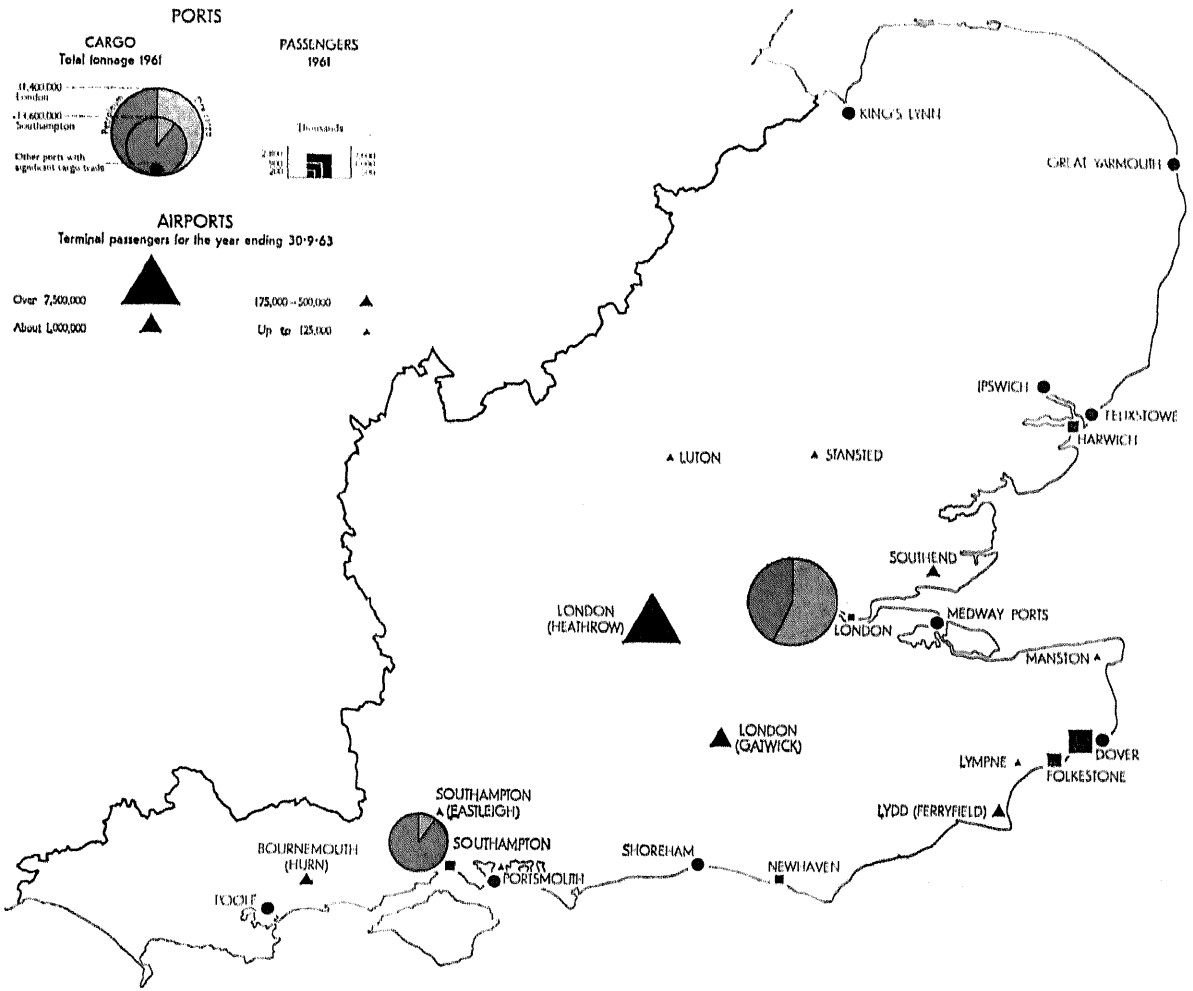

Fig. 22. Ports and airports: traffic 1961

The information relating to ports is derived from the Report of the Rochdale Committee, Tables 4 and 7. That relating to airports is based on information about traffic in the year ending September 1963, supplied by the Ministry of Aviation

of new roads gets under way, it will be possible, to an increasing extent, to shape new road plans to match future needs, for example, new proposals for major changes in the distribution of population and employment. A sense of proportion is needed in this; there is no case for building many miles of motorway for the sake of a remote new town. A single new town—even a big one—would not produce the traffic that would justify all the dead mileage; nor, on the other hand, would the construction of a motorway tempt employers to go to a new town which had no other *raison d'être.*

24. What can be done, however, is to try to determine where likely future developments in the South East will make the case for better roads outside the orbit of London; and, further, to consider how these new, or greatly improved, roads will intersect the London radial system to produce new focal points. Places such as these could be the most promising of all locations for the big new expansions needed, for they will provide new opportunities for growth.

25. One example of this can be seen from the developing need for better communications between Southampton and the Midlands. If expansion takes place on the scale suggested later in this Study at Southampton, and this is linked with the development of Southampton as a port, there will be a growing volume of traffic that will call for something much better than the existing road links, and possibly something on the scale of a motorway. An improved link with the Midlands would intersect the London–South Wales motorway, and would produce a major cross-road in the Newbury–Hungerford area, which would be another natural growing point.

26. PORTS AND AIRPORTS. Ease of access to ports and airports is obviously a factor of first importance when it comes to selecting growth points and Fig. 22 shows the broad distribution of traffic. As ports, London and Southampton stand out, though the presence of Bristol will add to the attraction of growing points to the west of London, especially when the South Wales motorway is built. This pattern is not likely to change much; although there may be scope for some development elsewhere, major port development in the South East is bound to be concentrated on the Thames and Southampton Water.

27. London has the country's main airport at Heathrow. Gatwick supplements Heathrow by handling short-haul and medium-haul services in the southern sector. The combined capacity of these two airports will be too small in the 'seventies and a third London airport will be needed. This may be established at Stansted, in Essex. This is close to the line of the Bishop's Stortford motorway, and the two together would provide a powerful stimulus for development in this area. Local airports offering a direct passenger and freight service to the continent can also be of great value to commercial employers or manufacturers willing to leave London. Southend, whose airport offers quick and easy journeys to Belgium and Holland in particular, is very well equipped in this respect.

Distance from London

28. There is one other general consideration governing the choice of places for expansion. This is the paramount need to channel as much growth as possible *well away* from London—right outside the South East, where this can be done. Even within the South East, distance from London is an important consideration. There are many attractive places in the outer metropolitan region, with excellent communications, a fine industrial record, and the ability to attract

commercial employment. But this is an area with planning problems arising from the growth that is already built in by reason of its population structure and the strength of its economy.

29. It is the outer metropolitan region which has taken the brunt of the planning policies deriving from Abercrombie. It contains all the first generation of London new towns, with their young and fertile population, and their new and flourishing industries. It contains some of the first generation of town expansion schemes, too. It has found homes for the London 'commuter overspill' for whom there was no room in the conurbation, and it will have to find homes for many more, as well as for others drawn towards London by the new jobs created there, but who never find a place to live in the capital at all. At the same time, the metropolitan green belt has been established, and big extensions to it planned, thus reducing the amount of land available for development.

30. In the last decade, the outer metropolitan region experienced a population growth of almost 1 million—an increase of 30 per cent. No other part of the country approached this rate of change; and the assimilation of growth on this scale imposes a real strain on local services. Over the period of the Study, the outer metropolitan region is likely to gain over 850,000 by natural increase alone, without allowing for movement into the area from London and elsewhere.

31. In these circumstances, there are strong arguments for keeping further planned expansion schemes out of this area. In practice, this is not likely to be possible. The difficulty of finding enough centres with the advantages necessary to support strong and rapid growth makes it necessary to look to a handful of places in the outer metropolitan region if enough viable schemes are to be got going. But it may be possible to confine these to the outer part of the area.

CHAPTER 12

Planned expansion: the local factors

So far, only broad strategic considerations in the selection of places for expansion have been discussed. When it comes down to places, a great deal more has to be looked at.

New towns

2. In some ways, it is easier to set out the requirements for a good new town site than for a town expansion. It goes without saying that the pre-requisites must be met—it should have first-class communications, or the prospect of them, and be far enough away from London or other major centres of population. The site has to be physically suitable for development; the contours should not be too severe, and the land should not be liable to flooding. Good agricultural land has to be avoided as far as possible. It must be possible to supply enough water to meet the needs of the town, including its industries, and there must be adequate means of disposing of the sewage effluent.

3. For a large new town of the type contemplated in this Study the aim should be to find sites capable of accommodating 150,000 people—8,000 acres at least. For the biggest schemes, there should be elbow room for later expansion even beyond this figure—physical scope for the growth of a major city.

4. There are few sites in the South East that can pass these exacting tests. If the site stands on good communications and has economic potential, there will almost certainly be a big town on

it already. If there are hundreds of acres of empty land suitable for building, the site is likely to be off the beaten track. To find the sites needed, it has been necessary to take account of likely new developments in communications. The results are given in the next chapter.

Town expansions

5. Where an existing town is to be expanded, other considerations arise. Again, the pre-requisites of good communications and distance from London must be met; there must be physical space for growth, and water supply and sewerage must not present insurmountable problems. But a great deal depends on the size and economic potential of the town itself, and on its character. One important reason for the slow pace of the present generation of town expansion schemes is the selection of small places for growth on a small scale; even if all had succeeded better, the total result would not have been great.

6. For the reasons already given, the need is for large schemes. This implies large towns to base them on, for the attempt to mount a big expansion on to a small town would, in practice, require new town machinery. The large town has the advantage of a stronger administrative machinery which may either be able to undertake expansion (with suitable reinforcement), or which can co-operate effectively with another agency in doing the job. The presence of all the public services and a good shopping centre makes it possible to embark quickly on a big programme of house-building. If there is industry in the town which can expand, given the labour, there will be less need for mobile industry. The population structure (unlike that of a new town in its early years) will include the school-leavers needed by office employers—and one of the big needs is to find places where offices can go to from London. Above all, it is likely to become an effective growing point more quickly than a small town being expanded, or a new town.

7. The search has, therefore, been concentrated on towns which could support a growth of at least 30,000 *over and above* the natural growth that could be expected in the town. This has been taken to mean that the likely places are those of present population of 50,000 and over (bigger towns can be looked to for more than 30,000 growth—perhaps 50 per cent of present population). Smaller places which seemed *prima facie* to offer special advantages have not been ignored (e.g. the small ports), but, by and large, these offer little prospect of rapid large scale growth.

8. Nor has the search overlooked the possibility of schemes outside the boundary of the Study area; and there are indeed three important proposals which do fall outside. Others were looked at but they failed on physical or economic grounds. Big and successful developments may take place in other parts of the country which could help to bring about a better national balance of population. But such schemes fall rather under the description of efforts to retain population in other parts of the country.

9. There are various ways of measuring the character and potential of a town, some subjective, some objective. As a practical matter, subjective tests are not to be despised, for they may greatly influence employers' choices when it comes to making a move. Right or wrong, this is something that has to be allowed for.

10. A more objective test is provided by the rateable value of the town, and of the different elements in it. This gives a measure of the industrial or commercial strength of a town, of

the size and attractiveness of its shopping, and of the entertainments it can offer. One important feature thrown up by an analysis of this kind is an indication of the extent to which the town has proved attractive to office employers in the past.

11. Another test is the amount of industrial employment offered by the town, and the extent to which this employment falls within industrial groups which are expanding quickly, slowly or not at all.

12. This kind of analysis does not and should not lead to a blue print of a standard type of town labelled suitable for expansion. Different towns can justify their selection in different ways, and play a different part in the scheme of things. For example, towns that can attract from London industry which, for one reason or another, is tied to the south; towns with strong indigenous potential for growth, which need the labour offered by a forced growth scheme and will not draw on the limited pool of mobile industrial employment; towns with little industrial potential but which may be especially attractive to office workers and employers.

13. Moreover, however strongly a theoretical analysis may point to a particular place, there may be overriding reasons against it. There are clearly some towns in the South East which, though otherwise attractive, already have problems to which it would be unwise to add by means of a forced growth scheme. Oxford, Cambridge and Brighton are three examples.

14. In the next chapter, details are given of a number of towns in the South East which seem, *prima facie*, to offer possibilities of large scale growth. Just how much growth, at any one of these places, must depend on detailed physical surveys and discussions, which must be undertaken as soon as it is agreed in principle that a scheme should be considered. These will have to cover such questions as the availability of land for housing and industry, the burden placed by population growth on the services of the town as a whole, and the cost of expanding these to meet a rapid rise in population and traffic. The demands which this growth will place on the communications system will need to be examined with great care. Schemes for the development of these towns will have to be planned to deal adequately with the problems arising from the great increase in the number of cars dealt with in the Buchanan Report. It may not be a question of adding new developments to the periphery of existing towns laid out on the traditional pattern. It may instead be necessary to create new forms of town structure which make full provision for transport needs.

Studies by consultants

15. Some pilot studies have been carried out. In the autumn of 1962, the Government commissioned three firms of planning consultants to investigate the planning and financial problems likely to be encountered in the rapid large scale expansion of big towns. Three towns were chosen for this exercise, two (Ipswich and Peterborough) which figure in this Study and one (Worcester) which has been regarded as a possible candidate for the reception of overspill from Birmingham.

16. None of the three studies—made independently by the three firms, which took a town each for theoretical study—discloses insuperable practical difficulties in expansion on the scales envisaged—50 per cent and 100 per cent spread over 15 years or 25 years. The estimates of total costs vary considerably. In part this can be accounted for by the differing degree to which the town centres and existing road networks of the towns were judged to be capable of dealing with 100 per cent more people and up to 200 per cent more cars; but the variations also arise from

differences among the consultants on the extent of the measures recommended to cope with such growth. All disclosed that central area redevelopment was a very significant element in the cost of expansion.

17. As might have been expected, variations in the difficulty and cost of expanding these towns stem from physical considerations peculiar to the particular town: on such factors as the relative ripeness for redevelopment of the existing town centre; the extent to which works on improving public services, the main road network and the town centre would have to be undertaken even if no steps were taken to bring about forced growth; and the room for manoeuvre in selecting areas for residential and town centre expansion which can be economically developed.

18. The particular solutions chosen also have a bearing on cost. For example, in one case the consultant proposes that an entirely new town centre should be built with the road network at a different level from the present one.

19. Certain broad conclusions can, however, be drawn from the studies. Variations in physical considerations and in the choices available in providing for town expansion, between one town and another, suggest caution in attempting to generalise about costs of achieving forced growth of this type. All three studies indicate that the cost per person of doubling the size of the town is less than the cost of expanding it by only 50 per cent. The critical factor in cost variation is the extent to which forced growth makes it necessary to undertake town centre redevelopment and improvement of the town's main road network, on an extensive scale, well before this would occur if the town were left to grow naturally. The need to adapt our towns to a very great increase in car ownership and usage, in the next decade or two, will call for some fundamental and unconventional thinking on the design of large towns and this will be particularly necessary where forced growth of such towns is envisaged, as in this Study.

Other considerations

20. WATER SUPPLY. In all these schemes water supply will be of particular importance, and a separate water supply study is being made in parallel with this planning Study. While there is no reason to fear that enough water cannot be provided to meet the needs of the growing population of the South East, present sources of supply, as now developed, will not be adequate; major new schemes will be required. In some areas (particularly south Essex) the supply is already short. The need for more water will affect the timing of new expansion schemes in some parts of the South East and, in some areas, may limit the number of schemes or the scale of expansion that can be undertaken in the short term. The question of water supply is examined in more detail in Part Three (Appendix 1), page 105.

21. AGRICULTURAL LAND. The South East has an unusually large proportion of good agricultural land. Some of the best of it, e.g. the Fenland soils, does not offer particularly attractive sites for urban expansion; but in many parts of the region the areas most desirable for development are those of particularly high agricultural quality. Good farmland can often be saved by diverting expansion to one side of a town rather than another, but sometimes there is no easy way of reconciling agricultural and other planning interests and it may then be necessary to avoid or defer large scale growth, if the programme can be made up elsewhere.

Conclusion

22. These then are the pointers and the limiting factors that govern the choice of places for expansion. Perhaps the most important has been left until last—the willingness of the local people and of the local authorities to undertake or collaborate in a scheme of this kind. That is why an examination of this nature can be neither exhaustive nor decisive. It is merely the first stage in a process of consultation and discussion, in the course of which many additional factors will have to be taken into account, of which one will be the views of people who would be affected by the schemes.

23. Chapter 13 tries to convert the ideas into places. It may well be that expansion may not prove possible at some of these places either on the scale suggested or at all. It may be that other places will be proposed by the local planning authorities for large scale growth. But the essential point is that, if the population increase in the South East by 1981 is to be dealt with and if growth is to be drawn away from London, something of this order is needed.

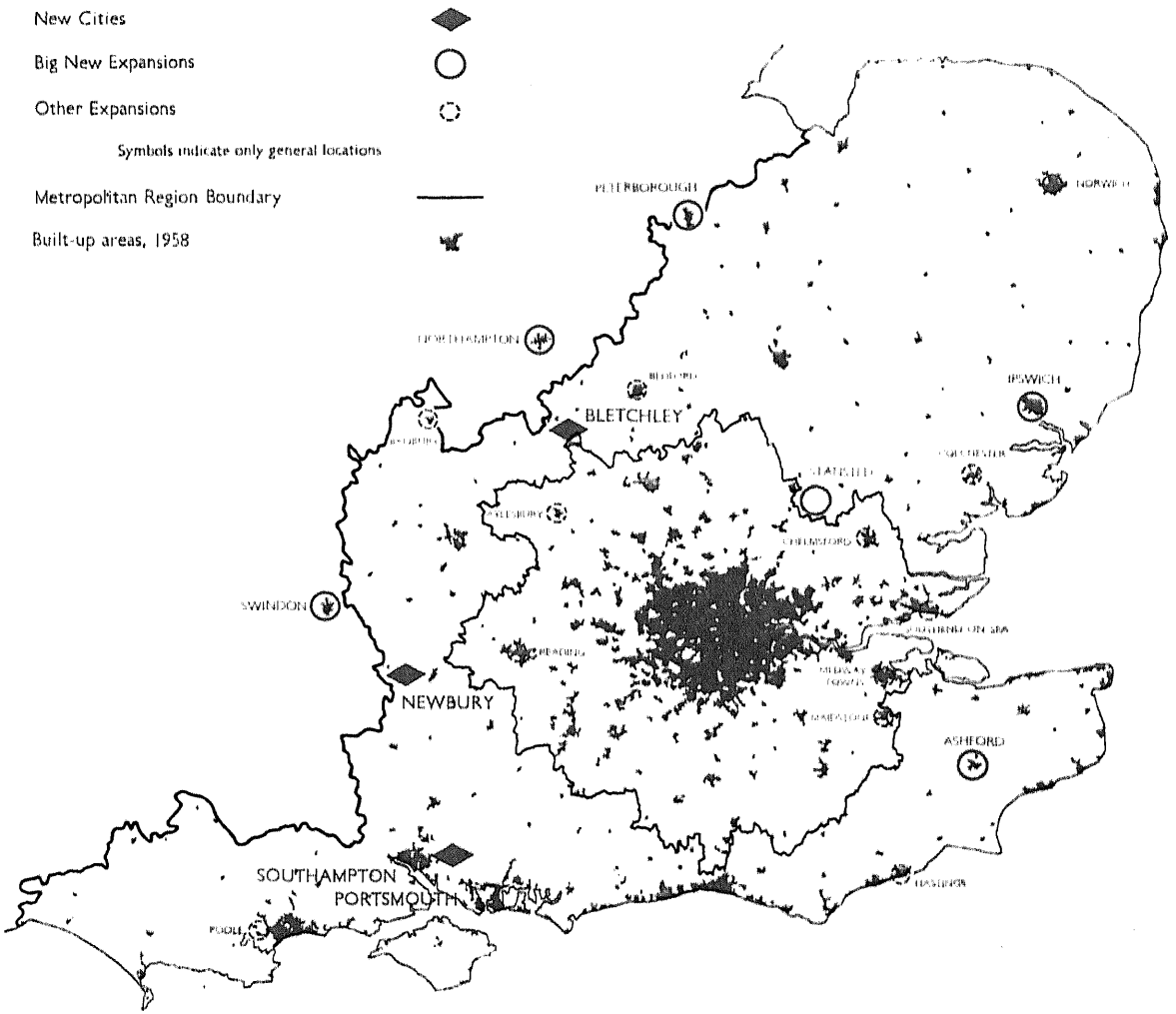

Fig. 23. Areas suggested for expansion

The symbols are diagrammatic only and are not intended to represent the actual location of any planned expansion (see Table IV, page 73)

Places for expansion

CHAPTER 11 set out the main principles that have been followed in the selection of places for expansion. Before these generalisations can be followed up with specific suggestions, some reservations must be made.

2. First, in order to be sure that major schemes of development could be carried out on the scale suggested, detailed examination of all the possible places would be needed. This means more than a physical survey. Particularly where an existing town is to be expanded, a thorough analysis of the consequences of planned growth must be undertaken, which would include not only a straightforward planning survey, but a close examination of the financial effects.

3. With the agreement of the local authorities concerned (who, in giving their agreement, did not commit themselves to the idea of expansion) pilot studies of Ipswich and Peterborough have been carried out, and equally thorough investigations will need to be made of other places before it can be decided whether they offer a firm base for large expansion and, if so, on what scale. The other places mentioned in this chapter have not been subjected to such a detailed examination. But each of them is a probable candidate in the sense that there are considerable opportunities of one sort or another, and that there are no obvious physical limitations to growth or insurmountable difficulties in the way of providing the necessary public services.

4. Secondly, the success of any expansion scheme must owe a great deal to the co-operation of the local authorities and the good will of the local inhabitants, and this implies full discussion and consultation *before* final decisions are taken. It may be asked why this Study, after so long a period of investigation, does not lay down 'solutions'. That is the answer. Each one of the proposals made must be fully discussed with the local authorities and other bodies concerned.

5. The Study does not suggest the direction which expansion might take in the neighbourhood of any of the places mentioned. In all cases, this would have to be considered in relation to many factors, of which one would be the whereabouts of the best agricultural land.

6. It cannot be over-emphasised that the mention of a place in this chapter does not imply a firm view that large scale expansion is necessarily practicable, or even, when the full facts are known, necessarily desirable. The list which follows is intended simply to offer a starting point for discussion and consultation. In it, tentative estimates are given of the scale of expansion that may be possible, over and above growth which will take place in any event by excess of births over deaths. Estimates are also given of the amount of growth that may be possible by the end of the Study period; but this estimate is dependent not only on the physical and economic scope for expansion that may be revealed by more detailed examination, but also on the starting date for any particular scheme and its programming.

7. The list of places is broken down into three sections. The first covers the biggest schemes which offer the best prospects of producing self-generating growth well away from London, and where, in the course of time—well after the end of the period of this Study—the development may grow to the scale of a new city. The second group consists of places where the prospects for growth, though not on the same scale, are still considerable; they, too, should exert a powerful pull on population and employment that might otherwise gravitate towards London. The third group comprises the remainder; places where the economic potential is less clear, or where there may be other difficulties, but where it should nevertheless be possible to mount expansion schemes substantially larger than those of the current programme.

The new cities

8. The **Southampton-Portsmouth** area already has a population of three-quarters of a million, with a strong natural growth, and an economic potential centring on the port. It has excellent deep water facilities, and the Rochdale Committee on Ports[1] has recommended that it should be built up as a major cargo port.

9. Whether or not the port is expanded in this way, there is little doubt of the area's economic potential. Development of the port would allow expansion to take place more easily, but, even without this, the area should be capable of growth on a scale sufficient to make a significant contribution to the solution of the South East problem.

10. The form of development would require careful consideration. Both Portsmouth and Southampton have populations of over 200,000 already; Portsmouth has its own overspill problems. But, by looking at the whole belt of country from the north of Southampton to the north of Portsmouth, it should be possible to find room for ample expansion at more than one point. A detailed study will be required to produce a further assessment, but there seems no reason why the area should not eventually have a population increase of a quarter of a million, over and above its own natural growth, and 150,000 of this might be achieved by 1981 if two or three centres can be developed simultaneously.

11. Apart from purely economic considerations, the whole area is the only one in the South East which can at present compare with the Greater London conurbation. Portsmouth and South-

[1] *Report of the Committee of Inquiry into the Major Ports of Great Britain* (Cmnd. 1824). (H.M.S.O., 15s.)

ampton are the leading towns outside London in both total population and total rateable value. Both have excellent shopping centres, and are well provided with hotels; there is a university at Southampton. In terms of rateable value, Southampton has more offices than any town in the South East, outside London.

12. Southampton is 77 miles from London, and communications will be considerably improved by the building of the M3 which is already planned as far as Basingstoke, 30 miles from Southampton. It should be possible in due course, to provide an excellent link between the Southampton-Portsmouth complex and London by means of this road.

13. Birmingham is 128 miles from Southampton, and development of the area and the port would call for improvement of the communications with the West Midlands.

14. The **Bletchley** area is near the main lines of communication (including M1 and the main railway line, which is being electrified) between the West Midlands and London. It would be difficult to find an area which would be more attractive to industrialists. There should be no trouble in finding enough employment for a new

Areas suggested for expansion TABLE IV

	Population 1961	*Estimated natural change 1961–81*	*Possible scale of increase*	*Possible progress by 1981*
	(*1*)	(*2*)	(*3*)	(*4*)
A. New cities				
Southampton/Portsmouth area	750,000	144,000	250,000	150,000
Bletchley area	17,000	4,000	150,000	75,000
Newbury area	20,000	3,000	150,000	75,000
B. Big new expansions				
Stansted (Essex)	—	—	100,000	75,000
Ashford (Kent)	28,000	3,000	100,000	75,000
Ipswich	120,000	19,000	60,000+	60,000
Northampton	100,000	7,000	100,000	50,000
Peterborough	60,000	7,000	50,000+	50,000
Swindon	90,000	14,000	50,000–75,000	50,000
C. Other expansions				
Aylesbury	27,000	6,000	All of these places seen to offer scope for an expansion of at least 30,000. At some of them, (e.g. Chelmsford and Southend) considerably more; though some of the growth could not take place before 1981.	
Banbury	21,000	3,000		
Bedford	65,000	8,000		
Chelmsford	50,000	7,000		
Colchester	60,000	8,000		
Hastings	65,000	—2,000		
Maidstone	60,000	8,000		
Medway Towns	170,000	24,000		
Norwich	120,000	14,000		
Poole	90,000	9,000		
Reading	120,000	16,000		
Southend	165,000	8,000		

NOTES

1. Targets for planned increase (columns 3 and 4) are *additional* to natural increase (column 2).

2. At some of the places mentioned town expansion (mainly on a small scale) is already proceeding. They are Ashford, Aylesbury, Bletchley and Swindon.

3. The estimates of natural change are provisional, and are made on the assumption that these places will continue to receive the same share of the total natural growth as they have received in recent years.

town here, and a large and successful development should be possible. There is plenty of room for building, and, in the very long term, a new city of a quarter of a million might arise. By 1981, a growth of 75,000 might be achieved.

15. The existing town of Bletchley had a population of only 16,900 in 1961, and there is not a sufficient base for building up the area by means of expansion of the existing town. The growth potential of the area's existing industry is only moderate, but the natural economic advantages of the location should ensure the success of a new town.

16. Bletchley already has an agreement with London under the Town Development Act for the reception of over 10,000 people, and has received a population increase of over 5,500 under this scheme.

17. The **Newbury-Hungerford** area lies on the main line of road communication between London and Bristol, and is roughly equidistant from these two centres. Its communications will be still further improved when the M4 is completed. The M4 will also provide an excellent link with the South Wales industrial complex.

18. The advantages of the area are further increased by its strategic position on the main link between the West Midlands and Southampton (A34). Newbury is only 40 miles from Southampton, and a major development there would obviously tie in well with expansion at Newbury. If, in time, development at Southampton led to the improvement of communications between the port and the West Midlands, the cross roads with the M4 would be in the Newbury area. These developments could give Newbury an even larger potential than Bletchley. It should be possible to plan initially for a population increase of something like 150,000, with hope of growth to a quarter of a million later; and to achieve 75,000 of this by 1981.

19. As with Bletchley, the existing nucleus of development is small—20,000 at Newbury itself. There is no great existing industrial potential in the area, but the natural advantages of its position should make up for this; again, for this reason, any major development would have to take the form of a new town. One drawback is that much of the surrounding area contains farmland of high quality.

Other large expansions

20. In addition to these *three* new cities, there are *six* places which might provide scope for expansion on a considerable scale—of the order of 50,000 to 100,000, over and above the natural growth of each area.

21. Four of these are based on big towns well away from London. One is **Ipswich,** 72 miles from London and in an area which has not so far experienced the exceptionally large population and employment increases which have taken place to the west and north west of London. The others—**Northampton, Peterborough** and **Swindon** are all over 65 miles from London, and outside the boundary of the Study area. Northampton and Peterborough enjoy excellent road and rail communications with the midlands and the north, as well as with London. Swindon is the outstanding example of a successful town development scheme. The fact that it has been able to do this, at a distance of 80 miles from London, and with its own problems of declining employment in the railway workshops, is an indication of its economic potential.

22. The siting of two other big schemes is largely dependent on other developments. The proposed Channel Tunnel makes development in the **Ashford** area, where the main railhead is likely to be, an attractive possibility. This

development might be on a scale far greater than that of the present small town expansion scheme and might take the form of a new town. If the Government should decide to establish a third international airport for London at **Stansted,** in Essex, the employment directly and indirectly generated would provide the initial impetus for a new town in this general area, and its development would be further stimulated by the construction of the Bishop's Stortford motorway. At both Ashford and Stansted, the target population might be of the order of 100,000.

Other expansions

23. The other places mentioned in Table IV are suggested as suitable bases for expansion, judged by the criteria set out in Chapters 11 and 12. In varying degrees, they enjoy the advantages of good communications and potential for employment growth of one kind or another. Several seem particularly well suited to attract office employment away from London, and three are university towns. At these places, it seems likely that there is both economic potential and physical scope for expansions of the order of 30,000 by 1981, and at some of them perhaps a good deal more. At certain places—and this applies also to those suggested for larger scale expansion—it may well be that some of the housing land required could suitably be found in neighbouring towns and villages. This will depend on physical circumstances and on communications.

Further growth of existing new towns

24. So far, the establishment of a number of new towns, and the setting in motion of large scale town expansion schemes have been suggested. At some of the places mentioned, town expansion schemes of the old type are in progress, but what is now proposed would involve virtually a fresh start.

25. The situation is rather different with the current new towns. At some of these there are physical possibilities of further growth—though, in some instances, this will involve an extension of the designated area. The advantage of planning for further growth at a new town now being developed is that the scheme can get away to a quick start. The prospect of economic success is not in doubt at the London new towns, and there is in being an organisation to plan and carry through the development, which can follow on from present targets without interruption.

26. At **Stevenage** and **Harlow,** the development corporations have made technical examinations of the possibility of further expansion. Both towns are planned to take an eventual population of 80,000, but the corporations consider that they could be expanded, without detriment to the structure of the town, to accommodate an eventual population of 130,000–140,000 at Stevenage and 120,000–130,000 at Harlow. If it is decided to go ahead, these two new towns would provide an additional capacity of about 100,000.

27. There is also some scope for expansion at Basildon, Crawley and Hemel Hempstead. The

assets of the last two of these have already been handed over to the New Towns Commission. There is therefore no development corporation to carry through the further expansion, although the Commission has certain powers of development. If, however, the amount and the rate of growth at these two places is not too great there is no reason why they should not expand naturally, like the other towns in the South East not picked out for forced growth.

Centres for office dispersal

28. The whole strategy of decentralisation from London will be undermined if commercial employment cannot be got away from the capital. The first aim must be to get offices a really long way away from London and the success of some of the Government's own staff dispersal moves shows that some offices can be moved right out of the South East.

29. In the South East itself, many of the places proposed for expansion in this chapter will be very suitable for office dispersal, and have been chosen with this in mind. A new town, in its early years, cannot easily provide the surroundings and the type of labour needed by a commercial employer; for some years, therefore, the town expansion schemes will have more to offer. Of the bigger ones, Southampton, Ipswich, Northampton and Peterborough should be particularly attractive to employers; and among the others Aylesbury, Chelmsford, Hastings, Maidstone, Norwich, Reading and Southend. The comparative nearness to London of the first generation of new towns will be useful to employers who cannot go further afield. Moreover, they are reaching a stage in their development at which they can support strong office growth. In the early years, their unbalanced age structure (illustrated in Fig. 24) made for a shortage of young people seeking office work; but from now on the school-leavers will be coming forward in large numbers. There would be advantage in planning and presenting all these places as major office centres, to be preferred, in the long run, to those nearer London.

30. But the scope for office development in the South East is not limited to places where forced growth is planned. Much office work is done by young people and by married women, and for many firms local recruitment will meet most of their needs. The provision of a home with a job will be needed for only a few key workers, particularly if the move is of routine operations being hived off from a head office. There are many towns in the South East that would fill this bill without the setting up of any formal arrangements. Many of the south coast towns fall into this category. Some of them have seasonal unemployment; and their character will be attractive to staff who are transferred from London. Some moderate growth of office employment would also be reasonable at a handful of towns in and near the green belt; such work would offer an alternative to commuting for those living in and near them. These places might include Tunbridge Wells, Tonbridge, Sevenoaks, Reigate, Guildford and Maidenhead. The other sectors around London are well covered by the existing new towns and proposals for new expansions.

31. Finally, there is the problem of the firm which can accept a location on the periphery of London for some or all of its staff, but has a need for such close contacts with its own or other organisations in the City or the West End that it is genuinely unable to go further afield. To argue that *all* new offices should be well away from London and that no new ones should be allowed in any part of the capital or its immediate surroundings is to ignore the existence of this problem, and to risk slowing down the pace of decentralisation. Moreover, the growing im-

balance between homes and jobs in London, and the high cost of providing more transport capacity, point to the need for some good office centres on the periphery. To the extent that peripheral offices are needed, they should be concentrated in attractive centres so placed that they give as much relief as possible to the transport services.

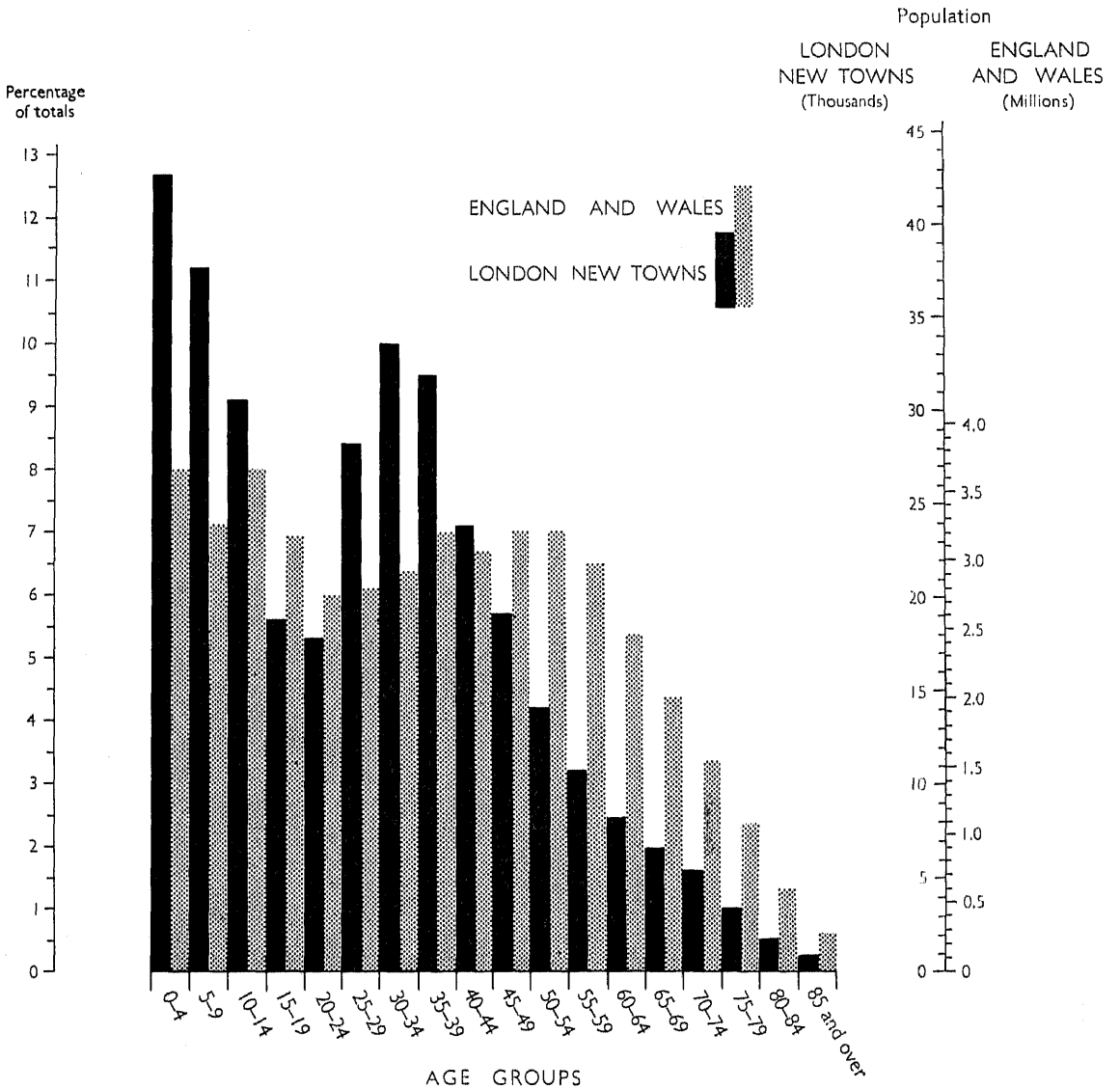

Fig. 24. A comparison of the age structures of the London new towns and of England and Wales as a whole: 1961
From the County Reports of the 1961 Census (see Appendix 2, Table 13)

32. Ideally, these centres should have a fast, preferably non-stop service to a London terminus; good local road and rail communications so that staff can be drawn from people living in the neighbourhood; and a good shopping centre close by. Peripheral centres of this sort can help in easing congestion in the central area and on the last few overcrowded miles on the suburban railways. They should reduce the pressure on the heart of London and, in the long run, help to bring demand down to a point at which central area redevelopment schemes are held back, and some perhaps abandoned altogether.

33. Where such peripheral office centres should be provided, and their number, must be a matter for consideration by the planning authorities in the first place; but, by way of example, suitable towns might include Ilford, Romford, Dartford, Bromley, Croydon, Surbiton, Kingston, Uxbridge and Watford. At some of these—Croydon, in particular—a good deal of building has already taken place or is planned.

Summary

34. In short, this Study suggests that, subject to detailed examination and full local consultation, the need to draw people and jobs away from London, and to provide homes and work for about 1¼ million people (over and above local growth) might be met by a programme consisting of:

(*a*) 3 new cities (Southampton/Portsmouth, Bletchley and Newbury);

(*b*) 6 big new expansions (Ashford, Ipswich, Northampton, Peterborough, Swindon and Stansted);

(*c*) 12 other schemes on a substantial scale;

(*d*) growth beyond the present population targets at some of the present London new towns.

Of the new schemes, those at Bletchley, Newbury, Ashford and Stansted would be new towns, and the others town expansions. In addition, certain other towns should consciously be built up as office centres.

35. It is hazardous to try to assess whether all these schemes, coupled with developments already under way, will provide for 1¼ million people by 1981. At this stage, nobody can tell how many of the new schemes will survive the processes of detailed examination and consultation; there are likely to be casualties. It is difficult also to try to estimate how much progress might be made with each scheme by 1981; this can be little better than guesswork. A lot of work will need to be done on timing and programming after decisions in principle have been taken. But, even on the assumptions that all the schemes went ahead and did well; that all the present new towns and town expansions proceeded successfully; and that additions to the population targets of some of the existing new towns were approved—the total capacity that would be realised by 1981 does not amount to more than 1¼ million. This is too narrow a margin for comfort; and if any of the bigger new schemes should meet with difficulty, there would have to be a search for substitutes.

Timing

36. For practical reasons, it is unlikely that the greater part of the development envisaged in this Study could take place until the 'seventies, and it is during that decade that the rate of progress in the expansion schemes would reach its peak. First the schemes must be discussed and provisionally agreed—subject to full examination by local inquiry; outline and then detailed plans must be drawn up; and the statutory processes of designation and land acquisition must be gone through. After all that, it will take time before the building rate touches its maximum.

37. Nevertheless, not all the problems of the South East will wait until the 'seventies. The population growth is happening now; and, above all, the rapid rate of employment increase in London is presenting ever widening problems. It will take time to check this increase, and it will help if an early start can be made at a few places—for example, those which might draw commercial employment from London—to reinforce the effect of the current programme for new and expanded towns.

38. Two candidates are the existing new towns of Stevenage and Harlow which might well be increased in size; the machinery is there, and the preliminary planning has been done. There are also possibilities of early action at Swindon, where town expansion is already in progress. Peterborough and Ipswich would also have a head start because of the detailed surveys that have been carried out at these towns.

CHAPTER 14

Expansion schemes and employment

THESE suggested schemes of planned expansion will not work unless enough employment is available—at the right time, and of the right kind—for the people for whom houses are being provided. With the first generation of new and expanded towns, the emphasis was on providing the employment needed by the transfer from London of manufacturing industry. There will still be a need for this; but in the future there should be less emphasis on mobile industrial employment and much more on other sources of work.

2. An important question is whether enough jobs can be provided in the South East without prejudice to the development of other parts of the country. The build-up in those parts will depend on the continued diversion to them of all possible mobile employment, through industrial location control and through the fiscal and other financial benefits provided. In the competition for mobile employment, these areas must continue to have priority over the South East—not only for their own sake but also because failure to stimulate growth in the less flourishing parts of the country will lead to more southward migration and consequently a bigger problem in the South East.

Manufacturing employment

3. What was said in Chapter 4 about the industrial structure and the geographical advantages of the South East suggests strongly that, on present trends, there is unlikely to be any overall

shortage of jobs. As far as the South East is concerned, therefore, the problem is likely to be the redistribution of employment growth from the congested areas in and around London to the new expanding centres. The magnitude of this task of redistribution must not be underestimated.

4. The scale of employment that would be needed for the schemes suggested in the Study is greater than that required for the existing new and expanded towns, and there is little mobile expanding industry in London itself. There may be more possibilities in the outer metropolitan region, where there has been rapid growth in industrial employment in recent years. But the prior claim for any mobile industry lies outside the South East altogether.

5. One weakness of the present situation is that there are very few attractive alternatives for a firm wishing to expand in the London conurbation and unable to move out of the South East altogether. There are possibilities in the existing new towns and in expanded towns; but most of the current expansion schemes are on too small a scale to attract some employers. There are some firms who can satisfy the Board of Trade that there are genuine reasons—unusually close links with particular suppliers or markets, for example—which prevent them from going further afield. In such cases, there is an unenviable choice between allowing the growth to take place in London and preventing it altogether.

6. Given a wider selection of places to go to, it seems likely that more firms could remove some of their operations from the conurbation, thus adding to the total pool of employment on the move. Experience in the new and expanded towns suggests that a transfer yields more jobs, over and above those that might have been created had the firm been allowed to stay in London, because the combination of new premises and housing for workers acts as a stimulus to productivity, and because there is *room*—in the physical sense—to expand. With a wider choice of destinations, too, it should be easier to persuade whole firms—not merely expanding branches—to leave the conurbation, and to take a tougher line with managements who can show good reason for opposing longer range moves. The stimulus to growth provided by the expansion of strongly growing centres of the kind envisaged in this Study should therefore add to the total amount of mobile industry, and make it easier to find the employment required for the increasing population of the South East without doing this at the expense of other parts of the country.

7. If much of the planned expansion takes place by means of expansion of existing towns rather than new towns, there will be some stimulus to local employment. Analysis of the experience of some of the smaller expanded towns suggests that there is considerable growth of local jobs from small expansions in such towns; for every nine jobs imported into the towns concerned, four have been created by the growth of local industries. Experience with larger town expansion schemes might not be the same, but this gives some measure of the pool of local growth which might be released by expansion schemes. The selection of towns with potential for growth by reason of their industrial structure will reduce the need to introduce industry from outside.

Growth of service employment

8. Over and above this stimulated growth of local manufacturing industry, town expansions and new towns will create a considerable growth in service employment. There are some purely local services which grow with the population of an area. To this extent, town expansion helps to provide its own employment. In England and Wales, over two-fifths of all jobs come from such

local services; in the South East outside London the share is almost a half. Secondly, there are national and regional services many of which are tied to the areas of greatest population, in that the increase is in ratio to the population growth. The growth of the South East from natural increase alone is therefore likely to stimulate the creation of jobs in service industry, which cannot be moved away to help the areas of unemployment.

Decentralisation of offices

9. There is the further aim of getting a lot of office employment out of London. This subject has been discussed in other chapters and it is sufficient to repeat here that there should be more long range transfers to big centres of expansion outside London.

Timing

10. It must be emphasised that it would take years to negotiate, plan and start to build the large expansions suggested in this Study. As compared with commitments elsewhere, notably in Central Scotland and the North East (where programmes are already being implemented), the proposals in the Study will not start to make significant demands on employment until the 'seventies.

Conclusion

11. A good deal of the employment needed can be found in service industries, including office employment, where there is little clash of interest between north and south; by the development of latent industrial potential in towns chosen for expansion; and by taking advantage of any growth held back under existing circumstances because firms cannot transfer their activities outside the South East. Even so, a considerable effort will be needed.

Land allocations

THIS part of the Study has so far concentrated on the big new expansion schemes. But these would deal with only about a third of the total population increase expected in the South East. This leaves the greater part of the growth to be dealt with by *normal* planning processes —by the allocation of more land in the development plans of local planning authorities.

2. Since the London conurbation is unlikely to house more than its present population over the period of the Study and will in fact have an overspill of about 1 million, the rest of the South East will have to accommodate 3½ million extra people. The total is made up as follows:

Population growth outside London 1961–81 TABLE V

	millions
London overspill	1·0
Net migration gain	1·1
Natural increase outside London	1·4
Total	3·5

3. Of this total, 1½ million should be accounted for in planned expansion schemes of one kind or another—1–1¼ million in the new schemes suggested in this Study (including additions to the population targets of the existing new towns), and over a quarter of a million in the current

programme for new and expanded towns. The total growth is, of course, significant for the local authorities of the South East, for public services of every kind must be provided. But when it comes to making land allocations, the new and expanded towns fall into a special category; they will call for the preparation of separate master plans or town maps as each expansion scheme is agreed. For that reason, they stand a little to one side of the normal process of development plan reviews.

4. Leaving aside this $1\frac{1}{4}$–$1\frac{1}{2}$ million which requires separate treatment and which covers much of the overspill and migration, the local planning authorities outside the London conurbation need to allocate, as part of their review of their development plans for the period ending in 1981, land for over 2 million people.

The needs to be met

5. This total of about 2 million is made up of three elements, and its composition to some extent governs the areas where the land should be made available for development. The *first* consists of the natural increase of the population living outside London, and is spread over the whole of the South East. The *second* is migration for retirement; this is localised and the effects are felt most strongly in some towns on the south coast. The *third* is voluntary overspill from London; the Londoners who move out privately, rather than in planned overspill schemes, many of them continuing to work in London. The main brunt of this type of movement falls on the counties immediately surrounding London in the outer metropolitan region. Over and above this, some allowance must be made for contingencies.

6. NATURAL INCREASE. In calculating the natural increase to be expected in the area of each local planning authority in the South East, the method adopted in Chapter 5 for regional population projections has been used. The rate of future increase has been based on the rate of growth experienced in each area over the period 1956–62. This method makes allowances for the change in population structure caused by migration, and is particularly useful in giving warning of areas where a big turnover of population may lead to unexpectedly heavy rates of natural increase. Conversely, this type of calculation brings out those areas where inward migration of elderly people for retirement has resulted in a population structure which gives a very small rate of natural increase, and very often an excess of deaths over births. A word of warning is necessary, however. While this technique can be applied with confidence to large units of population, such as the South East as a whole, the results must be treated cautiously in their application to smaller areas—for example, to a single town or a small county.

7. VOLUNTARY OVERSPILL. Of the other elements of population growth for which land must be allocated, spontaneous movement out of London represents a demand mainly on the inner parts of the Home Counties adjoining the conurbation, because a large part of it is commuter overspill. Though some people working in London are prepared to face longer daily journeys, the greater number of the commuters will seek homes in the outer metropolitan region. Allocations of land for this purpose will, above all, need to match the transport services; extra land will be needed where there is at present spare capacity on the railways and more will have to be allocated in those sectors where rail improvements are decided upon.

8. RETIREMENT. The main weight of migration for retirement falls elsewhere in the South East.

The heaviest provision of land for this purpose will have to be made by the coastal counties and county boroughs.

9. CONTINGENCY ALLOWANCE. While a primary aim of the expansion schemes is to divert migrants from London, and while the estimated rate of migration for work to the South East has been taken as one pointer in arriving at the size of the expansion programme, it would be naïve to expect that every migrant from outside the region will find his home in a new or expanded town. Movement is going on all the time; and the possibility has to be faced that, because of planning or investment difficulties, the full programme may not be realised by 1981.

10. For all these reasons, allowance must be made in development plans for the fact that there is likely to be some migration for work to those areas where employment is growing strongly. This is very important in the outer metropolitan region, where the pull of London is likely, in the shorter term at any rate, to create an additional demand for housing land. Some flourishing towns in the South East which are not suggested for expansion will also continue to draw in migrants. In the South East as a whole, an allowance of about a quarter of a million might reasonably be made under this head.

11. There are more general reasons for making land allocations on a generous basis. Errors are inevitable in estimating needs over a 20-year period; if they are under-estimated, artificial land shortages are created and land prices are forced up unnecessarily. Builders, seeing that their needs are not being met, are tempted to hoard land against future needs, and there is a risk of starting a vicious circle of shortages and rising prices in the very areas where building land is most needed. Even where the situation is easier, some choice is needed; it is poor planning to attempt to equate demand and supply exactly. The risk of over-provision is very slight, as population trends are now going; the worst that might happen is that the land might be developed a few years later than was expected when it was allocated.

Allocations to the planning authorities

12. Table VI makes a provisional allocation of these land demands in the South East outside the London conurbation, county by county. The table excludes the proposals for new expansion schemes and for additions to existing schemes, which will have to be considered individually and separately, and which might account for about 1½ million of the total population increase. This allocation, which falls to be dealt with in normal development plan reviews, covers the balance of just over 2 million people, plus the contingency allowance of a quarter of a million.

13. The table distinguishes between the two main sources of population increase which the local planning authorities may expect. The first is natural increase; the second is population movement—voluntary overspill from London, and migration for retirement. The contingency allowance is also included under this second head, and the figures have been rounded; for the allocation, area by area, of particular types of population movement must, outside planned expansion schemes, necessarily be speculative.

14. The allocation of population targets to county boroughs presents special difficulty for two reasons. In the first place, some of the county boroughs in the South East have comparatively small populations, and the calculation of natural

Estimated population changes, excluding planned expansions, South East England outside the conurbation, 1961-81 (*thousands*) TABLE VI

Local planning authority area	Total				Outer metropolitan region				Rest of South East England			
	Population 1961	Change 1961–81			Population 1961	Change 1961–81			Population 1961	Change 1961–81		
		Total	By births and deaths	By other causes[1]		Total	By births and deaths	By other causes[1]		Total	By births and deaths	By other causes[1]
All areas	**9,614·2**	**2,235**	**1,345**	**890**	**4,269·1**	**1,385**	**870**	**515**	**5,345·1**	**850**	**475**	**375**
Bedfordshire	379·9	105	93	12	206·4	60	56	4	173·5	45	37	8
Berkshire	381·7	146	100	29	226·9	96	57	22	154·8	50	43	7
Reading	120·4		17		120·4		17		—	—	—	—
Buckinghamshire	484·7	144	100	44	431·2	139	97	42	53·5	5	3	2
Cambridgeshire	187·7	40	28	12	—	—	—	—	187·7	40	28	12
Dorset	308·9	30	18	12	—	—	—	—	308·9	30	18	12
Isle of Ely	88·7	15	13	2	—	—	—	—	88·7	15	13	2
Essex (excl. Met. Essex)	1,112·5	274	239	38	794·2	230	214	19	318·3	44	25	19
Southend-on-Sea	163·7		—3		163·7		—3		—	—	—	—
Hampshire	744·7		161		93·1	50	29	21	651·6		132	
Bournemouth	149·0		—21		—	—	—	—	149·0		—21	
Portsmouth	210·0	267	22	69	—	—	—	—	210·0	217	22	48
Southampton	203·9		36		—	—	—	—	203·9		36	
Hertfordshire (excl. Met. Herts.)	681·9	263	158	105	681·9	263	158	105	—	—	—	—
Huntingdonshire	76·7	23	19	4	—	—	—	—	76·7	23	19	4
Kent (excl. Met. Kent)	1,155·5	265	125	137	651·9	205	106	99	503·6	60	19	38
Canterbury	30·2		3		—	—	—	—	30·2		3	
Norfolk	380·3		50		—	—	—	—	380·3		50	
Great Yarmouth	52·6	77	2	14	—	—	—	—	52·6	77	2	14
Norwich	119·6		11		—	—	—	—	119·6		11	
Oxfordshire	199·6	78	51	14	31·5	10	4	6	168·1	68	47	8
Oxford	106·4		13		—	—	—	—	106·4		13	
Suffolk, East	222·9	55	22	11	—	—	—	—	222·9	55	22	11
Ipswich	117·2		22		—	—	—	—	117·2		22	
Suffolk, West	126·9	26	19	7	—	—	—	—	126·9	26	19	7
Surrey (excl. Met. Surrey)	645·1	252	99	153	645·1	252	99	153	—	—	—	—
Sussex, East	374·4		—23		123·7	45	7	38	250·7		—30	
Brighton	161·6		—5		—	—	—	—	161·6		—5	
Eastbourne	59·8	60	—11	111	—	—	—	—	59·8	15	—11	73
Hastings	66·2		—12		—	—	—	—	66·2		—12	
Sussex, West	409·3	115	3	112	99·2	35	29	6	310·1	80	—26	106
Isle of Wight	92·3	0	—4	4	—	—	—	—	92·3	0	—4	4

[1] 'Other causes' means overspill from London outside planned schemes, migration for retirement, and a contingency allowance.

change is particularly vulnerable to error with small units. Secondly, some county boroughs may be physically unable to provide the land needed for their natural increase or for any newcomers; and this may give rise to local overspill problems. This situation is not a new one, and it should normally be possible for neighbouring planning authorities to settle the matter by direct discussion. The estimates of natural change given in Table VI should not be taken to mean that a particular county borough has enough land to meet any increase mentioned. The changes from other causes have been grouped together on a county basis; again the local allocations of land to meet them may be governed by physical factors.

15. Local planning authorities in the outer metropolitan region may find it difficult, within the context of present policies, to find enough land. They have to provide for strong natural increase; for commuter overspill; for migrants drawn in by employment growth in London; for the continuation and for the extension of the existing new towns; and, in the outer part of the area, for a few of the new expansion schemes. All this in an area which contains over 800 square miles of green belt, and proposed extensions to it that would take in another 1,200 square miles. The implications of all this growth for the green belt are discussed in Chapter 16.

16. While the finding of enough land to meet the totals suggested in Table VI will be difficult enough in some places, it must be remembered that the totals would be even higher if it were not assumed that the new planned expansion schemes would cater for a third of all the growth in the South East. If for practical or other reasons it does not prove possible to mount a programme of the order suggested in Chapter 10, it will be necessary to increase the scale of provision made by way of local land allocations.

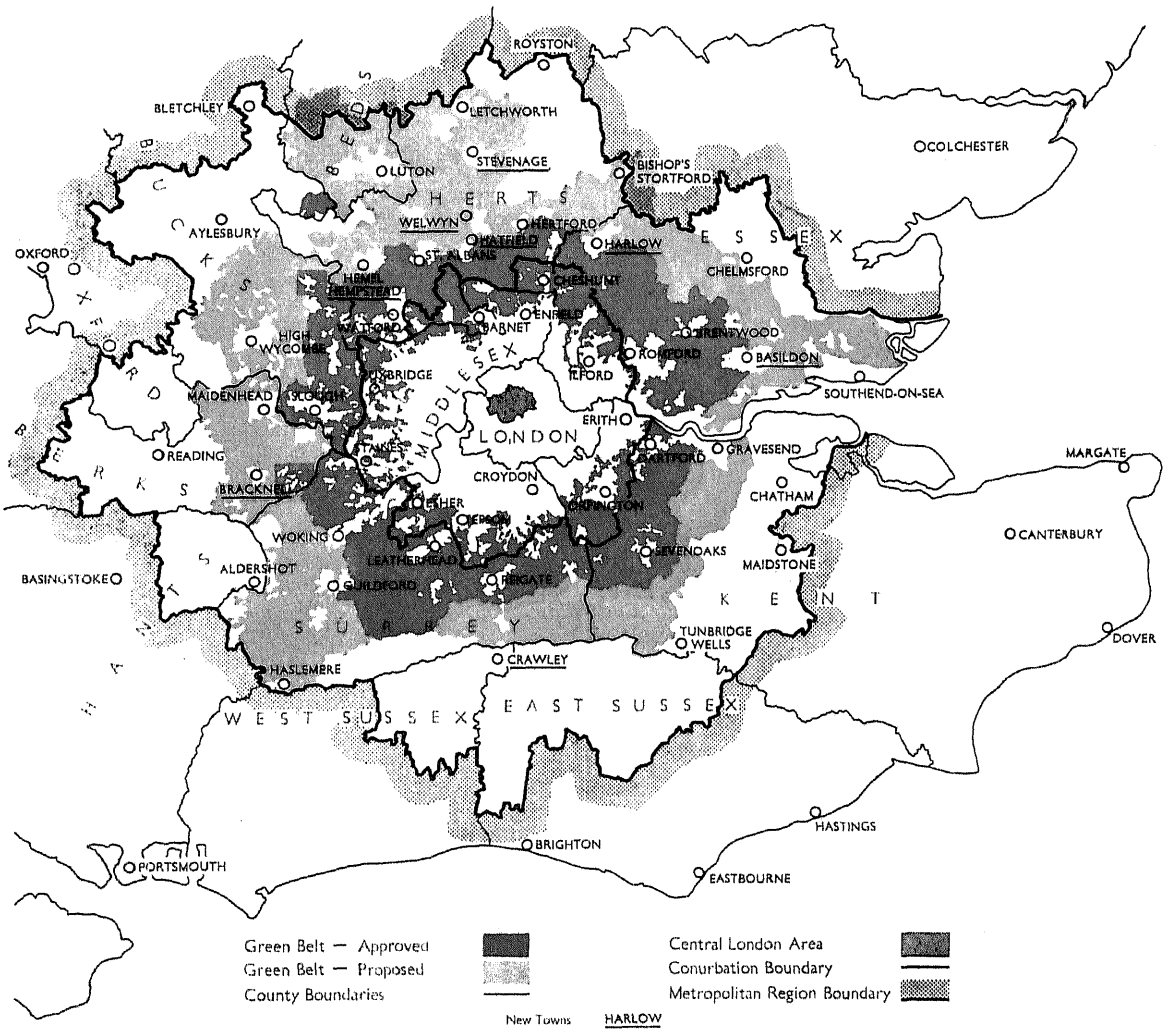

Fig. 25. The approved metropolitan green belt and proposed extensions

The approved green belt covers areas for which green belt proposals have already been approved by the Minister and incorporated in approved development plans. The extensions shown are those submitted formally or informally by local planning authorities. The map relates to the position in December 1963

The London Green Belt

THE main problem in the South East is that of accommodating growth. Green belts, on the other hand, are instruments primarily of restriction. Moreoever, it is of the essence of green belt policy that the restriction should be permanent. But permanent restriction sits uneasily with the knowledge that steady population increase is likely in the South East, not only during the period covered by this Study, but for as long afterwards as anyone can foresee. Whatever may be achieved by decentralisation, the pressures arising from current growth in and around London are falling in areas which are critical for the future of the green belt. Over the period of the Study, there is likely to be a natural increase of 1 million people in the London conurbation—the area surrounded by the green belt—and a natural increase nearly as great (870,000) in the outer metropolitan region, the ring of mingled town and country in which the green belt and the proposed extensions are situated.

2. There is a real conflict here which will not be solved on the one hand by crying 'inviolable'; or, on the other hand, by scrapping one of the main achievements of post-war planning, which still has a vital role to play.

3. This conflict has led to much public discussion of the purpose and function of the London green belt, and to some criticism of its boundaries. Critics argue (with some force) that the popular idea of the green belt as a playground for Londoners is belied by the facts; that much of it consists of airfields, hospital grounds, water reservoirs and agricultural land, to which the public have no access. They can say, too, that a large part of the green belt is far from being fine landscape—gravel pits, some of the small holdings and market gardens and the indeterminate and characterless type of land which can be found in places on the fringes of London. Some maintain that parts of the green belt have lost their

original purpose and are little more than high-class residential areas defended for property reasons.

4. There are good answers to many of these arguments. Nobody need be ashamed of a green belt that includes the Chilterns, the Surrey Hills and the Thames Valley; and the existence of semi-urban uses in the green belt is no reason for building on it. Land is needed for the sports grounds, the hospitals and the water reservoirs; the green belt must not only meet these current needs, but provide a future reserve for uses of this kind. Quite apart from the preservationist reasons for defending the green belt, positive planning requires that a large part of its area should not be built on.

5. But it is less easy to explain the value of some parts of the green belt. Not all green belt land need be of high landscape value; any undeveloped land can provide a barrier to prevent coalescence, and open land of any sort can form a useful part of a larger whole. But some of the green belt close to London is not only characterless but unsightly—for example, some of the derelict glasshouses in the Lea Valley, which were described by the Minister of Housing and Local Government as 'no adornment to the green belt'.[1]

6. There is also the argument that since the essence of a green belt is inviolability it should be untouchable; that once properly defined, there should be no alterations in its boundaries, no matter how circumstances may change; and that, after the first nibble, there would be no end to encroachment.

A new approach?

7. The advocates of change have put forward two main proposals. The first is to push back the boundary half a mile or so from the edge of the conurbation all the way round. The argument is that this would release a lot of land for development, and make it possible to build homes for hundreds of thousands of people. Even if this were so, the objection to this approach is that a detailed process of selection would inevitably have to be carried out; the exercise could not be done with a pair of dividers. If the half mile belt contained a common, a valuable gravel reserve and land within the approach to London airport (to take three random examples) excisions would have to be made. It might well be that other green belt land, which did not happen to fall within the half mile, could be released for building with far less harm, if any is to go at all. In short, the problem will not yield to blanket treatment. If any green belt land is to be released for building, this should be done on the basis of detailed surveys by the local planning authorities.

8. The other idea is more radical; it involves abandoning the green belt in its present form, and constructing an entirely new one. This would not take the form of a constricting girdle. Instead, development would be allowed to radiate from London along the main lines of communication in roughly star-shaped fashion; in between, wedges of green would be carried right into the built-up area. This pattern would have two advantages. It would keep town and country separate, but close together, and it would have a flexibility which the present system lacks, for radial development could proceed to meet the demands of the growing population, without destroying the green wedges. The main difficulty about this idea is that it has come too late. If the green belt had first been defined at a

[1] House of Commons *Official Report*, 26th February 1963, Col. 1160

time when the facts of population and employment growth in London were fully known, this might have been the chosen pattern. But in fact, over the last 15 years, a quite different type of green belt has been drawn up and embodied in plans. A great deal of development has been planned and carried through against this background of a green belt, rather than green wedges.

Demands on the green belt

9. Even in the past, the green belt has never been literally inviolable. Both the local planning authorities, and the Minister on appeal, have found it right to authorise development in the green belt from time to time, either because the facts made an irresistible case for an exception to policy, or because, on close examination, the green belt boundary proved to be indefensible at a particular point. For the future, there are strong arguments for finding more building land to deal with the concentration of growth that is inevitable in the outer metropolitan region; and there would seem to be some land within the green belt that could be developed without real loss. On the other hand, there can be no question of going to the other extreme and abandoning the conception of a green belt around London. This was made clear in the London White Paper:

> 'The Government believe that the green belt should remain a permanent feature of the planning policy for London. They will maintain the approved green belt without substantial change, and they will make extensive additions to it.' (paragraph 64)

10. Table VI provides a broad estimate of the housing demand which is likely to arise in the outer metropolitan region over the Study period (excluding demands arising from existing or new schemes of planned expansion). If this demand could be met by building *anywhere* in the 40-mile ring around London, there would be no great problem; but much of it is tied to particular places. The green belt and the proposed extensions contain some of the most thriving towns in South East England. These towns and the green belt ring generally can expect strong natural growth and, on present trends, employment growth that will retain the consequent increase in their labour force and call for more. Even in the smaller towns and settlements in the green belt many of the young people growing up will want local homes. Allocations of land in other parts of the South East will not meet these local needs.

11. Then there are the needs generated by London. Earlier chapters have shown that some part of London's housing needs will be met by a continuation of the process whereby people move out of the capital and find their own homes in the outer metropolitan region. Further, increasing employment in London will continue to make a call for more workers than can live in the conurbation. Some of these will be commuters moving out of London; some will be drawn from the existing population of the outer metropolitan region; and others will be migrants drawn from elsewhere but driven, by lack of space in London, to find their homes outside. For these people, too, allocations of land at long distances from London will not serve. Their homes must be within reasonable reach of a railway line to London—and one which has, or can produce, capacity to spare—and the journey to London should not be excessively long. It is true that some people commute long distances daily, notably from the towns on the south coast. It is one thing to do this as a matter of choice; quite another to be compelled to do so because houses and housing land are not to be found within reasonable travelling distance of London. Moreover, long distance commuting is expensive and it cannot be expected that the ordinary London worker will wish to pay for a daily

round trip of 60 to 100 miles. In 1961, well over 1 million people were entering and leaving the central area daily; but of these, only 17,000 held season tickets from places outside the outer metropolitan region.

12. The nature of the housing demand therefore calls for the allocation of some land close to London, in the ring which contains the approved green belt. In this part of the green belt, the presumption is strongly against change, and, given all the other possibilities, there should be no need to take extensive areas for development. A great deal can be done within the framework of existing planning policies. Local planning authorities were invited by the Minister of Housing and Local Government in 1960[1] to reconsider their practice on densities, and many are now applying new standards. The planning bulletin on residential densities[2] has shown how modest increases in densities at the lower end of the range, combined with good housing layouts, can produce homes for many more people per acre of land. In the towns themselves, opportunities will arise for the redevelopment of older residential areas; in green belt towns experiencing strong population growth, it is particularly important to secure the highest density that is reasonable in the circumstances of the site being redeveloped, in order to reduce the demand for new land.

13. A good deal could also be done by modest adjustment of town map areas, even in the approved green belt. There must be few places where it can convincingly be argued that it is impossible to allow any peripheral extension, no matter how small, to the area allocated for development. Where there is no danger of one country town running into another, a small extension of this kind can produce land for many houses without making any serious impact on the general shape of the green belt and without damaging its main functions.

14. In areas outside the towns and other large settlements, there is much less scope for change. In the countryside, there should be no relaxation of the general presumption against development; otherwise there would be no point in having a green belt. But in some villages, there is scope for infilling and rounding off—terms which are notoriously difficult to define and to apply to particular places. What may be permissible is influenced by the shape and composition of the village, the road pattern, the contours and features of the landscape, and the facilities and public services which are available. The design and visual quality of the development proposed will also be of the first importance.

15. None of the methods suggested so far for providing more homes in the green belt ring involves taking land out of the green belt, except perhaps on the fringes of existing towns. But there is also the problem of land on the fringe of London, some of which has little or no value for green belt purposes. Some of this land might make a most valuable contribution towards meeting the land shortage. There are strong arguments for suggesting that it would be better to allow building on land of this sort instead of taking open country further out. The London County Council, with Essex and Hertfordshire, are already examining the possibilities offered by the Lea Valley; and there may be other areas of this kind which should be considered similarly.

[1] *Circular No. 37/60.* Ministry of Housing and Local Government (H.M.S.O., 3d.).

[2] Planning Bulletin No. 2: *Residential Areas – Higher Densities.* Ministry of Housing and Local Government (H.M.S.O., 2s.).

Summary on the approved green belt

16. In the ring immediately surrounding London there will be heavy demands for housing land of a character that cannot all be shifted elsewhere. It should be possible to meet most of this demand within existing planning policies—by reviewing towns maps, increasing densities, and encouraging residential redevelopment. Some modest extensions of town map areas may also be called for, on a scale which would neither affect the general size or shape of the approved green belt, nor interfere with its functions of containing the main built up mass of London, keeping separate the country towns outside, and preserving the fine countryside of the Home Counties. A positive examination of villages in the green belt might also yield useful results. Finally, some of the fringe land on the edge of London might be developed with advantage or at any rate with no real loss; but only in a limited number of places where the character of the land justifies this. Any changes that may be necessary in the green belt will be small, and should be planned as a whole with regard to the final result. As was made plain in the London White Paper, it should be for the local planning authorities themselves to consider initially what areas might be suitable for housing, and to make proposals which can be examined by public local inquiry, bearing in mind the scale of the demand that has to be met and the likely continuance of that demand after the end of the period covered by this Study.

The green belt extensions

17. In the outer ring, covered by the proposed extensions to the green belt, there is much greater freedom for manoeuvre, for the boundaries have not been firmly fixed.

18. Many of the problems are similar. The area will have to meet its share of the general population growth in the outer metropolitan region. There will be strong local growth, and some parts are close enough to London to take some of the growing numbers of commuters. At the same time, there are powerful arguments for strengthening the present green belt around London by making extensive additions to it. Population increases on the scale contemplated in this Study will be no bar to this; but the boundaries of the extensions that are needed should be settled with proper regard to long term needs, for there is clearly a limit to the amount of land that can be and ought to be allocated for development in the ring which lies closer to London.

19. The danger of spreading the green belt extensions too far afield, and of drawing them tightly round existing development is that, in the long run, population pressures will make it impossible to hold the line. The green belt becomes of less value if each new reassessment makes it necessary to re-draw the boundaries. If the green belt is to be strongly maintained, and if it is to enjoy popular support and respect, its boundaries must be such that they can withstand all foreseeable pressures. This means that land should be allocated for development on a scale that is fully adequate to meet the needs set out in this Study; and further, that some margin of unallocated land should be left in town map areas to meet long term needs without cutting into approved areas of green belt.

20. There is therefore a case for a critical examination of the proposed extensions. The first step is to make the land allocations that are needed and, where this can be done, leave a margin of undeveloped land for later needs. The next step is to consider the shape of the green belt area which can and should be protected in the long term. The approved green belt will hold the physical expansion of London in check. In the extensions the two main aims should be to maintain the separate identity and the physical separation of country towns; and to prevent building on fine landscape.

21. The amount of countryside which needs to be retained to make an effective break between towns depends to some extent on the local topography. In many places, quite a narrow gap may be sufficient, provided that the towns have direct access to a wider sweep of open country in some other direction. Similarly, there is no rule of thumb for defining valuable landscape. There are some areas of outstanding national scenic value—like parts of the Chilterns—which are obvious candidates for permanent protection; other less well-known features of great local importance, like Sharpenhoe Beacon, or Luton Hoo; and stretches of attractive country which need permanent protection, not so much because of their appearance, but because their proximity to a big town makes them both valuable and vulnerable.

22. In other words, in the areas at some distance from London, a *positive* reason should be shown if it is intended to bring land into the rigidity of the green belt system. There should be a case for acting *now*; for example, where two towns are close together or where a stretch of good countryside is threatened with urban encroachment that would destroy its scale or diminish its value as a rural lung for town-dwellers.

Use of the green belt

23. Finally, there should be more emphasis on the positive functions of the green belt. The initial aim—namely to halt the indiscriminate urban sprawl of London—has been achieved by the establishment of the green belt as part of the plan for Greater London. A study of the plans for towns and smaller settlements within the green belt ring, and of planning permissions granted for building development outside these urban areas, shows that in general the green belt has been firmly held with relatively little encroachment over the last 15 years or so, notwithstanding the very strong pressures for building.

24. All land in the green belt should have a positive purpose; whether it be its quality as farmland, its mineral resources, its special scenic value, its suitability for public open space or playing fields for Londoners, or for those land uses generated by the main built-up area, which cannot suitably be located within it—such as reservoirs and institutions needing large areas of open land around them. Most of the approved green belt passes one or more of these tests without argument; but there are in it some areas without character or quality which at present cannot be seen to serve any positive function.

25. There is a need to survey and plan the green belt in a thorough and positive way so that the land in it is effectively used, so that the worthwhile countryside can not only be preserved but enhanced for the enjoyment of Londoners, and so that the opportunities for active recreation, which are increasingly in demand, can be fully exploited. The worked-out gravel pits in the river valleys are a good example of an opportunity to reconcile the demands for mineral

working and disposing of London's rubble and other waste material with positive landscaping and imaginative comprehensive development of areas for recreation in the open air—sailing, fishing, water sports of all kinds, and playing fields. More public access to enable people to walk through the countryside, and more provision of car parks in suitable places to allow the motorist to stretch his legs or picnic, are other objectives for consideration.

The green belt of the future

26. A re-examination of the green belt and its extensions on the lines suggested in this chapter should lead to a stronger and larger green belt; one which it will be easier to hold secure against the population pressures of the future; and one which will contribute more positively to the health and well-being of 8 million Londoners.

27. There will be understandable anxiety at the thought that some green belt land may be allocated for housing after the counties have reviewed the position. But, in the approved green belt, any changes are likely to be very small. Much will depend on the ingenuity and determination of the local planning authorities in finding the land needed in other ways—in particular, by reviewing their town maps and raising densities. Some idea of the scale of things can be given by the fact that even if the planning authorities were to decide that they wanted to find homes for as many as 150,000 people in the approved green belt, this would take only 1 per cent of the whole, leaving the other 99 per cent intact.

Investment

It was made clear at the start that this Study was primarily concerned with *land*—the problem of getting enough land allocated and brought into development to provide for the large population increase which the South East has to face over the next twenty years or so. The Study is not concerned with investment as such. Though the strategy outlined in it would clearly have implications amongst other things for the pattern of investment, it would not of itself make important new calls on national resources. It is much more concerned with the question where necessary development could be carried through to the best advantage.

2. Nevertheless it is clear that in order to meet population growth a lot of money, both public and private, will have to be spent in building houses, schools, shops, offices, factories and roads, and on public services of all kinds. Money will also have to be spent in remedying existing deficiencies in the social fabric and in carrying through normal renewal. Broadly speaking this is money which will be spent sooner or later, but there are bound to be priorities.

3. So far as public service investment in the South East is concerned, the Study does not in any way imply either increasing it or bringing it forward at the expense of other programmes.

Local costs

4. The main proposal in the Study is that there should be a programme of new and expanded towns with the object of decentralising growth from London. Land and development costs are

higher in London than elsewhere in the South East. There is a further advantage from steering growth away from London since reduction in the number of commuters reduces and delays the demand for improvements in the transport services.

5. For the reasons explained earlier, it is desirable to concentrate this growth into a number of large expansions. Studies of the cost of expansion of large towns and the further enlargement of some new towns show that the unit cost of development falls as the size of the town is increased to a quarter of a million (studies have not yet been made of larger towns). In other words, one town of 150,000 costs less than three of 50,000, besides having many other advantages.

Regional costs

6. The local savings from concentrated development are unlikely to be offset by higher regional costs on basic services—water, electricity and gas—since the towns proposed for growth are conveniently situated and expenditure must be made on these services simply to meet the growth in population, however it is distributed.

7. Water supplies require special explanation. Until now water supplies have been locally planned, but in South East England in the future they must be planned on a regional basis. (Details are given in Appendix 1.) It would be desirable to initiate the works required soon since they will take several years to plan and execute, but their cost would be relatively small.

8. The strategy of the Study has been based very largely on the road communications that already exist in the South East, and on improvements and additions already firmly planned. The most important of these are the motorways to South Wales, Bishop's Stortford and Basingstoke. Little addition to existing plans will be required (or can be expected) during the present decade. In the longer term, as was made clear earlier, there may be a case for improving Southampton's communications with the Midlands.

9. Many of the places suggested for expansion will need good feeder roads to the motorways; where existing towns are to be expanded, such roads would be needed in any event, but it may be necessary to plan them in such a way that they can take more traffic.

London

10. The total transport requirements of London itself will be seen in better perspective when the results of the London Traffic Survey are available. The Survey will provide an invaluable basis for working out developments to London's road system, but the policy of easing central area congestion by the decentralisation of office employment may increase the need for improved lateral communications in the outer areas.

11. On the railways, the main need would be for improvement of the suburban services. Fairly heavy capital expenditure would probably be needed, but the amount would be less if it proves practicable to provide extra capacity by the rearrangement of services. London Transport might also have to undertake costly improvements.

12. The suggested policy of dispersal from London would probably tend to reduce investment on road and rail together.

Summary and general conclusion

THESE are the main points arising out of the Study:

(i) POPULATION

There is likely to be a population increase of about 3½ million in the South East over the period 1961–81, of which nearly 2½ million will be excess of births over deaths in the South East, and just over 1 million net inward migration from all sources. Further growth—probably at a higher rate so far as natural increase is concerned—is likely after 1981.

(ii) THE LONDON CONURBATION

The heart of the South East problem lies in the strong population and employment growth of London and the area immediately surrounding it. During the period of the Study an overspill of about 1 million from London must be expected. About 400,000 of these will find their own homes outside the conurbation, many of them in the outer metropolitan region, the bread-winners travelling to work in London daily. The remaining 600,000 will need homes and work in towns well beyond the green belt. But, because of natural increase in the conurbation, the population at the end of the period is expected to be close to its present level of 8 million. The number of jobs—particularly office jobs—in London is likely to go on rising for some time.

(iii) LOCAL POPULATION GROWTH

Most of the population growth in the South East can be looked after by normal planning processes; but local planning authorities will have to allocate much more land. Their development plans will have to provide land to accommodate well over 2 million more people by 1981.

(iv) EXPANSION SCHEMES

There should be a second generation of new and expanded towns, conceived on a larger scale than those now being built. The need is for big schemes in locations favourable for growth. They should accommodate London overspill, and should attract some of the migrant population and employment growth that might otherwise be drawn into the London orbit. The biggest of these schemes should, in time, grow into major cities of the future, and act as strong counter-attractions to London. A programme for 1–1¼ million people is required.

(v) PLACES FOR EXPANSION

Places where it seems physically practicable to develop major cities are the Southampton-Portsmouth area, the Bletchley area and the Newbury area. New towns might also be built at Ashford (Kent) and Stansted (Essex); and large scale town expansion schemes could be based on Ipswich, Northampton, Peterborough and Swindon. Smaller, but still substantial, additions could be made to some of the existing new towns and to a dozen other towns in the South East. Some of these, and other places, should be built up as prestige office centres to encourage the decentralisation of commercial employment.

(vi) TIMING

It will take time to consult the local authorities and other interests about these schemes, to examine each in more detail to confirm that expansion is practicable, and to prepare a detailed plan. The time for most of the building is likely to be in the 'seventies; some of the schemes would continue to develop in the 'eighties and beyond. But if a handful of attractive schemes can be got going quickly it will ease the pressure on London.

(vii) INVESTMENT

This Study makes no specific proposals for capital investment. So far as public service investment is concerned, what is done in the South East and its timing must depend on national priorities.

(viii) TRANSPORT

Substantial improvements to the London suburban rail services and the London Transport network will be needed. In the rest of the South East, the big expansion schemes rest on the existing pattern of main roads, and on firm proposals to build new motorways. But, in addition, Southampton may need greatly improved links with the Midlands.