

2nd December, 1986

2
Prime Minister,
DWS
5/12

DEVELOPMENT

There are some encouraging signs of a quickening of pace in the field of urban regeneration.

I know over the years that you have been worried about the strength of feeling in the south-east against over rapid development, thinking that this is another example of a dog-in-the-manger resistance to change and economic progress. It does, however, have some other advantages.

If we succeed in limiting development in the south-east to a more modest scale, and forcing some of the new housing and industrial development into the city areas (including London, Reading, Bristol and the other large towns of the south-east itself) the following advantages would flow:

1. The public expenditure demands for new schools and hospitals to service new towns and villages would be reduced in the shire areas.

2. The public expenditure and political costs of closures of schools and hospital wards in the inner city areas would also be reduced.
3. The pressure for more new road expenditure in the south-east to service new centres of population would be reduced.
4. There would be savings on the public budget in the inner city areas, as more private capital would be available and less dependence on public money.
5. Fewer active enterprising people might then move out of the cities, one of the main causes of the collapse in some London boroughs and in the centre of some of our towns.

Placing some limitation on south-east greenfield development and encouraging more action to redevelop the cities is good news in both places. It is true that antagonism to development in the south-east has become widespread and unreflective. People even oppose infilling developments, new industrial estates on old power station and gas board sites or,

the use of old railway land. If we could claim that there was more balance in policy - that there were not going to be whole new villages and towns built over the greenfields of Berkshire, Hampshire, Surrey and East Anglia - we might find more brave souls prepared to argue in favour of sensible, reasonable scale developments and the re-use of urban land throughout the country.



John Redwood