Problems of urbanisation in the inner city - inequalities

Inequalities exist in all urban areas. Inequality means extreme differences between poverty and wealth, as well as in peoples' wellbeing and access to things like jobs, housing and education. Inequalities may occur in:

- housing provision
- access to services
- access to open land
- safety and security

Often people who live in inner-city areas experience a poor quality of life. This is because the inner-city is typically a zone with older housing and declining industry. The diagram below compares the quality of life for someone living in an outer London borough with that of someone who lives in an inner London borough.

Graph showing quality of life in Outer London

Graph showing quality of life in Inner London
Unemployment and incidents of long-term illness are higher in the inner-city boroughs, while households are more likely to have central heating and multiple cars in the outer-city boroughs. Governments and planners often step in to help redevelop run-down inner-city areas. Inner-city redevelopments, such as those in London's Docklands or Manchester’s Salford Quays, may improve the physical environment of the area and improve the quality of housing. But it can also create even greater inequalities because the local residents may not be able to afford to live there anymore. Often the old industrial jobs are replaced by skilled jobs and new people move to the area.
Urban decay & deprivation

Decay & deprivation is a relative concept depending on how deprived the area is in relation to more prosperous areas.

Inner city areas suffer

- Poverty
- Pollution
- Crime
- Overcrowding
- Poor housing conditions
- Unemployment
- Racial tension

Causes of Deprivation

Inner city areas were once thriving communities with a mixture of land-use and rich living alongside poor. There were shops & houses, services, community spirit & little crime. However there were high levels of pollution – land, air & water. Poor sanitation led to a high death rate.

Cycle of deprivation

After the industrial revolution people became increasingly affluent. This led to social segregation – rich move out of inner city → suburbs. People left in the inner city:

- Older residents
- Single parent families
- Students
- Poorer families
- Ethnic minorities left behind – formation of ghettos.
Decentralisation increases the problem: - 

Movement of businesses out of inner city – unemployment – Dead Heart. 

Removal of businesses causes a loss of money from the area so there is little money available to invest in improvements. 

Out-of-town shopping centres means less wealthy are deprived of better shops – less mobile. 

**Inner city Problems**

**Social Problems**

- Properties have deteriorated 
- High percentage of overcrowded households 
- Higher death & infant mortality rates 
- Lower life expectancy 
- Social segregation – Racial discrimination e.g. Brixton. People are socially excluded. 
- Persistent unemployment – culture of poverty 
- High levels of stress due to poverty – family breakdowns. 

**Economic problems**

- Loss of business & industry – massive unemployment (51% above national average. 
- Few people can afford to own their own houses or invest any money. 
- Local authorities have little taxes so lack of investment in the local area. 
- Environmental decay – spiral of decline. 
- Businesses put off by high land prices, lack of space, high crime & traffic congestion. 

**Environmental Problems**

- Decay & deprivation of factories – seedbeds for crime e.g. drugs. 
- Lack of open space 
- Dereliction and poor state of repair causes depressing environment. 
- Air pollution 
- Local watercourses often badly polluted by factories. 

Overall the problem was so bad that there was multiple deprivation due to huge number of different problems that the areas face. There were numerous initiatives to try to stop deterioration.
The inner city has the following characteristics -

- Old factories and houses are mixed in together as they were built during the 19th century when most people walked to work (no cars); there was little open space left between the buildings
- The street pattern is often grid iron
- In Scotland the housing is usually tenements; in England terraced housing (think "Coronation Street")
- Often have empty buildings, derelict land, vandalism, crime, poverty, unemployment and other social and economic problems
- In the last fifty years much redevelopment has taken place in these areas; many high rise multi-storey residential blocks of flats have been built
- As both the houses and factories had chimneys air pollution was a problem; with industrial decline and housing redevelopment this has reduced
**Inner city areas**

Compare what you know about the CBD with the features of inner city areas.

The inner city area is located, in older cities, near the centre and surrounding the CBD. Inner city areas are identified not only with physical features but often by negative socio-economic features:

- high density of buildings and lack of good quality open space eg. parks
- older, nineteenth century, lower-cost housing - likely to be tenements in Scotland and terraced housing in England
- slum housing
- derelict land
- old declining industry
- a declining population with high unemployment
- large areas of re-development or urban regeneration
- limited convenience shopping facilities
- high levels of air pollution from traffic, and visual pollution in the form of vandalism and graffiti
- areas demolished and used for motorways and ring roads

Why were inner city areas built surrounding the CBD?

- Old heavy industrial factories were near the city centre market.
Low cost housing like tenements were built quickly for poorly paid workers who needed to live close to work.

People in poor inner city areas were able to make use of city centre amenities. Many inner city areas have now been improved through urban regeneration schemes. Think of examples you know from your own area. Improvements in areas like Leith, in Edinburgh, include:

- new housing, such as high rise flats
- renovation of older housing, often tenements
- environmental improvements by landscaping, improving docklands
- attracting a mix of inhabitants for example, by introducing luxury flats
- increased employment opportunities by opening restaurants, leisure centres and government offices such as the Scottish Office
- upgrading shopping areas and improving road links
The inner city

Terraced houses in Brighton, East Sussex

The inner city is also known as the **twilight zone**. It is typically found next to the CBD and has mainly terraced houses in a grid like pattern. These were originally built to house factory workers who worked in the inner city factories. Many of these factories have now closed down.

Unemployment and other socioeconomic problems have led to periods of unrest in many inner city areas, eg Toxteth in Liverpool. Many inner city areas declined in the late 20th century and have undergone a period of regeneration in recent years, for example Watford Arches Retail Park, which is located on a former industrial site. Run down terraced housing is often bought by investors and improved to appeal to young professionals who need access to the CBD. This is called **gentrification**.
Urban models in MEDCs

It is possible in many cities to identify zones with a particular type of land use - eg a residential zone. Often these zones have developed due to a combination of economic and social factors. In some cases planners may have tried to separate out some land uses, eg an airport is separated from a large housing estate.

The Burgess and Hoyt model

Geographers have put together models of land use to show how a 'typical' city is laid out. One of the most famous of these is the **Burgess** or **concentric zone model**.

This model is based on the idea that land values are highest in the centre of a town or city. This is because competition is high in the central parts of the settlement. This leads to high-rise, high-density buildings being found near the **Central Business District (CBD)**, with low-density, sparse developments on the edge of the town or city.

![Burgess model diagram](https://via.placeholder.com/150)

**Central Business District (CBD)**
- Factories / Industry
- Working class housing
- Middle class housing
- Commuter zone

The Burgess model

However, there are limits to the Burgess model:

- The model is now quite old and was developed before the advent of mass car ownership.
- New working and housing trends have emerged since the model was developed. Many people now choose to live and work outside the city on the urban fringe - a phenomenon that is not reflected in the Burgess model.
- Every city is different. There is no such thing as a typical city.

Another urban model is the **Hoyt model**. This is based on the circles on the Burgess model, but adds sectors of similar land uses concentrated in parts of the city. Notice how some zones, eg the factories/industry zone, radiate out from the CBD. This is probably following the line of a main road or a railway.
The Hoyt model
Half of inner city school-kids in deprived areas may be consuming fast foods/drinks at least twice weekly

Key factors are taste, ready access at fast food outlets, and peer influence

[Consumption of takeaway and fast food in a deprived inner London Borough: are they associated with childhood obesity? Doi 10.1136/bmjopen-2011-000402]

Over half of inner city school-kids in deprived areas may be consuming fast foods/drinks at least twice a week, if the findings from one London borough are applicable elsewhere, suggests research published in the online journal BMJ Open.

One in 10 of these children visited a fast food outlet every day, the study shows.

The authors quizzed 193 pupils aged 11 to 14, living in Tower Hamlets, a deprived inner London borough, about their weekly fast food preferences and habits.

The children, who attended two schools which operated an “open gate policy” at lunchtime, were weighed and measured to see if their weights were appropriate for their age, gender, and height.

Over half of them (61%) were entitled to free school meals, and around one in three (30%) was overweight or obese, with almost a third of boys (32%) of boys and 29% of girls falling into these categories.

More than half of the children surveyed (54%) said they bought fast food or drinks from a fast food or takeaway outlet at least twice a week. And one in 10 consumed products bought from these outlets every day.

Frequency of fast food/drink consumption was not associated with age, gender, or entitlement to free school meals. But children from non-white backgrounds were more likely to be frequent consumers of fast foods.

Seven out of 10 children from Black ethnic backgrounds and more than half (54%) of those from Asian backgrounds purchased fast food/drinks more than twice a week. This is of some concern, say the authors, as people from these ethnic backgrounds are more prone to cardiovascular disease and diabetes.

The most commonly cited reason for buying fast food was taste, with 92% of the children saying they liked the taste of the products sold in fast food outlets. The second most popular reason was ready access: the children said they could buy fast food products quickly.

Among those who bought fast food at least two to three times a week, most (71%) did so because of
the influence of their peers - they wanted to join their friends.

Analysis of the responses on food types and portion sizes showed that chips were the most popular option. Girls were significantly more likely to buy a portion of chips without other foods than boys, but boys were more likely to buy larger portions.

The authors point out that chips are laden with fat and salt, and high salt content increases thirst, which in turn increases the likelihood of buying soft drinks.

Most (70%) of the whole sample said they preferred sweetened (non-diet) soft drinks over other types of drinks, when making their purchases at fast food outlets.

When asked what would motivate them to make healthier food choices at fast food outlets, better choice and cheaper prices were the two most popular options.

“These children are exposed to an environment that is likely to cause obesity, and it is not surprising that in this situation, many of these children are already overweight or obese, and will likely become obese as adults,” conclude the authors.

They add: “Clearly, actions need to be taken to either limit the ability of these children to access fast food outlets or to change to they purchased at these outlets (e.g. less calorie dense, with more fruit and vegetables, with less fat and salt).”
Your Task – To answer the following

• Title - “To what extent can Smethwick be considered an inner city area?”
• Introduction – What are the features of inner city areas? Social, Economic, Environmental
• Research – What is Smethwick like? Social, Economic, Environmental
• Conclusion – your opinion. Refer back to the title
“To what extent can Smethwick be considered an inner city area?”

Before you can answer this question there are some key things that you need to know-

1. What is meant by the term inner city?
2. Where do we find inner city areas?
3. What are inner city areas like?
4. How can we find out if Smethwick has the features of an inner city area?
What are inner city areas? Where can we find them?

The Burgess Model of land use in cities tells us that urban areas develop in different zones in circles around the centre. The oldest part of the city is in the middle and the newest part is on the edge. This model shows us that Inner City areas are found between the CBD (City Centre) and the Suburbs (on the edge of the City).
Burgess Model

Hoyt Model

Two Urban models compared
What are the features and characteristics of inner city areas?

• **Social** (the people and community who live in a place. What is life like for them?)

• **Economic** (the wealth of the area. The types of jobs people have and what they are paid)

• **Environmental** (what a place looks like, types of buildings, land use etc)
Task

Research the Social, Economic and Environmental features of inner cities.

Use the research materials on the word document Urban Taster Day Research, and the following photographs.
What about this place?
What data do I need?

• Maps to label areas of land use e.g. housing, industry, open space
• Photographs with labels showing different features
• Statistics showing different measures of the population e.g. crime rates, education levels (need to compare with national averages)
• Newspaper articles about Smethwick
Where can I get data?

• Google maps, Google earth, street view
• www.google.co.uk/streetview/
• Statistics from National Census
  • http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/
• http://www.police.uk/ Crime statistics
• Local Newspaper articles.
• http://www.expressandstar.com/
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Smethwick is-
• Exactly like
• Mostly like...
• Generally like...
• Something like...
• Not much like...

Then you need to support your conclusion with evidence