between the metropolitan and rural regions. Recent studies suggest that people satisfied with or seeking city life favour 'the large central cities such as Manchester, Birmingham and Leeds, with their mix of private rented stock (of housing), younger population, upper income groups and vibrant atmospheres' and as the older people 'move out to quieter more family-friendly environments they are replaced by the next wave of youth' (Allinson, 2003, p. 135). Nevertheless, movements out of the metropolitan areas of England and Wales exceeded inward movements by 860,000 persons in the decade 1991–2000, the rate of loss rising from 1.7% in 1991 to 2.1% in 2000. This is further supported by Murdoch who cites attitudinal surveys which indicate that the majority of British people would like to live in rural areas (1998).

It seems that many smaller households demand, and can afford to acquire, larger premises in more open environments. This can also be argued to be the case in urban areas where gentrification occurs, which can lead to social exclusion of some members of society (Carmona *et al.*, 2001). Yet another difficulty in trying to contain dispersal is that the better off are not dependent on new building developments but can outbid locals for existing stock, thereby causing a serious shortfall in affordable housing and stimulation of local dispersed demand.

## The need to 'generate' cities and towns

The second factor is the genuine need to regenerate major cities and to revitalize declining industrial towns which may not have sufficient resources to rebuild their economic base. While the term regeneration may evoke ideas of exploiting the industrial past through the creation of museums or theme parks round famous names, or by hosting occasional international events, there is a real need to generate some parts of our towns and cities. This need stems from factors such as the prevalence of poverty in certain neighbourhoods and higher mortality rates and higher unemployment than in other parts of cities, and the country (SEU, 2000). Other factors include the need to improve poor quality of life which can be linked to run-down areas with poor economic performance (DETR, 2000). Many who see little future for themselves or their children move into England's central and southern growth areas, and this movement could well continue until the distribution of population more evenly balances economic opportunity.

## Objectives of environmental sustainability

The third conflicting factor relates to the environmental objectives of reducing the demand for and use of non-renewable resources and decreasing the emission of pollutants. In terms of city planning and development these objectives are usually translated into improving the insulation of buildings, increasing the efficiency of heating, and lighting and promoting a shift from private to public transport. Despite some progress (exemplified by the presentation to Parliament in 1990 of an environmental strategy by the Government), the environmental footprint of most British cities is widening and the transport tale is a sorry one in which the carriage of goods by road vehicle is increasing and crime on public transport is a real concern (Crime Concern, 2004). Car ownership and use continues to rise, offsetting the economic and environmental effects of bus and rail subsidies, new tramways and light railways (Clark, 2004), park and ride, and bus-priority schemes. Public transport remains a political nightmare and for the foreseeable future, national resources are likely to be directed in the largest measure at the national road network. As a Minister of State recently inferred, we seem as far as ever from persuading people out of their cars, or to use less gas and electricity; indeed the supply companies urge us to use more as competition reduces the price. Now our consumer demands are met increasingly by cheap imports from countries with low labour costs. Perhaps the resource we are saving most effectively is soil, although the need for land for agricultural production is still, arguably, steadily declining.

These conflicting factors could be turned to positive advantage if the planning canvas is sufficiently enlarged to recognize the city itself as a competitor within a wider economic and geographic region and to plan its regeneration and development within its whole sub-region. This will be illustrated in the details of the two case studies below.

## Case study background

### Sheffield

Sheffield is situated in West Yorkshire and competes economically with Huddersfield, Bradford and Leeds. Each town had an industrial specialism; Sheffield's (Figure 5.1) being