



Figure 5.7  
Spatial strategy showing zones  
of intensive use and green  
zones.

### Key stage 5

This stage lays down the zones of intensive use following the public transport routes, with intervening green zones of low-density use, open space and landscaping.<sup>2</sup> Figure 5.7 defines such a spatial strategy for the Bristol sub-region. By linking old and new areas of activity the corridors should stimulate regeneration and widen social and economic prospects for all who live within easy reach of public transport routes. Rail and motorway interchanges will bring city facilities closer to many people living in the countryside and with the public transport system will give city dwellers easy access to the facilities in the green zones in which city farms and forests, leisure centres, sports arenas and playing fields could be developed.

### Bristol: political reality

In the Bristol sub-region there had been the opportunity to plan sub-regionally but this was not grasped by the now disbanded

Avon County Council, hamstrung by its political composition. Now the sub-region straddles four administrative units for planning and transportation in South Gloucestershire, the city of Bristol, Bath and North-East Somerset and North Somerset. Soon the Government intends to remove the current structure of planning powers from these councils and establish a Regional Chamber to propose a spatial strategy for the whole of south-west England. Comprised of representatives of Government Ministers, the Regional Development Agency, other agencies and local authorities, the Chamber will be instructed to integrate sub-regional issues into its regional strategy. That sub-regional plans might grow from this seed is possible but somewhat unlikely. The regional strategy is to be 'set in motion' by transport plans and through local development frameworks. In the Bristol sub-region there will be four highway planning authorities. Even if the Regional Chamber were to conceive a sub-regional plan of the form envisaged in this study could four different authorities implement it is under question. In my 50 years working in the British political planning system I have found that radical policies and imaginative plans come from a combination of a dedicated professional team and a single-minded political backed by an electorate offered a product worth the cost. The preoccupation with process and the dullness of statutory plans have made the public highly sceptical that planning can deliver sustainable cities and countryside. Whatever else a sustainable community may require, it will need a high level of investment in human and financial resources.

Let us suppose that even through the statutory system, a positive plan for a sustainable city region should emerge, could it be implemented? Using the Bristol study as a guideline, funds would be needed for:

- **A radical reorganization of the road structure**
- **The laying down of new public transport tracks, mostly in newly developing areas, but also in parts of the city and surrounding towns**
- **The provision of new public transport vehicles**
- **The construction of 'stations' offering shelter and facilities along the public transport routes and at motorway and rail interchanges and the related parking facilities**
- **Where necessary the purchase of land for development and redevelopment**
- **The provision of clinics, schools, and other community and recreation facilities to be programmed with housing and the related construction and replacement of utility services**