

## Challenge Overview Sheet

# Liveable places: the country or the city?

Where do most people aspire to live? In developed countries like the UK, many city dwellers say they would prefer to be in the countryside. There is plenty of evidence to support the view that many people prefer a **rural sense of place** to an **urban sense of place**. A new **Mappiness** survey shows that people feel happier when they are closer to nature. Successive UK Census survey results reveal that many people have migrated away from British cities towards rural areas. When asked why, **counterurban** migrants say that they have gone in search of an improved quality of life. Symptoms of **urban stress**, such as congestion and noise pollution, have pushed these people away. The first lesson in this teaching resource focuses on these issues.

When taking a global view, however, the future for the majority of people on the planet is projected to be an urban one. The most rapid wave of **urbanisation** ever seen is underway in developing countries and emerging economies (including Brazil, India, China, Mexico, Indonesia and Nigeria). Since the 50:50 milestone was passed in 2008, urban areas have become home to more than half the world's population; by 2050 three-quarters of us are projected to be town and city dwellers. This forms the focus for the second lesson.

Managing change in a burgeoning number of global **megacities** and **megaregions** will not be easy. However, there are grounds for optimism:

- New technology is being incorporated into **smart cities** and **eco-cities**.
- Compact urban living is allowing the world's poorest people to gain access to vital services that are still unavailable in rural areas.
- Cities are associated with **economic development** and modernisation.
- 'Urbanists' such as Leo Hollins take a philosophical viewpoint that 'people are hard-wired to be together and this happens in cities'.

This 2014 scheme of work has relevance for the study of all existing major A-level geography Specifications, as well as the International Baccalaureate diploma programme in geography.

The emphasis in this scheme of work on the key geographical concept of 'place' will support core teaching for the 2016 revised GCE A-levels in geography.