PLANNING FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AROUND PEOPLE’S NEEDS

Sustainability is a key driving force in planning policy. But, many citizens, especially women, have found so-called sustainable policies have made their daily lives more difficult, whilst not necessarily enabling them to adopt a greener lifestyle. The potential conflict between promoting environmental sustainability and creating accessible, equitable and inclusive cities is highlighted. The problem is discussed first with reference to the old 'pre-sustainability' British city, with its emphasis upon decentralisation and the promotion of the motor car; and second, in relation to the challenges of the new 'sustainable city' which is more compact and based on public transport, walking and cycling. An emphasis upon restricting the use of the motorcar in order to reduce carbon emissions and protect the environment has arguably caused many social problems for ordinary living in towns and cities that lack an adequate public transport system or other alternatives to motorcar use. This particularly affects women, because the difference in their journey patterns from men is not necessarily acknowledged or accommodated in the new sustainable city. Also the original definition of sustainability comprised social, economic and environmental factors but arguably there has been too much emphasis on the environmental policies at the expense of social considerations. (200 words)