

**“Has Bluewater shopping centre been a benefit to the surrounding communities?”**



**Introduction**

Retail services (shopping) are so important in people's lives because it means that people can purchase luxury goods it can also be a socialising meeting point for people. Retail services sell useful products that the community needs and would benefit from. Some retail services provide conveniences goods. This is important to people because they have the opportunity to get their daily needs. Other retail services provide people with clothing, entertainments, and home furniture's etc. theses are all important in people's lives without clothes people will be cold during the winter.

Not all shopping centres provide the same goods and services. Smaller shopping centres provide everyday essential goods for people. They also supply their goods in smaller quantities. Whereas, larger shopping centres provide a wider range of products and in bigger quantities. Shopping centres located in a smaller settlement supply their customers with fewer goods. Villages are a good example of small shopping centres. This can be because there are fewer people to provide products for as not a lot of people live in the villages. However, most large settlements are located in cities, in the central business district.

‘Out-of-town’ shopping centres are being built because it makes money for the business that owns it. There are also larger areas that are cheaper to buy or rent for business use. There is more space for development for a bigger shopping centre. The advantages of and ‘out-of-town’ shopping centre is that it provides costumers with a free parking space, which is more convenient for people.

Land on the edge of cities is being used to build houses, schools, roads and car parks for the shopping centres. It is also being used to build other useful facilities such as parks and leisure centres.

There is a conflict about how such areas of lands called 'development sites' are used because some developments cause harm to the land such as cars and factories pollution.

When deciding how land should be developed, the factors that planner has to take into account are the residents living nearby also whether the development would effect the environment and all its inhabitants. They also have to put into account the advantages and disadvantages it would bring to the public.

When a new shopping centre is proposed, many different groups of people might be affected by this development. The elderly, teenagers, middle class, lower class and working class might be affected but the way each group is affected is different. The elderly would find living next to a shopping centre difficult this is because many people would visit the shopping centre that means a lot of noise would be made disturbing the elderly. However, for some elderly it could be a chance for them to keep themselves busy by strolling down to the shopping centre. Teenagers would see it has a opportunity to go shopping regularly which would make the retail services more money also the teenagers would go the shopping centre as a place where they could go and talk to friend and keep themselves warm in the winter. The shopping centre would also give some teenagers an opportunity to earn money as they could work there. It would keep teenagers entertained.

## ***Aims***

I will begin my investigation by showing the location of Bluewater by including maps and descriptions of where Bluewater is also which other places it is linked to. Then my investigation is going to include what range of services, and types of services are provided at Bluewater. I am also going to write about who uses Bluewater and where they come from. Then my investigation is going to question how successful has the Bluewater development been. I am going to explore the benefits and the costs of the development and find out which sections of the community have been benefited and who has lost out.

My investigation will then be followed by the question whether the development of shopping facilities at Bluewater has been more desirable than any other uses that they could have used for this site/ land, for example housing or industry. Then I will be giving my opinion as to whether I think that the local planning authority was right to allow the shopping centre to be developed. The investigation would then consider future developments in the area and finally I will reflect on how I could do things differently if I was to do this investigation again.

## ***Data used***

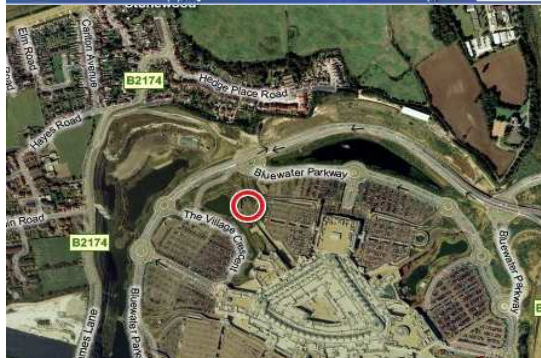
I needed information to carry out my investigation as to whether Bluewater shopping centre has been a benefit to the surrounding communities. I obtained some of data's from my fieldtrip to Bluewater. I needed to interview people at Bluewater to find out how often people come shopping to Bluewater, how long their journey was and what is the most important reason why they people come to shop at Bluewater. I used the information collected from the interview to help me answer the question of has Bluewater shopping centre been a benefit to the surrounding communities. I also did a visitor profile sheet to help me investigate the age and gender of Bluewater's visitors. I collected images of maps and pictures of Bluewater to help me locate where Bluewater is and the surrounding areas. Some of the evidence that I used was from the Bluewater downloaded student pack. Using this helped me answer questions and get extra information about Bluewater that I needed. The student pack also provided the number figures and percentages that e couldn't get from other sources. I gathered extra information about Bluewater from the Internet e.g. the Bluewater official website.

## *Presentation*


This information was from the Bluewater student pack. "Bluewater is a shopping centre containing about 360 shops, which is built in a 50 meters high chalk quarry. It is located in Greenhithe in the borough of Dartford." The development of Bluewater has enabled the local communities surrounding Bluewater to get jobs and earn money. It has also provided shops for businesses to use.(see next section about jobs.) Local retailers have also benefit from the development of Bluewater because they use the open spaces at Bluewater to sell products. (at Christmas)



This is a map from multimap. It shows the location of Bluewater and the communities surrounding the shopping centre.



This is an aerial photograph of Bluewater. It shows the area surrounding Bluewater. As you can see the surrounding land use are fields, housings and woodlands.



According to the Bluewater student pack, the site of Bluewater provides an easy access route, as it is just a mile away from M25 junction 2, between Dartford and Gravesend on the A2 London to Canterbury road. Travellers from the south can get to Bluewater using the A2 or from the north using the new south Thames development route or STDR. This indicates that people from local communities can reach Bluewater easily. Bluewater is approximately 4 kilometres from the planned Ebbsfleet station on the new high-speed rail link between the channel tunnel and London. This is an advantage for people that live further away but it does not benefit the local communities. The location of Bluewater gives it a large catchments area. The fast motorway links attracts almost 10 million shoppers within an hour's drive and 4.8 million people in the principal catchments.

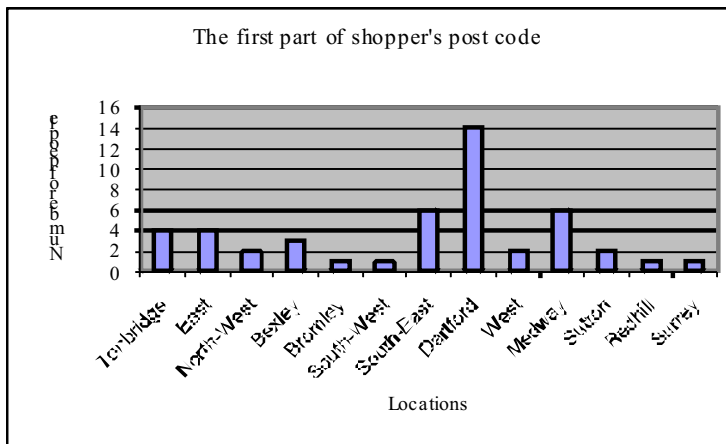
Going back to my introduction, retail services sell useful products that the community needs and would benefit from. Bluewater as a retail services provides useful products that the community needs and would benefit from. It also supplies different range of shops and services. From the Bluewater student pack, Over 14 hectares are for retail space and nearly 1.5 hectares are for indoor leisure use and the rest of the site is occupied by parkland, lakes and car parking. Approximately 330 shops unit are located at Bluewater including large flagship stores. Bluewater offers the finest products from top shops like John Lewis, Marks & Spencer and House of Fraser. These anchor shops sell wide range of goods that people will need in their lives. This benefits the local communities because they have the opportunity to purchase the luxuries goods from Bluewater without having to travel very far.

Bluewater is a shopping centre that is developed to cater for everyone's need because this means selling some products at more affordable prices for other people. While I was at the shopping centre I could see that Bluewater has Variety of products. These include clothes, accessories, electronics, home wares, games, media and many more. From my trip to Bluewater I could see that there were many catering services that provide shoppers and staffs with quality cafes, restaurants, fast foods and bars. Bluewater is a benefit for people because it contains many shops that sell all kinds of different goods under one roof. This is an advantage for shoppers because they don't have to travel far to get what they need. Bluewater also contains mini convince stores to get daily goods at reasonable prices for everyone. The local communities benefits from this because they could do their shopping all in one go at Bluewater saving valuable time.

While on the field trip to Bluewater I could see that they provide shoppers and the local communities with entertainment services such as leisure centre, cinema, and ice rink for use in winter etc. As well as making sure that shoppers have the best range in products. In my opinion I think that Bluewater focuses on services that would help make shopping at Bluewater easier and convenient for people. These services includes a valet parking which would make life easier for shoppers as they don't have to worry about where to put their car because it is being done for them already. Bluewater also provides disabled people with toilets just for them and convenient parking spaces for

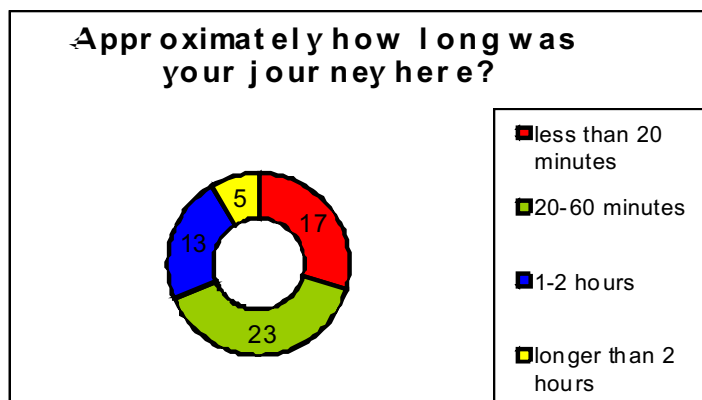
them to use. The shopping centre includes elevators that will make life easier for disabled people and mothers using prams. Toilets are put inside the centre for people to use. Baby changing have also been placed in the store to make it stress free for parents. Banks and CCTV are in the site and these are useful towards the shoppers and staff. A good thing about 'out- of-town' shopping centre from my introduction such as Bluewater is that they provide free parking space for visitors.

From my survey, shoppers travel from different locations and distances to get to Bluewater. Some travel further than others while people that live near Bluewater do not travel very far.



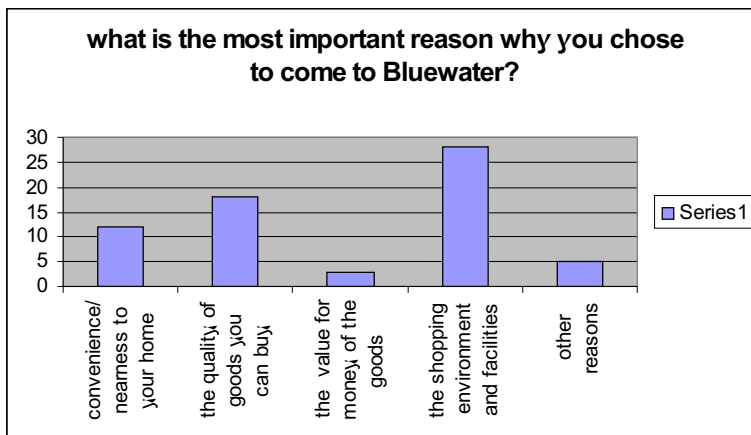
This bar chart shows the postcode of shoppers. As you can see in this graph the majority of the people are from Dartford. This could be because they live closer to Bluewater. Therefore, it is easier for them to travel to Bluewater. This chart also suggests that the reason why there are more people from Dartford is that most of them are probably workers at Bluewater.

To help me figure out how long the journey to Bluewater was I interviewed shoppers and workers. This would help me with my investigation because with the results I would be able to see clearly who benefits most from the development of Bluewater. It would help me to see roughly how many of the local people visit Bluewater. From the chart below, I could see that people that come from areas such as Tunbridge, Bexley, Bromley, Dartford and Medway are the people that live locally. It would take them less time to travel to Bluewater.



This is a bar chart of approximately how long people's journeys were. Whether they are shoppers or staff. This chart shows that most people that visit Bluewater travel between 20-60 minutes and only a few travels longer than 2 hours. This could be because they live further away from Bluewater.

While I was at Bluewater I could see that most of the shoppers were adults this could be because they were off work and decided to start buying Christmas present as it was getting close to Christmas. It could also be that they were on break and they wanted to get lunch from the food court provided. While I was at Bluewater I interviewed a elderly woman who said the reason why she comes to Bluewater is because of the leisure centre which, her and her husband attend she also did not live very far from the shopping centre which means that she does not have to travel far. Bluewater has attracted many people for different reasons. Not everyone at Bluewater go there to shop some people go there for the entertainments while others go there to work.



From this bar chart, we learn that the majority of the people visit Bluewater because of the shopping environment and facilities while others take a trip to Bluewater because of the quality of goods provided. Some people also visit the centre because it is closer to their house. In the other reasons this could be people that work there.

I think that Bluewater would attract mostly adults because they would have money and they would feel like buying things that they need. It would also attract teenagers because they would want to go there for window-shopping and for the entertainments available. Bluewater would attract less elderly people because they would not have enough money or energy to go and shop at Bluewater.

I believe that the Bluewater development has been successful for the following reasons. Firstly, according to “wikipedia” it shows that around 30 million people visit Bluewater every year. I also think that the development of Bluewater has been successful because the developers spent around 30 million on making roads better for visitors. For Bluewater to spend so much money on roads it shows that it might earn lots of money.

Bluewater has been designed to cater for all sections of the community. This includes the structure of the building, facilities, prices, shops etc. all of these were made to

make shopping easier, affordable and enjoyable for everyone. The shopping centre placed elevators in the shop to make it easier for disabled people to get around the shop and also for the fit able people to make them not get stressed. It also provides lockers for shoppers to use while shopping at Bluewater; this enables visitors and staff to put their belongings in it without losing it or carrying it around. There are comfortable sofa's placed in the shop for people to sit and feel relaxed. Bluewater has 13,000 parking space including separate spaces for disabled people and elderly to use. This will make life easier and safer for them. As well as catering for the elderly, Bluewater also caters for young people that visit the site. There are fun activities for them to take part in while staying at Bluewater, these activities includes boating, ice-skating and cycling. As shown in the Bluewater mall guide, there is also a crèche room that allows up to 250 children to play in. this is to keep them entertain while shopping. Source used to obtain this information is the downloaded student pack. The site also caters for both genders visiting Bluewater. Female and male stores are provided to ensure that both genders get what they need to keep up with fashion. Even though Bluewater has some expensive stores in the centre. It also has some affordable stores for the majority of the people that do not own a lot of money. These shops also sell quality products but just at more reasonable price.

In my opinion Bluewater is a development that has helped most of the local economy. According to the Bluewater's student pack. Bluewater has provided thousands of jobs for the local community both during and after construction. While Bluewater was being developed it brought approximately 6,500 jobs for constructing it only. When Bluewater opened in March 1999, it created about 7,000 permanent jobs on site. About 4,000 of these are in retail trades. These jobs include sale staff and store management. Around 40% of these jobs are full time and 60% part time. The remaining of the workers is involved in non-retail jobs. This includes occupations such as cleaning, catering, Security, warehouse staff, ground staff and administration.

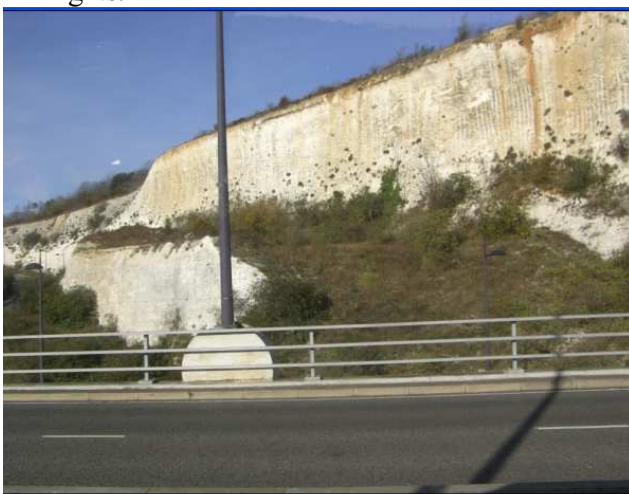
Bluewater has been a benefit to services and the local communities. A reason for this is that it has invested lots of money in proving roads and transportations. This has made road safer and transportations better. Local communities have benefited from this. To help me with investigation of do other services and local businesses benefit from Bluewater. I used the downloaded student pack, which says that Bluewater is designed to help local businesses win contracts at Bluewater. So Bluewater has been a benefit to local businesses. However, many local businesses near Bluewater have not really benefit from Bluewater. The reason for this is that Bluewater is a large shopping centre designed to provide many services for people and make their visits enjoyable all under one roof. Local businesses do not provide enough ranges as Bluewater does. This means that many people will rather go to Bluewater for the shopping's. The local businesses will therefore, loose out on money due to the lack of customers that shop in their shops. They might also end up going bankrupt. Though local shops lose out on money, Bluewater will provide more money for hotels. This is due the amount of tourists and people that will visit Bluewater and need a place to stay.



Jobs in Bluewater have helped the local community. It has given them the opportunity to earn money. It has also helped them to work, undergo training and obtain formal qualifications, which can help them in the future. Jobs in Bluewater have reduced the amount of unemployed in the local community. From my interview with a worker at Bluewater, I have some knowledge as to whether people that work there like it. The person that I interview said she liked working there and the salary is good. Workers at Bluewater can also take the advantages of the food court and services provided at Bluewater.

The development of Bluewater has affected the environment in many ways. It has benefited the environment as well as harming the environment. I will start off by explaining the problems Bluewater causes for the environment. Firstly, Bluewater increases the amount of carbon monoxide in the air. This done by cars and Bluewater is a place that attracts many visitors with cars. The number of cars that visit Bluewater gives off carbon monoxide, which is bad for the environment, but if fewer cars visit Bluewater each day, there will be less poisonous gas in the air. Secondly, Bluewater causes noise pollution for the surrounding environment. Noise pollution is caused by the number of people that visit Bluewater this could make the place really loud and also cars that drive by make lots of noises. This affects the peace and quietness of the environment and also it disturbs the local people. Thirdly, the development of Bluewater has brought more attention to its local environment. This is because people from all over the place visit Bluewater and this can be very disturbing for the neighbourhood and very dangerous for children that play outside because they don't know who might harm them.

However, even though Bluewater causes many problems for the environment. It also benefits the environment. Bluewater is located in a stunning location. It is situated among cliffs. Bluewater is surrounded by landscape of lakes, parkland and trees. This shows the more nature side of the environment and makes the environment calming and attractive. Bluewater also brightens up the environment at night with its bright lights.



This is photograph taken while on the journey to Bluewater. It shows a chalk quarry near Bluewater. It makes the surrounding look more attractive. This is going to attract more shoppers which is good for the shopping centre. However, this creates more visitors and increases pollution.



## Conclusion

In my opinion I think that the local planning authority was right to allow the shopping centre to be developed because firstly it provided many jobs for people, something that would benefit everyone rather than living it as a chalk quarry, which would not benefit people. It also makes life easier for the local community as they do not have to travel far to get what they need. The development of Bluewater was also better for the community because it earns more money for business people, which they could use to make more businesses and offer more jobs to people. Furthermore, the local planning authority was right to allow the development because it means the majority of the people can go and shop in Bluewater rather than high streets where it would be too crowded and stocks would go quicker due to the amount of people.

“Has Bluewater shopping centre been a benefit to the surrounding communities?” Looking at all the information I have investigated and written. I believe that Bluewater has been a benefit to the surrounding communities. My reasons for this are that it has provided jobs for people that live there. It has also improved the roads, which the surrounding communities have benefited from. Although some people might disagree with my answer because of the environmental issues that Bluewater the shopping centre causes. I believe it has been a benefit because looking at all the different aspect; Bluewater has brought more advantages than disadvantages.

Personally I think that there are lessons to be learned about future developments in the area nearby. Firstly, there should be more traffic lights and zebra crossing surrounding the developments. This is for the local community and other people to be safer and for drivers to drive with care. Secondly, it should be developed in a place where it will benefit the community without disturbing them or causing trouble for them. Finally, it should not be built near a school or places that contain many children. This is to prevent children wandering off and being safe.

If I were to repeat this investigation again, I would have the courage to go up to people in the shops for interview. This is because I feel like I did not interview enough people therefore; I did not get as much information as I needed. I should have also paid more attention in filling in the visitor profile sheet because this would have helped me to make a rough judgement as to what gender attended Bluewater more on the day I visited. It would also have helped me to see what majority of age group visits Bluewater. In addition, I could have interviewed more than one worker at Bluewater and I should have asked more logical questions that would have helped me with my coursework. Finally, while on the road to Bluewater I should have paid more attention on to the amount of cars that were passing by. This would have increased my knowledge of how many people visit Bluewater and I should have been more aware of the houses and shops that were near Bluewater. This is to help me figure out exactly what advantages and disadvantages Bluewater cause for the local community.

