

Choosing the right area to live in

You could find your dream home but if the area is not what you want then you will probably never be content in your new home. It is crucial that you find the right area before you even think about looking for a home. There are a lot of things to take into consideration when choosing an area such as crime, neighbours etc.. Here are a list of things that you should find out about before opting for an area.

Amenities

Have you got interests outside the home that you like to do frequently? Maybe you like to do aerobics, got to bingo or you like to go to the cinema. Maybe you don't have any transport of your own and you need to be close to local shops. You will need to think about things that you can't live without and whether the area has them.

Here are some things that you should make a list of.

Do the area have a busy high street and do they have enough of the shops that are of interest to you?

How far is the nearest supermarket?

Is there a big out of town shopping centre within reach?

Is there a leisure centre or gym to serve the area?

Are there enough parks for the children?

Are there local youth clubs that your children can join?

Is there a local library?

Is there a cinema? If not is there one in the surrounding areas?

How far is the town centre?

Is there a local post office, newsagents, butchers etc..?

Basically, is there anything that forms part of your life which would be difficult to do without? If the answer is yes and giving it up would make you terribly unhappy, then maybe it wouldn't be such a smart move.

Crime

Very few people want to move into an area with a high crime rate. The level of crime in an area can have wide ranging effects, from making you uncomfortable walking the streets, extremely wary of who your kids make friends with, to being downright scared in your own home. Crime can rip the soul out of a community and turn people's lives upside down.

There are obvious telltale signs to look out for - graffiti scrawled on walls and shopshutters, smashed windows, burnt out cars, crime is not always so obvious in the evidence it leaves behind.

Find out about the crime rate in any area you are thinking of moving to. Check local newspapers, ask residents, shopkeepers. Don't ask the seller they won't give you an honest answer. How many houses are boarded up or are up for sale? Generally the house prices in an area that has a high crime rate will be cheaper than that of its neighbours with little or no crime. You can find out how much crime an area has by using www.upmystreet.com This site also covers all aspects of an area from,

house prices, schools to finding a plumber for that area.

Landscape

It can be worthwhile giving some consideration to the physical appearance of the area in which you want to live. You don't want to open your curtains on a morning to be greeted by a over polluted factory. If you want to live in a city, which most people do. You will still need clean air.

Find out the answers to questions such as

How built up is the area?

How green is the environment?

Are there plenty of parks and trees?

Is the area clean?

How quickly can you get from the area out into the country?

Is it near to the sea?

Are there any factory's in or around the area? Remember that certain industries have factories that some people find pretty ugly and that create unpleasant smells or noise.

If you have no transport do you really want to live in an area that has lots of hills.

What sort of factories are active in the area?

Neighbours

There is no real way of knowing what the neighbours will be like before you decide on a particular property. The last thing you want is "neighbours from hell". Most house owners keep themselves to themselves but it is still a good idea to find out a little bit about your future neighbours.

Ask the owner of the house you are interested in, if they will introduce you to the neighbours. They may get on very well and this might be a good sign. But just because they get on doesn't mean you will get on. If the owner frowns ask what is the matter with the neighbours. They might have a running feud or they might simply not get on with one another.

Visit the neighbours if you can you should get an inkling whether or not you will like them.

As there is know real way of knowing what the neighbours are going to be like, keep your eyes open and be ready for anything that might a rise.

Transport

If you are looking for peace and quite it is no good moving near an airport or a railway line. But if you haven't got your own transport you will need a way of getting to and from work, shops in a neighbouring town etc..

Answer these questions and you will clarify your transport needs

How do you normally get around and will you be able to do that in the new area?

How easy will it be to get work?

Are there cycle paths and footpaths?

Can you easily get on to the motorway?

Does there appear to be many taxi services around?

What is the local public transport like?

Are there good bus services?

Does there seem to be traffic problems?

Is there a mainline train station nearby?

What rail network does it connect you to?

Is it difficult to get to an International airport?

Here are some useful tips on choosing the right area

If you are moving with your partner, make sure you both go have the same ideas on where you want to live or one or both of you will not be able to settle.

Visit the area during the day and night if you can.

See if you can spot many For Sale signs if there are a lot of them on anything but a new development, this can be a bad sign. Why is everyone leaving?

Similarly, take note of the apparent state of local businesses - are they run down, or does it appear that investment is coming into the area?

Have a drink in one or two of the local pubs to test the atmosphere. You might even get to know a few of the locals.