

The Strategies for an Urban Regeneration

Regenerating post-industrial cities

An Urban Manifesto in nine recommendations
by Professor Steffen Lehmann

Introduction

Cities are facing huge challenges and the answer to these challenges lies in closer collaboration between city leaders, industry, community and universities.

Using public dialogue to discuss visionary but grounded ideas for the future of cities in the UK, we will explore their continuing transformation to service and knowledge-based cities.

A paradigm shift in urban thinking is happening, where cities become urban laboratories, highlighting participatory planning processes and the greening of cities to build inclusive public space. This new urban agenda sets a high benchmark for the type of urban development we should strive for, as well as a clear accountability framework for achieving it. The motto “leave no one behind” is a challenge that should be applied to every district and neighbourhood.

Today, urbanisation and urban regeneration are seen as the 21st-century’s most transformative trend. But we must also be aware of the limitations of design and be careful not to burden future generations.

The urban future of UK cities requires us to work closely together and support local leadership to develop better strategies, policies, tools and projects that will help to address and resolve some of the core challenges. To achieve all this, our collaborative networks and partnerships are crucial, including closer collaboration between all levels of government, communities, the private sector and academia, to enable peer-to-peer learning networks and better information sharing.

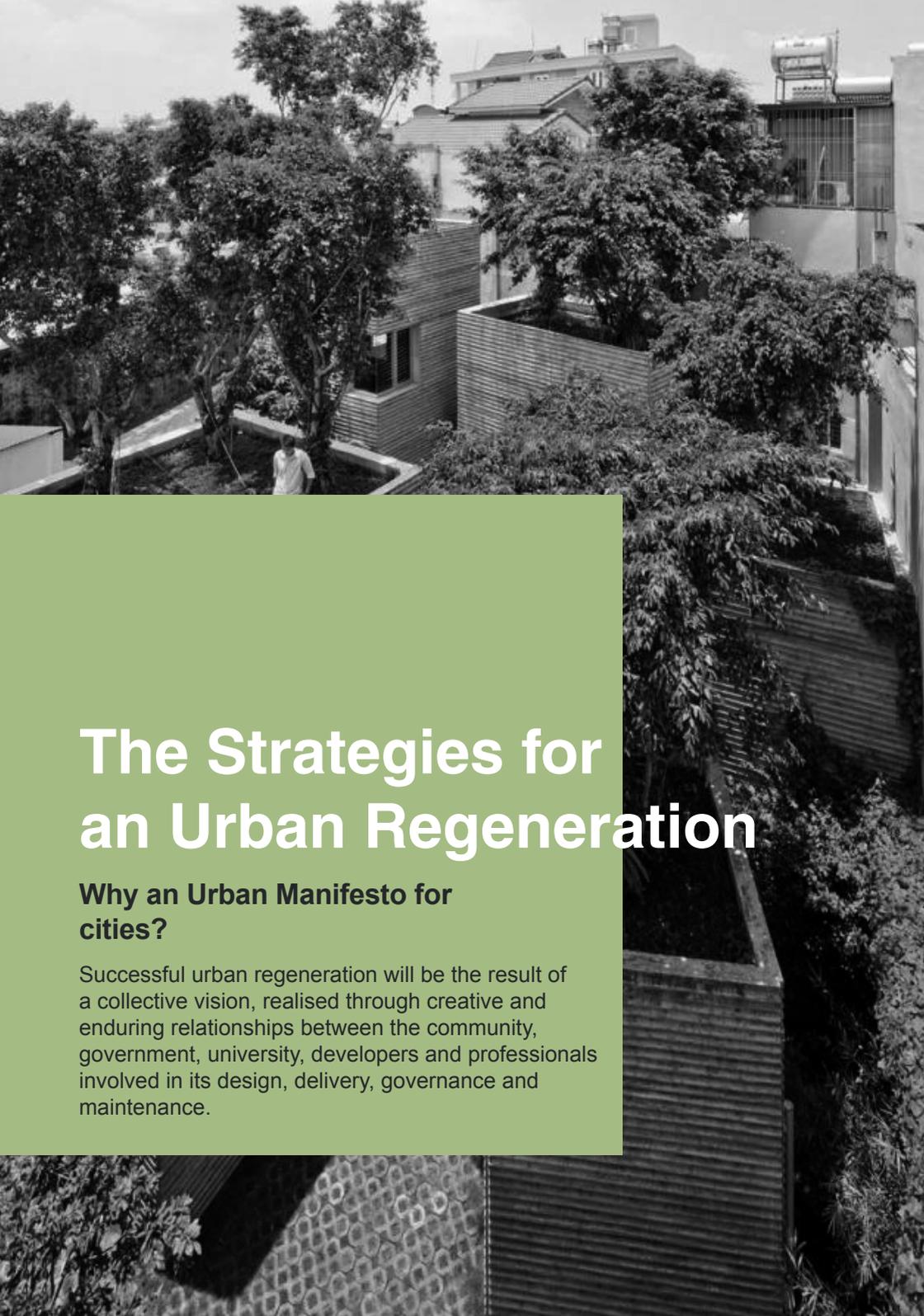
We will partner and collaborate with the business community and local government to reshape sustainable future cities.

To this aim, we have developed nine high-level guiding strategies as principles of good urbanism that we hope might guide the urban regeneration of our post-industrial cities. Their implementation is critical. We are launching this manifesto to assert the following principles for a confident urban future.

Please join us on this journey.

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The Strategies for an Urban Regeneration

Why an Urban Manifesto for cities?

Successful urban regeneration will be the result of a collective vision, realised through creative and enduring relationships between the community, government, university, developers and professionals involved in its design, delivery, governance and maintenance.

We recommend the following strategies for urban regeneration of cities:

Strategy 1.

Urban culture and heritage – maintaining a unique sense of place

Strategy 2.

A public space network for a compact, walkable and mixed-use city

Strategy 3.

Mobility – moving around cities conveniently

Strategy 4.

Transforming the waterfront to a resilient, future-proof city through citizen engagement

Strategy 5.

Inclusive mixed-use urban living

Strategy 6.

High-quality architectural design as a catalyst for a better city

Strategy 7.

Smart citizens, smart energy

Strategy 8.

Thinking long-term and making the most of what we have

Strategy 9.

A vibrant University Quarter in the regenerated heart of the city



'Urban Void' by RCR Architects

Strategy 1.

Urban culture and heritage – maintaining a unique sense of place

- The cultures of the people and ecology of the place must be expressed at a human scale through both physical and social structures.
- The distinctive cultural identity, diversity and full potential of the community should be supported spiritually, physically and visually to sustain a sense of collective ownership, belonging and civic pride.
- The design of spaces and buildings is always influenced by their context enhancing local character and heritage. Simultaneously responding to current-day needs, changes in society and cultural diversity, contemporary places can have a deep sense of the city's history and heritage.
- The role of social innovation and entrepreneurship in cities has to be recognised. There has to be space provided for alternative economies to thrive, which will benefit all.
- Cities must have fewer cars on their roads to ease congestion, reduce air pollution and noise by using alternative forms of transport including public transport, in the form of buses and light railway, on-demand minibus services, car-sharing schemes, e-bikes, cycling and walking.

Strategy 2.

**A public space network for a compact,
walkable and mixed-use city**



Highline, NYC

“Great streets make great cities!” (Jane Jacobs)

- Vibrant streets and urban spaces with their own distinct character should form a coherent interconnected network of places that support walking, social interaction and display distinctive private, commercial and civil functions.
- Streets designed for pedestrians: the pedestrian environment should be closely associated with active frontages at street level and there should be an appropriate intensity of use at all times.
- Nature-sensitive urban strategies and a greener city will help to increase biodiversity, absorb CO₂ emissions and improve public health and well-being; encouraging the use of sustainable drainage systems and permeable ground surfaces across the city.
- Essential activities must be accessible or within walking distance and there should be a concentration of activity around meeting places. This could include growing food locally.
- Create policy and incentives to make urban forests, green roofs, community gardens and food production a part of the city's future.
- The public realm must be age-friendly and supported by inclusive processes that respond to the local community and its changing economic and social conditions.
- Delivering new types of infrastructure and public spaces: continuous upgrades to public space can provide opportunities to ensure *connectivity* and social inclusion are strong themes throughout the urban future.



Strategy 3.

Mobility – moving around conveniently

- Addressing the challenges of climate change through better urban development: compact well-connected cities are more walkable, allowing for active zero-emission mobility such as walking and cycling.
- Healthy ageing: a permeable street network with pedestrian priority gives maximum freedom of movement, making walking and cycling enjoyable and safe while offering a good choice of active transport.
- Electric mobility will significantly reduce air pollution and noise in the city. Could we ban combustion engine cars on the island by 2030?
- Public spaces are the 'glue' that holds society together. Mobility is the 'oil' that brings people together. Strengthening the connectivity and removing walls, railings and fences, is an important part in enhancing the city's connectivity and resilience.
- Increasing biodiversity within the city: natural areas and parks must be easily accessible and in close proximity to citizens.
- Make transportation more equitable and identify new region-wide mobility concepts that are not car-based. For instance, enable young adults to travel freely by bicycle and public transport: opening up opportunities for education and jobs.



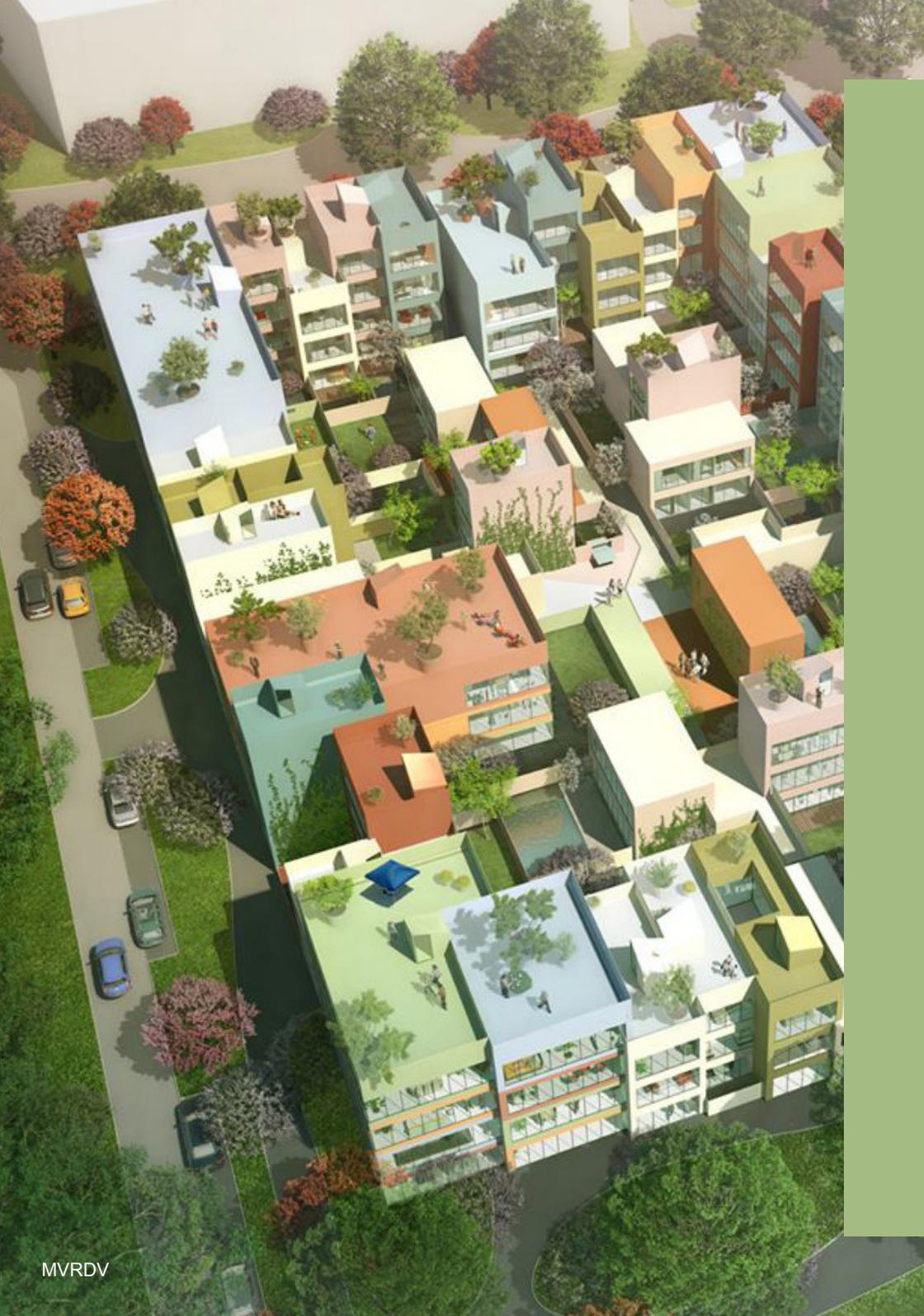


Strategy 4.

Transforming the waterfront to a resilient, future-proof city through citizen engagement

- Although 'future-proofing' a city is impossible, we can plan ahead and allow the city to become more adaptable and anticipate demands and impacts to ensure future infrastructure is resilient.
- New and existing public places must respect, enhance and respond to their local natural environment within and around them.
- Strengthening the City's readiness to deal with the impact of sea-level rise: alongside protecting from the dangers of sea-level rise, urban parks and other landscaped areas along the waterfront should provide space for recreation, increase biodiversity and help support a balanced environment.
- Increasing community participation in the planning process: decision-making for the ongoing development and management of the future waterfront and urban fabric must engage stakeholders and the local community through public participation.
- Participatory and people-centred urban governance: people-centred planning will further improve the liveability and competitiveness of Portsmouth by encouraging practices that make our city more just, safe, healthy and resilient. Concepts of co-creation, empowerment and community engagement play a significant role in the upgrading of our waterfront.







Strategy 5.

Inclusive mixed-use urban living

- Cities that manage density well will enrich the lives of people who live and work there.
- Urban form and good building design are significant drivers of resource efficiency and neighbourhood regeneration.
- The city must provide a diversity of functions, tenure, facilities and services, have a mix of building designs and types and include a variety of appropriately scaled neighbourhoods catering to different socio-economic groups and encouraging a better use of roof spaces.
- A diverse, accessible, affordable and active city will encourage successful commercial activity, promote prosperity and support the well-being of inhabitants including the ageing population.
- Balanced residential/non-residential mixed-use developments can reduce travel and support inclusion.
- The built environment must seek to minimise the use of carbon-intensive products, energy and non-renewable resources. Modular houses that are built off-site can extend housing choices, open up innovative models for urban infill and careful densification.
- Modular off-site manufactured housing can deliver houses faster and to higher quality and reduce construction waste. The supply of good housing is essential for growth, including a decent standard of multi-generational family housing.



Strategy 6.

High-quality architectural design as a catalyst for a better City

“Architecture is about public space held by buildings.” (Richard Rogers)

- Architecture is a continuously developing and public language, and design must be at the heart of any urban planning, creating a human-scale built environment, higher design standards and raising the overall quality of our architectural culture.
- The best way to achieve the shift to carbon-neutral buildings and higher quality architectural design is through design contest - where a solution is sought from a well-defined and agreed brief.
- We should use the development of publicly-owned land to pioneer the best sustainable designs and be effective champions of the importance of good architecture. Leading by example: the City Council and the University can collaborate as transformation agents.
- Encouraging the reuse and up-cycling of existing buildings and structures and the careful increase in urban density will help to make the city more sustainable, which can include mixed-use neighbourhoods such as apartments on top of shopping malls, enabling people to live in or close to the city centre.
- Sustainable cities are compact, intensive and diverse. The use of local materials give a place its homogeneity and distinctive character.



Strategy 7.

Smart citizens, smart energy

- Everyone has a right to the city. Strengthening public participation in decision making and creating inclusive public spaces is an important goal.
- Smart, citizen-centric planning will use urban performance data for better decision-making and new policy formulation.
- Measuring urban sustainability progress is essential to be sure we are on the right trajectory.
- This includes an accelerated transition to clean, renewable energy generated in the city, and the integration of emerging technologies. Digital urbanism can be used to model and forecast the impacts of decisions on urban living.
- To activate the water-energy-food nexus, new green infrastructure and nature-based solutions are required that include sustainable drainage systems, smart electricity grid and concepts based on the principles of a circular economy.





Strategy 8.

Thinking long-term and making the most of what we have

“Density and mixed-use creates urbanity.” (Renzo Piano)

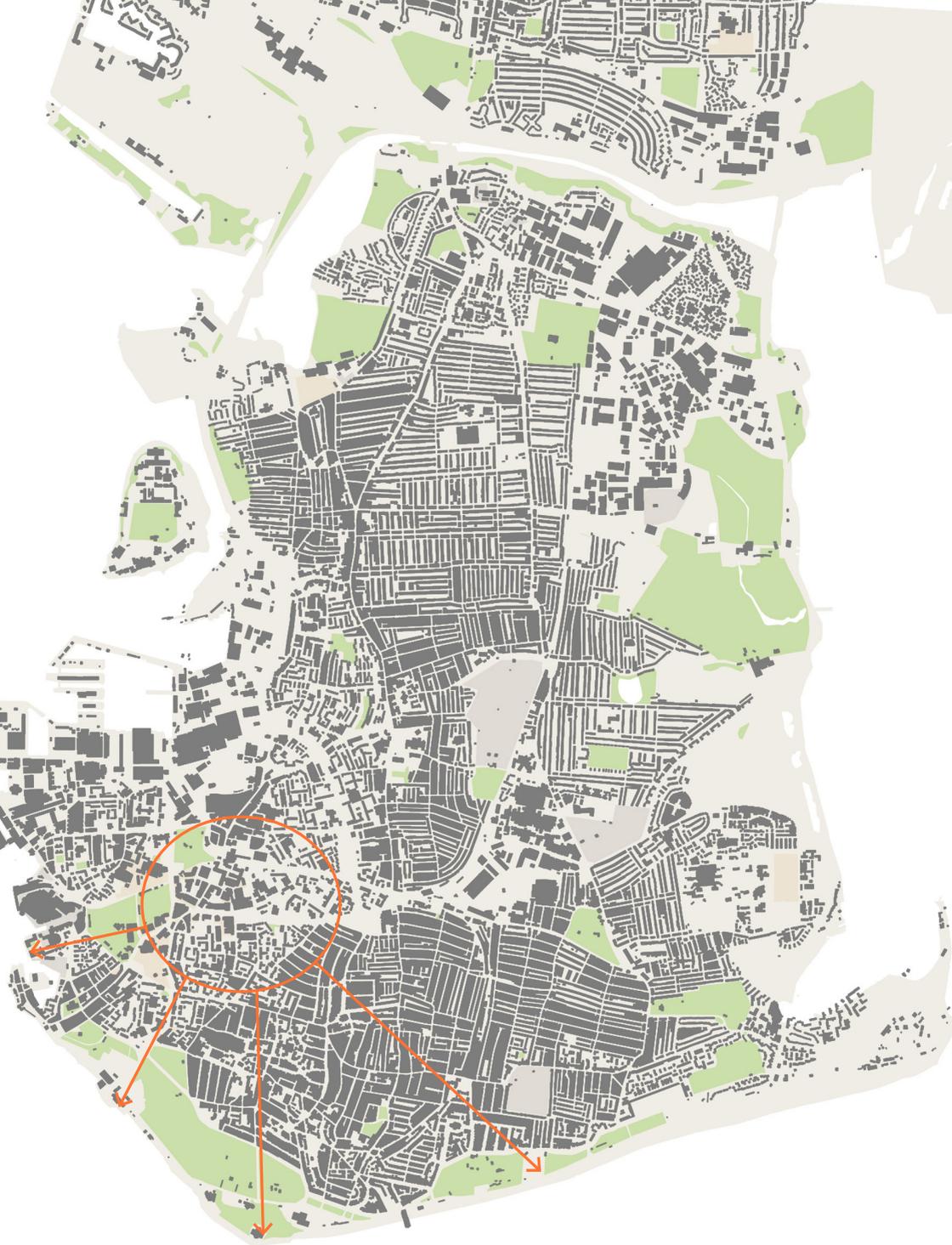
- Optimising urban density and exploring alternative density scenarios will enhance the city. Too much low density development is leading to too many car trips and inefficiencies. Some new thinking about compact, higher density living around transport hubs and above shopping centres is necessary.
- The contradictory objectives need to be carefully balanced: How people want to live versus the imperatives of sustainability targets.
- Gaining community trust and buy-in in higher density is the first step as we cannot do density without community support.
- Land value is critical. How can we better capture the increase in land value from public investment?
- In urban regeneration long-term thinking is essential. Too much focus on the short run does not contribute to solving social disparities.
- Taking full advantage of the existing and making the most of what we have, while creating ‘Spaces of Opportunity’ is a sustainable way to strengthen the city.

Undoubtedly, the greatest asset of cities are the existing buildings. The adaptive reuse of historical buildings in combination with contemporary extensions provides a good model.

Strategy 9.

A vibrant University Quarter in the regenerated heart of the City

- Re-imagine a regenerated city centre that is less car dominated, with walkable public space and a world class University Quarter.
- We have been working with the University of Portsmouth and the City of Portsmouth, both major stakeholders in the urban regeneration of the city centre.
- New urban forms of the University's masterplan should be capable of adaptation over time to meet changing needs and to promote the continued use of existing buildings and resources.
- The new University Quarter will be integrated into its surrounding community, with transparent ground-floors that allow for greater permeability and visibility of activities and the integration of public uses, with new informal spaces between buildings for interaction and learning.
- The University will increase its provision of secure cycle racks and further promote bicycle usage and cycling by staff and students.
- The University has commenced more detailed planning for the first three early projects. To create a new 'heart' of the University Quarter we suggested the pedestrianisation of Hampshire Terrace as central public space.



Portsmouth: the University Quarter is located between Gunwharf Quays and Guildhall

Our Research with real impact

Our research brings together a group of experts and key industry partners with an interest in resilient urban futures, promoting design and collaboration as a way to transform the built environment. Urbanisation is one of the defining processes of contemporary times, and our understanding of the urban, whether in theory or in practice, has reached a turning point: cities in the UK and across the world are facing new complex and challenging conditions that require resilience and adaptation to the impacts of environmental and social change. It's time to rethink cities for the age of global warming.

An R&I agenda for urban sustainability and the future of cities

We have developed a Research and Innovation agenda and trans-disciplinary approach to scaling-up urban innovation for low-carbon living, working and mobility. We are excited about our research leading to innovation and new critical thinking about our urban futures. Such as our recent involvement in large EU projects, including Horizon 2020, on nature-based solutions for inclusive urban regeneration and the food-water-energy nexus.



Making the most of what we have includes to take full advantage of the existing building stock

Enhancing impact: learning from other cities

Our research interests span architecture, urban design, technology, engineering, geography and sustainability with a strong focus on improving the environmental performance of buildings, neighbourhoods and communities, by introducing the concept of 'integrated urban climate resilience'. We focus on solutions for a low carbon society, resilient urban development and wellbeing, and the integration of technologies to further optimise the resource-efficient city, including construction methods and end-user driven system integration.

Close collaboration with local actors

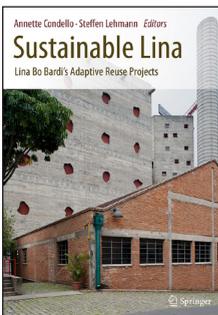
The issue of urban sustainability is of trans-disciplinary nature and the development of any R&I agenda must be a co-created effort of all society. Architects, planners, urban designers, geographers and engineers have a crucial role to play in developing strategies and adaptation solutions to ensure our cities are resilient, resource-efficient and sustainable in the face of intensifying global warming.



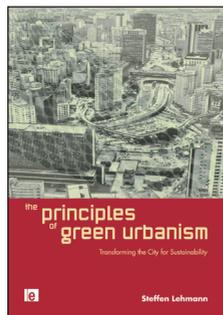
The 'Big Deck': part of Hastings' urban regeneration, offers an exciting large public space above the water

Recent book publications

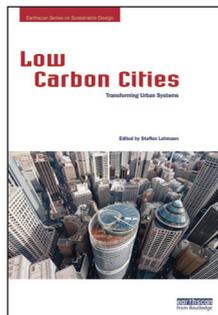
The fruits of our research are prodigious, including scholarly books (authored and edited), articles and conference papers, invited book chapters, online podcasts and contributions to significant industry and policy reports. Here are some recent books published:



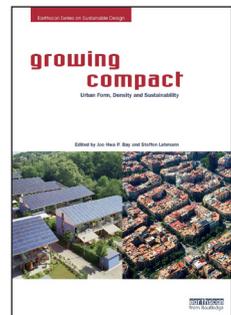
Springer, 2016



Earthscan, 2010



Routledge, 2015



Routledge, 2017