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## PREFACE

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The papers contained in this issue are a selection from those presented at the Urban Regeneration and Sustainability Conference held in Alicante, Spain, organised by the University of Alicante and the Wessex Institute of Technology.

They address many multidisciplinary issues of urban planning, which result from the increasing size of cities, the amount of resources and services required and the complexity of modern society. The continuous process of urbanisation generates many problems, which need to be resolved by the cities becoming more efficient habitats, whilst improving the quality and standard of living of their residents.

Most of the earth's population now lives in cities and the process of urbanisation continues to generate many problems deriving from the drift of the population towards them.

The rapid growth of cities has traditionally generated an unbalanced urban development where the centre of the city becomes neglected while its surroundings are anonymous spaces. The lack of adequate mobility between different parts of the city and a lack of balance between their uses generate functional instabilities in the urban context and situations of abandonment and insecurity.

In response, the level of occupancy of the urban space diminishes and its inhabitants no longer identify with their built environment.

Situations of abandonment and improper use show up in the decreasing quality of public spaces and well-being of residents.

The strategy consists of finding solutions that allows restoring a balance between the different uses of the urban fabric, improving transport infrastructure and especially improving the quality of life in urban space so that all stakeholders develop a sense of ownership and belonging.

The process however faces a number of challenges such as reducing pollution and improving transportation and infrastructure systems. New urban solutions are required to optimise the use of space and energy resources leading to improvements in the environment.

Large cities are probably the most complex systems to manage. However, despite such complexity, they represent a fertile ground for architects, engineers, city planners, social and political scientists, and other professionals able to conceive new ideas and timely implement them according to technological advances and human requirements.

The challenge of planning sustainable cities lies in considering their dynamics, the exchange of energy and matter, and the function and maintenance of ordered structures directly or indirectly supplied and maintained by natural systems.

The papers published in this issue, as well as all others presented at the Wessex Institute Conferences are archived in the Institute's eLibrary ([witpress.com/elibrary](http://witpress.com/elibrary)) where they are permanently available to the international community.

*The Editors  
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