

Making the city centre sustainable – helping to meet climate challenges

Across the world there is renewed public and political attention to, and concern about, the future of the city centre. Along with the ‘high street’ of smaller urban agglomerations, accounts discuss the ‘death’ of retail functions as familiar names of businesses close and new leasing agreements are sought to stave off other closures. Changing needs and the design of ageing commercial office properties are generating new levels of vacancies, whilst in developing countries, continued and rapid growth of the city has placed the city centre under renewed pressures.

City authorities, realising that structural change is happening in city centres, are responding by seeking to build new collaborations between private and public sectors, and with citizens to reactivate the city centre as a crucial epicentre of urban agglomeration. The seminar draws on current research in the UK, Australia, South Africa and Brazil to provide (i) a deeper understanding of their resilience to profound and rapid mutations of urbanisation how city centres and (ii) consideration of how responses to the climate crisis may form a key part of the future of the city centre.