

YEAR 10 UNIT 4b: Urban Issues and Challenges

Urban Change in a Major UK City: Leicester Case Study



Location and Background

Leicester is a large city of 348,000 in the East Midlands, the eleventh largest city in England by population. The city grew enormously during the industrial revolution.



The importance of Leicester

- The city enjoys a sporting heritage with a number of famous athletes and football clubs situated there.
- Leicester was the first Environment City in the UK and in 2010 was designated the second most sustainable city in the UK.
- Leicester has two major UK universities.
- Leicester is one of the fastest growing cities outside of London.



Migration to Leicester

During the industrial revolution, the population dramatically increased with people migrating from rural areas to work in the factories (specifically hosiery).



With the attraction of a wealthy city and working in the factories, international migrants came from India, Pakistan (post WWII), later Uganda and more recently Eastern Europe.

Leicester also attracts thousands of students from the UK & abroad to the University of Leicester and DeMontfort).

Opportunities in Leicester

Social: Leicester has various cultural attractions such as the Curve Theatre & Cathedral. Highcross is also very popular with shoppers.

Economic: The service (incl. retail) sector contribute to thousands of jobs and £millions for the economy. Leicester is home to head offices such as NEXT, Walkers Crisps etc.

Environmental: Leicester is described as being the greenest city in Europe. It has various open spaces (Jubilee Square, Castle Park and Gardens) for residents to enjoy.

Challenges in Leicester

Social: St. Matthews was described as the second most deprived estate in the country. 47% of the adult population here is unemployed and only 60% have a GCSE

Economic: Closure of the factories caused large scale unemployment and dereliction.

There is economic inequality as some areas have high unemployment and low average pay.

Environmental: Urban sprawl has led to increased pressure and the decline of greenfield sites around the city.

Leicester City Centre Regeneration Projects

Aims: Leicester wants to attract investment in more businesses and job opportunities. Also the projects aim to improve public spaces with more green urban environments.

Main features: Brownfield sites and derelict buildings regenerated. 'Connecting Leicester' is a new £50m project to regenerate highways, office space, the hotel industry and retail in the city. The Highcross shopping centre is the largest shopping mall in the region, home to 140 shops and hundreds of jobs.

There is currently a further £14m expansion underway.

Sustainable Urban living

Sustainable urban living means being able to live in cities in ways that do not pollute or damage the environment and have access to social and economic opportunities for people such as jobs, healthcare, services etc.

Water Conservation



This is about reducing the amount of water used.

- Collecting rainwater for gardens and flushing toilets.
- Installing water meters and toilets that flush less water.
- Educating people on using less water.

Energy Conservation



Using less fossil fuels can reduce the rate of climate change.

- Promoting renewable energy sources.
- Making homes more energy efficient.
- Encouraging people to use less energy.

Creating Green Space



Creating green spaces in urban areas (urban greening) can improve places for people who want to live there.

- Provide areas for people to relax and socialise in.
- Encourages people to exercise.
- Reduces the risk of flooding from surface runoff.

Waste Recycling



More recycling means fewer resources are used. Less waste reduces the amount that eventually goes to landfill.

- Collection of household waste.
- More local recycling facilities.
- Greater awareness of the benefits in recycling.

Sustainable Urban living Example: Freiburg



Background & Location

Freiburg is in west Germany. The city has a population of about 220,000. In 1970 it set the goal of focusing on social, economic and environmental sustainability.



Sustainable Strategies

- The city's waste water allows for rainwater to be retained.
- The use of sustainable energy such as solar and wind is becoming more important.
- 40% of the city is forested with many open spaces for recreation, clean air and reducing flood risk.

Traffic Management



Urban areas are busy places with many people travelling by different modes of transport. This has caused urban areas to experience different traffic congestion that can lead to various problems. **Environmental problems:** Traffic increases air pollution (such as greenhouse gases) that is leading to climate change. **Economic problems:** Congestion can make people late for work and business deliveries take longer. This can cause companies to lose money. **Social problems:** There is a greater risk of accidents and congestion is a cause of stress. Traffic pollution causes health issues for residents.

Congestion Schemes

- Widen roads to allow more traffic to flow easily.
- Build ring roads and bypasses to keep through traffic out of city centres.
- Introduce park and ride schemes to reduce car use.
- Encourage car-sharing schemes in work places.
- Have public transport, cycle lanes & cycle hire schemes.
- Having congestion charges discourages drivers from entering the busy city centres.



Integrated Transport System - This is the linking of different forms of public and private transport within a city and the surrounding area e.g. cycle lanes leading to a train station.

Traffic Management Example: Bristol - In 2012 Bristol was the most congested city in the UK. Now the city aims to develop its integrated transport system to encourage more people to use the public transport. The city has also invested in cycle routes and hiring schemes.



Brownfield sites are areas of land due to be developed (built on) that have been previously used, but have become vacant, derelict or contaminated.

Greenfield sites are areas of land due to be developed (built on) that have never been built on before such as open fields, farmland, parks etc

