

Centre for Urban and Regional Ecology  
University of Manchester

Since 2000 the Centre for Urban & Regional Ecology has been working on 'sustainable city-regions' – the challenge of steering our behaviour, settlements and landscapes towards more sustainable futures.

Based in the School of Environment and Development at the University of Manchester, CURE carries out multidisciplinary research, both for scientific understanding and for practical application. CURE draws its expertise mainly from the disciplines of spatial planning, geography, environmental science, policy studies and systems studies. In total there are over 50 researchers directly involved, including academic members, researchers, honorary staff and PhD students.

CURE is now coming up to its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary. We are reviewing what has been achieved, what are the prospects and goals, and what kind of strategy we should take forward. Clearly the priority of environmental issues has increased in the last decade: but so have the scale of the risks and the challenges. The concept of integrated city-regional policy and governance has continued to develop: there are more sophisticated tools and evidence bases to help in this, but also more realism about what is possible.

### **CURE research agenda, themes and approaches**

The common theme is that of ecology – encompassing the organisation and interactions of the natural and human environments at multiple scales. This research agenda is applied across five main research themes, with many overlaps and synergies:

- **Spatial planning and urban-rural links:** spatial planning and policy: capacity building and adaptive learning; ICT applications, peri-urban and rural links: environmental impact assessment.
- **Climate change emissions and responses:** urban and regional emissions modelling with scenarios and policy studies: climate change mitigation: institutional and governance studies.
- **Climate change impacts and adaptation:** adaptation strategies and opportunities: resilient communities, cities and processes.
- **Landscape, land-use & restoration:** land-use change and landscape impacts: land restoration and reclamation: urban socio-cultural capital.

- **Urban environments and human ecology:** resource flows and urban metabolism: green and blue infrastructure: water resource and flooding issues: air quality and public health.

Within these themes CURE also specialises in the application of innovative research strands, i.e. an approach to complex problems which combines theory with methods and tools. These include: *foresight and future studies; adaptive learning and assessment, ICT and geographic information systems; systems and complexity studies; and risk and resilience.*

In combining these themes and approaches we aim for active links between theoretical and practical applications. Figure 1 outlines the range of research themes and approaches which are brought together by CURE.

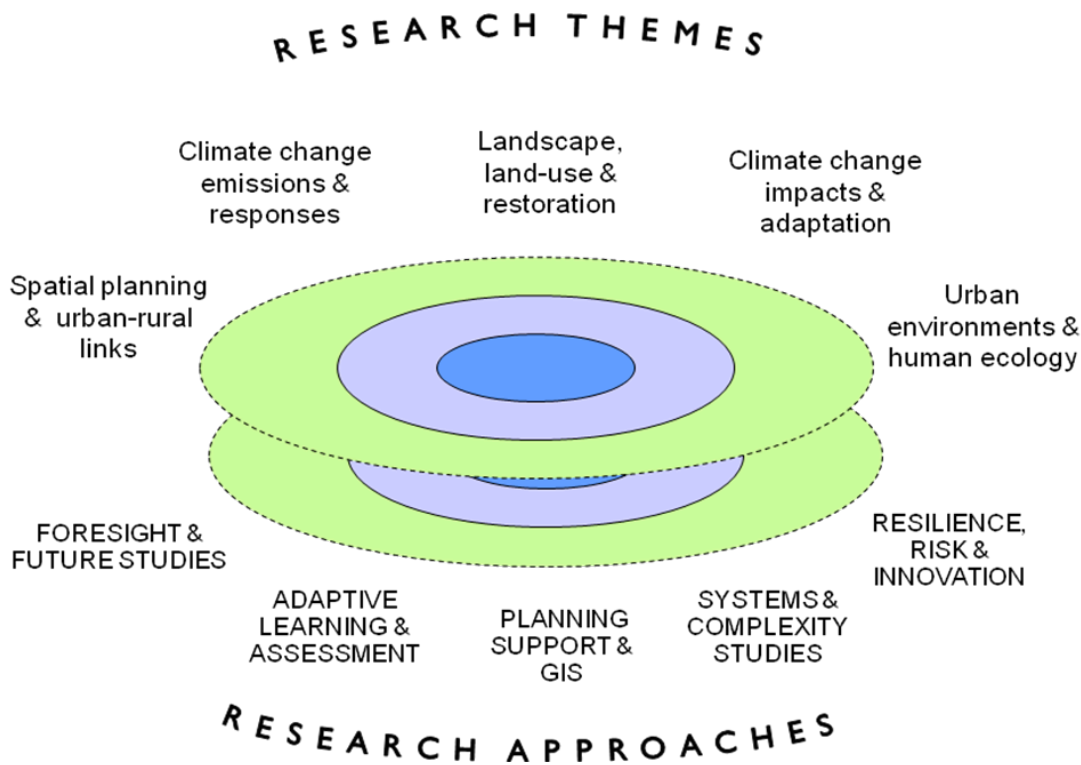


Figure 1: Research Themes and Approaches