

B B C BITESIZE

Over 80% of the UK's population lives in towns and cities, making it one of the most urbanised countries in the world. But what is the urban landscape and how has it changed?

Population density is greatest in lowland areas with a greater proportion of people living in towns and cities. This means that cities like Manchester and Sheffield just keep on growing.

Meanwhile highland areas for example are sparsely populated and rural.

Industrialisation and changing economic patterns also increased urbanisation. So what is the urban landscape like?

Typically city centres are a focus for economic activity. They are busy locations with high land prices.

Homes close to the city centre are often smaller with limited space.

City centres are expensive and as people have wanted space, development has sprawled out across the rural urban fringe.

This process is called suburbanisation. Suburbs are areas around the edge of cities where there are larger houses and gardens and less pollution and congestion.

More recently increased road and rail connections and home working, have allowed people to live further away and commute to work.

Over time urban landscapes can develop problems. Living conditions in cities can be challenging with issues such as inequality, waste management, affordable housing and pollution. We also need to find ways to make urban living more sustainable. Sustainable urban transport, renewable energies and improving construction technologies such as solar panels and heat exchangers can all help to improve sustainability.

This is just a snapshot of how the UK's urban landscape is changing. Have a think of the urban areas near you and the challenges they might face.