



Good Cities, Better Lives: How Europe Discovered the Lost Art of Urbanism (Planning, History and Environment Series)

Peter Hall

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This book has one central theme: how, in the United Kingdom, can we create better cities and towns in which to live and work and play? What can we learn from other countries, especially our near neighbours in Europe? And, in turn, can we provide lessons for other countries facing similar dilemmas?

Urban Britain is not functioning as it should. Social inequalities and regional disparities show little sign of going away. Efforts to generate growth, and spread it to the poorer areas of cities, have failed dismally. Much new urban development and redevelopment is not up to standard. Yet there are cities in mainland Europe, which have set new standards of high-quality sustainable urban development. This book looks at these best-practice examples – in Germany, the Netherlands, France and Scandinavia, – and suggests ways in which the UK and other countries could do the same.

The book is in three parts. Part 1 analyses the main issues for urban planning and development – in economic development and job generation, sustainable development, housing policy, transport and development mechanisms – and probes how practice in the UK has fallen short.

Part Two embarks on a tour of best-practice cities in Europe, starting in Germany with the country's boosting of its cities' economies, moving to the spectacularly successful new housing developments in the Netherlands, from there to France's integrated city transport, then to Scandinavia's pursuit of sustainability for its cities, and finally back to Germany, to Freiburg – the city that 'did it all'.

Part Three sums up the lessons of Part Two and sets out the key steps needed to launch a new wave of urban development and regeneration on a radically different basis.

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