



Sustainable Places
Research Institute
*Sefydliad Ymchwil
Mannau Cynaliadwy*

A large, light-colored graphic on the right side of the page, composed of numerous small icons related to sustainability, such as leaves, lightbulbs, recycling symbols, globes, and hands.

“Our mission is to provide a new basis for sustainability science, to push the boundaries of traditional sustainability research and find solutions to the challenges of diminishing resources and a changing climate.”

Professor Terry Marsden, Director

Founded in 2010, the Sustainable Places Research Institute operates across all three Colleges of Cardiff University, and is making new connections in sustainability science.

Bringing together over 100 researchers, the Institute is developing place-based responses and solutions to issues including climate change and resources depletion, this is being done on the specific requirements of individual places.

Research within Sustainable Places focuses on the complex and dynamic interrelations between ecosystems, society and economy at different spatial scales. This is achieved within six interrelated research areas and the hub.

Developments in the Research Hub include:

- (i) Developing city-region and landscape observatories
- (ii) Theoretical, conceptual and methodological development and innovation
 - Progressing the adaptive governance of sustainable places
 - Progressing place-based learning communities
 - Linking biodiversity and food security
 - Linking biodiversity, natural capital and ecosystem services
 - Spatial Design Network Analysis
 - Place as a boundary device for the sustainability sciences

Developments in the six research areas include:

Transitions and adaptations in city-regions

This research has centred on sustainability and communities (community land, environmental behaviours, supporting community development, the social dimension of sustainable growth) and building City-Region Observatories (Cardiff, Helsinki, Stuttgart, Shenzhen, Toronto).



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Security, risk and resilient places

Research here can be divided into four distinct themes.

1. Understanding and improving the use of models in policy making: focuses on analysing the use of formal models in governing threats to environmental and public health.
2. Analysing the formal heuristics embedded in regulatory science and policy making: explores the role of heuristics in shaping environmental and public health policy, with particular concern for expert rules for methodological design and the analysis of data.
3. Public understanding of sustainability issues: focuses on individuals' understandings and beliefs in relation to sustainability, energy and risk issues
4. The design and management of engineering systems focuses on the sustainable design and management of infrastructure systems and public buildings, taking a socio-technical approach.



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Places for ecosystems and people

How can ecosystems and people spatially co-exist in a changing world. Work here focuses on biodiversity for ecosystem service sustainability, ecosystem services and human wellbeing and ecosystems and ecosystem service management.



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Health and connected communities

This research has three key objectives:

1. To develop a better understanding of the complex interplay of social, economic, physical and biological factors in relation to health at different spatial and time scales.
2. To exploit new technologies for record linking between large routine health datasets and environmental data.
3. And to integrate knowledge across disciplines.



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Adaptive governance for social and ecological transitions (governance of sustainable places)

Governance, in this context refers to such practices that are anticipatory, oriented towards the long-term, multi-level change and open to learning, more inclusive deliberation, and innovation and adaptation. The research focus has been to develop an understanding of the relationships between government, other public bodies, private sector, and those in the civil society addressing public policy issues. It also attempts to move away from the traditional forms of governance that require certainty and set goals, and to overcome problems of policy integration across sectors and spaces.



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Adaptations around mobilities, flows and migration

The key aim for this research theme is to understand the sustainability implications of the dynamic flows (and associated interactions) that occur within and between places, and types of place. The scope of the theme is extremely broad, and includes the mobility of people, goods, services, and knowledge as well as the infrastructure that enables these flows and mobilities.



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Here at the Sustainable Places Research Institute we are constantly developing new and innovative project ideas and our team of researchers are keen to make interdisciplinary research connections with a range of academic and stakeholder groups. Our Research and External Network Platform provides an opportunity to share and develop these projects. We are keen to forge new relationships, and to develop new and exciting research opportunities.

More information on the six research themes and projects can be found in our latest research update. Please get in touch with us to discuss your ideas.

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