and there are many examples of this translated into practice (Edwards, 1999; Beatley, 2000; European Commission, 2001; Sorensen *et al.*, 2004).

This book presents some of the diverse aspects that are inextricably bound up with, and strongly influence, the scope of sustainable urban planning and design. A great deal has been written about the influences that can be said to affect the urban form, such as the technological, social, economic, institutional, geographical and physical (e.g. Norgaard, 1994; Jenks *et al.*, 1996; Jenks and Burgess, 2000; Williams *et al.*, 2000; Wheeler, 2003). These aspects are inter-related and interdependent as they all facilitate and influence sustainable urban planning and design in varying degrees. The chapters that follow add to the debate, examining ideas drawn from research and practice at different scales of the built environment from the urban region to the neighbourhood level in a number of different countries. The different scales at which sustainable ideas are discussed are reflected in the three major sections of the book.[1]

Section One

The chapters in Section One of this book discuss different (spatial) urban concepts, with particular reference to the city region. The chapters draw on research to assess how emerging conceptual ideas work when put into practice through a range of policy and planning strategies, with the ultimate objective of achieving urban sustainability.

The first chapter by Giddings *et al.* outlines the important role that the city's character and content have to play in establishing that city as a viable, sustainable, urban form. While cities have always experienced varying degrees of indiscriminate and unregulated change, it is suggested that a concerted effort should be made to incorporate the city's distinctiveness and evolving nature into a strategy of urban sustainability. They suggest that establishing the social, economic and environmental dimensions of sustainability can contribute to the recovery of a city's urban spirit and the re-emergence of a clear delineation between the currently blurred boundaries of the rural and the urban. One of the ways in which this is possible is by considering the city as part of a wider urban region: a concept that is discussed in several chapters in this section.

The second chapter by Briggs also considers the intangible nature of the city in his discussion of the concept of the

intelligent city; that is, how the form of cities, the culture and habits of its citizens may be affected by advances in communication technology. He draws together the discussions of city intelligence and urban sustainability, illustrating how one cannot exist without the other. According to Briggs, the intelligent city has 'social equity as its focus', putting 'people back at the centre of the urban agenda', mirroring the *Brundtland* definition of sustainability. He suggests that adaptability is key to the intelligent, sustainable city and highlights the need for indicators to measure and monitor change, in an effort to help ensure the city's long-term sustainability.

Okabe notes in the following chapter that the reality of current living spheres has already extended beyond the city limits. Recognizing that the sustainable city limits itself spatially, Okabe looks at the monocentric and polycentric configurations of two established urban regions, Tokyo in Japan and the Randstad in the Netherlands. Like Giddings *et al*. she discusses the importance of the spatial form of the city, in terms of the distinction between the urban and the rural, which, it is argued, allows for a more inclusive analysis of the phenomena of counter-urbanization and re-urbanization. Okabe suggests that the polycentric urban system is a more sustainable form than the monocentric.

Bertolini also discusses the Randstad region, examining the transport planning policy and design in relation to a key dimension of sustainability – the integration of environmental and economic goals. He concentrates on how to design for good accessibility and efficient transportation with minimal environmental damage. The future policy plan alternatives for the Randstad region that have been proposed by the Dutch Government are evaluated to illustrate the scope for policy development within a conceptual framework. Bertolini suggests that a scenario which radically improves the performance of public transport, improves mobility and increases access to employment whilst reducing carbon dioxide emissions, best fulfils the goal of minimizing environmental damage and maximizing accessibility.

Green considers the city region in the context of the UK. He discusses the unsustainable nature of city regions in their current state with specific reference to dispersal and urban sprawl, a need for meaningful urban regeneration and the growing environmental footprint of cities. By widening the planning canvas from city to region, a more sustainable urban environment might be achieved. Focussing on two UK cities,