



A busy city centre in Tokyo

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## The future of the city centre

Members of the public, people living and working in city centres, representatives of local government, businesses and communities are invited to share their views at a special event on the future of the city centre, being held at Northumbria University in September.

The wireless revolution has fuelled increasingly flexible working patterns and generated places of work in cyberspace, meaning that the need for city centre offices has fallen. At the same time, images of streets with empty shops is starting to concern everyone. Meanwhile urbanists are looking around and asking 'what is a city centre for?'

Northumbria University is hosting a two-day symposium on how we can best shape the city centre of the future, as part of an international project to review how city centres worldwide are changing.

Four sessions will be held across Tuesday 11 and Wednesday 12 September, each debating different aspects of cities.

The first day will see Newcastle and Gateshead Councils jointly host a session to focus on how the structures of politics and governance in the UK contribute to the city centre; and will consider how local government can help in shaping its future.

In the afternoon, a team from the Newcastle Gateshead Initiative will use their expertise in presenting ways in which vibrant city centres are attractive to tourists, businesses and major event organisers.

On the second day, the award-winning business improvement company, NE1, will outline its vision for the city centre, together with pathways to deliver it and examples of how challenges could be overcome.

Later that day, representatives from the housing and homelessness charity, Shelter, will discuss who is benefitting from the changes to city centres, and who might be excluded or marginalised as a result.

[Professor Bob Giddings](#), Chair of Architecture and Urban Design in Northumbria's Department of [Architecture and Built Environment](#), is leading the international project and will welcome partners from Australia, South Africa and Brazil to the symposium.

He said: "Cities in the developed world evolved from their industrial base into commercial activity during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, the global recession from 2009 exposed the underlying trend that electronic systems are changing the demand for city space once more."

*The Future of the City Centre* symposium will be held at Northumbria University on Tuesday 11 and Wednesday 12 September.

The event is free to attend and is open to people living and working in a city centre, representatives of local government, business and communities.

Those who would like to attend can find out more and register for their place at [www.northumbria.ac.uk/futureofthecitycentre](http://www.northumbria.ac.uk/futureofthecitycentre)

The Future of the City Centre project is funded by the [Arts and Humanities Research Council](#) and run in partnership with the University of Strathclyde, Scotland; the University of Newcastle, Australia; the University of Paraiba, Brazil and the University South Africa.

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