



3S RECIPE - Smart Shrinkage Solutions Fostering Resilient Cities in Inner Peripheries of Europe

ŁÓDŹ (PL) POLICY BRIEF #3 • LIVEABILITY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This policy brief refers to a so far partially successful solution for urban renewal in a city inhabited by almost 700 thousand people. Łódź is a former old industrial centre, which is located in the heart of Poland. The city is still coping with the results of deep economic restructuring and ongoing population loss. The broadly defined issue of urban regeneration, especially of the historical core of Łódź, ranks high in the public agenda. To deal with those problems, **The Urban Renewal Programme for Łódź 2026+** was approved in 2017. This document is a significant step forward regarding the issue of long-term, integrative, strategic planning. Nonetheless, it could be further improved. A more comprehensive approach to urban renewal, one that more explicitly focuses on social issues, should be considered. The brief suggests policy recommendations aimed at developing a more resilient and effective approach to urban renewal.



INTRODUCTION

Former old industrial regions often face the problem of dilapidated inner cities and derelict industrial sites. The urban renewal projects, especially in the historical core, are often considered to stimulate economic growth and reverse the process of depopulation. Accordingly, urban regeneration/revitalization is usually actively promoted and supported, or even led, by the public sector (state-led urban renewal). However, if urban renewal is expected to bring about economic growth and a vibrant and liveable city centre, a comprehensive approach to urban regeneration is crucial. Other key factors are the consistent use of a clear and exact terminology to formulate a project's objectives, and spatial scale/range and time-horizon of a project.

URBAN RENEWAL PROGRAM FOR ŁÓDŹ 2026+: A STEP CHANGE IN PLANNING

According to **Revitalization Act** (2015), urban renewal has become a facultative communal task. In the document, revitalization is defined as “a process of drawing out degraded areas of critical state through complex, integrated and territorially focused activities in favour of local communities, space and economy, conducted according to communal urban renewal program by revitalization stakeholders” (chapter 1, art. 2.1). The group of stakeholders consists of residents, owners, lessees, managing bodies (e.g. housing cooperatives), entrepreneurs, public authorities of different kinds, NGOs etc. The Urban Renewal Program for Łódź 2026+ was approved in 2017, and it was scheduled to finish in 2026. The program was introduced to face the problems troubling the historical-core of Łódź, such as the process of depopulation, concentration of social problems, poor technical conditions of historical housing stock and transport and green infrastructure. The program is undoubtedly the most ambitious approach to the inner-city redevelopment

after 1990, especially its spatial scale; areas covering substantial parts of the historical core, and objectives are unprecedented in Łódź after socialism. If successful, this public initiative will radically transform not only the public housing stock, and transport, and technical infrastructure in the inner city, but also the social composition of the area.

The Urban Renewal Programme for Łódź 2026+ can also be viewed as a 'tool' to coordinate and operationalise regeneration/renewal objectives included in the **Strategy for the Integrated Development of Łódź 2020+**. Moreover, the **Programme** is not the first project launched to regenerate the historical core of Łódź. **The**



New Centre of Łódź and City of Tenements projects seem to be the most successful in terms of concrete spatial effects. The former project has resulted in the ongoing redevelopment of a significant swath of land in the historical core, including the new already functioning train station. The latter public initiative has contributed to the redevelopment and upgrading of more than 100 publicly owned pre-war buildings in the inner city. However, the previously implemented projects actually confine regeneration to physical aspects of urban milieus: technical infrastructure and buildings. The social aspects, local residents in particular, have been generally neglected so far. **The Urban Renewal Programme for Łódź 2026+** is a real innovation in this respect, as it places the intervention into the local social crisis at the heart of its objectives.

THE URBAN RENEWAL PROGRAM FOR ŁÓDŹ 2026+: KEY URBAN REGENERATION OBJECTIVES

Area	Goals
Social cohesion	1. Create incentives for better employment. 2. Reduce scale of exposure to poverty, stop process of inheriting poverty. 3. Increase educational opportunities for young people in the revitalized area. 4. Build strong local communities. 5. Prevent spatial segregation, creation of diverse communities in revitalized areas. 6. Stimulate transfer of social capital. 7. Prevent of exporting social problems out of revitalized area.
Revitalization of the city and its centre	1. Build new image of Łódź's centre as an attractive, lively, creative, interesting and friendly space. 2. Create new image of the city centre by recognizing its architectural values and attracting new architectural projects that build area's prestige. 3. Gradually transform area's cultural landscape so that the area is important for local identity. 4. Build coherence between revitalization and Łódź's efforts with EXPO 2022.
Revitalization of local entrepreneurship	1. Create spaces for business activities. 2. Support synergy of entrepreneurship. 3. Support initiatives of local entrepreneurs, including creative entrepreneurs and traditional crafts. 4. Develop entrepreneurial attitudes, especially among children and adolescents. 5. Build consistent visual identification systems and advertising
Revitalization of infrastructure	1. Improve technical standard of residential and service buildings in residential areas. Promote creation of public and semi-public spaces arranged with participation of residents. 3. Improve fitting of residential areas into necessary network infrastructure. 4. Provide a consistent preference for pedestrian traffic with adaptation to climate change. 5. Develop new social housing.

The following table highlights how the **Programme** frames the desired outcomes and enabling conditions/mechanisms to achieve them:

Renewal outcome	What are the necessary conditions to make it happen?
Businesses attracted to new office space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prosperity in the real estate market • Prosperity in national economy in general • Development of entrepreneurship • Access to funding (bank loans)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional support for small business (municipal authorities, employment office etc.) • Good transport accessibility • Positive city image • Central part of the city competitive to other districts • Sufficient provision of skilled labour force • New technologies development
Improvement in housing conditions (old housing stock)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rental policy supporting communal and social housing • Ownership policy fostering privatisation • Sufficient financial resources for modernisation (local authorities, housing cooperatives, individual owners) • Availability of external funding (bank loans etc.)
Public spaces adjusted to users' needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sufficient financial resources for municipal investments • Municipal authorities need to have a vision of development • Social demand for public space • Users' proper attitude toward community property • Sufficient provision of space (plots) for new land development

As shrinking cities require solutions that are immune to unexpected interferences and shocks, resilience of **The Urban Renewal Programme for Łódź 2026+** was assessed on the basis of Urban Future method (see Lombardi *et al.*, 2012). Supported by the members of a workshop that was held in April 2018 at the University of Łódź, we have identified three main general benefits that will influence other social, economic and environmental spheres. The following table presents the potential benefits for Łódź's liveability along with the required enabling conditions.

WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED FROM ŁÓDŹ? RECOMMENDATIONS

➤ **Clear and coherent terminology is needed for successful planning**

A successful plan for urban renewal, similarly to other planning and strategic documents, must rely on exact and coherent terminology. Unfortunately, this is not always the case in Łódź. Essentially, the **Urban Renewal Programme** is directly related to other strategic documents and policies introduced in the city to tackle shrinkage and increase the city's liveability. However, different documents define 'liveability' in different, usually non-coherent ways or just mention the term briefly without properly defining it. This can potentially contribute to the fact that different projects aimed at increasing the liveability of regenerated areas will be less comprehensive and less compatible with each other. There is also a risk that some aspects of 'liveability' will be totally neglected. Then, there is a need to clearly define the term 'liveability' and use it coherently and systematically in planning and strategic documents.

➤ **Big is not always better and the spatial scale of urban renewal projects should be carefully considered**

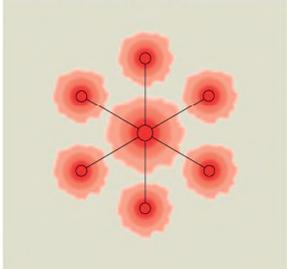
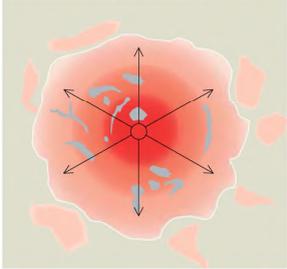
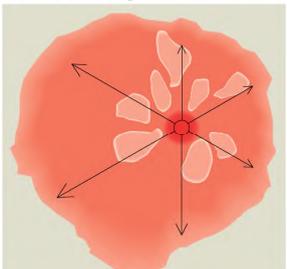
Successful policy implementation hinges on the spatial scale of particular projects, and smaller projects in terms of area and/or population are usually more comprehensive and easier to manage. Even though the spatial scale of the urban renewal activities suggests that the program is really ambitious, it may actually be too big for the program to be adequately managed. The huge scale of the program actually already contributes to the blurring of roles and responsibilities among the public actors implementing and managing the program; the area designed for regeneration is simply very complex in terms of urban fabric and socio-demographic composition of residents, and it stretches across the five districts of Łódź. Rather than envision a number of different projects distributed over an extensive area, a fragmentation of regeneration activities, the spatial range of urban renewal should be reconsidered, preferably contracted, and the program should be made more focused on those areas that indeed require immediate actions.

➤ **The expertise of local practitioners and mid-level specialists, and the knowledge gained in previous projects should be better used**

One of the pivotal factors that should be considered when developing a large regeneration project is how inclusive the process will be, in terms of both public actors and local residents. The lesson from Łódź points that a more exclusive approach to a project's planning, one that is limited to the higher echelons of administrative hierarchy, could result in losing valuable practical knowledge out of sight. The same applies to neglecting the results/outcomes of the previously implemented revitalization projects. Then, the implementation of the urban renewal program should even more strongly rely on the already accumulated and locally available experience and knowledge.

WOULD THE PROGRAM BE EFFECTIVE IN DIFFERENT FUTURE SCENARIOS?

Resilience analysis with regard to **The Programme** regarded confronting necessary conditions identified for prospective benefits against four divergent Urban Futures scenarios (see Lombardi *et al.*, 2012) with ca. 40-year time horizon. Four **plausible but distinct** future scenarios were included into our analysis (see Lombardi *et al.*, 2012: Table 2). A summary of these four global **urban future scenarios** is provided below:

New Sustainability Paradigm (NSP)		Key driver: Equity and sustainability
Settlement pattern 	Description An ethos of 'one planet living' facilitates a shared vision for more sustainable living and a much improved quality of life. New socio-economic arrangements result in changes to the character of urban industrial civilisation. Local is valued but global links also play a role. A sustainable and more equitable future is emerging from new values, a revised model of development and the active engagement of civil society.	Philosophy The worldview of the <i>New Sustainability Paradigm</i> has few historical precedents, although John Stuart Mill, the nineteenth century political economist, was prescient in theorising a post-industrial and post-scarcity social arrangement based on human development rather than material acquisition (Mill, 1848).
Policy Reform (PR)		Key driver: Economic growth with greater equity
Settlement pattern 	Description <i>Policy Reform</i> depends on comprehensive and coordinated government action for poverty reduction and environmental sustainability, negating trends toward high inequity. The values of consumerism and individualism persist, creating a tension with policies that prioritise sustainability.	Philosophy In <i>Policy Reform</i> , the belief is that markets require strong policy guidance to address inherent tendencies toward economic crisis, social conflict and environmental degradation. John Maynard Keynes, influenced by the Great Depression, is an important predecessor of those who hold that it is necessary to manage capitalism in order to temper its crises (Keynes, 1936).
Market Forces (MF)		Key driver: Competitive, open global markets
Settlement pattern 	Description <i>Market Forces</i> relies on the self-correcting logic of competitive markets. Current demographic, economic, environmental, and technological trends unfold without major surprise. Competitive, open and integrated markets drive world development. Social and environmental concerns are secondary.	Philosophy The <i>Market Forces</i> bias is one of market optimism, the faith that the hidden hand of well-functioning markets is the key to resolving social, economic and environmental problems. An important philosophic antecedent is Adam Smith (1776), while contemporary representatives include many neo-classical economists and free market enthusiasts.
Fortress World (FW)		Key driver: Protection and control of resources
Settlement pattern 	Description Powerful individuals, groups and organisations develop an authoritarian response to the threats of resource scarcity and social breakdown by forming alliances to protect their own interests. Security and defensibility of resources are paramount for these privileged rich elites. An impoverished majority exists outside the fortress. Policy and regulation exist but enforcement may be limited. Armed forces act to impose order, protect the environment and prevent a societal collapse.	Philosophy The <i>Fortress World</i> mindset was foreshadowed by the philosophy of Thomas Hobbes (1651), who held a pessimistic view of the nature of man and saw the need for powerful leadership. While it is rare to find modern Hobbesians, many people believe, in their resignation and anguish, that some kind of a <i>Fortress World</i> is the logical outcome of the unattended social polarisation and environmental degradation they observe.

The scenarios address local spatial and institutional contexts, possibilities for urban renewal, citizens' attitudes, etc.:

Urban Futures Method applied to The Urban Renewal Programme for Łódź 2026+				
Necessary Conditions	New Sustainability Paradigm	Policy Reform	Marker Forces	Fortress World
Sufficient provision of skilled labour force	Labour force skills respond quickly and elastically to employers' demand	Education system is well adjusted to the demand	In this scenario split into better and worse qualified labour force begins	Just the richer part of the society will be able to obtain proper qualifications, the other one will be deprived of the possibilities to work in this sector
Positive city image	All kinds of places in this scenario ought to be perceived positively	This depends on the scale of resistance toward reasonable policy aimed at improving city image	Private investors take care of the quality of space and its perception	This refers only to the 'rich' parts of the city
Institutional support for small business	Only to generally approved economic activities	The authorities support business which is in line with current policy	Market is the regulator, there is no need for public interference	There should be one but it's not on offer; even if it was offered only the rich would take advantage of it (they know how to obtain and make use of such a support), contrary to the poor
Ownership policy fostering privatisation	There is no need for communal property because there is no poverty; also, communal housing is a kind of sustainable resource. People in this scenario are used to sharing; there is no place for consumerism	Only to a certain point; communal housing is sold with discounts so that residents take more care of their property	Total privatisation of communal property	The poor need such a support, at least to a certain point not to create more severe problems
Sufficient financial resources for modernisation (for private investors only)	There are no problems with obtaining funds for such a useful purpose	Probable, as individual initiatives that are in line with public policy ought to be supported (modernisation of housing stock is such a desirable activity)system is adjusted accordingly	Funds are accessible according to market rules	Public transport is poorly organised unless the elites are interested. However, they travel separately from the masses and public transport optimisation won't bring any profits to the enclave
Rental policy supporting communal and social housing	If there is such a housing it would be supported	The state takes good care of its citizens	The market regulates rents, the authorities shouldn't interfere	The care for the poor is insufficient due to the erosion of social standards
Users' proper attitude toward community property	All people take care of the properties no matter who the owner is	There are some individualists that don't take care of it	Because of the fact that such a commodity wouldn't be available for free, people take care of commodities they pay for	It is true in the rich enclaves, but in the poor sectors, one needs to survive and such commodities could enable that (welfare needs first, then recreation, landscape, etc.)
Social demand for public space	Those needs are respected	There are some individuals who don't care about it	Available, though would the public have time for recreation in public spaces due to work pressures?	Especially for the poor who don't have proper housing conditions, public space would offer the opportunity to meet others in better environment



Sufficient provision of space for new land development	People take care of their surrounding and don't consume resources unnecessarily; public space is preserved for the community	The authorities preserves space for public needs; however, if there is a need for expropriation, the individuals would resist and delay investment processes	Everything was sold out to private owners	There is overpopulation in the poor sectors and therefore no possibility to preserve any area for the whole community; in the rich sector everything is in private hands
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Key: ■ condition highly unlikely to continue in the future ■ condition is at risk in the future ■ condition highly likely to continue in the future

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Choosing the 'right' spatial scale: The process of urban renewal is a complex and highly context-sensitive process. Put differently, a successful urban renewal project should be tailored to match the problems of particular neighbourhoods, as neighbourhoods differ considerably in terms of urban fabric (morphology) and social composition. Consequently, a large-scale project, for instance one that assumes the renewal of the entire city centre (historical core) at once, might not be the optimal solution. With this in mind, the major recommendation of this policy brief is to start with a preparation of comprehensive and 'bespoke' regeneration projects for specific locations, and gradually shift renewal activities to new locations. Such approach should help stakeholders to learn on mistakes, receive necessary feedback, and eventually improve the approach so that the results actually meet the envisioned objectives. Focusing on smaller areas would also make the process more efficient, as it is easier to collect necessary information and identify local problems in detail. This in turn should allow addressing the local problems quickly, effectively, and with a strong focus on details. Finally, the advantage of smaller projects over one large-scale project also seems to lay in the fact that there are fewer issues to deal with and tasks to be completed at the same time, and it should be significantly easier to distribute exact responsibilities among the actors involved in urban renewal.

Capitalizing on local expertise and promoting collaboration:

Making best use of the local knowledge and expertise on implementing and managing urban renewal projects, and on urban social geography is strongly recommended. It is reasonable to assume that any successful urban renewal program, similar to most other planning policies and projects, should be preceded by a comprehensive



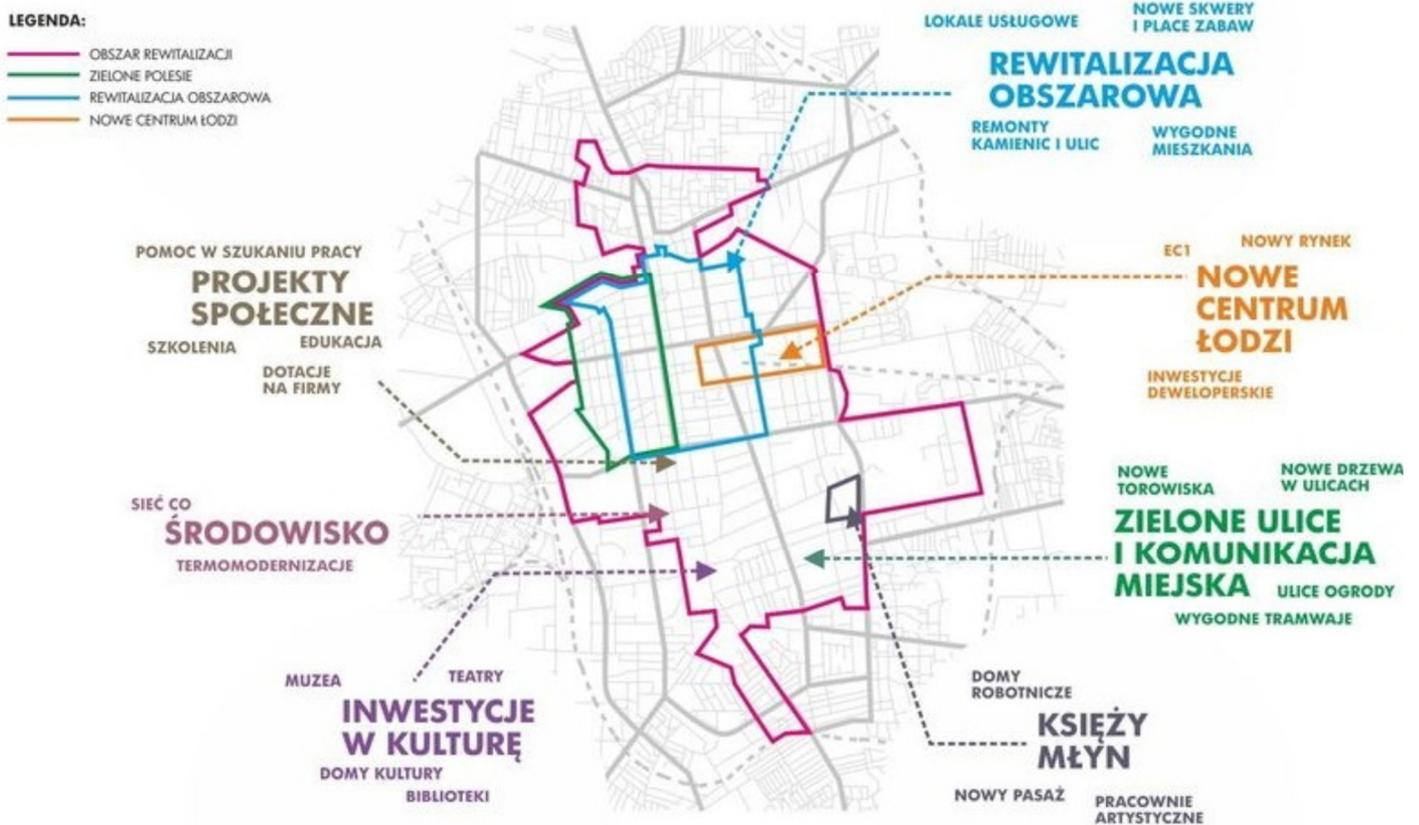
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analysis of neighbourhoods' history, social and demographic composition, morphology, technical conditions of housing stock, and many other characteristics. It is also reasonable to argue that while preparing an urban regeneration program one should carefully and critically consider the outcomes of previously implemented revitalization projects in order to identify best practices. Moreover, the decision making process should not be limited to the highest representatives of public stakeholders and it should not be politically motivated. Equally important is a tight and well-managed collaboration between different public actors. It also seems rational to involve local academics in an urban renewal project. More specifically, researchers and/or students could be involved in monitoring the process of urban renewal and its effects on the city: e.g., they can design tools, make surveys, and process and analyse spatial and demographic data.



Putting local communities in focus: Designing and implementing a resilient urban renewal program requires avoiding negative consequences for local communities and the whole city. Put differently, urban regeneration projects should not be overtly focused on 'hard' factors such as buildings and infrastructure. Accordingly, the problems of local communities should be carefully identified and analysed, and local communities should be actively involved in urban regeneration process. Needless to say that any resilient urban renewal project should limit the displacement of local residents, especially those who are socially vulnerable, to minimum. In the same vein, and bearing in mind that affordable housing is already a scarce resource in cities worldwide (Madden and Marcus 2016), resilient urban regeneration projects should avoid further reductions of the public housing stock, social housing for the most vulnerable residents in particular. As the share of public housing declines in many European cities and the residual stock is often clustered in space, the simple relocation of social problems away from regenerated areas may backfire in future – the enclaves of socially vulnerable can be easily – and unintentionally – created in other parts of the city. Then, if some relocations are indispensable, the effort should be put to distribute the residents evenly in space, preferable with the idea of socially mixed housing in mind.

Mapping Urban Regeneration: Łódź City Council Executive (2015)



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