



## **Report on Resilience First Webinar**

**14 May 2020**

### **Urban resilience around Covid-19: lessons from China**

#### **Speakers:**

**Ali Cheshmehzangi**, *Head of Department of Architecture and Built Environment and Director of Urban Innovation Lab, University of Nottingham Ningbo China, Director of Centre for Sustainable Energy Technologies, and author of 'The City in Need'.*

**Hank Cole**, *Global Head of Business Continuity & Incident Management at HSBC.*

#### **Respondent:**

**Eco (Yigong) Zhang**, *Urban Designer at Perkins and Will.*

#### **Chairperson:**

**Caroline Field**, *Advisory Board Member, Resilience First and Associate Director at Resilience Shift and Arup.*

#### **Key Messages**

If the UK is to find a successful route out of lockdown and avoid a second wave of Covid19 in the autumn then we most likely need to learn some lessons from what seems to be working very successfully in China and other countries such as South Korea and Taiwan.

As China has emerged from its lockdown with very few new cases, it has relied on very high levels of individual health monitoring, including checkpoints for access to all public premises such as lecture theatres and restaurants. It has also required citizens to carry a green health status QR code on their mobile phones to allow entry to buildings.

Here in the UK, we are not used to such restrictions on our freedom of movement but we have already accepted things that we once thought never possible and we might now have to do so, as the price we pay for emerging from the pandemic successfully.

Some of the key points that emerged in the webinar were:

- Consider a holistic spatial management.
- Pay attention to details in a reflective manner. (Details do matter. In London, new office seating arrangement have been designed to comply with social distancing and a planned employee return approach taking into account transport modes and other factors almost on a person-by-person basis. A personal employee health recording system has also been developed and implemented in China.)
- Use community and city-level checkpoints.
- Adopt early asset management and prioritisation.
- Focus on regional-level and local-level approach for implementation.

- Early high-level measures are more effective than later restrictions.
- Adaptive measures and planning are key. If you want to maintain social distancing, then you really have got to organise your office properly. (In China, occupancy has returned to 75% in some offices.)
- Include community representatives in action plans.
- Make good use of right, tech platforms. (In China, every single public premises you enter has to have temperature checks, you must have a documented green code status to enter these buildings. Temperature checks, face masks and disinfectant all have to be used before entering a restaurant. Many of which are now open for business.)
- Wear a face mask when in public. (In China, wearing a face mask in public is important. Learning from Japanese culture you are protecting other people as well as yourself. The use of facial masks is a simple measure but very effective in reducing transmission to others.)
- Technology is important. (The WeChatApp has already been able to cover almost all aspects of the daily routine in China from paying utility bills to booking a doctor appointment. The Alipay app allows users to generate a QR green status code which they need to move freely about in the community.)
- Sometimes, to be slower is ultimately quicker in responding. This can be the case with the return to work and the move from home back to the office. Just because you can doesn't mean you should.

The speakers answered a series of questions from the participating audience.

The full video recording can be found [here](#) and the slide decks used are [here](#).

**Please note: The links must not be shared outside the circle of participants.**

## Biography of Speakers

### Ali Cheshmehzangi

Ali is the Head of the Department of Architecture and Built Environment and Director of the Centre for Sustainable Energy Technologies at The University of Nottingham, Ningbo, China. He holds five degrees, including a PhD in Architecture and Urban Design, a Master's Degree in Urban Design (with distinction), a Postgraduate Degree in higher education, a Graduate Certificate in Professional Studies in Architecture, and a Bachelor Degree with Honours in Architecture. So far, he has published 60+ journal papers and five books. His books are 'Designing Cooler Cities' (Nov 2017), the award-winning 'Eco-Development in China' (June 2018) – Springer Award 2018, 'Sustainable Urban Development in the Age of Climate Change' (Oct 2018), 'Identity of Cities and City of Identities' (April 2020), and '[The City in Need](#)' (expected publication date June/July 2020). His last book focuses on urban resilience and city management strategies during the disruptive disease outbreaks.

Ali is an urbanist by heart and by profession, with qualifications, practice experience and research profile in urban design, sustainable urbanism, and sustainable development. In 2015, he developed a comprehensive planning toolkit, called 'Integrated Assessment for City Enhancement', which is utilised for planners and policy makers. In early 2020, he developed a comprehensive urban resilience framework, which was utilised for the city of Ningbo during the Covid-19 response plan.

**Hank Cole**

Hank spent the first 30 years of his career working for the British Government, first in the military and then later in UK Law Enforcement, finishing his career with the National Crime Agency as the director for International Operations. He spent 12 years of his time with HMG working overseas in Afghanistan, Iraq, Kenya, Colombia, Panama, Venezuela, Peru and throughout Europe. In his five years with HSBC he set up the Financial Intelligence Unit, spent two years in Mexico as the Head of Corporate Security for Latin America and has spent the last nine months as the Global Head of Business Continuity and Incident Management.

**Eco (Yigong) Zhang**

Eco (Yigong) Zhang joined Perkins and Will in 2014 and has worked in our Atlanta, Shanghai and London offices. Eco has worked on urban design and planning projects in the UK and internationally across multiple sectors and scales, including campus masterplans, town centre regeneration, and large-scale community developments. She gained her Bachelor of Architecture in 2012, Master of Architecture from Tongji University in 2015 and Master of Science in Urban Design from Georgia Institute of Technology in 2014. In 2017, she completed a Master of Research in Interdisciplinary Urban Design from University College London.