Urban Decay

Urban decay happens when an area of a city becomes destroyed and dirty. Old buildings are usually abandoned and not repaired. Local factories and businesses move out of the area and residents are unemployed. Crime and poverty might become a problem in these areas and a lot of people move to other areas. Areas of urban decay are not nice to look at and often quite dangerous to visit.

Detroit, in the USA is a good example of a city where there is urban decay. Although it used to be a rich city full of car factories for most of the 20th century, it has changed dramatically. Most American car factories have shut down, which leaves many people in Detroit without a job. As a result, lots of people moved away from the city to find new employment. There are around 70,000 abandoned buildings in Detroit now and 31,000 empty houses. The city also has one of the highest crime rates in the whole country and it is considered one of the most dangerous cities in America.

The solution to urban decay is not simple. In the past, governments have tried to fix the problem by destroying old neighbourhoods and building new houses. This process is called "urban renewal" and has been heavily criticized by many experts. Nowadays, city governments have had some success by using different methods together. They renovate some buildings, destroy some other buildings, and try to encourage new businesses to come to the areas which are suffering from urban decay. It is not a perfect solution, but it seems to be working much better than just destroying an old neighbourhood and building cheap housing in its place.

Currently, cities with urban decay, like Detroit, are experimenting with a brand-new way to solve its urban decay problem. Detroit is attempting to make the city smaller. It plans to destroy areas and let trees and nature grow in these **former** urban areas. No one knows yet whether this will work but it could be a new way to solve the problem of urban decay.

1. What problems might happen when urban decay happens?

2. In the article, what has been strongly criticised by experts?

3. The word 'currently' in paragraph 4 could be replaced by what?

4. What word could replace 'former' in paragraph 4?