

3 National Housing Strategy for an Ageing Society – Lifetime Neighbourhoods

The National Strategy on Housing for an Ageing Society, *Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods*, is a cross-government strategy published jointly by Communities and Local Government (CLG), Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) and the Department of Health (DH).

Why are Lifetime Neighbourhoods important?

As we grow older the accessibility of the local neighbourhood becomes increasingly important. A number of factors such as good paving, street lighting and access to seats and toilets make neighbourhoods accessible to older people and people with impairments. Poor design can 'disable' people in their immediate environment and act as a barrier to participation in local activities. Social exclusion is linked to poorer health and wellbeing and has an impact on demand for health and social care services.

Key messages:

- Our neighbourhood is increasingly important as we grow older and we need access to local shops and services, and
- Lifetime neighbourhoods are linked to lifetime homes i.e. they are designed to be welcoming, accessible and inviting to everyone – transport, housing and civic spaces all making it possible for people to have a full life and take part in their community.

About Lifetime Neighbourhoods

The lifetime neighbourhood is part of the *Sustainable Communities* agenda, meaning that our future homes and neighbourhoods are fit for the people who will live in them – particularly the increasing numbers of older people, people with disabilities and people with dementia.

In November 2007 CLG published a discussion paper with the International Longevity Centre, *Towards Lifetime Neighbourhoods*, which sets

out the argument for lifetime neighbourhoods and identifies key themes and how we can plan for them. These include:

- Viewing lifetime neighbourhoods as sustainable communities that offer a good quality of life to all generations
- Making them accessible and inclusive
- Environments which are aesthetically pleasing, safe (in terms of traffic and crime) and easy and pleasant to access
- Communities with plenty of services, facilities and open space, and
- Environments that foster and support a strong social and civic fabric; social identity and a sense of place.

A joint seminar by CLG, the Town and Country Planning Association, the Chartered Institute of Housing and the Royal Institute of British Architects developed a consensus on the top ten elements for lifetime neighbourhoods, set out in the *Common Ground Manifesto*. These are:

- Access to basic services
- Safe, secure and clean streets
- Realistic transport options for all
- Public seating
- Information and advice
- Lifetime homes
- Older people's voices heard
- Places to meet and opportunities to participate
- Pavements in good repair, and
- Public toilets.

Making it happen

The new performance framework for local government supports lifetime neighbourhoods. Local Area Assessments and the new Treasury-led Public Sector Agreement (PSA) target on tackling poverty and promoting independence and well-being in later life provide tools for local authorities (PSA 20).

CLG recognises that many of the policy statements, guidance and tools need to be brought together and the department will be working with partners to publish planning and implementation guidance on lifetime neighbourhoods. Meanwhile, the Academy for Sustainable Communities (ASC) will ensure that the concept is embedded in its work.

CLG will seek to promote inclusive design and has contracted the Town and Country Planning Association to provide practical guidance, including a guide on inclusive design.

CLG will also use the Olympic Village to promote inclusive design.

What you can be thinking about

Local commissioners and developers should be thinking about how their developments fit with this agenda. They need to invite local residents, police, local schools, the community safety team and local voluntary sector groups to oversee the 'masterplan' for the project. Smaller scale developments will need to consider how they fit with the existing infrastructure, in particular local facilities and services.

Using Planning Policy Statement PPS3/6/13, integrating principles into existing planning structures and guidance using PSA agreement 17 and National Indicator 138 (over 65s satisfaction with home and neighbourhood)

Being aware of new obligations under the Housing and Regeneration Act to make homes and communities relevant to 'elderly' and disabled people.

Other useful Housing LIN publications:

ILC, CSIP and CLG booklet – sustainable planning for housing in an ageing population: a guide for regional-level strategies 2008
<http://networks.csip.org.uk/IndependentLivingChoices/Housing/Topics/browse/HousingOlderPeople/OlderPeopleStrategy/RegionalHousingStrategy/?parent=3670&child=2666>

Factsheet 13: Eco Housing – taking extra care with environmentally friendly design
<http://networks.csip.org.uk/IndependentLivingChoices/Housing/Topics/browse/HousingExtraCare/Commissioning/Design/?parent=1009&child=1622>

More Choice Greater Voice
<http://networks.csip.org.uk/IndependentLivingChoices/Housing/Topics/type/resource/?cid=2545>

Towards Common Ground – the Help the Aged manifesto for Lifetime Neighbourhoods
www.helptheaged.org.uk

Towards Lifetime Neighbourhoods: Designing sustainable communities for all Communities and Local Government and ILCUK
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/lifetimeneighbourhoods>

Neighbourhoods for life: designing dementia-friendly outdoor environments
<http://www.brookes.ac.uk/schools/be/oisd/sue/wise/>

Useful links to other relevant organisations:

CABE – for inclusive design information
www.cabe.org.uk

Communities and Local Government (CLG)
www.communities.gov.uk

International Longevity Centre UK (ILCUK)
www.ilcuk.org.uk

Healthy Urban Development Unit (HUDU)
www.healthyurbandevelopment.nhs.uk

Housing Corporation Gold Awards for 2008 for:

Building cohesive Communities
<http://gold.housingcorp.gov.uk/server/show/nav.4069>

Delivering Joined-up Development
<http://gold.housingcorp.gov.uk/server/show/nav.4070>

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