



# ARE WE READY FOR THE BOOM? HOUSING OLDER LONDONERS

Report

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## Forecast population growth in the over 55s across London by 2027.



# INTRODUCTION

In Whitehall and across the UK, the challenge of our ageing population is surging up the agenda. In London, it is the fastest-growing demographic, with the number of over-60s expected to rise by 48% to 2m by 2035, and over-80s set to rise by 70%.<sup>1</sup>

Older people, defined in planning as over 55, will have a huge impact on city budgets, services and housing capacity as this swell hits. In turn, the built environment has a huge impact on them, whether they live in, work in or visit London.

Built environment professionals have a key role to play in making sure the capital is a good place to grow old in - and in collaborating more with peers across health, care, local economy and other relevant areas.

Helping people stay healthy, independent and connected is a vital role for planning. Up to now, few local authorities have had policies specific to older people, but many are starting to link planning, care and health.

Part of that effort must be to better understand this booming demographic. Often, over-55s are seen as a homogeneous group, but in reality they have very diverse needs. Contrary to popular belief, many want to enjoy the city and all it has to offer in later life. To plan and deliver neighbourhoods they can thrive in will serve us all.

The growth of this group opens new avenues of innovation in home design and delivery. The gap in the market between sheltered housing and high-end properties is largely untapped. The desire to address loneliness provides an opportunity for new models such as intergenerational living and co-housing.

Most people in later life live in conventional housing which may not be suited to their needs. For those wanting to move, there are few attractive options, stifling downsizing. Older people should have choice of typologies, tenures and locations.

Through roundtables, site visits, workshops with older people, case studies and a pan-London survey, Future of London focused on three areas with significant potential to improve the lives of older people in the near term and beyond: **planning and policy, housing and neighbourhoods**. Within that framework, this report shares opportunities and barriers, best-practice case studies, insight from older people and recommendations for cross-sector professionals in planning, housing, design and development.

Of course, there are many more factors affecting older people, such as their role in the workplace, societal attitudes, care and health provision and technology. Further, the recommendations and manifesto herein are not about putting the needs of older people above others, but about adapting to London's fastest-changing demographic - and preparing for the impact it will have on us all.



Courtesy of LB Southwark

## POLICY AND PLANNING

### Raising older people's profile & addressing gaps

Planning plays a huge role in ensuring London is a good place to grow old. It improves health by promoting active travel, reducing pollution, safeguarding open space, and reducing the crippling problem of isolation by providing places for people to meet and socialise.

Policy support is also critical to improving the supply of older people's housing, but nationally, only 10% of planning strategies include both policies specific to older people and site allocations for older people's housing<sup>2</sup>. Where local plans refer to older people's housing, there has been a tendency to focus on provision of homes

with onsite support (the extra care model) but the need is much broader<sup>3</sup>.

The movement towards integration of planning and health at national, regional and local level is starting to demonstrate benefits to older people's wellbeing and reductions in healthcare costs.

### Policy evolution

As the ageing-population swell looms, it is moving up the policy agenda, with more evidence-based planning and nuanced provision on the way.

However, this is a very diverse demographic, and few policies – or actors – fully understand the group's composition. Central government is addressing this by reviewing the National Planning Policy Framework's extremely broad definition of "older people"<sup>4</sup>. The draft revised NPPF was published as this report went to print.

The Draft London Plan offers more direct policy support by drawing together sections from the current plan. Policies include inclusive communities and design; a requirement for boroughs to find sites and proactively encourage housing for older people; provision of benchmark figures for specialist housing need; and clarification of the C2 and C3 use classes (see below).

Detailed information on demographics and need is critical to producing age-friendly local plans - ones that can, among other things, attract appropriate

development. In 2015, GLA research found only five boroughs had a policy specifically relating to older people's housing<sup>5</sup>. Just two years later, FoL's 2017 survey of London local authorities, housing associations and developers showed real progress. Of the 16 local authority respondents, 56% now have policies in place and a further 31% are working toward them.

### Future of London survey: What are your priorities for the next 15 - 20 years in terms of providing good quality housing and neighbourhoods for older people?

#### The top three objectives were:

1. An offer for all: bringing forward a mix of tenures and offering more choice in properties and financial models
2. Upgrading homes and facilitating adaptations: enabling people to stay in their homes and optimising existing stock
3. Transparency: clarifying the housing offer and providing information to residents



## Understanding residents' needs

To better understand older residents housing and social care needs, LB Camden set up a scrutiny panel. Councillors on the panel were interested to hear about the existing housing stock, adaptations, new housing supply and design, loneliness and isolation.

The panel received evidence from residents, tenant representatives, Age UK (Camden), Camden Carers Voice, Health Watch Camden, Camden Federation of Private Tenants, London Fire Brigade, Girlings, the Housing and Improvement Network and the Department of Health.

### Member scrutiny panel recommendations included:

- Amend housing planning guidance as part of the Local Plan, to encourage more developers to consider offering adaptable properties and mixed-age communities.
- Provide housing options advice for older residents.
- Provide new models of housing to support downsizing.
- Offer discounted sheltered housing to younger people who volunteer with older people.

- Use long-term empty sheltered bedsits and studios as 'step down' properties.
- Fast-track Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) applications for smaller, cheaper works.
- Build a model flat to demonstrate the range of adaptations available.
- Ensure as many adaptations as possible are re-used.
- Pilot new technologies such as motion sensors.

Following the recommendations, LB Camden added a discretionary element<sup>6</sup> to its DFG policy, allowing DFG money to be used for independence support measures beyond the mandatory grant criteria, e.g. for security measures or minor improvements such hard-wiring which may be preventing a resident from leaving hospital. Starting in early 2018, the borough will begin market research with older residents on new models of housing.

## C2 and C3 use classes – and why they matter

Offering choice and understanding need is critical. Of the options available, older people may wish to live independently with optional care, or need to move into a residential care home. In planning these options sit under different Use Classes: the former in C3 'dwelling houses' and the latter C2 'residential institutions'.

An opaque but critical issue in planning is that developments can often fall in-between the two Use Classes and in some cases this affects the requirement to provide affordable housing. Some London Boroughs, such as RB of Kensington and Chelsea, specifically exempt C2 uses from affordable housing requirements but this

is not consistent across all boroughs. Professionals argue that this uncertainty makes it hard to plan. At the same time, planning officers need clear evidence of local need to waive affordable housing obligations, and many schemes proposed as C2 have been turned down on this basis.

The Draft London Plan defines the Use Classes. Residential nursing homes (including end-of-life/hospice and dementia care) that are not self-contained are to be considered Use Class C2<sup>7</sup>. Self-contained accommodation with communal facilities such as sheltered accommodation and housing with an element of extra care falls into Use Class C3.

Developers have argued that the additional cost of providing and managing shared, non-saleable community space and facilities (C3) means they cannot meet affordable housing obligations. London's viability fast-track system speeds up the process for developers where 35% affordable housing can be delivered without public funds. These two circumstances mean that general needs housing with an element of affordable may offer better returns than than schemes for older people, disincentivising developers from bringing forward purpose-built older people's housing. Flexibility on affordable housing provision at the borough level could help.

## Integrating health and planning

Linking health and planning efforts has clear benefits, one of the foremost being that good placemaking is shown to cut NHS and social care costs. However, siloed working across planning and health is pervasive. Anecdotal evidence throughout this research revealed an ongoing concern about the lack of joint working between planning and health. Research by Design Council and Social Change UK found that only 34% of built environment professionals 'always' or 'often' collaborate with others to tackle local wellbeing issues<sup>8</sup>. Different language, timescales and ways of working are recurring barriers.

There are laudable - and replicable - exceptions. The NHS recognised the need for a place-based approach to planning for healthcare and in 2016 launched Sustainability and Transformation Plans (STPs)<sup>9</sup>. The five STPs in London bring together boroughs with Clinical Commissioning Groups and health providers to create a local health blueprint.

Greater Manchester may soon offer valuable lessons. The Mayor now controls the combined health and social care budget, plus a £300m housing investment fund. Control of

these three budgets should promote cross-sector working and foster better understanding; other cities can follow suit.

There are also good examples of joint working at local authority level. For one, LB Lambeth has integrated and co-located commissioning and public health teams, led by a Director of Integrated Services; further examples are below.

### Healthy planning in Southwark and Lambeth

There is ample evidence that the quality of the built environment can improve or damage health, but there is less certainty about the outcomes of specific policy and design measures. To help find and share those outcomes, LB Southwark and LB Lambeth are running a healthy planning initiative ahead of major regeneration projects in both boroughs, with funding from Guy's & St Thomas's Charity.

Key themes are social isolation, obesity (physical activity and healthy eating) and access to health services. While driven by planning and public health, projects also involve colleagues from transport and adult social services.

The Building Research Establishment (BRE) was commissioned to undertake a literature review, including case studies where planning and regeneration delivered health and wellbeing objectives. Ipsos MORI was also commissioned to carry out in-depth social research with local residents. Both the literature review and social research findings are being used to develop an Action Plan for a Healthy Old Kent Road to ensure that:

- Current residents in and near Old Kent Road benefit from regeneration and that the quality of their lives improves.
- Current residents in and near Old Kent Road benefit from new affordable housing and from improved conditions in existing properties provided by regeneration.
- Residents of all ages and abilities feel that walking and cycling are safe, convenient and pleasurable activities for commuting, leisure and daily travel needs.
- The design and management of new buildings in Old Kent Road minimise residents' exposure to harmful air pollutants indoors and outdoors.

- Residents have sufficient local access to healthy affordable food and feel that the healthier choice is the easier choice.
- Residents of all ages have affordable places to meet throughout the seasons.
- New health facilities are integrated with other community services such as a new four-court indoor sports hall.
- Residents' mental health and wellbeing are improved by access to more and better green spaces.

Later in the year LB Southwark will publish a health plan to sit alongside the Old Kent Road Area Action Plan, keeping health in focus as regeneration commences. Other boroughs could learn from this approach.



Courtesy of LB Southwark



Courtesy of One Housing

## Achieving faster recovery and reduced health spending through older people's housing

Budget constraints and the expansion of our ageing population are putting extreme stress on the NHS. The lack of beds and limited one-to-one support in hospitals can mean an inpatient stay actually delays recovery. Health and social care are interdependent: schemes combining the two can deliver benefits to residents in recovery and to the public purse.

One Housing's Roseberry Mansions, a 10-unit scheme in Camden, provides intensive short-term support and therapy, enabling people to leave hospital and recover in a clean, safe and friendly environment. Based in a purpose-built extra-care scheme in King's Cross, the onsite multi-disciplinary team collaborate to provide high-quality care and support service for up to six weeks.

As a result of the service, 72% of residents returned home or to other appropriate accommodation after their initial stay; 28% of those who returned home did so with a reduced need for ongoing support. Evaluation showed the service saved Camden & Islington NHS Trust £288,695 over a ten-month period – £1.7m over five years – excluding efficiency savings from the onsite team, reduction in repeated hospital admissions or NHS discharge fees.

One Housing welcomes the recent merging of health and social care into one political portfolio but calls for more integration and support for innovative integration schemes like Roseberry Mansions.

# HOUSING

## Fit-for-purpose products and better information

Older people's housing is both in crisis and contributing to the wider housing crisis. Among other things, encouraging down-sizing is a priority for councils seeking to release family homes, but the stress and cost for older people can be prohibitive. Alternatives must be desirable, but the UK later living offer is usually seen as far from aspirational.

For people wanting to move, there is often no clear offer and little choice. Consumers are faced with a confusing array of terms and very little information

relating to their area. For those wishing to stay in their homes, adaptations can help, but long wait times for even minor works can bring on ill health.

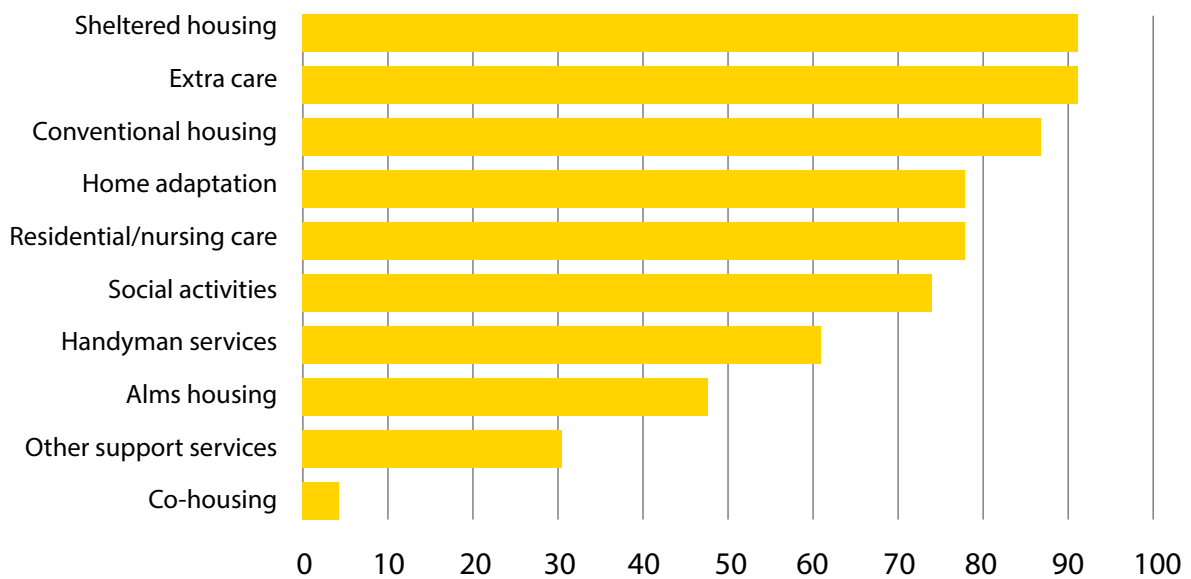
Developers are faced with the question of whether to build general needs housing suitable for ageing or to offer special schemes with extra-care facilities. The reality is that both are needed, but planning policy rarely refers to later-living housing beyond specialist schemes. London's requirement that all new homes

are designed to be adaptable is progressive, but as discussed below, the majority of housing stock is already built.

It's not all bad news. Interest is growing in the huge untapped middle market between sheltered housing and high-end retirement living. An ageing population also means opportunities for new housing models and innovative approaches are maturing in and beyond the capital.

### Future of London survey: What is your current and near future housing offer?

Local authorities and housing associations reported the following options within their near-term offer for older people.





## Housing for all ages

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Despite the fact our population is ageing, the majority of all new homes in the UK are built for and marketed to younger buyers. Some housing associations and a few senior living developers do focus on older generations, but overall, supply is nowhere near demand. At the same time, British Land observe that segregating the market and building age-specific housing runs counter to all we know about creating

happy, successful places. More mixed developments, built and marketed to all generations are needed.

Flexibility is the standard to strive for – simply put, homes designed today should anticipate the needs of tomorrow. Current and draft London Plan policies on inclusive design and accessible homes both address this. Accessible housing policy calls for at least 10% of new-build developments to be suitable for wheelchair users. The

remaining 90% must be “accessible and adaptable”.

Advertising these advantages of new-build could help developers target the largely untapped market of older people looking to right-size into a home they could age comfortably in. Marketing to all ages would highlight choice and send a message of inclusion.

## Ageing in place: adapting and maintaining

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As 80% of homes that will be standing in 2050 are already built, looking after and adapting existing homes is a priority<sup>10</sup>. Poor housing contributes to bad health and costs the NHS at least £1.4bn a year, falls cost £1bn – the majority of these are older people falling in their homes<sup>11</sup>. Adapting and improving homes to promote health and prevent accidents is essential.

Under the Care Act 2014, local authorities have a legal obligation to help with such adaptations<sup>12</sup>. The primary delivery mechanism is the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG), available to owner occupiers and housing association and private tenants. The claim ceiling is £30,000, but the average claim is just £6,500. The alternative to adapting or repairing homes can be moving into residential care, which costs local authorities an average of £29,000 per person per year. DFGs are widely acknowledged

***“A lot of older people just need their light bulbs changed. When you are in your 70s, you cannot climb up a ladder to change your light bulb, so you end up sitting in the dark. Then there is the risk of falls and you break your hip, and onwards and upwards. Some of that low-level stuff is very cheap.” Evidence given at the 2018 Communities and Local Government Committee Inquiry<sup>16</sup>***

to be a vital tool for promoting health and wellbeing, but problems around delivery, lengthy waiting times and substandard work are well-documented<sup>13</sup>.

In 2018, Central Government will review DFGs, but moves are already being made to improve the process at the local level. The Local Government Association found partnerships between local authorities and third-sector organisations can streamline works programmes, cutting wait times and

costs<sup>14</sup>. Discretionary policies like LB Camden’s allow funding for preventive measures and relocation.

For smaller works, handyman services are a real benefit to older people. These have been the victim of cuts, but research commissioned by the Department for Communities and Local Government in 2011 showed handyman services to deliver value for money, promote independence and reduce the demand for health and social care services<sup>15</sup>.

## From under-occupation to down-sizing

One of the thornier aspects of London's housing crisis is under-occupation: 54% of older homeowners have two or more bedrooms going unused, but the scarcity of good alternatives and stress of moving keep them in place<sup>17</sup>.

Research shows that down-sizing to more suitable properties brings wellbeing benefits for older people in addition to freeing up much-needed family-size properties<sup>18</sup>. However, a study by Strutt & Parker found 42% of older people believe there is a lack of suitable properties in the UK to move into<sup>19</sup>. Research from Demos found 58% of over-60s are interested in moving

and 25% of over-65s are interested in retirement property<sup>20</sup>. The market exists, but the offer needs to be convincing and deliver clear lifestyle benefits for savvy consumers to part with their largest asset.

Additional barriers to down-sizing include prohibitive transactional costs and fees associated with moving; the stress of the moving process; and strong emotional attachment to the homes people may have lived in for decades. Homeowners need to feel that a move will deliver more attractive circumstances in terms of the property, neighbourhood and lifestyle gains.

Policy measures such as stamp duty exemption for downsizers would undoubtedly help. Research from LSE sums up the problem, finding that older people "can't buy something that costs the same as their original house without spending money on the tax—but can stay where they are for nothing"<sup>21</sup>.

The issue is particularly pressing for those looking ahead to the cost of care in later life. One of down-sizing's key appeals should be its potential to release capital for other purposes. At present, that extra capital is likely to evaporate in the form of transactional fees.



© PTE-Galit Seligmann

### Woodside Square: design for downsizing

Designed by Pollard Thomas Edwards Architects (PTE) and developed by Hanover & Hill, Woodside Square offers an alternative for Muswell Hill's under-occupiers. The scheme comprises 35 homes for affordable rent, 13 for shared-ownership and 111 for sale. Homes range from one-bedroom flats to large four-bedroom houses. Approximately 70% of the development is restricted to over-55s and 10% of the units are built to wheelchair standards in line with London Plan guidance.

PTE worked with LB Haringey to ensure the homes would be attractive to older people seeking to stay close to friends and neighbours, but ready for something smaller. All of the development's 159 homes have either a balcony or terrace as well as access to an onsite concierge, communal gardens and tennis courts. Located on the former site of St. Luke's psychiatric hospital, homes are predominantly new-build, but

the Grade II listed administration building and two locally listed buildings to the south speak to the area's heritage.

The development was designed by PTE using guidance set out in the reports from Housing our Ageing Population: Panel for Innovation (HAPPI). The outdoor spaces and the 'common room' community space encourage residents to socialise, while footpaths prioritise walking over car use. Home interiors offer clever storage solutions and go beyond regulatory space standards.

Construction started in 2015 and is due to complete in early 2018. While it's too early for a post-occupancy survey, anecdotal evidence suggests the scheme is meeting its goals. A new community is starting to form, with many private residents moving in from larger homes in the surrounding area.

## Opportunities for retirement living

As shown by the Housing our Ageing Population: Panel for Innovation (HAPPI), there is cross-party support for specialised older people's housing. However, the UK retirement communities housing market is underdeveloped compared to counterparts abroad. The Housing Learning and Improvement Network reports that 17% of over-60s in the United States and 13% in Australia and New Zealand live in dedicated retirement communities<sup>22</sup>, compared to 5% of over-65s in the UK. Further, nearly 75% of UK over-65s have no plan for retirement accommodation or care provision<sup>23</sup>. While specialist housing isn't for everyone, there is clear potential for the market to grow – and a few key changes could help.

For one, specialist housing's bad reputation limits interest in it. Historically, the quality of UK retirement homes has been variable, and Associated Retirement Community Operators (ARCO) are calling for national standards. ARCO already have a consumer code, to attain 'Approved Operators' status, members must demonstrate compliance with the code through independent assessment<sup>24</sup>. The code is based on regulatory frameworks from Australia and New Zealand, where retirement communities are supported by strong legislation that provides protection for consumers and parameters for developers and operators. Similar regulation covering all retirement housing in the UK would boost investor confidence in retirement schemes.



## The middle market

Despite the challenges outlined above, the market for retirement housing is strengthening year-on-year, with investors increasingly drawn to the sector as a result of growing demand from an ageing population and the historic under-supply of suitable accommodation. Consumer profiling indicates a significant proportion of older households fit into the middle market, but the challenge is creating a viable product.

Older people in the 'middle market' bracket are typically defined as owning average sized two or three bedroom homes<sup>25</sup>. Their household income or wealth leave them ineligible for social rented accommodation, but unable to afford accessing high end provision. For these households, funding extra care is a serious challenge. It has been suggested that downsizing into shared equity or shared ownership homes could help release funds for private care<sup>i</sup>.

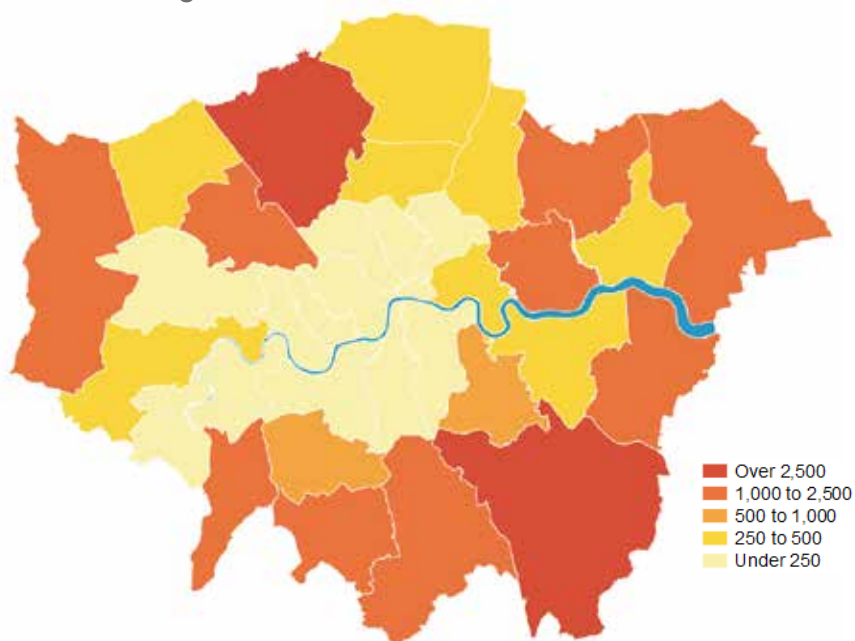
Research from Savills' found high potential for shared ownership in London but moving from home ownership to paying rent on part of a home may be unappealing. Rents on the leased portion

of homes for shared ownership are likely to rise over time, a problem for older people without the means to grow their income. Shared equity appears less problematic and this form of Help to Buy is available in London. However, equity loans target first time buyers<sup>26</sup>. Tailored support for older people who already

own a home but need support to free up capital for other uses is badly needed.

There is consensus that a viable, attractive product for middle market consumers remains elusive. For professionals working on this challenge, better data on the market can help.

### Number of households able to buy shared ownership but not market housing in London.



<sup>i</sup> | Shared ownership – where the purchaser buys a proportion of the property with a traditional mortgage, while the other portion is owned by a social landlord who receives rent on this element; shared equity – where the purchaser buys 100 per cent of the property but obtains an equity loan to cover part of the value. JRF (2010) <http://bit.ly/2FUONeP>

# Later living – the future of retirement housing need

Barton Willmore has researched the circumstances of those likely to be entering retirement within a typical 20-year period. The research uses the Experian Mosaic Public Sector dataset, which segments the UK population into 16 broad groups based on consumer and socio-economic factors.

Of these 16 groups, six cover the later living market. ‘Senior Security’ and ‘Vintage Value’ are dominated by over-65s:

- **F - Senior Security**

Singles and couples who are still living independently in comfortable homes that they own, average age of 75.

- **N - Vintage Value**

Mostly live alone, often in purpose-built housing, either social or private. With an average age of 74, their health needs are growing and incomes declining.

These four groups are the older population of the future, with more than 45% of their population in the 46-65 age group:

- **B – Prestige Positions**

Affluent married couples with financial security and spacious homes. They may be retired, or younger couples with teenage or older children, either at home or living independently.

- **E – Suburban Stability**

Mature couples or families, living in mid-range family homes in traditional suburbs where they have been settled for many years.

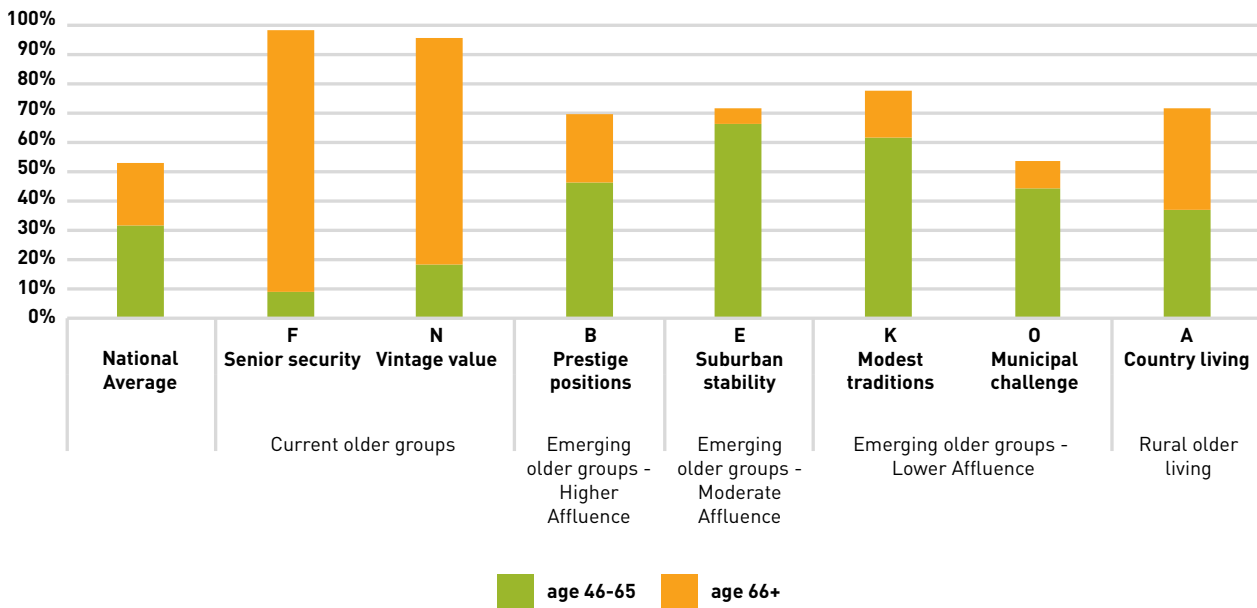
- **K – Modest Traditions**

Older people with a reasonable standard of living, settled in inexpensive homes that they own, often with the mortgage nearly paid off.

- **O – Municipal Challenge**

Working age people with low household incomes. Long-term social renters living in low-value multi-storey flats in urban locations, or small terraces on outlying estates.

Age profile of selected Mosaic groups



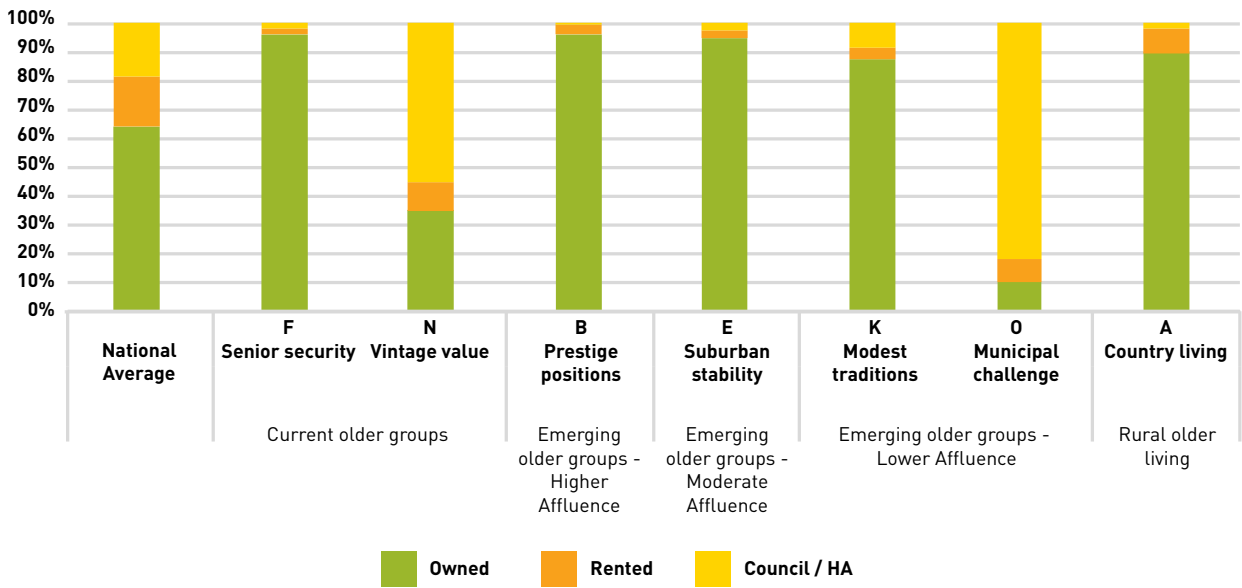
This graph shows the groups likely to need retirement housing over the next 20-30 years.

There are significant variances in their ability to fund their retirement. The next chart shows the tenure breakdown

within each group. This varies from high levels of home ownership in ‘Senior Security’ to mostly social housing tenants in ‘Municipal Challenge’.



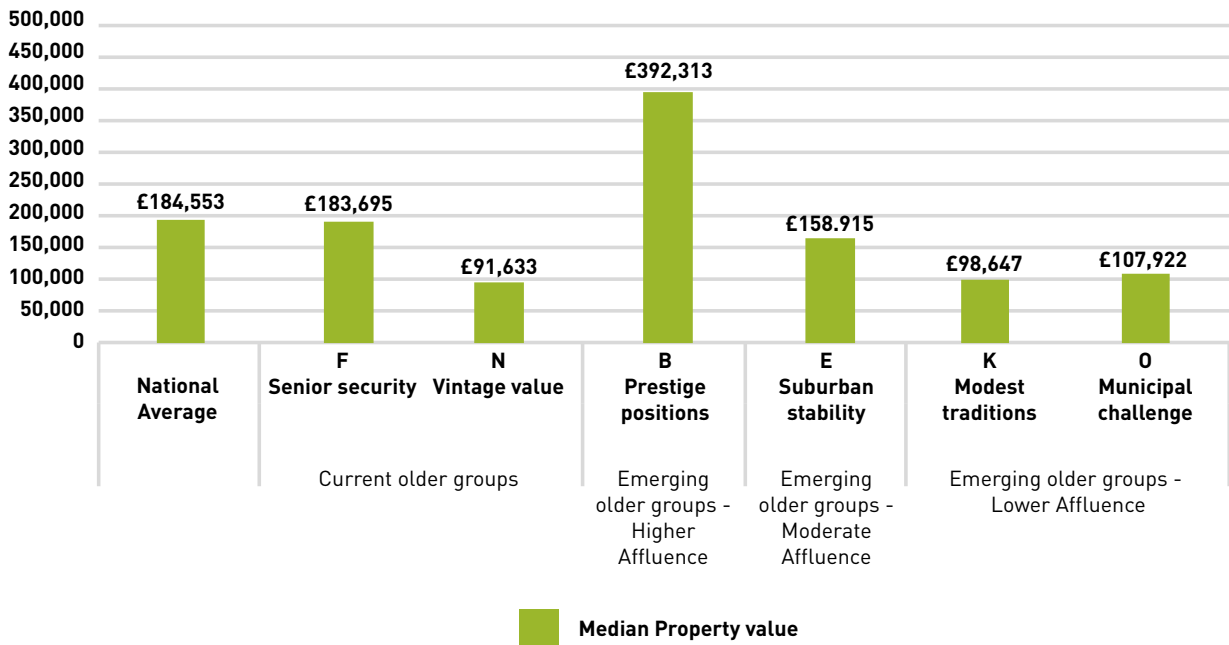
### Tenure profile of selected Mosaic groups



Unsurprisingly, the more affluent groups are most likely to be owner-occupiers, though 'Modest Traditions' also shows a high degree of ownership.

Although geography is a key factor in this analysis ('Prestige Positions' for example, is concentrated in the home counties), there are clear disparities in the values of properties – the key source of wealth for the over-65s. This is illustrated below.

### Average property values of selected Mosaic groups



The issues highlighted here mirror general inequalities in the UK, influenced by geographic and socio-economic factors. Findings emphasise the need to deliver a range of retirement housing products, including high-end,

mass market, low cost and social, reflecting the varying economic circumstances of UK households. 'Municipal Challenge' forms a large segment of London's emerging market: addressing the middle market is vital in the capital.

## Alternative housing models

Despite the hurdles, the UK's ageing population does offer exciting opportunities to think creatively about how we all live in a city. London is leading the way:

the UK's first senior co-housing community is in LB Barnet, and public and private bodies are exploring the capital's potential for intergenerational schemes. London can also learn from

overseas, where intergenerational homes and urban living for older people are producing measurable health and wellbeing benefits.

### Intergenerational housing in Europe

In the Netherlands, Finland and Spain, as in London, young people struggle to afford a decent home, while there is growing recognition that isolation and loneliness are key issues affecting the older population's quality of life. Intergenerational housing is emerging as a solution to both issues.

In Deventer, Holland, students enjoy free board at Residential and Care Center Humanitas; while In Helsinki, Finland, under-25s can access cheap accommodation inside the city's Rudolf Seniors Home<sup>27</sup>. The success of both schemes lies in their ability to provide clear benefits to both demographics. Students are neighbours to older residents: sharing skills and time in exchange for low or free rent and access to facilities which would normally be beyond their budgets. Increased social interaction combats mental decline in seniors.

Alicante, Spain took a similar model much further, providing 244 affordable, intergenerational homes in central

urban areas. The project is run by the Municipal Project for Intergenerational Housing and Community Services, initiated in 2003 to address the housing problems of low-income old and young people. Experience had shown the municipality that loneliness, isolation and vulnerability were pervasive problems even in well-designed units for older residents. It proactively filled vacancies in these developments with young people, leading to the creation of a city-wide intergenerational project, supported by €50m investment from central and city governments .

Alicante's intergenerational model helps older residents remain in their homes in later life. The young people each spend a few hours per week with four older people, liaising with the facilities management team if additional help is needed. The young people are selected based on income and suitability for the social programme. In 2012 their rents were €160 per month. The project was shortlisted for the Building and Social Housing Foundation's World Habitat Awards in 2012<sup>28</sup>.



*Courtesy of Municipal Housing Board of Alicante*

## Co-housing

*“This interest [in cohousing] seems to represent the changing demand of the new older generation, who do not wish to be done unto, but rather want to define how they want to live<sup>29</sup>.”*

### UK Cohousing Network

Co-housing is a form of group living based on mutual support, self-governance and active participation. Homes and communal spaces are run entirely by residents<sup>30</sup>. The model allows older people to age independently, supported by their peers. It tackles the

thorny issue of social isolation, slowing cognitive deterioration and enhancing quality of life.

Co-housing for seniors is in increasing demand<sup>31</sup>. While proponents say co-housing is still poorly understood

by local authority decision-makers, its profile is on the rise. The GLA-supported London Community-Led Housing Hub offers technical advice and opportunities for collaboration and learning for those wanting to develop their own homes.

For those less keen to build themselves, the UK Cohousing Network and housing associations are exploring the conversion of existing buildings for co-managing groups<sup>32</sup>.

## Older Women’s Co-Housing

New Ground in north London is the UK’s first co-housing project for older residents.

Residents moved into New Ground in December 2016, 20 years after the founding members were inspired by research into co-housing models overseas. Concerned about loneliness, the limited options available and the potential to support each other, a group of six women formed Older Women’s Co-Housing (OWCH) for women over 50.

OWCH approached every London borough and nine housing associations for help to find a suitable site in London. They were initially rejected by all. Hanover Housing Association stepped in in 2010 with a site in Barnet, and after three years of lobbying, planning permission was finally granted. A turning point was the Barnet Director of Adult Social Care’s argument that this way of living, where people share values and support one another, is likely to reduce – not increase – the social care bill.

OWCH worked with architects Pollard Thomas Edwards (PTE), to learn the skills needed to lead their own housing development. The group said that gaining specialist knowledge, such as site assessment and design briefs, was a “liberating and powerful experience”. The design team confirm that the collaborative process between PTE, OWCH and the contractors did not add time or costs to standard housing delivery, dispelling a common myth about community-led development.

There are 26 owners and tenants living in 17 leasehold and 8 social rent flats. Each person has a self-contained flat and shares a common room, guest suite, garden, food-growing area and laundry. Everyone takes part in running the organisation and managing the property.



© Joe Okpako, courtesy of PTE

When originally picked up by national press OWCH received a staggering 400 applications. The offer continues to be so popular that OWCH have now closed their waiting list.

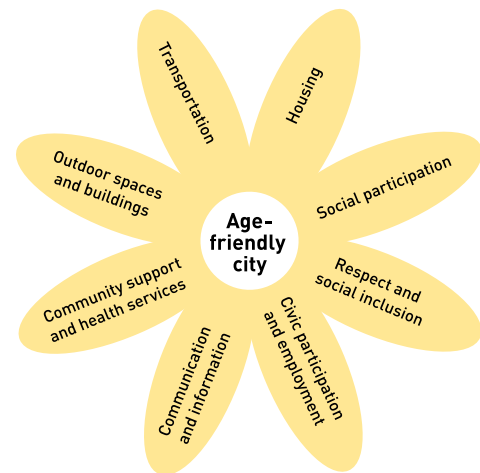
“We are carving out a path for others in our age group to follow. We hope they have an easier journey than ours, now we have shown the way. The senior cohousing community could enrich the last years of many, and reduce pressures on health and care services, if local authorities, planners, policy makers and housing developers helped to remove the many obstacles society puts in its way<sup>33</sup>.”

# NEIGHBOURHOODS

## Joined up thinking for health, accessibility and inclusivity

Creating a London that's good to grow old in requires as much thought for neighbourhoods as for housing, but the area picture is often missing from the debate. For entities ready to get started, there is a plethora of evidence on what makes an age-friendly city, such as the World Health Organisation's (WHO) Age-Friendly Cities guide. Healthy placemaking - access to services and social activities, clean affordable transport, and quality public spaces in dense, safe, mixed communities - all support older people's wellbeing. The draft London Plan recognises that improving local environments will improve mental health and help combat social isolation<sup>35</sup>.

### WHO Determinants of an age-friendly city<sup>34</sup>



## Toyoshiki-dai: creating an age-friendly community in Kashiwa City

Japan has a "super-ageing" society; by 2065, over 38% of the population will be over 65. Toyoshiki-dai, a large social housing estate built in the 1960s, mirrors the national trend: 40% of residents are over 55 and struggle with the development's five storeys of stairs which limits residents access to sunlight, society and exercise.

To tackle these challenges, University of Tokyo's Institute of Gerontology, the Urban Renaissance Agency and the local authority are collaborating to on a progressive approach to neighbourhood-scale regeneration. They are developing an age-friendly community model that can be tested and rolled out across Japan's social housing estates. Arup visited the project during the research stage of developing their Index for Age Friendly Cities.

The renewal programme tackles physical barriers through refurbishment and modification. Improvements, such as the introduction of lifts, focus on access.



The supporting community infrastructure has three tiers:

### A liveable physical environment

New bike lanes and Sustainable Urban Drainage systems promote livability. Social and environmental sustainability features are integrated throughout, with panels explaining how they work.

### A social participation support system

Through the 'working places for a second life' scheme, older people are involved in the everyday workings of the local community. Initiatives include a community farm, a roof garden, a mini 'vegetable factory' and community eatery.

### An integrated community care system

A home healthcare system is being trialled to promote senior independent living. Simultaneously, retirees support families by running an after-school programme.

The whole approach centres on asking the community what they want and facilitating this through imaginative governance structures and partnership arrangements. Older people are supported in their neighbourhoods, but also able to share their skills and time with others.





## A priority for Londoners

The importance of neighbourhoods when planning for older people is recognised by London’s local authorities and housing associations. Over half of respondents to Future of London’s survey said their plans and strategies ‘significantly’ address

neighbourhood issues. More than a third of respondents have plans that ‘moderately’ address these issues.

The survey also asked how older people had fed into the development of strategies, and specifically what

older people had told them was important. Neighbourhoods featured very strongly in this consultation feedback.

### Survey: What did you learn from consulting older people in London?

Respondents reported that availability and accessibility of amenities and services was the top concern for older people; this was also emphasised by Future of London workshop participants: “it’s about what’s available within a walkable distance, to ensure home does not become a prison”. Other concerns included:

- Transport links, connectivity and concerns about declining mobility.
- The importance of community, and being able to remain in one’s neighbourhood.
- Importance of advice and help to plan for the future.
- Safety in the home and neighbourhood.
- Concerns about loneliness and isolation.
- The need for housing options, choice, and help to downsize.
- Importance of making consultations accessible, and listening to older people.

## Canada Water – lifetime communities

British Land is delivering a new town centre at Canada Water with up to 3,500 homes, workplaces, retail, leisure, education and cultural facilities. The development will provide homes suitable for a range of needs, life stages, and incomes, designed to adapt to lifestyles over time, allowing people to put down roots.

Beyond homes, management of the public realm is critical. British Land is developing a diverse programme of events and opportunities for neighbours to meet and make connections.

For British Land, creating a mix of homes for a broader market makes business sense, as it spreads risk away from the narrow and volatile markets of young professionals and overseas off-plan sales. Attracting a broader age group, including an older generation with disposable incomes and more leisure time, also helps sustain the retail and leisure offer in the town centre.



Barking Riverside London - Masterplan developed by LDS Architects.

## Cross-disciplinary working

Delivering high-quality neighbourhoods relies on multiple and interlinked disciplines: planning, parks, public health, police, adult social care, housing, town centre management, highways and transport, design and development from across the public, private and voluntary sectors. This requires addressing the common challenge of siloed working. To understand the 'silo effect' on placemaking, Design Council and Social Change UK surveyed 400 built environment practitioners through 24 professional trade bodies, the media and professional networks to assess current practice.

The survey found that only:

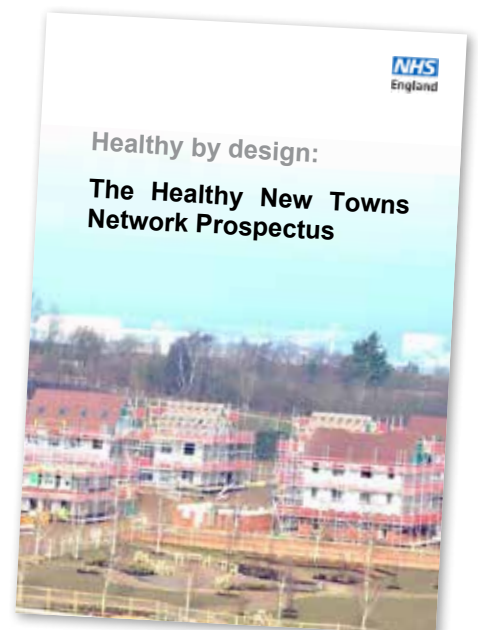
- 62% of professionals 'always' or 'often' shape places to increase walking and cycling.
- 45% 'always' or 'often' shape places to decrease car use and increase public transport use.

- 38% 'always' or 'often' create places in the form of compact, mixed use neighbourhoods.

Bringing together planning, housing and health to support wellbeing is increasingly popular, but is still the exception to the rule. The NHS England-funded Healthy New Towns programme is piloting 10 projects to bring together public health, NHS providers and commissioners, planners and developers<sup>36</sup>.

These new housing developments will demonstrate how to achieve health and wellbeing outcomes and deliver high-quality health and care services. Barking Riverside in London, set to deliver 10,800 homes, will apply the latest learning on 'age-friendly' built environments and public spaces to ensure the area is liveable and inclusive for all ages.

The Healthy New Towns network is a resource for learning and sharing



best practice, to help ensure all new housing developments are promoting health and wellbeing and securing high quality health and care services.



## Engaging with older people

Considering the needs of older people should be part of everyday practice in planning policy and strategy, regeneration, housing and neighbourhood management and maintenance. Older people can help professionals understand the history of a place, learn what facilities and local assets are valued by older people and ensure investment will bring about positive benefits. In turn, involvement by older people in civic life has a positive impact on their health and wellbeing.

Engagement skills such as empathy and communication, plus the resources to do this well, need to be valued and provided by those leading policy and delivery projects. During workshops with older people Future of London asked how they would like to be consulted, their feedback was consistent with work produced by Age UK<sup>37</sup>.

### Top tips from older people:

#### Dos

- Ensure consultation is timely, at a point when there is a genuine opportunity to influence.
- Ask older people how they want to be consulted and consider co-designing approaches with them.
- Go in with an open mind, don't make assumptions.
- Go beyond the usual suspects. Use existing networks to reach less visible people and don't expect people to come to you. Ensure people have an easy means to respond.
- Speak clearly, communicate in jargon-free language, and give people time to respond to questions.
- Bring older and younger people together to share ideas.
- Provide materials before and feedback after consultation in different formats.
- Use accessible venues and offer flexibility, for example events at different times of the day.
- Take groups to similar schemes to help visualise outcomes and understand design options.
- After schemes have been built, check in with older people to understand the lived experience to see if it meets the original aspirations.

#### Don'ts

- Don't expect people to be able to read technical plans and drawings. Take time to talk people through materials: interaction is important.
- Don't make assumptions: older people are a diverse group with an array of opinions, skills and experiences.
- Don't allow a single issue or voice to dominate.



# RECOMMENDATIONS

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Future of London's broad-ranging research has led to the following set of recommendations, all aimed at delivering a London that is good to grow old in.

Almost all of the actions herein cross over sectors and disciplines - or should do to be effective - but this list focuses actions on the group that can have the most impact.

Rather than waiting for policymakers to catch up or waiting for developers to do the right thing, all of the cross-sector actors with influence must act together. See below for a proposed manifesto to that effect.

## POLICY AND PLANNING

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### Central government

- Clarify the C2 and C3 Use Class issue to set out clear definitions of 'residential institutions' and 'dwelling houses' and the affordable housing requirements.
- In line with the Communities and Local Government Committee recommendations, monitor Sustainability and Transition Plans (STPs), ensure housing is included in STPs.

### GLA

- Promote provision for older people in terms of housing and regeneration through Mayoral funding programmes.

### Local authorities

- Understand the dynamics of the ageing population; 'older people' or 'the over-55s' is a broad spectrum. The draft London Plan recommends data-driven planning and statistical

data on health and employment can help build a more accurate picture of local need and drive healthy placemaking.

- Engage with adult social care and health services to better understand the wider needs of older people.
- Use joint commissioning to foster cross-sector collaboration.
- Local plans must consider the needs of older people across all tenures. This includes a balance of ownership, shared equity, social rent, affordable, sheltered and extra care housing. Inclusion in site allocations as well as strategic policy will help ensure guidance translates into delivery. This could include encouraging volume house builders to provide for older people in larger developments.

- Engage directly with older people: this is becoming more important as the population ages and aspirations change. Older people's views need to influence policy in a meaningful way.
- Be open to engagement from the older peoples' housing sector in local planning policy development.

### Developers and operators

- Engage better with plan-making at the site-specific level. Planners would welcome input from developers to better understand the issues for providing housing for older people.
- Bring in people who will be important to a development's life during planning: consulting professionals such as GPs early on will help ensure resident requirements are met.

## HOUSING

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### Sector-wide

- Strive for transparency and clarity of offer. Recognise the complexity of older people's housing models and aim for a plain-English approach.
- Provide better information to landlords and tenants on the right to Disabled Facilities Grants.

### Central government

- In consultation with the housing sector, consider the benefits of a broader help-to-buy offer for older

people, including shared equity options for down-sizers.

### GLA

- Actively promote innovation and best practice in planning and delivery for older people through programmes such as the Innovation Fund.
- Support new entrants through community led-housing hub.
- Acknowledge the additional cost of delivering specialist housing such as the provision of shared facilities.

- Promote flexibility in how affordable housing is delivered, as is the case for Build to Rent.

### Local authorities and housing associations

- Take a long-term view: be aware of under-occupation statistics for your borough and consider these when assessing schemes which could promote right-sizing.
- The draft and current London Plans include guidance on inclusive housing.



Ensure these standards are met, precluding costly adaptations later.

- Older people welcome help in planning for their future housing; signpost to guidance on housing options.
- Be open to the possibilities of co-housing, self-build and intergenerational housing, precedents from London and beyond show the benefits.

- Recognise the value of handy-person services which are a real benefit to older people, particularly those living in older properties.

### Developers

- Widen the marketing of general-needs new-build developments to include older people.
- Consider providing age-restricted housing as part of larger, well-connected developments. This

would help older people compete in the market for the locations that suit their needs.

- Large developers should pilot new approaches such as intergenerational and co-housing within bigger development sites.

## NEIGHBOURHOOD

### Sector-wide

- Establish ambassadors for older people within the GLA, local authorities and housing associations who can co-ordinate strategy and delivery to ensure the needs of older people are understood and met.
- Share the outcomes of cross-disciplinary working to demonstrate the benefits of planning, housing, health and care working together: NHS and social care costs can both be reduced through healthy placemaking.

### GLA

- Mayoral funding criteria can ensure the needs of older people are considered and encourage innovation through programme objectives. Impact should be monitored and success shared across the capital.

### Local authorities and housing associations

- Consult older people as part of regeneration and neighbourhood improvement projects, to understand the history of a place, learn what facilities and local assets are valued and make sure investment delivers benefits for this group.
- Develop activities and initiatives that offer older people the chance to participate. Involvement in civic life has a positive impact on health and wellbeing: older people have experience, time and skills to make a significant contribution.
- Make use of existing guidance such as WHO Ageing Cities and Healthy Streets for London when planning, writing design briefs and in management and maintenance. Consider older people's needs as part of everyday practice.

- Ensure initiatives join up such as quietways, healthy streets and town centres to reflect everyday experience of the built environment.

### Developers

- Consult older people early, preparing clear, readable materials and ensuring consultation activities are fully accessible.

# MANIFESTO AND CONCLUSION

## A sector manifesto

Future of London's research revealed a strong, shared desire from investors, developers, local authorities, housing associations and designers to improve the housing offer for older people, and specifically to address the alarming middle market gap. At government level, initiatives like Housing our Ageing Population: Panel for Innovation (HAPPI) show cross-party support for improving housing for older people, and any such work is relevant across departments from the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy to the NHS.

It's time to take this broad will to act to the next level.

During Future of London's six-month programme, roundtable participants, interviewees and stakeholders of all kinds – including directly affected older people – called for what amounts to a manifesto. The groundwork would be to connect the elements of the older peoples' housing sector, raise its profile and establish a unified voice to influence plan-making and policy. Based on input to Future of London, this coalition's manifesto could be drafted as follows.

### **We will:**

#### **Understand this diverse demographic better**

- Commission research on this group – especially the middle market – and its different needs.

#### **Clarify the offer to older people**

- Agree and use standard, jargon-free terms for the products on the market.
- Create a single public-information resource on later-living housing.

#### **Lobby for legislative and policy reform**

- Lobby for legislation that provides protection for consumers and clear parameters for developers and operators.
- Identify economic policies that can help older buyers, e.g. a senior help-to-buy programme, or a stamp duty exemption for older people with less valuable assets.
- Make a valid case for planning flexibility around developments offering communal facilities.

#### **Work to change attitudes**

- Highlight the demographic shift and tackle stereotypes about older people.
- Show positive examples of later-living and intergenerational housing.
- Demonstrate the societal and economic value of good housing and neighbourhoods for older people, e.g. combating isolation, freeing up family homes and reducing health and care costs.

#### **Engage with planning**

- Improve communication between developers and local authorities to better understand local needs, markets and viability issues.



## Conclusion

This programme set out to understand current practice and future thinking to deliver a London fit for an ageing population. It is an issue rapidly gaining attention but the complexity and cross-sector nature of the challenge will require a better understanding of need and being open to new ways of working.

Addressing the needs of older people through policy and strategy has been lacking, but is now on the increase. Calls for a more overt policy focus on older people's needs do not seek to prioritise these needs above the needs of other groups: this is about recognising that older needs have been neglected for too long. Shining a light on it now will help to redress the balance. New local policies are prioritising a better choice in properties and financial models, upgrading existing homes and providing clearer information to residents on their options.

Siloed working across the policy areas of planning, health and housing was repeatedly cited as a barrier. Research found the issue is not so much that these areas do not join up, but that understanding of how and where they do interlink is poor. Local, regional and national initiatives are starting to offer good practice approaches.

Housing is the thorniest issue, as could be expected in the current climate of London's housing crisis. Innovation and improvement here requires a host of interventions, including better understanding of need; a shift in consumer attitudes; a clear offer; a sector with a unified voice; and policy and legislative changes. Future of London's proposed manifesto is offered as a framework for addressing these issues.

There is much to be learnt from the experience and lifetime knowledge of older people themselves. This report sets out good practice for consulting with older people in inform policy and delivery. Working towards a London that is good for older people delivers lessons that help us create a better city for all.

Future of London will continue to support this effort beyond this report, by connecting ideas, stakeholders and influencers; through our related work on housing, placemaking, severance and diversity, and through our 4,700-strong network. Stay connected for updates, and get in touch if you'd like to be involved.

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