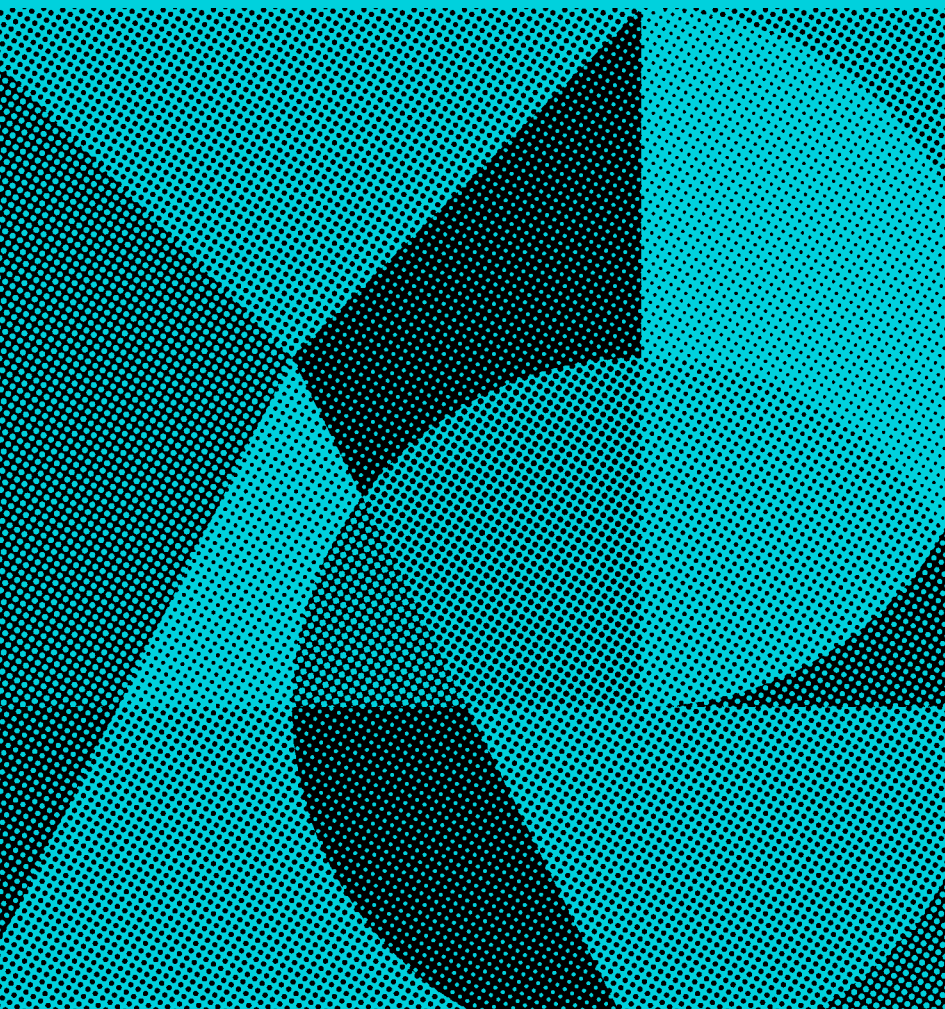
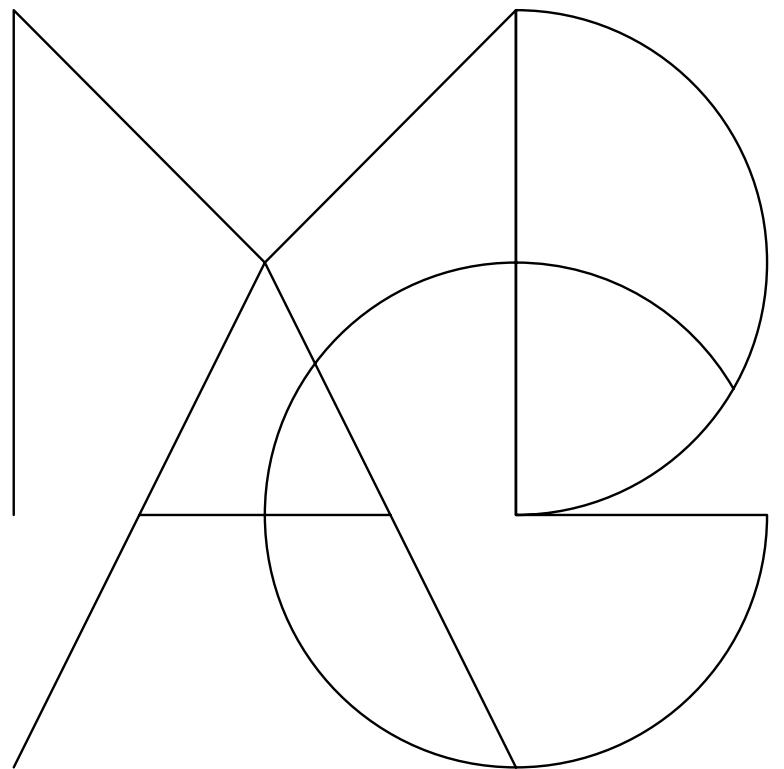


Mayor's Design
Advisory Group

Ageing London





*Ageing London:
How do we create a world-class city
to grow old in?*

Hank Dittmar
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A great city's future

Foreword by Daniel Moylan, chairman, the Mayor's Design Advisory Group (MDAG)

By 2030 one and a half million people – almost as many as currently live in Birmingham – will be added to the 8.5 million living here in London. Accommodating that growth in a way that allows the city and its people to thrive and prosper will be extraordinarily challenging. Only if we think long term and plan ahead will we make a success of it.

Parliament has placed the Mayor of London squarely at the heart of getting this right, through the Mayor's statutory strategic responsibilities for the city's spatial development and its transport and environmental planning. With a new Mayor due to be elected in May 2016 and a new London Plan and other strategies to be produced, this is the moment to build on the work of the past and to shape this great city for its future.

Over the last year, members of the Mayor's Design Advisory Group, representing a range and diversity of views, have been working on four topics identified as crucial to getting the strategy right. They are *Growing London, Public London, Ageing London and Shaping London*. Together these reports form the *Good Growth Agenda*.

This publication is on *Ageing London*. It is clear that a major contribution to London's projected growth in population is increasing longevity: people are living longer and there will be more older people living here. Will that place challenging demands on our public services? Or will it bring opportunities for increased entrepreneurship and creativity for a still

active and articulate older population? How should we plan for the possible outcomes?

This document is an effort to grapple with those questions and to provide some pointers as to the actions we have to start taking now.

The Good Growth Agenda

Essay by Peter Murray, MDAG member, and Patricia Brown, MDAG Deputy Chair

London is growing. Birth rates are on the up, Londoners are living longer and are requiring places in which to live that match their active lifestyles. At the same time, more people want to come here, work here, and stay here.

The capital has experienced periods of rapid growth before. The population grew from 1 million in 1800 to 6.5 million a century later - an increase of around 140 people a day. The result was a city of great grandeur but also one of squalor, overcrowding and poor health. In the first three decades of the 20th century, the population continued to increase to a peak in 1939 of 8.61 million. This growth was largely accommodated by the development of the suburbs, supported by the expanding transport infrastructure. The resultant sprawl of 'Metro-land' spread out into the Home Counties and hugely increased the capital's footprint.

London's population has now surpassed 1939 levels, and is continuing to rise. For the first time, the majority of this growth is planned to be absorbed within London's boundaries, constrained as it is by an extensive Green Belt.

As a result, we have to make better use of the land we have available. We have to develop more densely, and we need to do so within the context of the existing urban fabric and communities. To absorb this growth in population within the fixed area of London will be no mean task. The physical

impacts will be highly evident and ubiquitous – on the ground, underground and on the skyline.

The impact on London of building homes for nearly 70,000 more people and of accommodating 34,000 new jobs each year is huge. It will affect its built form, its infrastructure, its streets and transport systems, as well as its health and education services.

We have to build around 50,000 new homes per annum over 20 years – even more if we are to make up for the historic shortfall – and space for more than eight Canary Wharfs' worth of jobs, as well as schools, health facilities, shops and cultural centres.

So, how do we create a London of the future that we will still want to live in? How do we make sure that growth delivers a high quality environment that does not feel alien to London, or to Londoners? What are the key design issues that must be addressed if we are not to emulate the rookeries of the Victorians, the sprawl of the 1930s or the monocultural estates of the post war era? How, indeed, do we get what we are calling 'good growth'?

We believe that 'good growth' results in an inclusive city that is a pleasant place to work, visit or stay. It delivers a balanced mix of young and old, of housing tenures, of jobs. It enriches the city's great public and civic spaces both internal and external. It allows for vitality and change, building on the 'London-ness' that is a crucial part of the capital's character and enduring appeal. Finally, 'good growth' provides the kind of integrated infrastructure and services that enable Londoners to lead fulfilled lives.

Through this series of reports – the Good Growth Agenda – we set out the key challenges

and opportunities that result from London's dramatic growth. We promote a vision and a series of recommendations - to help support and shape the physical growth that is planned for London to continue to be a thriving and great capital city. We hope this opens up an inclusive debate about how we best achieve good growth.

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Introduction

The growth of London has revealed an interesting and important demographic shift – its citizens are getting older, too.

A London that works for older people is one that works for everybody.

This agenda report proposes steps a mayor could take to harness the potential in that scenario – for both the city and its citizens – since a London that works for older people is one that works for everybody.

London, like most cities, has always revolved around a young demographic; from popular culture to economic growth, it has been the youth driving the agenda. Older people – for the purposes of this report, older means over 60 – have had to make do. But in 2015, London's population grew to an all-time peak and, as it continues to grow, it is now clear that it will also age – most rapidly in central areas – giving older Londoners the kind of presence in the city that has not been seen before.

By 2035, the number of over 60s in London is expected to increase to almost two million; a 48 per cent increase, compared to only a 12 per cent increase in the numbers of those aged under 60 during that time. With numbers of those aged over 80 set to increase by 70 per cent over the same period, older Londoners are the fastest growing demographic across the city. For the first time, the over 60s could outnumber the under 16s as

a proportion of the total population of Greater London. All of the evidence suggests that this shift is likely to continue beyond 2035, fundamentally changing the demographic balance of the city.¹ Put simply, this scenario could see older people having much more influence as to the kind of city that we try to create.

Our ageing population must be a driver to guide good growth, catalysing innovation in new types of housing choice, collaboration between generations and economic or social entrepreneurship in later life.

Consistent with prejudices that have long undermined older people, much of the debate around ageing in cities has been focused on the challenges we might face, from provision of pensions to healthcare and specialist housing. However, older Londoners are not a homogeneous group of people. Some require support and care services, and may be under increasing financial pressure to leave the city or to continue to work beyond retirement age. Others will be well placed to make choices about their home, lifestyle or career in later life. There will be an increasingly mixed picture of health and social or economic inclusion.

Focusing on the challenges does a great disservice to the potential contribution that hundreds of thousands of older people can, and do, make;

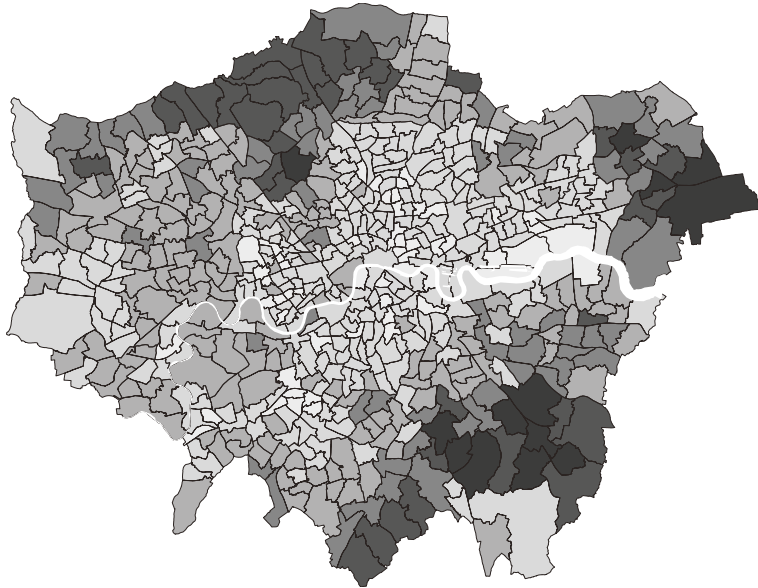
to society, to culture, to the economy of the city. Worse still, we run the risk of missing a new dawn of opportunity for London; a chance to secure the freedom of the city as we all grow older – creating new opportunities to work, play, travel and live together in dynamic and mixed communities fit for a whole lifetime.

Our ageing population must be a driver to guide good growth, catalysing innovation in new types of housing choice, collaboration between generations and economic or social entrepreneurship in later life.

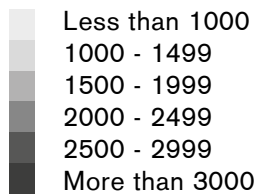
Having this choice as to how we participate as valued urban citizens, on our own terms throughout our lives, will set London apart from other global cities and ensure our resilience and competitiveness during this period of unprecedented demographic change.

The next mayor must drive a progressive agenda for ageing in London and ensure older people are equal as active participants at the heart of our high streets and local centres in a number of spheres. That is, as community leaders and business gurus, as workers and consumers, and as residents and citizens.

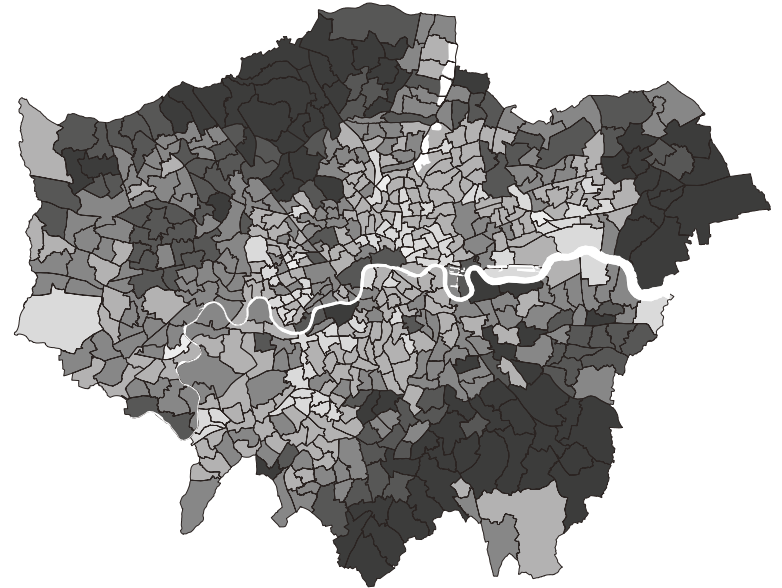
Outer London, particularly the north western, south eastern and far eastern areas currently contain the largest numbers of older people.



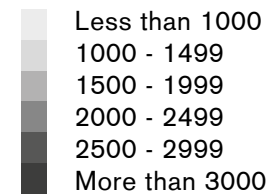
Population over the age of 65, by ward, in 2015



By 2030, numbers of older Londoners will grow across the city. However, some central areas will now see the high numbers of older people previously seen only in outer boroughs.



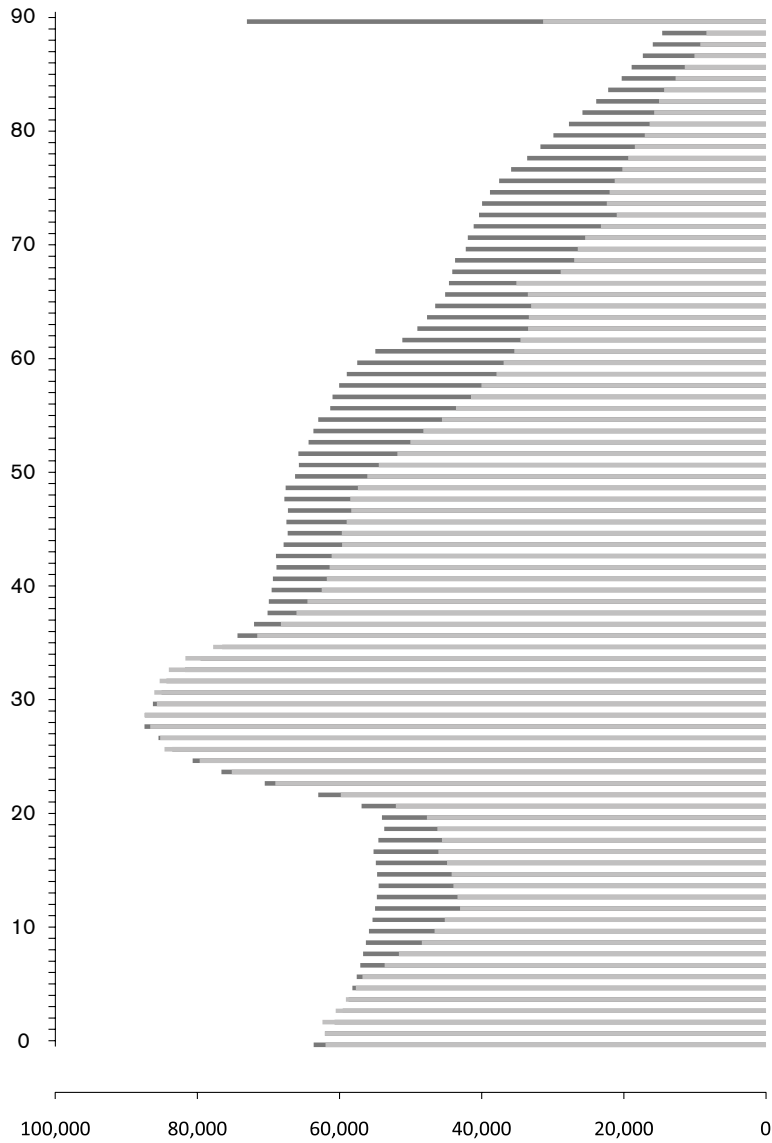
Projected population over the age of 65, by ward, in 2030



The next 25 years will see the most significant population growth in numbers of Londoners aged over 50

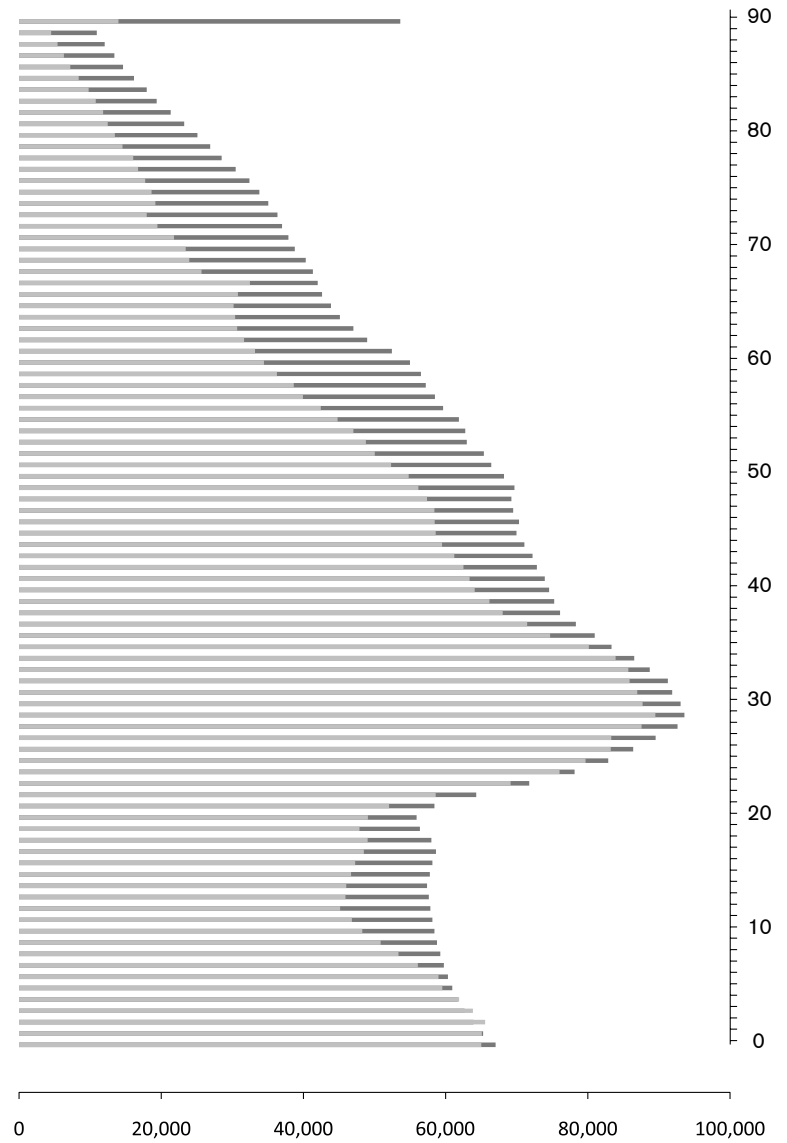
■ 2015 population
■ 2040 population

Female



6

Male



7



Issues and recommendations

1. Active older citizens

Maximising their contribution to London

Increasing numbers of us will have better health in older age. With a decade of good health post retirement age increasingly common.² Many will be able to make new choices about how to spend this phase of life. This fitter, more economically and socially engaged older cohort is being called the Active Third Age, and its members will play an influential role in demanding that older Londoners are more visible in mainstream society. Alongside working later into life, many – as their free time grows – will also want to take advantage of London as a world city, enjoying its cultural offer, its range of services, its open space: the excitement of living in a capital city. Others will look to share skills and knowledge, care for grandchildren, return to education or start a new business or career. They will have in common a wish to continue, for as long as possible, to play a full and rewarding role in society and live happy and healthy lives.

As a politically active group, older Londoners could also have increasing influence over the shape of government policy,³ while as an economically active group, they will affect the marketplace in new ways.

The current value of older Londoners' contributions to the capital alone is estimated at over £50 billion every year through paid work, care to other adults or support to their own younger

family members.⁴ Despite this, over three-quarters of all older people in the UK feel that their talents and skills go unused and are wasted by our country.⁵ When one considers what is involved here: the increasing tax revenue, spending power and the immensely valuable transfer of skills, expertise and knowledge to younger generations through work, training and academia, it is clear that active older citizens have a significant role to play in London's future prosperity. However, the opportunity to positively contribute to their local urban community, supporting the economic and social networks that grow out of day-to-day encounters is currently lacking. The next mayor must recognise this and act now to provide inspiring settings, innovative programmes of activity and new opportunities to maximise this potential.

If older people have more time and encouragement to support the next generation of young entrepreneurs, the benefits to the economy could be exponential and the sense of purposefulness to older people, life-enhancing.

Older Londoners will have diverse needs, goals and demands of the city. Opportunities to work more flexibly, learn and develop new skills, share existing knowledge or be more socially integrated could become key drivers for the way that the city changes. Initiatives should be developed which

encourage re-training in later life in addition to new working practices for older Londoners, close to their communities, as they approach retirement. This flexibility could begin to present new models of skills transfer and mentoring, between generations, and in both directions.

Older entrepreneurs

London could emulate Bologna in Italy by nurturing an intergenerational 'start-up' culture that connects people of different ages, wealth and skills with mutual interests to generate or support new opportunities, businesses or networks. Older, experienced and successful people have a wealth of knowledge that is important for young businesses in early stages of development and could be the difference between success and failure. London already has a vital start-up culture; taking the initiative to make this one that involves intergenerational mentoring and collaboration would be a natural outgrowth of existing models. If older people have more time and encouragement to support the next generation of young entrepreneurs, the benefits to the economy could be exponential and the sense of purposefulness to older people, life-enhancing.

Similarly, there is no reason why older people shouldn't be the ones encouraged to start new businesses of their own. The Prince's Initiative for Mature Enterprise (PRIME) which merged with Business in the Community in 2014, has been campaigning to address the growing unemployment issue amongst the over 50s and promote the need to harness this talent through enterprise.

Google has recognised the importance of encouraging new segments of society to engage with, influence and create new technology, as well as the limited opportunities for older people looking to work in new and dynamic ways. Through its Campus London initiative, they have launched 'Founders over 50', a free pilot programme to support older entrepreneurs to start a business for the first time, coaching them in the fundamentals from business planning to communications. The initiative brings like-minded older people together, and recognises that many have as much energy and enthusiasm as young people, but fewer opportunities to access support networks and develop new ideas. This approach can bring significant new value to their existing experience and contacts to enable new innovation.

The role of cutting-edge IT infrastructure will be important to realising these aims. As technology and virtual networks (of both information and communities) become more accessible and influential to a broad spectrum of society, they will become increasingly ingrained in the lifestyles of the older generations of the future. We must recognise that, in the 21st century, it is not only the young that have new ideas and innovation can come from anywhere.

Life-long learning

The University of the Third Age (U3A) began in the UK in the 1980s, more as a self-help initiative for older people to learn and socialise for pleasure in later life. Drawing on the skills and experience of its own members, everyone can be both a

pupil and a teacher, running courses in anything from philosophy to photography. In the modern world of location-based personal communication via smartphones, it would not be a big leap to encourage this principle and these kinds of networks to grow, at scale, across London. The city as university, perhaps, with new, local community spaces made available to those willing and able to share skills and knowledge informally by retraining, in an accessible way, older people would have more opportunities to work more flexibly, on their own terms, in later life.

New civic leaders

Culturally and civically, the impact of an active and engaged older population is already being felt in museum venue attendance and participation, and in the political engagement of older Londoners at community meetings and planning events. Considering London's high streets and town centres, the opportunity exists to unlock this positive engagement of older Londoners in the management of local community assets. These could include libraries, community theatres, park facilities and the like, enabled through new tools such as Community Interest Companies.

Indeed, these older Londoners could well become the dominant force for spending on cultural or leisure pursuits, and will start to drive the offer provided by various sectors – with older people taking the initiative to start new businesses that provide services or facilities in demand from their peers. We must find ways to encourage this kind of activity, at the heart of existing communities.

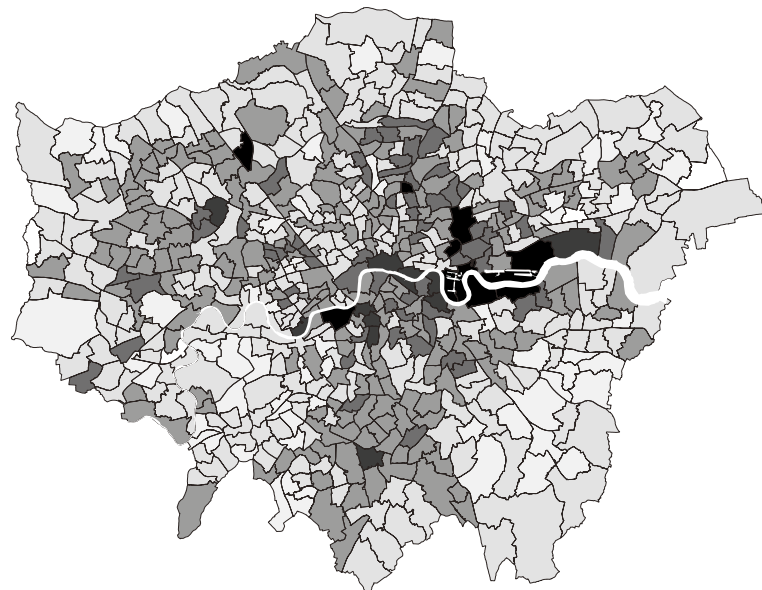
Intergenerational support

Raising a family in 21st Century London is becoming increasingly complex and varied, due to both social change and increasing cultural diversity; with new types of family unit, new working patterns for both parents and the rising cost of childcare. It is expected that older generations will naturally come to play a more prominent role in the care and support of their grandchildren.⁶ In addition, it has been claimed that London has a shortage of up to 2,000 foster carers⁷ to support the young and vulnerable, with the average age of foster carers rising. When this is taken alongside the well-documented issues of loneliness and isolation in older generations and the fact that over half of Londoners over 65 currently have a limiting condition that would benefit from support,⁸ one thing is clear. There is a significant opportunity – and mutual benefit – in bringing younger and older generations together in such a way as to break down barriers and promote local support networks.

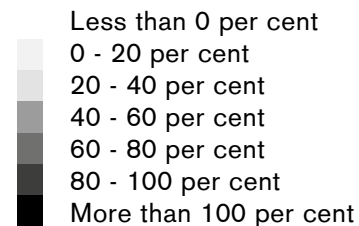
London must work much harder to do this, and could learn a good deal from the idea of combining intergenerational meeting and collaboration with intergenerational housing, which has been explored at SOS-Mutterzentrum in Germany. The project includes 14 housing units (specifically multigenerational in occupation), as well as a meeting house which accommodates a café/bar, nursery, kindergarten, elderly day care, laundry and music studios, creating a close and supportive community structure.

Whilst this is a bold vision for the new types of neighbourhood housing models, discussed further within the housing section of this agenda report,

The fastest growing populations of older Londoners are in central and inner London areas, particularly to the east of the city.



Percentage change in population aged 65 and over 2015-2030



the same ambition for intergenerational support can be achieved at the scale of a single enterprise. This has been demonstrated by the NANA Café project in Hackney. The project specifically recruited older, retired ladies (Nanas), on the cusp of social isolation, to cook in a community café. Finding employment and social participation on their own terms proved immensely rewarding, but the café soon became a valued support structure for local young mothers who came to enjoy a well-earned break over lunch, whilst the Nanas help to look after the children.

New initiatives for local urban centres

The fastest growing older populations in the city are in central and inner London boroughs. This represents a significant shift, compared to what we have seen before, but central areas are well placed to respond. With close proximity to the highest intensity of transport infrastructure, employment opportunities, leisure and services, it makes sense to focus our efforts and find new and innovative ways to accommodate increasing numbers of older people around the existing opportunities for 'natural connectedness' that is possible in local urban centres and high streets.

By supporting and encouraging all older people to play a full and active role in mainstream urban society for as long as possible – from work, to leisure, to civic leadership – there are immense potential benefits to be had for both older people and the wider city alike.

Recommendations

To unlock the potential positive contribution of growing numbers of older Londoners, the Mayor should promote social, cultural, civic and economic participation and a positive synergy between the generations by:

- 1a Establishing a 'Lifetime High Streets' pilot programme to fund innovative projects. These would:**
- **Create opportunities for new business innovation and skills-sharing initiatives to be led by older Londoners. This would promote intergenerational collaboration as part of an enterprise and start-up culture, with flexible and affordable workspace for older people looking to establish programmes to share skills and expertise with young entrepreneurs.**
 - **Promote Intergenerational support networks – creating community meeting places for co-working, mentoring, supporting, caring and volunteering to bring older and younger people together in both new and existing developments.**
 - **Support older Londoners in Operating Community Assets - demonstrating the viability of operating community assets such as local libraries, park buildings, community theatres and crèches under contract to Community Interest Companies owned and operated by older Londoners or intergenerational teams for mutual benefit.**

- 1b Producing guidance or a collection of case studies outlining best practice in innovative urban interventions promoting intergenerational exchange and entrepreneurial spirit in cities**
- **The publication should be used by all London boroughs to shape investment in pilot programmes across the city**

2. Housing

Providing innovative new choices for later life

The provision of new housing in London is perhaps the most significant issue facing the city. As our population ages, it will become increasingly important not to overlook the value in addressing housing choices for older people as a key component of the wider provision across the city. By getting this right, we can ease the pressure across the spectrum and achieve an intergenerational mix within communities that will be key to maximising the ability for older Londoners to remain as active participants in civic life, tackling social isolation as we all get older.

For those older people that can afford to make choices about their housing, and are open to moving, there is significant potential to offer new models for desirable homes. These could set off a chain reaction and have knock-on benefits for all Londoners looking to get onto the housing ladder.

Older people tend to spend more time in their home, whether that is because of physical restrictions or simply through entertaining friends and enjoying retirement. They tend to value security and stability – knowing their neighbours and avoiding the clash of lifestyles common when a transient population occupies a development on short-term lets. But new urban housing tends to be focused on the ‘first-time buyer’ or ‘buy-to-let’ investment properties. This stock is not appropriate or flexible enough to meet the needs of older people who are clear about the atmosphere they desire and their specific requirements on issues like

storage or appropriate spaces in which to entertain guests. Relatively small but conveniently located starter homes, with minimal storage and space efficient layouts (such as kitchen-cum-living rooms) are not going to convince older empty-nesters or so-called 'last-time buyers', currently living in four- or five-bedroom houses, that they should move into local centres or closer to the city centre to embrace the potential benefits of doing so.

Pressure on housing development, with a backlog of undersupply amidst surge in demand, is leading to increasingly unaffordable housing stock in inner London boroughs (covered in more detail in *MDAG's Good Growth Agenda 1: Growing London*). But sheer demand and price inflation is also a limiting factor in the range of options developers are willing to produce. Providing larger units with generous communal spaces and landscaping, with the flexibility to be adapted to eventually provide care and support (i.e. that could appeal to a demanding older cohort) reduces the ratio of saleable units to floorspace, and increases costs. This, in turn, squeezes profit margins. With a move to financial contributions required now based on floor area (i.e. CIL), there is less risk and more profit in concentrating on tried-and-tested products for the largest markets. The 'last-time buyer' or older downsizer is therefore neglected, despite one report suggesting that over 75 per cent of all people aged over 60 in the UK, occupying three-, four- and five-bedroom homes would be interested in both moving and downsizing by at least one bedroom, provided an option existed to meet their needs.⁹

Promoting innovation

London must focus on promoting innovation in the consumer marketplace for housing types that would encourage or support some of these older people to move on their own terms and live in, or near, to town centres; embracing a desirable active urban lifestyle in later life or retirement. This will be critical to achieving the 'lifetime neighbourhood' ambition set out in the Further Alterations to the London Plan.

Some developers, such as Pegasus Life, are already reacting to this emerging market opportunity and innovating with new models that meet the needs and aspirations of older people. But this is currently focused on the higher end of the wealth spectrum, to ensure viability and account for any potential service charges. The Friary in Lichfield, Staffordshire, is one such example, demonstrating high quality design and generous space standards alongside adequate storage, social spaces and communal amenities such as a courtyard garden. The domestic scale and local materials help the development to blend into its surroundings. The development provides one- and two-bedroom apartments, for those who do not require care or assistance. Another scheme Pegasus is developing in the Cotswolds also provides assisted living units and concentrates communal facilities and social interaction alongside staff support for care and therapy in a barn-like 'village hall' in the centre of a well landscaped courtyard. We need to find a way to support these emerging examples and produce them at scale to ensure that they are accessible to increasing numbers of Londoners as they age.

One way, would be to encourage London Boroughs to review CIL charging on innovative

schemes for older people, particularly where a commitment is made to offering first purchase opportunities to local downsizers.

Cultural shift

If older Londoners are to downsize into high quality and innovative new urban housing, it will initially still require a significant cultural shift, so the offer of a different home in the short term needs to be very attractive. Essentially, it needs to be the right type of housing, in the right location, with the right social and support networks, and at the right price. In terms of design, there is still a lack of consistency in approach to both standards and models that would best meet the needs and desires of older people. This is despite the momentum and important insights made in the two reports on housing design for older people produced by the Housing and Ageing Population Panel for Innovation (HAPPI).¹⁰

There is clearly a key role for the mayor in ensuring that innovation within the private sector offer is being delivered widely and at scale to a high standard of design and aspiration.

HAPPI is not the panacea, but we do need to explore generic solutions to appeal to a broad and emerging market with a variety of spending power and ensure

that best practice is better embedded in new developments across the city and across tenures. This must be a viable model that developers can buy into and deliver, that older people want to buy, and that can also deliver affordable units and potentially allow a transition to assisted living scenarios.

A new use class could be one way of unlocking innovation in housing for older people in central urban locations. This use class would sit between the current C2 (care homes, nursing homes) and C3 (general housing needs) and offer flexibility at borough level in terms of S106 and CIL requirements to help ensure good schemes for older people are viable. It would also ensure that Local Plans make specific reference to the provision of consumer choice in housing for older Londoners, as something distinct from the wider housing choice requirements. Indeed, the Further Alterations to the London Plan only refers to housing for older people in terms of the provision of 'specialist accommodation' - we need to broaden this definition and embed into policy. Qualities that would define any new use class should be investigated, but would likely include: housing which is located in places where older people want to live, larger housing units – fewer rooms but generous with good storage and car parking – and homes which are more suitable for older people to live in long-term, including ensuring homes are fuel-efficient and mobility friendly. The use class could allow flexibility for housing with no support services on site, schemes with some provision and schemes with the provision of communal and public access space used by the wider older community such as a café/ restaurant, hobby rooms, health services etc as part of a development.

There is clearly a key role for the mayor in ensuring that innovation within the private sector offer is being delivered widely and at scale to a high standard of design and aspiration. Relevant policy support, guidance and leadership along with exemplar projects are all needed to kick-start action.

Money matters

Growing the supply side of desirable housing for older people needs to be matched by older person households being able to access good quality financial advice. This is particularly important for asset rich, cash poor households. As the new housing developed is likely to be flatted housing (providing bungalows in London's local centres will certainly not be viable), people considering moving in are going to be particularly concerned about service charges. Similarly, it is crucial to find ways of turning excess cash released from a sale of a property after the purchase of a new one into revenue to top up income, pensions or meet ongoing costs associated with the new home when the occupant would not have decades of employment ahead of them.

Co-Housing could also offer an alternative way of growing older; one that eschews the institution and is also based on both neighbourliness and independence.

A desire to downsize, supported with the right financial tools, could have a significant impact in stimulating the self-build and co-housing movements in London. Interest is growing fast across the country, but we are still a long way behind both America and parts of Europe in supporting this as a way to diversify housing delivery and provide new and innovative solutions. Co-Housing could also offer an alternative way of growing older; one that eschews the institution and is also based on both neighbourliness and independence. Effectively, a small community is owned, designed, built and managed by the residents, through an agreed set of principles. Made up of private individual homes, the addition of shared spaces and facilities are integral to the community, the most important being the common house, where group meals and events can take place. Sargfabrik, a project in Vienna, has been conceived as a multi-generational community with 109 flats for both young families and senior citizens. Described by residents as a 'village in the city' shared facilities are generous (including a library, café and gardens) and are an acknowledgment that the older residents enjoy spending more time within the buildings.

In Britain, we have already seen a number of co-housing groups forming with a specific age range – the Older Women's Co-Housing (OWCH) group will be moving into their new home in Brent this year, and the Threshold Group in the Cotswolds is predominantly occupied by 50- and 60-somethings, having formed in 2005 on the premise of 'creative ageing'.

Flexible planning

For many older people, remaining in their own home and existing local community will continue to be a priority. These people should be supported to modify their existing homes to meet their emerging and evolving needs. It should be made easier for owner-occupiers to subdivide their homes, add facilities for boarders, carers or family members, and this can be done through expanding permitted development rights for owner occupiers; a policy that could be intrinsically linked to the reduction of under-occupation. A lodger could provide the security of a revenue stream, whilst a carer or family member living in permanently could help reduce social isolation and aid people to remain in their home for as long as possible in later life. Allowing these changes to be considered permitted development could be accompanied by good advice about the options, about releasing equity to undertake the project, and about other housing options that may be available.

In situations where the need for more specialist accommodation is accepted and older people are resigned to moving, or where the promotion of downsizing within the social rented sector is desirable (to reduce an occupant's running costs and free up a larger home for a young family) there is much that can be done to increase choice and ensure older people can remain in their community. United St Saviours is applying the tradition of the 'alms house' – a charity-led housing and care offer as part of an existing community – to the 21st century, via a proposed new development in a central London location. All 57 flats are affordable and planned around a café, community space and

cookery school. The model is being specifically developed to work at high densities in town centre locations, integrating mixes of tenure. The Mayor could allocate appropriate sites, in public ownership, to deliver similar exemplar schemes for affordable extra-care facilities and social renters willing to downsize to a more supportive environment.

Recommendations

To drive innovation in housing choice for older Londoners, the Mayor should:

2a Ensure new housing options for older people are provided in town centre and high street locations across London by:

- Ensuring all London borough Local Plans have strategies or direct policies which reflect older Londoners' housing needs and desires. They must detail the impact of ageing in their communities in terms of assessment of the need for neighbourhood care and support services, extra care and specialist care homes and retirement homes. They should also include provision of desirable homes for active older people or downsizers. Plans should be required to accommodate new provision in local centres as part of increasing density around good transport infrastructure and local services.
- Exploring the need for a new use class to promote desirable housing for older people in central urban locations, and the qualities that would define it.
- Allocating appropriate sites, in public ownership, to deliver exemplar schemes for affordable extra-care developments and options for social renters willing to downsize to a more supportive environment.
- Introducing a new 'Space to care' initiative exploring the delivery of accessory units

and house conversions as a permitted development right. This would enable older home-owners to make the best use of their home and have flexibility to meet their emerging needs, by accommodating boarders, carers and family members to help financially, socially or in the provision of healthcare.

- Developing and issuing guidance for local authorities to support those older Londoners affected by the Welfare Reform Act 2012, specifically the under-occupancy penalty within housing benefit, or retired social tenants willing to downsize, by ensuring they have a choice in meeting their future housing needs. The guidance would advocate prioritising older tenants gaining access to appropriate alternative options within their existing community, should they wish to move and could involve moving to a ground floor flat, closer to friends and relatives, or closer to support services or local facilities. This should include allowing people downsizing from a three-bedroom or larger home an extra bedroom if desired, i.e. they could move into a two-bedroom home.

2b Stimulate the market for innovative new models of housing for older Londoners and downsizers by developing policies and actions that support or unlock delivery such as:

- Initiating a design competition and associated pilot programme for new and innovative models of housing for older

people, backed with GLA funding, support and/or the offer of land in appropriate locations

- Using the competition and associated pilot programme to develop guidance for exemplar solutions suitable for a range of urban London locations
- Allowing for owner-occupied retirement homes, only available to those who have downsized from a larger home, to replace affordable housing units in schemes in appropriate locations. This should be designated at borough level through local plans.
- Exempting CIL charging on communal, social and support areas in developments for older people (either market, retirement or extra care accommodation) located in appropriate locations and that demonstrate best practice in design. This could be related to a new use class.
- Creating an information service for older people to access advice on housing options within their neighbourhood and financial options / products that they can trust. This would better enable asset rich/cash poor owners to release equity through downsizing. Or it might help older people remain in their existing home or community, but make the best use of their assets – perhaps to pay for care. The service should also signpost approved builders to undertake improvements to modernise older Londoners’ homes, either to accommodate their emerging needs, or to ensure it is desirable to sell on to a

younger buyer and ensure they receive the value required to purchase an alternative within the same area.

- 2c Ensure the improvement in the quality and consistency of new housing options built specifically for older people by:
- Embedding HAPPI principles into the London Housing Design guide and forthcoming Housing Standards Supplementary Planning Guidance. These should be tailored to different housing types and care models, from general provision to extra care, retirement housing for the 55+ age group and nursing homes. Guidance should include standards for room sizes, storage requirements, design and type of amenity space, mobility needs, relationship between dwellings and for communal space.
- 2d Support the self-build and co-housing movements for groups of older Londoners who are downsizing by:
- Allocating GLA or local authority land in appropriate town centre or high street locations for self-builder pilot projects. This could be a series of smaller, but strategically connected plots (i.e. around support services, infrastructure and facilities) or a larger site, whereby infrastructure is provided and smaller plots are parcelled off to encourage smaller groups of builders and diversify supply.

3. City-wide issues

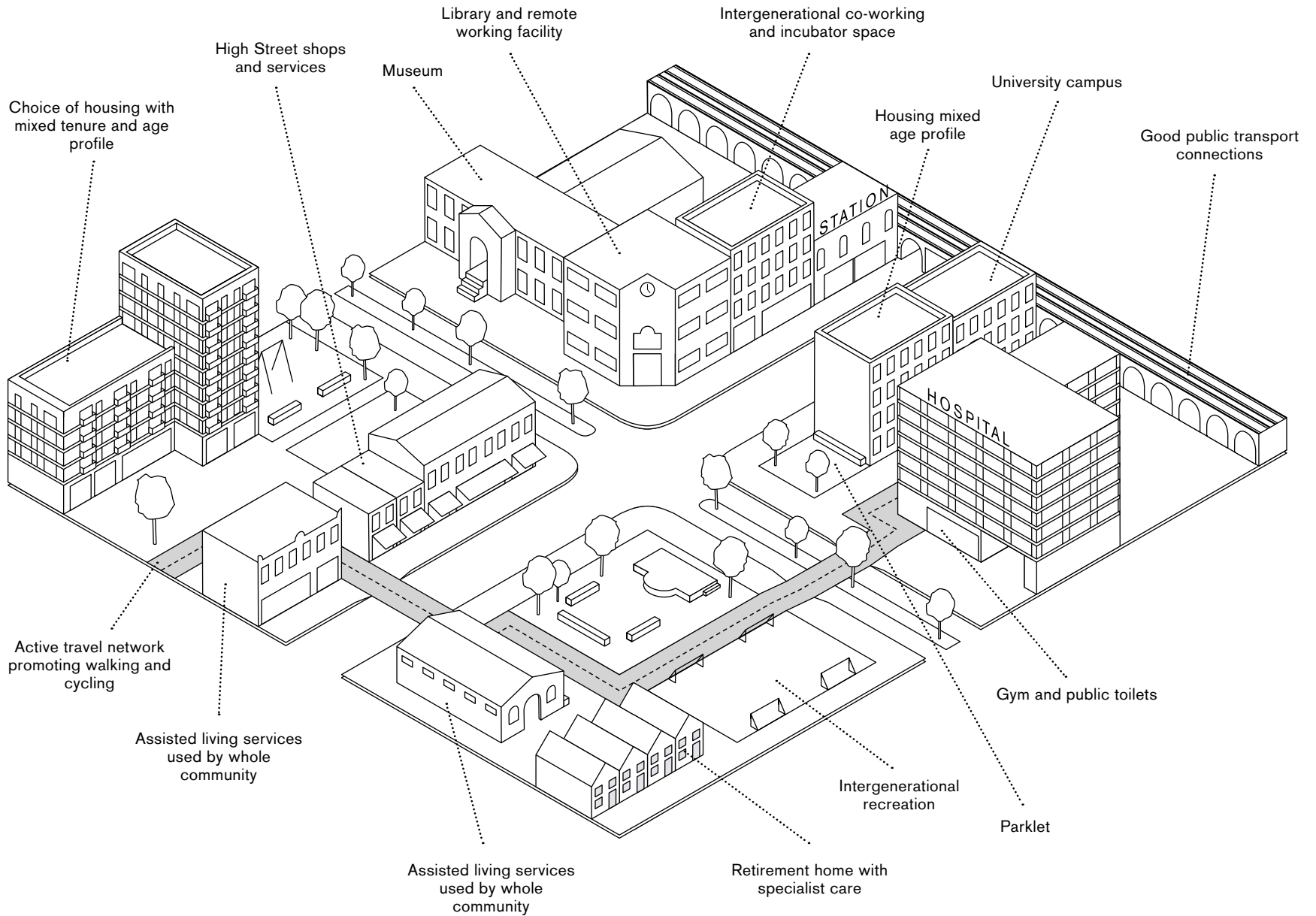
Ensuring the freedom of the city as we age

This paper has touched on the many benefits that the city offers for older people, with good public transport provision, free travel for people over 60, close proximity between services, a variety of housing options, shops and facilities, and seemingly endless opportunities to socialise.

London could be a great place in which to grow older if we act now to create a city that respects older people's needs and which encourages their ambitions, at every opportunity.

Accommodating London's growing ageing population in town centres and high streets makes clear sense as we look to build cohesive intergenerational communities which foster diversity, social interaction and well-being. Providing new opportunities to participate in civic life alongside the right choice of housing, will be essential to enabling older people to stay in the city, as well as attracting others back to enjoy the latter part of their lives as active urban dwellers. This will have considerable benefit to both town centre vitality and local community wellbeing.

Concept diagram of the desirable characteristics of a walkable lifetime-neighbourhood in a town centre location



However, this must be accompanied by strong leadership from the next mayor to ensure that we do not prohibit the wider spectrum of older Londoners from ageing well in central locations and that the city meets their demands and expectations as much as it does those of younger people vying for position close to jobs and entertainment. London could be a great place in which to grow older if we act now to create a city that respects older people's needs and which encourages their ambitions, at every opportunity.

It has been rightly acknowledged in the Further Alterations to the London Plan that 'lifetime neighbourhoods' need to be well-connected, walkable, close to infrastructure, facilities and services with places to spend time and to work. As Roger Battersby has pointed out in his paper on 'continuing care neighbourhoods', when it comes to considering how we all grow older in our urban communities, we already have so many of the elements of success in place.¹¹ The challenge lies in joining these up, in breaking down the silos and in building a truly collaborative approach between government agencies and across local authority departments, between health and planning professionals, and between housing providers.

Exemplary Ageing

The Brunswick Centre in central London became a popular place for older people for precisely those qualities advocated by 'lifetime neighbourhoods'. The local authority, Camden Council, has since recognised this and formally established a sheltered housing unit of around 150 flats with a resident

warden as part of the centre, supporting its older residents. There is now a strong, curated intergenerational mix of tenure and use, aided by the original design philosophy of openness, inclusiveness and communal space, embedded within a diverse and well-connected urban neighbourhood. There is level access throughout, nearby shopping options, the Marchmont Community Centre and other essential services, including medical facilities, a library and parks. Not to mention London's West End, a short walk way.

But cities can be chaotic, hostile or intimidating environments as a flip-side to the benefits of density. If we can improve the urban experience and opportunities for all older people now, the city will be much more resilient to ageing in the coming decades.

This will require action at a range of scales:

Governance and Strategic leadership

London has made considerable progress since Jan Gehl observed in 2004 that older people are seldom to be found in key parts of the West End¹² and the GLA demonstrated a clear commitment to valuing and supporting older people following the launch of the World Health Organisation (WHO) Age Friendly Cities Project soon after. In that time, major improvements to connectivity, accessibility and legibility accompanied the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, the expansion of the London Overground service and station improvements associated with Crossrail.

Public spaces across the city have seen a continued renaissance in recent years; Transport for

London's (TfL's) commitment to de-cluttering, new Legible London signage indicating walking times and points of interest alongside improved surfaces, furniture and new timed crossings. Coupled with the adoption of Lifetime Neighbourhoods into the further alterations to the London Plan, the Town Centres Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) and the London Green Grid SPG, these improvements and strategic direction have all helped to enhance the experience of the city for all ages, and particularly for older people. This is a start, but we must not be complacent, there is significant work still to be done.

Much of the city-wide improvements required will rely on a strong political advocate, with the GLA leading by example to kick-start initiatives that link across broad and complex sectors.

London can learn much from Manchester City Council's multi-agency approach to improving connections in older age, building communities and promoting active ageing in the city. The Valuing Older People Programme (VOP, 2003) and subsequent Manchester Ageing Strategy (2009) set out a ten year plan to make Manchester a great place in which to grow older. This had high-level political support from the outset, capable of bringing the necessary multi-sector team together (both within the council and with relevant partners – a wider group than just health and care agencies, to incorporate citizenship and equality) and influencing both policy and delivery in every area of the council's work. This initiative was supported by a strong communications campaign and a community-led programme of bottom-up interventions and local investments.

Healthy ageing

In addition, the NHS 'estate' we have built and continue to build is not the estate we need to support people in later life. The current NHS estate model was developed in the mid-20th century for post-war Britain, founded on doctors' surgeries with consultation rooms delivering primary care in isolation. This is now under reform, offering opportunities for improved wellbeing and a better relationship to spatial planning and the development of the city.

There is a clear and crucial role for a future mayor in ensuring that issues of health and social care provision become much more aligned to strategic planning priorities, brought together at an early stage to shape development and challenge attitudes or perceived wisdom in the GLA, boroughs and development sector – a sense of 'total place' rather than creating housing alone. This will be imperative to create greater opportunities for older people to remain active and engaged, and to reduce dependency on medicalised care.

Creating public places and urban connections fit for an all-age-friendly city

Much London Plan policy supports a desirable ambition for a mixed, walkable and lively city. However, we have not particularly innovated with intergenerational public spaces – tactical interventions that appeal to and encourage mixed groups to gather together for positive social exchange.

Promoting healthy, active lifestyles and improving wellbeing or intergenerational cohesion will almost

certainly help to counter the rising cost of public healthcare and service provision, especially when dealing with modern challenges of rising obesity, social isolation and mental health issues.¹³ It will become increasingly important and valuable to improve public health through good urban design and the planning of new development and infrastructure to accommodate London's growth. Health and spatial planning are still largely isolated considerations. Furthermore, active travel strategies promoting walking and cycling suitable for all age groups are still inferior to the best exemplars across the world and are lacking in strategic direction, although welcome progress is being made through the Mayor's Vision for Cycling. That includes the emerging Quietways initiative to find safe routes across the city that would appeal to a broad range of ages and abilities. The Healthy Streets approach is beginning to be adopted, but must be significantly scaled up and considered as part of a wider strategic network that brings together cycling and walking strategies.

Lessons from abroad

Sønder Boulevard in Copenhagen is both a re-imagined street connection – shifting the road hierarchy to prioritise cycling and walking along a key route into the city centre – and also a public place for all age groups to gather.¹⁴ More of a linear park, the design has places in which to sit, meet or engage in activities that appeal specifically to both old and young living locally, and which encourage them to connect and enjoy the city together. The Mayor's 'Quietways' cycling

initiative is a step in the right direction to enabling all people of any age and ability to feel safe and confident cycling through the city.¹⁵ But we must go one step further and think about the types of intergenerational public spaces that could complement this network and make new, strategic active travel connections across London, joining up parks, hospitals, high streets and neighbourhoods. The Pavements to Parks initiative in New York and San Francisco, where public space is clawed back from on-street parking, is a great example of a light-touch and local business-led approach to adding new opportunities to sit and socialize in busy streets.¹⁶ The city authority takes care of the planning framework, with local businesses leading on the design and implementation of new pocket parks. The odd loss of a parking space is more than offset by new and accessible opportunities to rest or socialise on key connective routes, in a way that supports local enterprise. Local communities and businesses could potentially bring forward ideas themselves through a crowdsourcing or crowdfunding platform; perhaps an expansion of the Mayor's Civic Crowdfunding pilot programme, which is currently investigating the potential of such a tool for Londoners to bring forward small projects.¹⁷ This subject is picked up in *Good Growth Agenda 2: Public London*.

An underlying infrastructure for comfort and confidence building

The single biggest improvement cited by older people over the last decade has been the public transport improvements and extension to the

scope of the Freedom Pass.¹⁸ The Freedom Pass, which allows free travel on the TfL network for the over 60s, has become an important badge of independence for older people in the city and has afforded them greater flexibility to live in an urban setting, on their own terms. This principle should be at the heart of other initiatives to give confidence that London is a welcoming and accessible place.

The Freedom Pass, which allows free travel on the TfL network for the over 60s, has become an important badge of independence for older people in the city and has afforded them greater flexibility to live in an urban setting, on their own terms.

For instance, access to public toilets and appropriate benches in the right locations are two clear and crucial pieces of infrastructure that are required more frequently by older people. In the last few years, the number of public toilets has reduced significantly as local authorities struggle with the associated ongoing maintenance costs and TfL are reluctant to provide them. A lack of provision discourages older people from frequenting parts of the city and participating in urban life. This then has knock-on impacts on physical and mental health. London could do much more, quickly and easily, to tackle both issues. Indeed, Richmond has already

scored a proven success with a community toilet scheme – pro-actively working with local businesses to allow free and safe access to toilets across the borough.¹⁹

Similarly, Manchester has launched the *Take-a-Seat* initiative, (based on a similar scheme in New York) where local businesses commit to welcoming older passers-by through offering a seat in their premises – with no obligation to buy anything – if they need a rest in the absence of any public bench.²⁰ The Mayor could play a key and valuable role in enabling and coordinating this kind of activity across London, perhaps linked to the Freedom Pass and mapped and organised with the same strategic thinking afforded to the city's cycle hire scheme.

Maintaining diversity

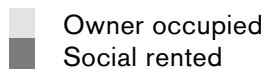
Many older people wish to remain in their homes and communities as long as possible. Regardless of limitations, ensuring that the right care and support offer is present within inner London boroughs – especially for social housing tenants, the predominant tenure of those aged over 65 in central locations – will be crucial to the choices they can make and the age-friendliness of the city in the years to come. Moving to specialist, sheltered or retirement accommodation, if not on their own terms, can have a significant impact on an older person's quality of life and their capacity to remain independent and socially involved for as long as possible.

If we do not get this aspect right, there is a real danger that, alongside concerns over potential wealth inequalities and the subsequent loss of socially mixed communities, we could also begin

The predominant tenure of residents aged 65 and over across the city. Most older Londoners in central areas currently reside in social rented housing. With these areas also growing the fastest, in terms of older population, combined with pressures on social rented housing, how do we ensure choice and flexibility so that older Londoners can remain in central locations?



Predominant tenure of residents aged 65 and over



to see generational inequalities in central and inner London neighbourhoods if older people are put under increasing pressure to remain in central areas, around retirement. This could significantly undermine the diversity that makes London such a great city.

The next mayor needs to ensure that the care and social support structures are there for older people living throughout the city, and that care workers are supported to live close to the people who rely on them, possibly through preferential treatment for affordable housing of their own, but certainly through adequate pay and working conditions.

This care and support offer is not a one-size-fits-all model, however, and could vary, depending on need. For instance: in a recent development in the Netherlands, the Humanitas Apartments for Life 'age-proof flats' are coupled with publicly accessible restaurants, bars and film screenings. It also includes an initiative that invites students to live in the same development, rent free, in exchange for 30 hours a month being 'good neighbours' to the older residents. Not only does this encourage intergenerational exchange, but it also allows older people with no family support to access light-touch help, instead of having to rely on more formal care. Something similar has happened in London with the Homeshare schemes supported by some London boroughs, but we need more of these initiatives, happening at scale, across the city.

Recommendations

To ensure that London becomes a global exemplar for Older People, the Mayor should:

- 3a** Appoint a Deputy Mayor to an 'All-Age Friendly London' portfolio.
- They would be responsible for championing and coordinating an innovative suite of policies and activities supporting active ageing and opportunities for older people to contribute positively across society in London.
 - They would take the lead to ensure health and strategic planning issues are more closely aligned when considering major new development across the city, including infrastructure improvements and active travel initiatives.
 - They would coordinate all parts of the GLA family to demonstrate a considered and strategic approach to the needs and desires of older people in formulating policy, strategy and plans including delivery plans. They should require that older people and organisations representing and/or providing services for older people are actively involved in the formulation of policy, strategy and plans that affect older Londoners.
 - They would report to Londoners, the London Assembly and the London Mayor annually on how they are making London a better place for older people.
 - They would be expected to work with

the 32 London Boroughs and the various health structures to develop a coherent strategy to ensure that existing resources deployed to provide services for older people are used in the most effective way.

- 3b** Issue a 'Lifetime Neighbourhoods' Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) document
- This would champion town centres and high streets as good places in which to grow old, and encourage the provision of dense, well-connected, age-friendly housing development as part of existing communities, with good transport access.
 - It would set out how new development could provide a wider resource to promote social and economic participation as we all age and support the whole community.
 - It would also promote the creation of intergenerational mixed use developments as part of major infrastructure improvements such as Crossrail and the wider TfL network
- 3c** Develop an implementation plan to deliver an integrated network of active travel strategies with the ambition to connect up existing parks, high streets and public facilities such as hospitals or museums.
- This should be delivered in coordination with the new Active Travel Commissioner recommended in Good Growth Agenda 2: Public London

- This should set out a strategic direction to align the Mayor’s Vision for Cycling with a scaled up ‘healthy streets’ approach and new focus on complementary walking strategies as part of an ‘all London active travel grid’, connecting key parts of the city.
 - It should also be accompanied by a pilot programme to fund ‘pocket parks’ or ‘parklets’, targeted to support the emerging network. Initiatives would focus on opportunities for intergenerational exchange, provide places to rest or establish facilities that would encourage more people to practice active travel in their day-to-day lives.
- 3d** Establish a pilot programme with select London boroughs or Business Improvement Districts to expand the Freedom Pass to include access to toilet facilities or places to rest
- Create a map and digital app to indicate locations of facilities that can be accessed with the Freedom Pass
 - Create a campaign to raise awareness of the initiative and the issues behind it, encouraging local businesses across the city to participate
 - Establish a programme to deliver public toilets in all town centres, major TfL funded public spaces and transport hubs, including access to toilets in all TfL stations – by exploring the repurposing of redundant ticket offices – and bus interchanges
- 3e** Support people to remain in central and inner London communities as they grow older by:
- Reviewing care services and setting out an action plan to ensure London boroughs, working with health authorities, can provide appropriate care and social support structures for older people living centrally in the city, in their own homes.
 - Ensuring care workers are able to live close to the people who rely on them, through preferential treatment for affordable housing of their own in areas of highest need, and by guaranteeing adequate pay and working conditions.
 - Promoting good neighbour schemes, the use of volunteers (including volunteers from those older people who are fit and have available time) and paid services. This should aim to strengthen networks of social engagement within older people and between generations. Initiatives could potentially link schools to extra care accommodation, to promote this exchange and mutual support.
- 3f** Expand the Mayor’s Land Commission to include the London NHS Estate.
- This will cement a strategic partnership to make best and most effective use of these resources to deliver not only health services but also positive community outcomes.

Acknowledgements

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MDAG provides a combination of external expertise to the Mayor and GLA Group, engaging in thematic reviews, topic exploration, and place-based design reviews – including longer-term involvements in places like Old Oak Common or with programmes such as the ‘Mini Hollands’. It also provides an advocacy role with regard to London and its significant design community.

New London Architecture (NLA) is an independent forum for discussion, debate and information about architecture, planning, development and construction in the capital. Over a series of months, NLA invited representatives from across the built environment to take part in a series of expert roundtables, which helped to shape the agenda for each paper.

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Notes

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