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Lifetime Neighbourhoods

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December 2011
Department for Communities and Local Government

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December 2011

ISBN: 978-1-4098-2973-7

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Acknowledgements

Many people have assisted us through the course of this project.

We would like to thank the members of the Project Advisory Group, and also the members the York Panel. Both groups allowed us to draw on a wide range of knowledge and experience which was invaluable.

We would also like to thank members of the Essex Design Initiative, the London Tenants Federation, and the Newcastle Elders Council.

Many people from a number of organisations, including community and voluntary sector groups, local authorities, and parish councils helped us identify examples of how lifetime neighbourhoods are being developed and taken forward and provided valuable insights and information into different projects. We are grateful for their time and contributions.

Executive summary

Introduction

Due to increasing longevity and falling birth rates, all industrialised and developing nations will see massive and unprecedented demographic changes in the early 21st Century. In the last two decades much consideration has been given in the UK and elsewhere to the implications of the demographic shift and the changes that need to be made to address both the challenges and opportunities of an ageing society, and to ensure that as we grow older we can maintain our independence, enjoy a good quality of life, and take an active role in our communities. For most people the idea of independence is closely associated with the idea of home. As we grow older we are more likely to spend more time at home, and where we live is an important determinant of our well-being. However, it is increasingly recognised that it is not just our homes, but also the neighbourhoods where we live that have a significant role in keeping us well and independent as we grow older.

Recognising the importance of neighbourhood as a determinant of well-being in later life and its crucial role in supporting older people's independence, the Department for Communities and Local Government commissioned the Centre for Housing Policy at the University of York to explore and develop the idea of a 'lifetime neighbourhood', and search out and present examples of how the idea has been taken forward in different parts of the country. The Commission for Rural Communities has also had an input into report.

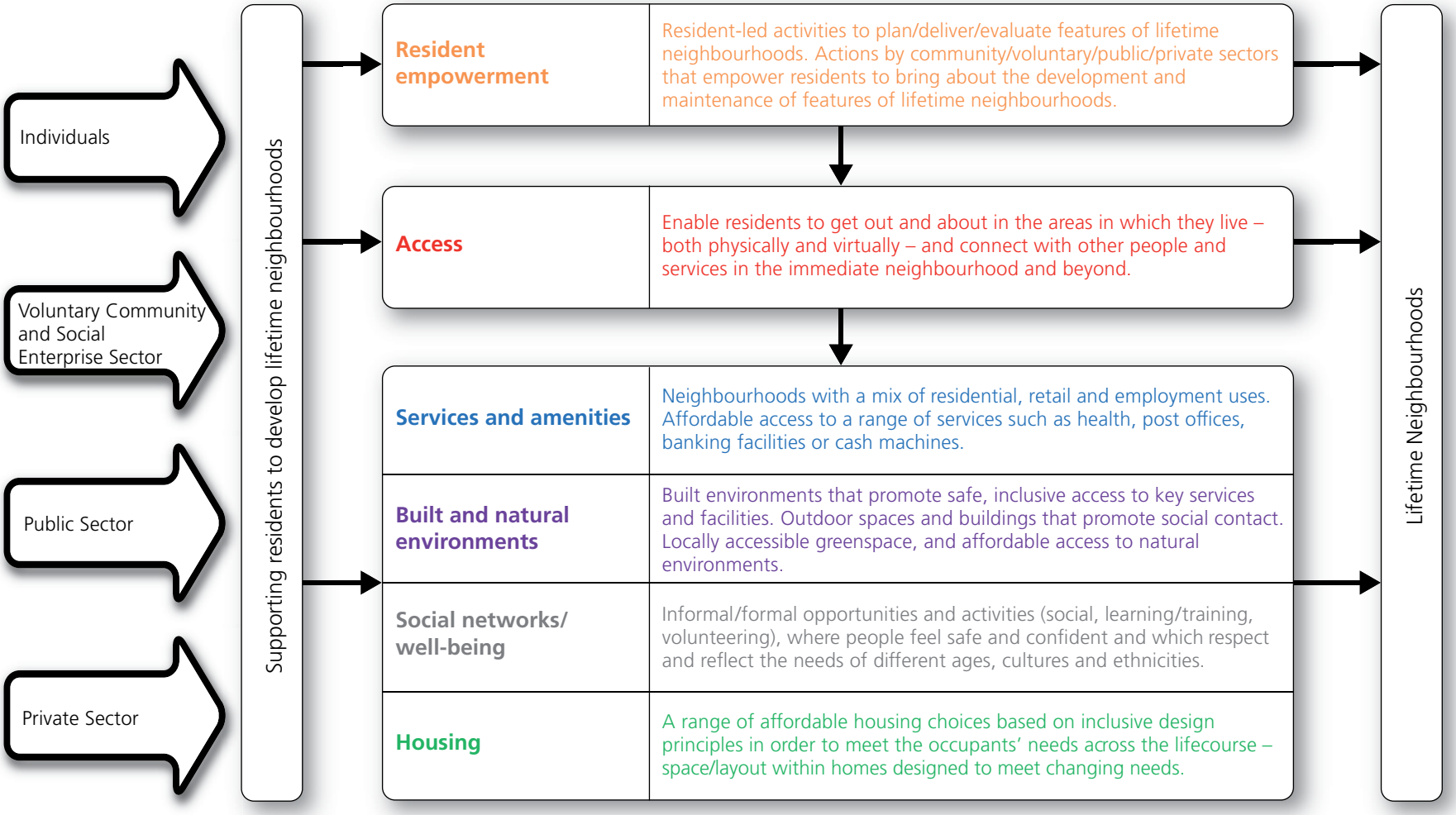
What is a lifetime neighbourhood?

Figure 1 sets out the main components that make up a lifetime neighbourhood, and includes:

- supporting residents to develop lifetime neighbourhoods – especially resident empowerment
- access
- services and amenities
- built and natural environments
- social networks/well-being
- housing.

The main components are summarised in Figure 1, and are also described in more detail in the following pages.

Figure 1: Lifetime Neighbourhoods: Key Components



Supporting residents to develop lifetime neighbourhoods: resident empowerment

How lifetime neighbourhoods are achieved is just as important as what is done to bring about necessary changes. Residents stand at the centre of achieving change within the areas in which they live. While it is not possible to be prescriptive about the specific features of lifetime neighbourhoods that should be developed in all areas, the overarching principle needs to be that of resident empowerment. This involves public sector, private sector, voluntary and community organisations working in such a way that residents of any age are enabled to:

- set out their needs and concerns
- identify priorities for action within their own areas
- work towards bringing about change and delivery themselves, and/or,
- make the case for the range of services that they want others to deliver into their communities.

A key component in assisting resident-led activity to promote lifetime neighbourhood features will be the role of the various tiers of local government. As the first tier of local government, parish and town councils have a crucial role to play in prioritising the design and delivery of lifetime neighbourhood features within their areas. It is important that the skill sets necessary for parish and town councillors to respond to the lifetime neighbourhoods agenda are identified and delivered.

Resident-led activity at neighbourhood level takes place within the wider context of service delivery and planning by a host of agencies, often linked strategically at local authority level. There are also examples of positive approaches that local authorities have taken to put in place the strategic frameworks necessary to drive the development of lifetime neighbourhoods, in terms of:

- listening and responding to the aspirations and needs of residents
- the inclusive design of outdoor spaces
- configuring services to respond to an ageing society.

Access

Access encompasses the various ways in which people can get out and about around the areas in which they live – both physically and virtually – and connect with other people and services in their immediate neighbourhood and beyond. The connections between different places are as important as the design and accessibility of places themselves. Forward-thinking inclusive design features at one point in someone's journey may be rendered useless by poor design somewhere else.

Information and advice

The provision of access to information and advice comprises an essential role for agencies and organisations in making it easy for people to get out and about. This role encompasses not only the dissemination of practical information across as wide a spectrum of residents as possible, but also helping to break down misperceptions about neighbourhoods, such as fear of crime.

Creating walkable environments

A crucial aspect of access relates to the extent to which neighbourhoods can be described as walkable. That is, the ease with which pedestrians can get out and about around outdoor spaces, services and facilities, which has significant implications for sociability, health and well-being. Walkable environments consider not only the physical design of routes, but also features and facilities that are inclusive of the widest possible range of needs; for example, places for people to rest along their journeys, including well designed seats and benches, accessible toilet facilities, signage and street design that is sensitive to a range of needs and that can help with orientation and wayfinding.

Transport

A key objective for lifetime neighbourhoods is sustaining a diverse range of methods of transportation that enable people to get around, especially by using public transport, or by other means if they cannot use this type of service. Demand- responsive services are an important feature, enabling accessibility in neighbourhoods and across wider areas. A key role that local authorities can play in developing innovative and effective transport solutions as part of their planning function will be to plan services that can respond to future demographic change.

Services and amenities

Neighbourhoods that offer a mix of residential, retail and employment uses can help to meet the needs of diverse groups within the community. Although this is an ambitious aspiration, this feature of lifetime neighbourhoods has the potential to enable local authorities and residents to meet a range of parallel objectives such as striving towards sustainability and helping to reduce negative impacts on the environment.

Vibrant services within neighbourhoods

A crucial element shaping this aspect of the lifetime neighbourhood agenda is the role of the business community – including social enterprise. Furthermore, local authorities are in a strong position to work in partnership with the local business sector, voluntary

sector, community groups and residents to strive towards local retail and service provision in both urban and rural areas alike. Vibrant services embedded within neighbourhoods can contribute to how an age-friendly neighbourhood might look in the following ways: local access to shops; accessibility within shops; the range of products available within neighbourhoods (such as access to fresh food); contributing to sociable spaces within neighbourhood, and also volunteering and employment. Further, health interventions within communities are an important aspect of working towards lifetime neighbourhoods. Partnerships between local authorities, health, voluntary and community sectors to join up service and break down barriers can bring about better locally delivered services.

Built and natural environments

Working towards built and natural environments that are inclusive of as wide an audience as possible is not just about a fundamental equalities issue. Outdoor spaces that work well for people have the potential for benefits in terms of sociability, health and well-being. Although a range of guidance already exists that promotes sound design principles into new build, one consideration is the extent to which current guidance takes sufficient account of the implications of a larger number of older people in future decades. Further, a significant issue is how existing environments may need to be retrofitted to accommodate a growing older population, leading to the following key issues:

- how will new developments incorporate lifetime neighbourhood objectives into masterplanning
- retrofitting the current built environment, including the potential of regeneration and renewal, and
- adequate maintenance of the existing infrastructure.

Greenspace

Greenspace encompasses all open spaces, including natural greenspace, parks and gardens, allotments and community gardens, as well as street greenery and planting. The importance of greenspace for health and well-being cannot be underestimated and is an essential component of lifetime neighbourhoods.

Social networks

As well as enabling residents to meet their daily needs, the inclusive design of physical features of neighbourhoods provides the essential backdrop to enable people to develop their social networks and participate as active citizens in their communities. Social networks enhance the way in which individuals are able to engage with their neighbourhoods and beyond, linking in to different groups, activities and facilities that are available.

The practice of developing lifetime neighbourhoods, therefore, includes not only a consideration of physical design, but also developing an understanding of the social factors and events that promote active participation in community life. This theme links closely with social well-being, especially around addressing the lack of confidence that individuals and groups may feel about making full and active use of outdoor spaces around their homes due to fear of crime and anti social behaviour. However, developing lifetime neighbourhoods also aims to address the physical and social isolation that can inhibit the choices that residents make about how they engage with their neighbourhoods.

Isolation is often associated with later life, but the impact of this issue on all age groups needs to be factored in to any actions by agencies and organisations. Initiatives to promote social well-being can include: inter-generational projects; good neighbour schemes; transport and access projects (since these promote social contact, as well as providing accessibility); projects that address fear of crime, as well as target hardening, and security-conscious design features.

Housing

Wherever we live as we grow older – whether in ordinary housing or specialist housing – our homes have a powerful influence on our capacity to remain independent, socially involved and enjoy a good quality of life. As noted elsewhere, the housing needs and aspirations of older people have been the focus of much research and investigation. A number of consistent messages have emerged. The majority of people would prefer to remain in their own homes as they grow older, and where possible make changes and adaptations to their properties should their needs change. Research has also shown that those people who chose to move to housing schemes especially for older people that offer care and support in their own homes express high levels of satisfaction with their homes. Key to these expressions of satisfaction is the combination of independence and security – the knowledge that help is at hand if and when people's circumstances change.

Looking forward to lifetime neighbourhoods

A key role for practitioners is in facilitating a consideration of the responses necessary within neighbourhoods to address the long term implications of a growing older population. Planning for neighbourhood change might revolve around *engagement* with residents over individual services or more holistic, place based design of neighbourhoods and services. More fundamentally, practitioners have an important role in resident *empowerment,* and also in providing information about projected population change within neighbourhoods to assist residents in thinking about how neighbourhoods and service delivery may need to be configured into the future.

In this respect, resident empowerment will be an essential process as part of fostering lifetime neighbourhoods, to enable individuals and communities to set their own priorities and agendas in order to bring about change in the area where they live, either by their own actions or by working with providers and commissioners to get the services that they need. There are a range of evaluation tools from other countries, especially the USA and Canada. In the UK, there are also a number of examples where audits of neighbourhoods, and specific features of neighbourhoods have taken place, as a way of helping to assess 'age friendliness', and how well neighbourhoods work for people.

While pre-existing tools and resources are useful, all neighbourhoods will be different, and each will be starting from a unique point. There is an imperative to consider the lifetime neighbourhoods agenda in many rural localities since the implications of a growing older population are already becoming apparent, and will continue to do so more rapidly than in urban communities. Whilst the broad principles that underpin lifetime neighbourhoods are similar for any area, the practical outcomes in terms of priorities and emphases will look very different both between rural, suburban, inner city and town or city centres, as well as within different types of rural area.

Nevertheless, there remain real challenges for residents and practitioners who aim to develop lifetime neighbourhoods, including overcoming limited awareness of the implications of demographic change, as well as the potential for neighbourhood design and service delivery to be more inclusive, as well as severe resource constraints to taking this agenda forwards.

This summary has set out a number of principles and themes for achieving lifetime neighbourhoods. The issues that residents currently face in terms of the design of their neighbourhoods and the range of services and facilities available vary hugely. The priorities that communities decide upon in order to meet the challenges and opportunities of the coming decades will necessarily be diverse. Furthermore, there is already a huge range of individuals, groups and organisations undertaking projects that help to meet lifetime neighbourhood objectives. We would urge communities, service providers and tiers of government to celebrate this diversity, and to encourage residents to articulate their visions and share ideas and innovation at local level, and more widely.

Chapter 1

Introduction

Due to increasing longevity and falling birth rates, all industrialised and developing nations will see massive and unprecedented demographic changes in the early 21st century. In the last two decades much consideration has been given in the UK and elsewhere to the implications of the demographic shift and the changes that need to be made to address both the challenges and opportunities of an ageing society, and to ensure that as we grow older we can maintain our independence, enjoy a good quality of life, and take an active role in our communities. For most people the idea of independence is closely associated with the idea of home. As we grow older we are more likely to spend more time at home, and where we live is an important determinant of our well-being. However, it is increasingly recognised that it is not just the homes, but also the neighbourhoods where we live that have a significant role in keeping us well and independent as we grow older.

Ideas of home and later life, and the housing aspirations of older people have been widely researched, however much less is understood about how neighbourhoods can or should change to meet the needs of older people. Research on neighbourhoods has tended to focus on issues about regeneration, and sustainability (see for example, Robertson *et al*, 2008) with little attention specifically given to how neighbourhoods will accommodate an increasingly older population. There is also some evidence that different age groups or groups of interest have different and sometimes conflicting ideas about what is a 'successful' neighbourhood. While there are various tools and guidance to assist with the design and planning of new neighbourhoods the majority of older people will live in existing neighbourhoods, and less is understood about how best to reshape existing neighbourhoods whether these are in urban, suburban or rural locations.

Recognising the importance of neighbourhood as a determinant of well-being in later life and its crucial role in supporting older people's independence, the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and the Commission for Rural Communities commissioned the Centre for Housing Policy at the University of York to explore and develop the idea of a 'lifetime neighbourhood', and search out and present examples of how the idea has been taken forward. The intention is to promote understanding of the need to be planning ahead at a local level for the demographic changes, and to offer ideas and examples that will prompt thinking and help generate ideas.

The Coalition Government made a commitment to radically reform the planning system to give neighbourhoods far greater ability to determine the shape of the places in which their inhabitants live, based on the principles set out in Open Source Planning[1]. These principles

[1] http://www.conservatives.com/~/media/Files/Green%20Papers/planning-green-paper.ashx

include local people specifying what kind of development and use of land they want to see in there area. Details of the proposals to give neighbourhoods more power to influence the planning and development of their areas have been set out in the Localism Bill: **www.communities.gov.uk/localgovernment/decentralisation/localismbill/**

Therefore, in designing neighbourhoods a wide range of planning issues need to be balanced in order to plan and deliver a 'lifetime neighbourhood' that can meet the needs of all sections of a community now and in the future. These include the importance of inclusive design, convenient access by different transport modes, sustainable construction, energy generation, access to a range of employment, leisure and education opportunities, and creating neighbourhoods that have social well-being and social capital at their heart.

In preparing this report we have examined the international literature that has explored how neighbourhoods can better address the needs of an ageing society, and sought case studies[2] and practice examples from the UK that will demonstrate how some of the key principles of lifetime neighbourhoods are understood, and are being taken forward. We have also talked to various neighbourhood groups and organisations about their priorities for their neighbourhoods, what they think should change, and – importantly – what they value and feel should be maintained. In the following chapters a number of key questions are addressed.

- Why should there be investment in lifetime neighbourhoods? (Chapter 2)
- What are the principal components of a lifetime neighbourhood? (Chapter 3)
- How are lifetime neighbourhoods being developed and what lessons and ideas can be taken forward? (Chapters 4-9).

All neighbourhoods will be different in terms of their demographic and socio-economic profile, as well as in terms of existing infrastructure, and ease of access to resources and facilities in other neighbourhoods and city centres. While a number of key concepts of a lifetime neighbourhood have already been identified, they will play out in different ways in different places. Different organisations and groups will have greater or lesser roles in developing lifetime neighbourhoods depending on the local priorities and needs of their communities. Thus, there can be no standard blue print for a lifetime neighbourhood. The intention is to raise awareness of the crucial role neighbourhoods will have in supporting growing numbers of older people to enjoy a good quality of life, to clarify the concept of lifetime neighbourhoods, and provide practical advice and examples for residents, local service commissioners, planners and providers to facilitate the achievement of lifetime neighbourhoods. With this in mind, the report also draws upon practice examples in a range of different urban and rural contexts, in order to highlight the way in which features of lifetime neighbourhoods are being tackled in these diverse areas.

[2] The fieldwork for this report was carried out during June 2010. As such the authors cannot comment on any changes in localities that may have taken place since then.

Chapter 2

Why should there be investment in Lifetime Neighbourhoods?

The first and most compelling argument for lifetime neighbourhoods is that of the incipient demographic changes. In 2008, there were 1.3 million people in the UK aged 85 and over. This number is projected to increase to 3.3 million by 2033, more than doubling over twenty-five years. Between 2008 and 2033 the number of people aged 90 and above is projected to more than triple, whilst the number of people aged 95 and over is projected to more than quadruple. In comparison, the projected increase in the number of people of all ages between 2008 and 2033 is 16.6 per cent (Office of National Statistics, 2009)[3].

Although many people enjoy good physical and mental health well into later life, others do not. Problems with mobility, vision and memory can not only limit people's capacity to live independently in their own homes, but also limit the ways in which they can take part in social activities, access services and facilities in their neighbourhoods, and play an active role in their communities. However, there are many ways homes can be changed and adapted, and we need to think in similar ways about neighbourhoods, and how they can be made to enable rather than disable people with a range of impairments.

Age related disability is likely to become more prevalent as the population ages:

- the number of disabled older people is projected to double from approximately 2.3 million in 2002 to approximately 4.6 million in 2041
- based on current prevalence rates, the number of older people with dementia could rise from 684,000 to 1.7 million by 2051, an increase of 154 per cent
- the number of older people registered blind or partially sighted is estimated to rise from 789,000 to 1,178,000 by 2025.

Source: Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods (DCLG, 2008)

We also need to consider the ways in which the design of neighbourhoods and neighbourhood services can encourage social inclusion and prevent the social isolation of older people. For many older people, a 'good old age' is as much about maintaining meaningful relationships and contributing to the community, as it is about staying physically well (see for example, Godfrey *et al*, 2004).It is estimated that about 20 per cent of the older population is mildly lonely, and a further 8-10 per cent is intensely lonely

[3] *Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods* (CLG, 2008) sets out in detail the size and implications of the demographic changes.

(Victor, 2011). Intense loneliness is associated with people who experienced divorce or the death of a partner, those living along, people confronted by poor health, and those living in deprived areas (De Jong Gierveld *et al*, 2011).

Local responses need to be shaped not just to meet the future needs of communities and individuals both young and old, but to allow everyone regardless of age to contribute to their communities. Local areas need to recognise and understand the requirements and challenges for their communities and decide what works best for them locally. Indeed, there is increasingly an expectation from central government that individuals will take on this role, and may be given greater opportunities to do so see: **www.communities.gov.uk/localgovernment/decentralisation/localismbill/)**

In terms of striving for neighbourhoods that work well for people of any age an important consideration, therefore, is the extent to which the main players at local level – especially residents – appreciate the implications of demographic change and what this may mean for the areas in which they live. Furthermore, work by the Audit Commission (2008) suggested that many local authorities were not sufficiently prepared to meet the challenges of the demographic changes, and will experience considerable financial difficulties in meeting future needs (Audit Commission, 2010).

Data sources to assess demographic change at local level:

- The Office of National Statistics provide an interactive mapping tool – Ageing in the UK – to enable the analysis of the age structure and projections at local level: **www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/HTMLDocs/dvc5/agemap.html**
- A further resource for analysing projections at local level is the Projecting Older People Population Information System (POPPI): **www.poppi.org.uk/**
- This resource also enables a range of possible impacts of health conditions to be projected at local level for people aged 65 and over. Information on adults aged 18-64 is available via **www.pansi.org.uk**

Promoting independence and enhancing quality of life

A key message of current policy and thinking, both in the UK and elsewhere, is that of supporting independence and social inclusion and promoting the well-being of older people. Investment in a range of services, not just health and social care, but also in the social, physical and built environment, that enable and prolong an active and independent later life should reap benefits in the future with regard to reducing demand on health and social care (Chartered Institute of Housing 2009).

There is a growing evidence base that highlights the positive (and negative) impacts of different aspects of neighbourhood on general health and well-being. These effects appear to be particularly amplified for older people (see for example, Day, 2008; Croucher and Myers, 2008; Croucher and Myers, 2006; Rowles, 1978). Gentle exercise, such as walking and cycling, is most often undertaken in public spaces, and has considerable health benefits.

Green spaces are of crucial importance as spaces for exercise, play, de-stresssing, and social engagement. Fear of crime and social isolation have negative impacts on health and well-being. Gilroy (2008) has recently reviewed research on the quality of life of older people. Older people cite a number of key elements that contribute to their quality of life – notably health, income, social networks, community participation, information, activities, home, neighbourhood, and mobility. Of these, Gilroy argues the most important are home, neighbourhood and mobility. Older people spend more time at home than virtually all other age groups, they depend to a greater extent than younger people on the various resources available to them locally. Environments – both domestic and public – that do not take account of ageing and create environmental pressures confine older people and limit their capacity to live both independently, and interdependently, and enjoy a good quality of life. Similarly, facilitating the mobility of older people allows them to get out, access services, and reduces social isolation and offers opportunities for exercise.

As Gilroy notes, while the arguments for lifetime neighbourhoods can be made on economic grounds, they can also be made on the basis of social inclusion and equity.

Perhaps the main message is that the 'do nothing' option is not viable, and that preparations need to be made now at neighbourhood level to meet the challenges of the coming decades. However, in many areas 'lifetime neighbourhoods' are already a reality, although they may not be described (or even recognised) as such. While in some cases additional investment may be required, in others residents may already perceive their neighbourhoods as being a 'lifetime' neighbourhood. Another message to support the development of lifetime neighbourhoods is that in some cases little or no change or investment will be required.

Chapter 3

What is a 'lifetime neighbourhood' and what are the principal components?

In the last decade various publications, particularly from North America, have started to explore how the physical environment can best support growing numbers of older people and allow them to age in place, using terminology such as 'elder-friendly', 'age-friendly', 'liveable community', and so forth. In addition there is a large and growing literature that addresses issues of community, social capital, and the impact of the built environment on human health.

A review by Alley *et al* (2007) presents an analysis of the North American literature on elder friendly communities, as well as the results of a Delphi study identifying the most important characteristics of an elder-friendly community from the perspective of practitioners. The authors note the lack of a uniform definition, but highlight the general understanding that an elder-friendly community usually refers to a place,

> *'where older people are actively involved, valued, and supported with infrastructure and services that effectively accommodate their needs…. An elder-friendly community can moderate the demands of the environment and bring them in line with older individuals' strengths and deficits.'*
>
> (Alley *et al*, p4, 2007)

The review identifies a small number of studies that have attempted to document neighbourhood characteristics that older people value (including work by the American Association of Retired Persons, the City of Calgary, the North Western Illinois Area Agency on Aging, and the Centre for Home Care Policy and Research).

There were common elements across these studies: transportation, housing, health care, safety, and respect for older members of the community, as well as financial security and advice on financial matters, and an active social environment that allowed people to stay active through formal and informal social networks. Different groups, however, placed different emphasis on different elements. Alley *et al* identify two general themes: *age-based community* issues which focus on those programmes and services specifically aimed at older people, and *age-related community* issues that address issues relevant to the wider community or specific subgroups, such as disabled residents or children and are likely to be important to all community residents regardless of age.

The authors note that age-related community issues are more likely to require the engagement of a bigger group of key players, rather than simply those engaged with the provision of services for older people. They also note that studies highlighted the importance of both the social and built environment and the relationship between the two. Along with other authors they highlight the need for such endeavours to be multi-disciplinary and community driven (see for example, Scarfo, 2009).

The guidance on age-friendly cities by the World Health Organisation has also highlighted both physical and social aspects of urban environments that particularly impact on the lives of older people. The guidance embraces a wider set of themes or components of an age-friendly city than those identified in much of the earlier literature (World Health Organisation, 2007). These include:

- the built environment and outdoor spaces
- transportation
- housing
- social inclusion
- respect and social isolation
- civic participation and employment
- communication and information, and
- community support and health services.

The work by the World Health Organisation seems to have promoted a greater interest in how local communities can and should be shaped to support older people, but moving on from the idea of the age-friendly city towards ideas about local services and infrastructure that impact on the daily lives of residents in different types of area. For example, in Japan the University of Tokyo is working on a number of neighbourhood design projects that are intended to assist with the creation of communities that work well for older people: **www.iog.u-tokyo.ac.jp/research/kasiwasi-e.html**

The discussion paper, *Towards Lifetime Neighbourhoods: Designing Sustainable Communities for All* (Harding, 2007), one of a number of documents supporting the strategy Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods presents a definition of a lifetime neighbourhood, linking the idea to that of the Lifetime Homes Standard:

> *'Those* [neighbourhoods] *which offer everyone the best possible chance of health, well-being, and social, economic and civic engagement regardless of age. They provide the built environment, social spaces that allow us to pursue our own ambitions for a high quality of life. They do not exclude us as we age, nor as we become frail and disabled.'*
>
> (Harding, 2007)

Harding also presents ideas about what the components of a lifetime neighbourhood (as opposed to a city) might be. These components include:

- the built environment
- housing, access to services
- a sense of place
- social capital
- cross-sectoral engagement and planning
- intergenerational or shared site usage, and
- the use of information technology.

Responding to this publication, and the work of the World Health Organisation, other organisations have highlighted the need for neighbourhoods and neighbourhood services to be better structured to support the independence and well-being of older people (see for example, Help the Aged, 2009; Help the Aged, 2008; Counsel and Care, 2009). Again, similar themes emerge: transport, safety and security, accessible amenities and facilities, a built environment that takes account of the needs of older (and disabled) people; housing; and information.

Some local authorities have already made significant progress in thinking about the future needs of an older population, taking forward the concepts of lifetime neighbourhoods or age-friendly cities, and reflecting on how services and environments can change. Some notable examples include:

- Manchester City Council's *Quality of Life Strategy* (MCC, 2004), and subsequent strategy *Manchester: A Great Place to Grow Older 2010 – 2020* (Manchester City Council, 2009)
- work undertaken in Newcastle by the Newcastle Elders Council to create an age-friendly city and neighbourhoods **www.elderscouncil.org.uk/publications/**
  - Age-friendly Neighbourhoods Study: **www.ncl.ac.uk/apl/assets/documents/CowgateCreatingOlderPersonFriendlyNeighbourhoods2009.pdf**

    www.ncl.ac.uk/apl/assets/documents/CreatingOlderPersonFriendlyNeighbourhoodsJesmond.pdf
- the Greater London Authority *Valuing Older People Strategy* (GLA, 2006). **http://legacy.london.gov.uk/mayor/strategies/older_people/docs/ops.pdf**

Although these initiatives involve a wide range of agencies, consultation with older people is the first fundamental step. They set out a range of services and measures that will enhance the quality of life of older people, and embrace many of the concepts of lifetime neighbourhoods. Many other local authorities' older people's strategies have addressed at least some elements of lifetime neighbourhoods.

Most recently the Northern Housing Consortium has developed a guide to age-friendly communities in the North of England (Northern Housing Consortium, 2010). Drawing upon engagement with people of all ages, the Consortium identified a range of themes for practitioners to consider in the development of age-friendly communities:

- approach
- health
- navigation
- access
- safety
- seating and street furniture
- ideas and aspirations.

Regarding the conceptualisation of lifetime neighbourhoods, it is perhaps worth reflecting that the changing demography will affect all age groups. While clearly there are policy drivers to support and maintain older people's independence, it is important not to lose sight of the need and potential for lifetime neighbourhoods to address both individual changing needs throughout life and the different needs and aspirations of various groups across the life course, including those of children and young people, and to acknowledge that there may be tensions around the needs of different groups of residents. Despite these tensions, however, many of the principles of a lifetime neighbourhood can benefit many different groups – including younger disabled people, families, and children.

As noted above, lifetime neighbourhoods have been conceptualised in various but often similar ways, and there are many parallels between lifetime neighbourhoods and ideas of sustainable communities. All neighbourhoods will be different in terms of demographic and socio-economic profile, as well as in terms of existing infrastructure, and ease of access to resources and facilities in other neighbourhoods and city centres. Some neighbourhoods could already be described as lifetime neighbourhoods, or already be well on the way to being a lifetime neighbourhood.

Figure 3.1 sets out the main components that make up a lifetime neighbourhood, and includes:

- supporting residents to develop lifetime neighbourhoods – especially resident empowerment
- access
- services and amenities
- built and natural environments
- social networks/well-being
- housing.

A key theme that stands at the heart of the diagram is resident empowerment, which can be supported by the way in which agencies and organisations work with residents.

The second key component of a lifetime neighbourhood is that of access, which must be understood as multi-faceted, encompassing: different types of transport; physical infrastructure that facilitates walking, mobility, and orientation within a neighbourhood; information about services and resources; and communication systems that allow people to connect with others in their neighbourhood and beyond.

The next four elements of the matrix comprise the aspects of neighbourhoods that enhance well-being and – for older people particularly – facilitate independence:

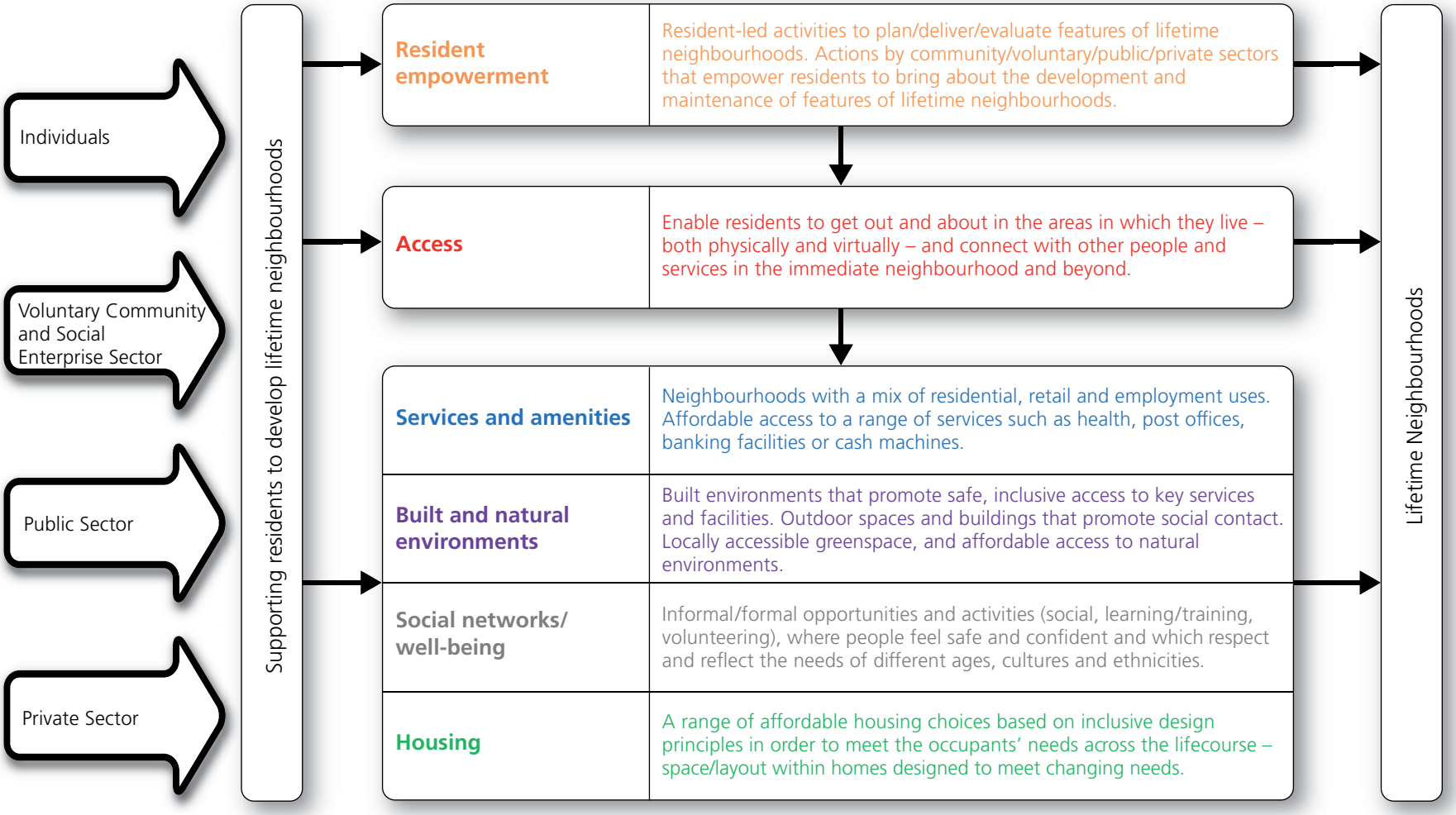
- a range of services and amenities including health and social care but also leisure, education, retail and financial services
- the wider built environment and public spaces particularly green spaces
- mechanisms and facilities that promote social networks and well-being, such as measures to address crime and anti-social behaviour, promote intergenerational dialogue and activities, as well as opportunities for volunteering, work, and other community involvement
- appropriate housing and housing-related services.

These components are explored more fully in subsequent chapters using a range of case studies and practice examples showing how different organisations, agencies and residents have developed particular elements of a lifetime neighbourhood in a range of different locations. While many of these projects were not always conceived as being part of the development of a lifetime neighbourhood, they do nevertheless contribute to making places that better address the needs of an ageing population. As far as possible we have highlighted links to other resources and organisations.

At the end of each subsequent chapter we have included a summary resource for residents and practitioners to use in assisting in the development of lifetime neighbourhoods, highlighting key features and also practice examples. The resources and examples listed are not exhaustive by any means, and are intended to illustrate the type of activities that are taking place.

While these themes and concepts are the building blocks for taking forward the idea of a lifetime neighbourhood, how they are taken forward and how neighbourhoods change will be the task of local communities and residents, assisted by local authorities, service planners and providers. In the final chapter we suggest the types of questions that residents, planners and service providers need to address.

Figure 3.1 Lifetime Neighbourhoods: Key Components



Chapter 4

Residents as active participants

Introduction

How lifetime neighbourhoods are achieved is just as important as what is done to bring about necessary changes.

An emphasis on process draws attention to the way that residents themselves can bring about change within the areas in which they live. It is not possible to be prescriptive about the specific features of lifetime neighbourhoods that should be developed in all areas. Residents, however, should be enabled to influence local decisions by working with statutory, voluntary and community bodies to identify priorities for action within their own areas.

In this chapter we look at examples of how residents in some neighbourhoods have already begun to develop their own thinking about lifetime neighbourhoods, and then consider the potential roles of parish councils and local authorities in enabling residents to effectively plan and deliver change, as well as providing a strategic overview at local level. A summary matrix is presented at the end of the chapter.

Resident-led planning for lifetime neighbourhoods

There are a range of examples from across the country that illustrate the ways in which residents are getting involved in highlighting the features of lifetime neighbourhoods that they would like to see in the areas in which they live. The following examples are drawn from urban and rural areas, and also relate to a variety of scales – from a resident-led strategic focus across London, to single issue activities based around a few streets.

Eastleigh Southern Parishes Older People's Forum

The work by the Eastleigh Southern Parishes Older People's Forum offers an example of one approach that residents can use to focus on the needs of older people within their area. In particular, it illustrates a method of focusing thinking at local level about the range and type of issues that go into making up an 'age-friendly neighbourhood' and that could be incorporated into community-led planning approaches such as parish plans.

This forum undertook the development of an action plan to reflect the issues, concerns and aspirations of older people within their area, and to produce an action plan to promote the development of age-friendly communities.

The development of the age-friendly action plan drew upon the World Health Organisation checklist, linked also with the Audit Commission's work on the dimensions of independence for older people (see Audit Commission, 2004).

A copy of the action plan and further information can be found at:
www.espopf.org/

The Forum has also undertaken work to highlight the needs of residents on specific issues such as transport (ESPOPF, 2006a), especially access to hospitals (ESPOPF, 2006b).

A significant finding from the work by the Eastleigh Southern Parishes Older People's Forum was that there were already many features in place within their area that this group felt supported age-friendly neighbourhoods. A key role in undertaking audits of neighbourhoods is not just to assess what might need to change, but also to value features that need to be supported and maintained into the future.

Other examples of resident-led approaches at the level of individual neighbourhoods point towards the kinds of activities that communities can engage in to help bring about age-friendly features in the areas where they live, often with a focus on single issues.

A popular approach both in this country and internationally has been the development of checklists for residents to assess and prioritise action within their areas to focus attention on the development of age-friendly features (see for example, Age Cymru's Community Calculator: **www.ageuk.org.uk/PageFiles/5748/Community%20Calculator%20English%20FINAL.pdf**

Cynru's Community Calculator was developed as part of the Help the Aged campaign for lifetime communities: *Towards Common Ground* (Help the Aged, 2008).

However, as the two examples below – Gospel Oak Older People's Network and London's Tenants' Federation – show, these are not the only methods available to residents. Both case examples also reinforce the argument that lifetime neighbourhoods are about shaping places for people of all ages.

The example of the London Tenants Federation also raises an important distinction between resident engagement and resident empowerment. Engagement tends to focus upon consultation mechanisms around existing services, or planned developments and services where the range of options available have already been set out by practitioners, and also the range of issues that residents can discuss has already been pre-determined. Empowerment refers to processes that assist residents to set out their needs and concerns, and either work towards bringing about change and delivery themselves, or making a case for the range of services that they want others to deliver into their communities.

Gospel Oak Older People's Network

London Borough of Camden used cameras to record an inspection of the streets in their area in order to lobby the council to improve accessibility for older people in this area (Gospel Oak Older People's Network, 2008). Other work they have engaged in has been a report on reducing social isolation amongst older people within their area of Camden.

However, the use of cameras has been promoted not only in relation to improving neighbourhood features for older people. Recent research in Canada has also explored the use of digital cameras as a means for children to highlight the features of their neighbourhood that are of most significance for them as they undertake walks of the areas where they live.

(Loebach and Gilliland, 2010).

London Tenants' Federation

The London Tenants' Federation have developed their own definition of lifetime neighbourhoods. The Federation's definition reflects a concern that large developments in London have not embraced the range of social and infrastructure needs that communities require at neighbourhood level. The definition built upon earlier work by the Federation on defining sustainable communities, which emphasises the close parallels between the two agendas, and that neighbourhoods which are developed with sustainable outcomes in mind will also tend to meet objectives in relation to lifetime neighbourhoods. There are three priority areas that the Federation identified, along with a summary of their definition:

'All Londoners should have the opportunity to enjoy a good quality environment in an active and supportive local community. Ensuring this means planning for lifetime neighbourhoods in which communities are empowered and in which local shops, social and community facilities, streets, parks and open spaces, local services, decent homes and public transport are affordable and accessible to everyone now and for future generations'.

Priority areas:

- Communal spaces, facilities, services and activities – well run, accessible, affordable and relevant to all
- Homes that meet our needs
- Good consultation, democratic accountability and empowerment of communities.

A full copy of the definition may be found at:
ucljustspace.wordpress.com/2007-just-space-briefings/lifetime-neighbourhoods-2008/

The example below – Action for Communities in Rural England's Community Led Planning toolkit – illustrates a practical approach to resident empowerment. Other resources also offer a starting point for residents in terms of community planning, for example, the Community Development Foundation (**www.cdf.org.uk/web/guest**), and Participation Resource Centre (**www.pnet.ids.ac.uk/index.htm**).

These generic mechanisms for self help and community planning are well established and could readily incorporate a consideration of planning for Lifetime Neighbourhoods. However, there is an important role for organisations such as Action for Communities in Rural England in raising awareness of the potential for community-led planning processes to factor in a consideration of long-term demographic change, and also lifetime neighbourhood features.

Although the examples above illustrate how residents can take the initiative with regard to working towards lifetime neighbourhood objectives, a key challenge remains in linking resident-led activity with local governance structures and service delivery. Local political or service delivery structures may not always be receptive to resident-led developments that sit outside their own mechanisms for resident engagement. Nevertheless, there is a large range of examples where practitioners work closely with residents in terms of planning and delivery of services (see, for instance, the Ageing Well programme, which has a range of tools, practice examples and events for promoting neighbourhood change: **www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageId=20344655**

Existing and emerging generic guidance also helps to provide a wider strategic context which can assist communities in meeting lifetime neighbourhood objectives:

- guidance to be published by Action for Communities in Rural England in 2011 will highlight how local authorities can make the most of community led planning: **www.acre.org.uk/our-work/community-led-planning/Resources**
- The Young Foundation has developed a resource for developing new communities that emphasises working between a range of practitioners and residents: **www.futurecommunities.net/**

Community Led Planning by Action for Communities in Rural England

Guidance produced by Action for Communities in Rural England structures community -led planning so it is an inclusive process and results in an action plan that can address a range of issues relating to the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of the community. A step-by-step guide for communities is available that can involve all sections of the community and covers all matters that affect their quality of life in a local area, particularly those that need most support. The process results in an action plan which identifies:

- actions the community can take forward itself
- actions that need external support to achieve
- actions that require external influence over long term statutory plans.

For further information see:
www.acre.org.uk/our-work/community-led-planning

Parish and town councils

A key component in assisting resident-led activity to promote lifetime neighbourhood features will be the facilitation role of the various tiers of local government. As the first tier of local government, Parish and town councils have a crucial role to play in prioritising the

design and delivery of lifetime neighbourhood features within their areas. The grassroots links between parish and town councils and the communities they serve (Newman, 2005) means that they are well placed to undertake a range of activities that can contribute towards the development of lifetime neighbourhoods, including:

- community led planning and the development of parish plans
- direct service delivery
- funding of design features that can contribute to lifetime neighbourhoods either directly through the precept or levering in funding from external sources
- working in partnership with other parish and town councils, other tiers of local government and voluntary and community sectors.

The potential role of parish and town councils in relation to lifetime neighbourhoods is reflected in the range of services that local councils can provide, maintain or contribute towards:

- allotments
- bus shelters
- car parks
- community centres
- community safety schemes
- community transport schemes
- crime reduction measures
- cycle paths
- festivals and celebrations
- leisure facilities
- litter bins
- local illuminations
- local youth projects
- parks and open spaces
- planning
- public lavatories
- street cleaning
- street lighting
- tourism activities
- traffic calming measures.

Indeed, parish and town councils are already undertaking a considerable range of activities that help to promote lifetime neighbourhoods, including services that enable older people to take full advantage of the areas in which they live. Nevertheless, maximising the potential of parish and town councils is also about developing the range of skill sets necessary to take forward the lifetime neighbourhoods agenda as part of their community planning and service delivery functions. Current research with parish and town councils suggests some support at this level for training with regard to achieving sustainable development in Cornwall (Borne, 2009).

Consideration also needs to be given to develop the skills and knowledge required to take forward the lifetime neighbourhoods agenda at parish and town council level including:

- an awareness of the implications of projected demographic changes within their area
- future proofing new housing, infrastructure and services to incorporate inclusive design principles, or where existing infrastructure can be redeveloped or retro-fitted
- working with other partners to coordinate activities and developments that promote the achievement of lifetime neighbourhoods through mechanisms such as community-led planning.

As with community led planning approaches, emerging generic guidance for parish and town councils provides an important context for achieving lifetime neighbourhood objectives:

- Organisations such as the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) are an important source of practical guidance and information that address devolved community representation and service delivery functions at local level. The Commission for Rural Communities has also provided research and guidance that cover practical aspects of delivering localism such as participative budgeting and parish clustering: **http://crc.staging.headshift.com/2010/02/18/participatory-budgeting/** (Commission for Rural Communities, 2009)
- Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment have emphasised the greater role that communities can play in shaping and delivering quality public spaces as part of the localism agenda (CABE, 2006). As part of this role, the Commission have also helpfully set out guidance for communities and smaller councils to develop quality public spaces (CABE, 2007) and published a useful case study report on designing for an ageing population (CABE, 2009).

Planning and delivering change through local authorities

Resident-led activity at neighbourhood level takes place within the wider context of service delivery and planning by a host of agencies, often linked strategically at local authority level. The support provided by Newcastle City Council to the Newcastle Elders Forum

provides an illustration of the way that resident activity can link into, and be supported by, local authorities. This section focuses upon the positive approaches that local authorities have taken to put in place the strategic frameworks necessary to drive the development of lifetime neighbourhoods, in terms of:

- listening and responding to the aspirations and needs of residents
- the inclusive design of outdoor spaces
- configuring services to respond to an ageing society.

Listening and responding to the aspirations and needs of residents has been central to the approaches that local authorities have taken to strive towards age-friendly neighbourhoods, reflected in the examples shown below. A number of resources are also available to practitioners with respect to listening and responding to the needs of residents. See for example:

- People and Participation.net: **www.peopleandparticipation.net/display/Involve/Home**
- the *Local Government Improvement and Development* website, which hosts the Ageing Well programme: **www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageId=20344655**
- the Homes and Communities Agency resource 'Skills and knowledge': **http://skills.homesandcommunities.co.uk/**
- the Community Development Exchange: **www.cdx.org.uk/**

Edinburgh – A City for All Ages

Edinburgh has adopted a coordinated approach to the development of an age-friendly Edinburgh, which arose out of a review of older people's services across the city in 1999. A joint strategy – A City for All Ages (2000-2010) – was developed between the City of Edinburgh Council and its partners in National Health Service Lothian and the voluntary and commercial sectors. The strategy aims to improve the quality of life for older people through better opportunities and services, and by removing discrimination and overcoming barriers. One of main aims of the strategy was to get away from only seeing older people as recipients of health and social care, and to ensure that older people would be valued as active citizens who make contributions to the life of the city.

Edinburgh – A City for All Ages *(continued)*

Central to Edinburgh's approach are the processes for taking the strategy forward. There are two key elements to this approach:

Firstly, an important discussion at the outset was where the post of Strategy Manager should be located. Based in corporate services, the Manager is able to work right across the council and encourages people in all departments to think about the needs of older people. The remit from the start was not to have a dedicated budget, but to work within existing structures and mechanisms to influence thinking and an expectation of actions. Nevertheless, the approach has required the flexibility to respond to opportunities for funding to achieve 'quick wins' and successes, that can not only deliver services, but also raise the profile of an 'age-friendly' approach to generic service delivery and strategic thinking.

Secondly, older people themselves are central to driving the agenda forward. A City for All Ages Advisory Group involves older people and representatives from the voluntary sector. Its members include individual older volunteers who support the development of Edinburgh's Plan for Older People and representatives from groups and organisations that represent older people on issues of health and support. Further, the Today and Tomorrow task group was formed to develop an action plan for older people and their carers from the minority ethnic communities in Edinburgh, networked as part of the A City for All Ages strategy.

Part of Edinburgh's approach to developing age-friendly neighbourhoods is to encourage communities to use the checklist developed by the World Health Organisation's (2007) to assess the age friendliness of the areas where they live. Seminars in the city have been used to raise the profile of resident-led activity, as well as the potential of the twelve Neighbourhood Partnerships (each comprising local councillors, and representatives from the police, health, local voluntary sector organisations and the local community).

More information about Edinburgh's approach, as well as the details about the activities that have been undertaken can be found at:
www.edinburgh.gov.uk/info/1456/older_people/1055/a_city_for_all_ages/1

A key ingredient in two large city authorities – Edinburgh and Manchester – has been the creation of dedicated posts, or teams, tasked with championing the development of age-friendly features at a city-wide level (see below). The presence of a person or group to champion the future implications of demographic change is a valuable mechanism for engaging with practitioners right across local authority departments and with stakeholders in other organisations. It is also a platform for reconfiguring how older people are viewed – not as recipients of care and support, but as active citizens.

Manchester City Council – Valuing Older People to create an age friendly city

Key learning about the process of developing age friendly neighbourhoods has had a dedicated team that are centrally located, who are driving long term thinking about older people. The Valuing Older People (VOP) team is part of Public Health Manchester (PHM). The team of six (5.5 full-time equivalents) has had a very wide remit. The team is financed with a combination of mainstream and grant funded sources. Central to this thinking was the need to move away from a dominant focus upon health and social care needs and to see older people as contributing citizens. The VOP team work closely with a board of older residents who hold the team to account for their work. The VOP is backed by an older people's champion within the council as well as strong political support.

A crucial element is to work in partnership to encourage colleagues right across the council and partners elsewhere to consider older people and ageing: to ensure that the needs of older citizens, particularly the most disadvantaged, are central to the work of all service providers in Manchester. One of the challenges for partnership working is to try and influence a wide range of actors, who are faced with their own sets of priorities, and who do not necessarily concentrate on older people. A barrier is that there are no policy incentives for partners to engage with the agenda around older people. The VOP team have also set out a range of secondary sources of data that can be used to assess older people's health, well being and quality of life in Manchester (see **http://www.manchester.gov.uk/downloads/download/2460/directory_of_vop_data_sources**).

As part of Manchester's innovative plan to achieve an age friendly city is the objective of achieving lifetime neighbourhoods across the city where, by 2020, a greater number of older citizens will live. The features that contribute to a lifetime neighbourhood are detailed in the strategy: Manchester: A great place to grow older, 2010-2020 (**www.manchester.gov.uk/downloads/file/11899/manchester_a_great_place_to_grow_older_2010-2020**). This strategy sets out that although lifetime neighbourhoods will vary from place to place, that they should all include adequate or good quality:

- Public transport, with shelters and seats at bus stops and toilets at transport hubs; Community transport for people with mobility problems

Manchester City Council – Valuing Older People to create an age friendly city *(continued)*

- Affordable housing that meets the needs and aspirations of older people, now and in the future, in their neighbourhood or community of choice
- Accessible and locally delivered services and facilities, including health services, information, advice and guidance services (including housing advice), a post office and cash machine, an age-friendly community/cultural centre, a venue with a lunch club or affordable café, shops selling fresh food, and exercise facilities
- Policing and community safety initiatives that result in few incidents of antisocial behaviour, a low crime level, and a low fear of crime level
- Opportunities for taking part in learning, cultural and creative activities, and civic activities
- Green spaces and facilities for outdoor exercise and activities, including gardening, food growing, walking, and cycling
- Public toilets and seating in public places
- Streets, pavements, footpaths and cycle routes that are clean, well-lit and safe, with adequate road-crossing points.

Driving innovation - Delivering a lifetime neighbourhood for Chorlton

Manchester's ten-year ageing strategy, 'A Great Place to Grow Older', launched in October 2009, included a commitment to develop a number of 'Lifetime Neighbourhood' projects. These exploratory projects are designed to investigate how the principles of 'age-friendly' cities can be applied and developed in differing neighbourhoods and contexts in Manchester. The first demonstrator was the Chorlton Lifetime neighbourhood project, which focused upon the plans for an improved district centre in Chorlton, including retail and housing developments, building upon consultation with residents in that area. The project builds upon the 'Talk Chorlton' consultation. An assessment of the demonstrator project will be linked with city-wide planning processes in Manchester to take forward how the concept can be developed. The council are also facilitating the input of a range of specialists to act as an advisory group and to provide scrutiny over the approach being taken in Chorlton.

Further details of Manchester's approach can be found at: **www.manchester.gov.uk/info/500099/valuing_older_people/3428/valuing_older_people_vop/1**

Whilst the two examples above focus on responses at city-wide level, a further challenge for lifetime neighbourhoods is designing for the diversity of contexts that exist within rural areas, as well as the heterogeneity of needs and aspirations amongst rural residents throughout their lives. There are a number of studies which highlight the way in which demographic change will affect rural local authorities:

- Noble *et al* (2009) have mapped not only the extent to which demographic change is expected to vary considerably between local authorities, but have also provided an assessment of local authorities which are likely to see the most significant changes in terms of care needs and aspects of social exclusion
- The Northern Housing Consortium (2010) have highlighted some the different ways in which rural areas in the North of England will need to respond to demographic change compared with urban areas.

Roger Tym and Partners (2008) highlighted how differences between urban and rural areas led to different priorities in relation to planning for sustainable neighbourhoods in the South West. For instance, there tends to be an emphasis on characteristics of the built environment in urban areas, compared with accessibility in rural contexts. However, see Gilroy *et al*'s (2007) discussion of the need to plan for accessible neighbourhood design *within* market towns. Market towns play a crucial role as housing destinations for the oldest old moving from surrounding smaller settlements, and emphasis needs to be placed not only on the role of market towns as service hubs for more outlying communities, but also on enabling access within them. Further, market towns play distinctive roles in different parts of the country, and these nuances need to be appreciated in order to gain the greatest potential benefits in terms of the configuration of services to accommodate future demographic change.

A current programme of research in the South West of England and Wales is investigating key ways in which older people are connected to their rural communities—i.e., culturally, physically, socially, economically and technologically—and the role which these links play in older people's involvement in civic life (**http://ehealth.chiirup.org.uk/greyandpleasantland/?page_id=61**).

Part of this research will identify what constitutes 'age-friendly' communities across Canadian and UK rural settings. Furthermore, work for the governments of Canada has developed a checklist for assessing age-friendly communities in rural areas which builds upon residents' views on ageing well in the rural areas of Canada (**www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/seniors-aines/pubs/age_friendly_rural/index_e.htm**).

Private sector role

The private sector – including social enterprise – has a significant role to play in helping to meet lifetime neighbourhood objectives, not just in relation to the way that neighbourhoods are built or redeveloped, but also in the accessibility of, for example, retail facilities within communities, as well as accessible design (see Chapter 6). The case example on the London Tenants Federation earlier in this chapter highlighted a concern that private sector led developments can sometimes lead to inadequate provision for social and infrastructure needs, with subsequent pressure on existing provision and services in adjacent neighbourhoods. Nevertheless, developers such as Urban Splash (**www.urbansplash.co.uk**) and Beyond Green (**www.beyondgreen.co.uk**), illustrate the type of positive contribution that developers can make not only in terms of delivery, but also in engaging with local residents as well.

KEY THEME: SUPPORTING RESIDENTS TO DEVELOP LIFETIME NEIGHBOURHOODS		
	Description of approach	**Examples and further information**
Resident-led	Development of resident-led definition of lifetime neighbourhoods	Case Example – *London Tenants' Federation (LTF):* development of own definition of lifetime neighbourhoods (**http://ucljustspace.wordpress.com/2007-just-space-briefings/lifetime-neighbourhoods-2008/**)
	Guidance in undertaking Community led planning	Case Example – *Action for Communities in Rural England (ACRE)* has set out a step by step guide for communities to involve all sections of the community and covers all matters that affect their quality of life in a local area, particularly those that need most support **www.acre.org.uk/our-work/community-led-planning**).
	Evaluation of communities/ neighbourhoods to assess 'age friendliness' against set criteria Resident/community group/ voluntary sector partnership working	Case Example – *Development of an 'age-friendly' action plan – Eastleigh Southern Parishes Older People's Forum.* A method for focusing thinking at local level about the range and type of issues that go into making up an 'age-friendly neighbourhood' and that could be incorporated into community led planning approaches such as parish plans: **www.espopf.org/** Further Information – National Association for Neighbourhood Management **www.neighbourhoodmanagement.net/index.php** Further information – Community Development Foundation **www.cdf.org.uk/**
Voluntary sector	Voluntary sector delivery at local level, or the development of resources such as toolkits to assist neighbourhood change	Further information – Help the Aged (2008) Towards Common Ground: The Help the Aged Manifesto for Lifetime Neighbourhoods (London: Help the Aged).
Parish and town councils	Grassroots governance	Parish and town councils will have a crucial role in facilitating a consideration of planning for a growing older population as well as achieving lifetime neighbourhood features as part of community planning. Further information – National Association of Local Councils: **www.nalc.gov.uk**

KEY THEME: Supporting residents to develop lifetime neighbourhoods *(continued)*		
	Description of approach	**Examples and further information**
Local authority approaches	Planning and delivering change through local authorities	The *Local Government Improvement and Development* website provides and shares good practice for local authorities on a range of issues including improving services for older people. The Ageing Well programme has a range of tools, practice examples and events for promoting neighbourhood change **www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageId=20344655**. The *Planning Advisory Service* has provided practice guidance for local authorities for planning, place based development, working with communities and meeting the needs of older people **www.pas.gov.uk/pas/core/page.do?pageId=1** Northern Housing Consortium (2010) A guide to age-friendly communities in the North: people and places 2020. Sunderland: Northern Housing Consortium Ltd. Department for Work and Pensions **www.dwp.gov.uk/policy/ageing-society/products-tools-goodpractice/**
	Case examples of local authority approaches	Case Example – *Manchester City Council – Valuing Older People to create an age-friendly city* (**www.manchester.gov.uk/downloads/file/11899/manchester_a_great_place_to_grow_older_2010-2020**). Case Example – *Edinburgh – A City for All Ages* Edinburgh is also working towards meeting the needs of older people within black and minority ethnic groups as part their approach to developing an age friendly city, centred upon the *Today and Tomorrow Task Group* **www.edinburgh.gov.uk/acfaa**.
Housing provider approaches	Developing neighbourhood plans	**www.liverpoolmutualhomes.org/your_neighbourhood/regenerating__neighbourhoods/neighbourhood_plans/**

KEY THEME: Supporting residents to develop lifetime neighbourhoods *(continued)*		
	Description of approach	**Examples and further information**
Approaches by private sector agencies	Private sector developers that work with residents to consider social infrastructure as part of developments	Further information – Beyond Green: **www.beyondgreen.co.uk** Further information – Urban Splash: **www.urbansplash.co.uk**
International approaches	Approaches from other countries to foster resident-led planning, developments and evaluation at neighbourhood level	Further information – resource for resident groups and others to develop livable communities for all ages **http://livable.org/about-us** Further information – Vital Aging Network – **www.vital-aging-network.org/Vital_Communities_Toolkit/Tools/71/Comprehensive_Tools.html** Further information – World Health Organisation (2007) *Global Age-friendly Cities: A Guide*. WHO, Geneva, Switzerland. **www.who.int/ageing/publications/Global_age_friendly_cities_Guide_English.pdf** Further information – Rural areas: Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers Responsible for Seniors (2007) Age-Friendly Rural and Remote Communities: A Guide. Healthy Aging and Wellness Working Group of the Federal/Provincial/Territorial (F/P/T) Committee of Officials (Seniors), Canada (**www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/seniors-aines/alt-formats/pdf/publications/public/healthy-sante/age_friendly_rural/AFRRC_en.pdf**) Further information – Cities in balance. EU Programme to improve mainstream opportunities for older people, aiming to reduce reliance on health and care services by encouraging a greater emphasis on broader well-being issues: **www.cib-online.eu/** Age platform Europe. European network representing older people across a range of policy areas: **www.age-platform.eu/en/about-age**

Chapter 5

Access

Introduction

Access is the central component of lifetime neighbourhoods. The theme of 'access' encompasses the various ways in which people can get out and about around the areas in which they live – both physically and virtually – and connect with other people and services in their immediate neighbourhood and beyond. The connections between different places are as important as the design and accessibility of places themselves. In this chapter different features of access are considered: information and support to enable people to access services; the physical design of neighbourhoods; and finally transport.

Access chain perspective

A key way of thinking about access in a lifetime neighbourhood is through the travel chain – or access chain – perspective. A travel chain starts from the point at which a person makes a decision to go out of doors for whatever reason, and includes all aspects of a journey, access within the destination, and the return journey home. A lifetime neighbourhood will be one that enables as many people as possible in society to have the necessary information with which to undertake journeys, free from unnecessary obstructions or barriers, to reach their destination and return home safely.

If a single feature along a travel chain causes difficulties for people, then the whole chain breaks down. Forward thinking inclusive design features at one point in someone's journey – for example, inclusive design features on buses – may be rendered useless by poor design somewhere else, such as a badly maintained pavement on the way to the bus stop. Therefore, the travel chain perspective offers one way for residents and service providers to assess how well various design features and other aspects of neighbourhoods fit together, and how well a neighbourhood works overall. One way of testing how well people can get about is by analysing the journeys that people make, such as walking around their neighbourhood, or to specific destinations such as the shops, the doctors or the park. CABE illustrate a similar approach in an analysis of a journey from London to Margate, which shows the importance of good design and management of stations, trains and roads and the need for urban designers, planners and architects to understand the effect of their design decisions on people with learning disabilities. (**www.cabe.org.uk/case-studies/wendys-journey**).

Other instances where the travel chain perspective has been applied include:

- Wigan Council has used the concept of the 'Access design chain' within Supplementary Planning Guidance to facilitate the design of accessible environments as part of their Local Development Framework (Wigan Council 2006; Wigan Council 2008)
- The Sensory Trust (2005) has described how the 'access chain' perspective can be used to develop access within natural environments. The Sensory Trust challenged organisations to think about the accessibility of services in relation to the decision making process that people go through before they even get beyond their front door, in addition to the routes that visitors use to get to a service, and the quality of their experience whilst at a destination (see next section).

Information and advice

The provision of access to information and advice comprises an essential role for agencies and organisations in making it easy for people to get out and about. This role encompasses not only the dissemination of practical information across as wide a spectrum of residents as possible, but also helping to break down misperceptions about neighbourhoods. For example, fear of crime and anti-social behaviour may unduly limit the extent to which some individuals move about their neighbourhoods and beyond.

A range of approaches is necessary to tackle the different ways in which people are likely to access information and advice. Web based services provide an important focus for activity in this area.

FirstStop (Elderly Accommodation Counsel)

At national level, FirstStop is a national telephone and web information and advice service for older people. The main objectives for FirstStop are to develop services for older people, including hard-to -reach and minority ethnic groups, whilst achieving cost savings both for individuals and providers. FirstStop aims to provide holistic advice across a range of areas such as housing, health, finance, care and broader rights, and works in partnership to link national advisors with advice services and organisations at local level such as Care and Repair agencies. The service is provided by the Elderly Accommodation Counsel, along with other national and local partners. An evaluation of the service has been undertaken by Burgess (2010).

For further information see: **www.firststopcareadvice.org.uk/**

Local authorities have also responded to the need for information by developing products across their areas.

A challenge in many rural areas is to provide the infrastructure to enable fast broadband access (see for example: Commission for Rural Communities **http://crc.staging.headshift.com/category/our-work/impact2/broadband-digital-inclusion/research** focusing on digital inclusion such as dot.rural **www.dotrural.ac.uk/**, and Inclusion through the Digital Economy, **www.side.ac.uk/**). A number of communities and organisations at local level have taken matters into their own hands to deliver the quality of access they demand.

Rural Broadband Co-operative

The Bay Broadband Co-operative provides a reliable high quality ADSL facility to the community and visitors to Robin Hood's Bay on the Yorkshire coast in the North York Moors National Park. Although many homes and businesses in the village could access broadband, many outlying properties could not. With funding from Yorkshire Forwards, the Bay Broadband Cooperative was set up as a not-for-profit social enterprise cooperative to bring high-speed digital access to most of the village and the surrounding area. Internet 'gateways' have been installed at two locations – consisting of a modem and mesh box connected to an aerial fixed to the roof of the house. The signal is purchased from one of a number of suppliers and comes into the house via a BT line. The signal is broadcast out and reinforced through a number of strategically placed mesh boxes, and can be accessed by anyone with wireless enabled PC within range. Members pay £8 per month for the service, and visitors can purchase a temporary connection for a small fee. The cooperative, with approximately 100 members, is currently making a sustainable profit. The members have formed a company limited by Guarantee. Although there is no formal committee or Board, all members are invited to attend open weekly meetings in a local pub, and a core group of members form an informal 'executive'. The meetings have become a useful way of sharing information and advice about using computers and the internet, as well as being a social event.

See: **http://rhbmesh.net/**

The need for alternative mechanisms to engage older people in providing advice and information is also demonstrated in rural areas. Research has found that people in rural areas are less likely to pick up the phone to ask for advice than older people in general. Various alternative approaches have been developed in the rural areas, as shown in the two examples below in South Lakeland, and Gloucestershire:

One Contact: Improving access to services for older people in South Lakeland

In South Lakeland 27 per cent of the population is aged over 60 compared with the national average of 21 per cent (based on 2001 Census), and the number of older people in South Lakeland is set to grow. A range of stakeholders and partner agencies across the district, including South Lakeland District Council, Cumbria District Council, Cumbria Primary Care Trust, Cumbria Fire and Rescue Service, Cumbria Police, Age Concern, and The Pension Service, set out to identify the needs of older people in the district and how these needs were being met by service providers. The work also supported the Council's Transformation and Change Programme by exploring opportunities to transform services around needs to improve quality, efficiency, and effectiveness, and if possible, reduce costs and possible duplication.

The work identified a number of areas where improvements needed to be made if the authority was to become a 'needs led' authority. One of the key issues was that of information for older people to help them access services more effectively. Across the District there were 29 agencies providing more than 100 unique services for older people. A total of 44 application forms were required to access these services, and there were more than 50 eligibility and assessment procedures. The same information was being collected many times over and information was not being shared across different agencies. It was estimated that 70,000 – 90,000 additional data sets were being requested from service applicants each year and re-entered into office systems. Many people were put off applying for services because of the number and complexity of forms.

It was decided to put information sharing at the centre of access to services, and the One Contact Programme was established, overseen by a Programme Board with clear terms of reference and mapped benefits and set targets.

Grants of £200K have been received from the Cumbria Improvement and Efficiency Partnership, the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership and IDeA, with additional partner funding. To support the programme a number of actions and projects have been set up including:

- two project officers employed by Age Concern to undertake consultation and engagement and to map community services across the district
- a 'first contact' needs form to be used across partner agencies has been established to proactively push services and take up of services

(Continued over page)

One Contact: Improving access to services for older people in South Lakeland *(continued)*

- shared information from the first point of contact across all partners immediately based on a common consent form with a data sharing protocol
- Village Agents used to signpost and facilitate individuals and communities in the identification and response to needs
- coordinated Age Awareness training of all organisational front line staff
- mapping of all community activity across South Lakeland to support development of projects to tackle rural isolation; and
- continuous engagement and consultation with the Older People's Forum to influence policy and service design.

The intentions are to proactively provide services to older people through collaborative working, enhance their safety and security in their homes and communities, and facilitate timely information and access to services, employment, and leisure opportunities regardless of where people live, and regardless of their first point of contact with services. Over time, this should enable people to stay independent in their own homes and communities for longer. In addition information is captured once and shared as appropriate which should lead to overall financial savings across partner organisations, as well as facilitating access to prevention and early intervention services, reducing demand for acute and crisis services in the medium term.

Village Agents, Gloucestershire

A village agent is defined as 'A locally based person who is able to provide face to face information and support which enables older people to make informed choices about their future needs'. Village Agents are jointly funded by Gloucestershire County Council and Gloucestershire NHS. The scheme is managed by Gloucestershire Rural Community Council. Further information is available from **www.villageagents.org.uk**. As well as details about village agents themselves, the website also contains very localised information about social activities, shops, pharmacy delivery etc and other services specific to the parishes covered by Village Agents. An evaluation of the service identified the following:

- A simple electronic referral system was developed as part of the project. This system was welcomed by statutory and voluntary agencies, and facilitated joint working resulting in holistic service and information provision.
- Older people were more likely to source information and access services from someone they know and trust, thereby promoting and supporting longer term independence. - Village Agents promoted a positive two way consultation link to Council and other services.
- Small actions can have a large effect on promoting well-being and reducing social isolation.
- Effective networking and face to face contact is of paramount importance.

Creating walkable environments

Walkability in London

Walkability in London has been defined in terms of five 'Cs' in the London Plan:

Connected
The extent to which the walking network is connected to key 'attractors' like public transport interchanges, homes, places of work and leisure destinations in addition to the degree that the routes themselves connect.

Convivial
The extent to which walking is a pleasant activity in terms of interaction with people and the built and natural environment, including other road users.

Conspicuous
The extent to which walking routes and public spaces are safe and inviting, with attention paid to lighting, visibility and surveillance. This also includes the availability of mapping and signage.

Comfortable
The extent to which walking is made more enjoyable through high quality pavement surfaces, attractive landscaping and architecture, the efficient allocation of road space and control of traffic.

Convenient
The extent to which walking is able to compete with other modes in terms of efficiency through the implementation of the above factors.

(Making London a Walkable City: the walking plan for London, Transport for London, 2004)
http://www.tfl.gov.uk/assets/downloads/corporate/walking-plan-2004.pdf

Walkability goes to the heart of lifetime neighbourhoods. It describes the ease with which pedestrians can get about outdoor spaces, and has crucial implications for individual access to services and facilities, sociability, health and well-being. The importance of walkability is reflected in the international attention to the concept by practitioners and researchers alike. Research has drawn together toolkits that can be used by practitioners to facilitate the planning of 'walkability'. Burton and Mitchell (2006) have provided an important resource for practitioners that provides practical advice on how planners and service providers can factor the needs of older people – especially older people with dementia – into the inclusive design of neighbourhoods that helps to promote walkability.

Evidence based design guidance on street environments – The I'DGO Consortium

A very significant source of research and guidance is available from the Inclusive Design for Getting Outdoors (I'DGO) consortium. The overall aim of I'DGO has been to identify the most effective ways of ensuring the outdoor environment is designed inclusively to improve the quality of life of older people, based on research evidence. Design guidance is available on the following topics, based on 200 interviews with older people on their preferences for different environmental features of the street environment:

- widths of footways and footpaths
- adjacent and shared use (cyclists and pedestrians) of footways and footpaths
- materials of footways and footpaths
- changes in level of footways and footpaths
- kerbs, including tactile dropped kerbs of footways and footpaths
- pedestrian crossings
- signage
- bus stops and shelters
- seating
- street art
- street greenery
- public toilets

See: **www.idgo.ac.uk/**

Walkability is not only about the physical design of routes, but also about features and facilities that are inclusive of the widest possible range of needs. For example, places for people to rest along their journeys, including well designed seats and benches.

'Away from home' toilets are a key feature of developing accessible environments (**www.britloos.co.uk/**). One solution has been to increase access for the public to away from home toilets by working with local businesses to make their toilets available for public use. The first example of this type of approach was by the London Borough of Richmond upon Thames (**www.richmond.gov.uk/community_toilet_scheme**), and key lessons about how to set up similar schemes have been drawn together (**www.communities.gov.uk/documents/localgovernment/pdf/1064520.pdf**)

Home zones and shared spaces

The design of residential neighbourhoods as safe, social spaces as well as accommodating the various travel and transportation needs of residents has led to developments such as Home Zones, as part of a wider context in reprioritising between pedestrians and other users (Department for Transport, 2007). Home Zones are:

> *'… residential streets in which the road space is shared between drivers of motor vehicles and other road users, with the wider needs of residents (including people who walk and cycle, and children) in mind. The aim is to change the way that streets are used and to improve the quality of life in residential streets by making them places for people, not just for traffic. Changes to the layout of the street should emphasise this change of use, so that motorists perceive that they should give informal priority to other road users.'*
>
> Institute of Highway Incorporated Engineers (2002)

Although the idea of Home Zones originated in the Netherlands, they were put forward as a potential tactic to reduce casualties amongst young children in the UK in the 1980s and to create safer environments for children. A number of design guides exist, which also highlight the various approaches to the development of Home Zones that have been taken in various parts of the UK:

- Department for Transport (2005) Challenging the Future of our Streets, London: Department for Transport, has links to several sources of guidance and evaluations of individual Home Zone schemes
- The Institute of Highway Engineers has a dedicated website focused upon homezones: **www.homezones.org.uk/index.cfm**
- The use of shared space within Home Zones, as well as in some high streets and shopping areas has been criticised by various groups as creating new barriers for disabled people, especially people who are visually impaired (Nevertheless, research by the JMU Access Partnership (2007) concluded that whilst disabled people had several criticisms of features of Home Zones, an understanding of these criticisms and subsequent careful design can go some way to overcoming these problems.

As the example of Home Zones above has highlighted, the recent and emerging nature of practice around the inclusive design of neighbourhoods has inevitably led to tensions between the needs of different groups of users. Another example of tensions around design features is the fact that tactile surfaces are not suitable for mobility scooters. The use of mobility scooters has itself come under increasing scrutiny, and raises the issue of the use of shared space. Evidence from within the UK and also internationally has also highlighted that the shared use of pavements by cyclists and pedestrians tends to be an unpopular option amongst the latter – especially older people.

A challenge for those working towards lifetime neighbourhoods is arriving at design solutions that can accommodate these various and sometimes conflicting perspectives which may not always be easy to reconcile. Ways of overcoming these challenges include:

- consultation with key groups likely to be affected by the introduction of new design features
- monitoring new evidence (such as the I'DGO website).

Further challenges may emerge in relation to achieving broader resident consensus over changes within neighbourhoods and the directions in which priorities at local level may be set. A particular challenge for service providers and residents alike is that the views of particular groups are not privileged over others.

Transport

Recent guidance has emphasised the key role that local authorities can play in developing innovative and effective transport solutions as part of their planning function. Part of the evidence base that practitioners can draw upon has linked accessibility planning with the needs of older people, and provides tools for the way that transport services can respond to future demographic change:

- Marsden *et al* (2007) focused upon how accessibility problems impact on older people's independence and how these vary across different categories of older people. The research also piloted techniques that could be applied to provide a more robust measure of accessibility for older people
- The DISTILLATE project- funded by the Engineering Sciences Research Laboratory – also aims to develop new processes and techniques that will assist local authorities to develop and implement sustainable transport strategies and schemes. This project emphasises that close working between residents and a range of providers – not just public transport – is necessary to achieve local solutions (see, for example, Snell and Jones, 2007)
- The Department for Transport has developed a resource guide for local authorities on transport solutions for older people (Department for Transport, 2010).

Rural areas offer a particular challenge. Again, a range of best practice has been identified in terms of the role that local authorities can play in planning for accessibility in the countryside:

- Integrated Transport Planning Ltd (2009) highlighted a range of best practice examples in rural accessibility by local authorities
- The Commission for Rural Communities (2006) also identified best practice by local authorities in rural transport planning.

An objective for lifetime neighbourhoods is sustaining a diverse range of methods of transportation that enable people to get around by using public transport, or by other means if they cannot use this type of service. Demand-responsive services, such as Dial-A-Ride are also an important feature that enables accessibility in neighbourhoods and wider areas. The following example illustrates the key role that local authorities can play in coordinating an integrated response to diverse methods of transportation, in this case, in a rural area:

Integrated transport in rural Lincolnshire

Lincolnshire County Council have developed CallConnect, which is a mini bus service which can be pre-booked by phone or online. From seven in the morning to seven in the evening it will collect people from or take them to designated pick-up points in each village or town. Those with disabilities or in more isolated locations may be taken to their home address. Each mini bus will take its passengers to any point within its local operating area. Those who wish to make longer journeys can be taken to join a regular inter-urban bus service (Interconnect) or to a railway station. More than 10 per cent of CallConnect users are daily commuters. Real-time monitoring of the whereabouts of the mini buses means they can be used efficiently. There is also a Community Rail Partnership: The Poacher Line is a valuable asset to the local community, providing easier access to the coast and a unique community engagement tool. During the quieter months of the year, the partnership arranges various outings for families, and community events, such as live bands playing on the train. Supporting these initiatives is widespread provision of self-sustaining voluntary car schemes and Dial-a-Ride and community transport. The partnership is funded by Network Rail, Department for Transport, East Midlands Development Agency, the district and County Councils.

Community-led action has a highly significant role within the sphere of transportation (see for example Plunkett Foundation, 2006). There is a huge range of resident-led activities right across the country, ranging from local surveys to highlight the difficulties that different members of the community experience in accessing services, through to direct provision of methods of transportation. Parish councils have taken a strong lead in helping to resolve accessibility problems for residents within their areas. For example, the Commission for Rural Communities (2007) have highlighted examples of parish councils focusing upon the needs of younger people in rural areas. Parish councils have also directly funded schemes to promote accessibility for residents in their areas:

H.A.R.T. Community Transport, East Yorkshire

H.A.R.T. Community Transport: H.A.R.T. (Holderness Area Rural Transport) is a registered Charity operating door to door dial-a-ride Community Transport services for North, Mid and South Holderness in East Yorkshire. Initial funding for the services came from parish councils in the area. The services include:

MEDiBUS services include dial-a-ride transport to all the Hospitals, doctors, dentists and specialist clinics in Hull and East Yorkshire.

MiBUS and Volunteer Shopping services operate from East Yorkshire villages to market towns and supermarkets in East Yorkshire.

Community Transport Volunteer car services are available to anyone who doesn't have easy access to transport in Holderness, East Yorkshire.

Community Group minibus vehicles are available for use by for not for profit groups in East Yorkshire For more information visit HART Community Transport's website at: **www.medibus.org.uk**

KEY THEME: ACCESS		
Issue	**Description of approach**	**Examples and contacts**
Information and advice	Using a variety of approaches to enable people to find out information, get advice and where to find help	Case Example – Firststop (Elderly Accommodation Counsel) provides a web and telephone information and advice service for older people, **www.firststopcareadvice.org.uk/**. An evaluation of the service has been undertaken by Burgess (2010). Case Example – Village Agents, Gloucestershire, defined as 'A locally based people who are able to provide face to face information and support which enables older people to make informed choices about their future needs'. Village Agents are jointly funded by Gloucestershire County Council and Gloucestershire NHS. The scheme is managed by Gloucestershire County Council in partnership with Gloucestershire Rural Community Council **www.villageagents.org.uk**
Transport- linking together different types of transportation to provide a coordinated service; Providing a choice of public and demand responsive services	Integrated transport services Resources for local authorities Community Transport Advice and support about rural transport issues (Rural Community Councils)	Case Example – Local authority led integrated transport including voluntary sector and community group services – CallConnect, Lincolnshire County Council Further information – Report on integrated transport in rural areas, including UK/European practice examples **http://cfit.independent.gov.uk/pubs/2008/rpt/index.htm** Further Information – Department for Transport (2010) Resource guide for local authorities: Transport solutions for older people **www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/inclusion/older/transportsolutions.pdf** Further Information – Community Transport Association **www.ctauk.org/** Case Example – H.A.R.T. Community transport, East Yorkshire **www.medibus.org.uk** Using Social Enterprise to develop community transport in rural areas; **www.plunkett.co.uk/whatwedo/RCT.cfm** Further information on advice and support on rural transport issues **www.ruralsussex.org.uk/service/rural-transport/**

KEY THEME: ACCESS *(continued)*		
Issue	**Description of approach**	**Examples and contacts**
Creating walkable environments		Further information – toolkits for practitioners and community groups: **www.livingstreets.org.uk/campaigning_tools/** Further information – Mitchell, L., Burton, E. and Raman, S. (2004) Neighbourhoods for life. A checklist of recommendations for designing dementia-friendly outdoor environments. London: Housing Corporation.
Orientation and wayfinding	Using signs, uncluttered streetscapes and landmarks to make it easier for people to navigate and find their way around	Manual for Streets 2 sets out design principles for decluttering: **www.ciht.org.uk** Mitchell, L., Burton, E. and Raman, S. (2004) Neighbourhoods for life. A checklist of recommendations for designing dementia-friendly outdoor environments. London: Housing Corporation. Burton, E. and Mitchell, L. (2006) Inclusive urban design: streets for life (London: Elsevier), sets out the arguments and design principles for accessible streets, including orientation and wayfinding as part of the discussion.
Adequate provision of away from home toilets	Design guidance and practice examples of away from home toilet provision	Inclusive Design for Getting Outdoors (I'DGO): **www.idgo.ac.uk/design_guidance/streets.htm#publictoilets** Department for Communities and Local Government: **www.communities.gov.uk/documents/localgovernment/pdf/713772.pdf** Department for Communities and Local Government: **www.communities.gov.uk/documents/localgovernment/pdf/1064520.pdf**

Chapter 6

Services and amenities

Neighbourhoods that offer a mix of residential, retail and employment uses can help to meet the needs of diverse groups within the community including households without access to a car, disabled people, frail older people and families with young children. Research evidence has emphasised the value of a mix of uses in fostering age-friendly communities. Walkable access to services and convenience stores comprises a significant element of this aspiration, especially with regard to older people (Burton and Mitchell, 2006).

Developing neighbourhoods with a mix of residential, retail and employment uses is an ambitious aspiration. Nevertheless, this feature of lifetime neighbourhoods has the potential to enable local authorities and residents to meet a range of parallel objectives such as striving towards sustainability and helping to reduce negative impacts on the environment. Put another way, imperatives such as climate change and peak oil are already shaping how communities are working to transform how neighbourhoods look. If a focus on these imperatives is maintained, then outcomes at local level to promote sustainability will also help to foster the kind of features that support lifetime neighbourhoods. Three examples illustrate this point:

- A number of villages in Devon and Cornwall have focused upon transforming their communities to address climate change and peak oil. Furthermore, the Planning Advisory Service (2009) has noted the work being undertaken by Cornwall Council that aims to make rural communities as self contained as possible. An important trend may be an emphasis upon the clustering of villages and parishes not only with respect to the identification of future shared needs, but also service delivery (Roger Tym & Partners, 2008; Commission for Rural Communities, 2009).
- A recent review of the role of land use planning in shaping demand for transport, and of promoting pedestrian, cycling and public transport solutions across the European Union, emphasised the need for a mix of land uses at local level, as opposed to their separation (Stantchev and Whiteing, 2010).
- Climate change presents a greater danger to people in later life. Haq, Whitelegg and Kohler (2008) concluded with a range of recommendations including a major programme of local accessibility enrichment, as well as public transport efficiency and reliability (Ibid, p21).

Vibrant services within neighbourhoods

A crucial element shaping this aspect of the lifetime neighbourhood agenda is the role of the business community – including social enterprise. There are a number of ways that a vibrant business sector embedded within neighbourhoods can contribute to how an age-friendly neighbourhood might look:

- local access to shops
- accessibility within shops
- the range of products available within neighbourhoods (such as access to fresh food)
- contributing to sociable spaces within neighbourhoods
- volunteering and employment.

This discussion is focused primarily upon outlets that offer a range of key services such as post offices, or access to essential items such as fresh food.

An argument for the support of small, independent retailers in local shopping centres has been put forward by the Urban Forum (2009), especially for meeting the needs of older people. Furthermore, Jones *et al* (2007) highlighted the value of mixed use high streets not only in terms of a retail function for diverse communities, but also as important spaces for social interaction (see also Holland *et al*, 2007). One way in which a local authority has engaged with this issue is working with the business community to understand how shoppers access retail outlets. This work by Bristol City Council highlighted that there is often a misperception of the importance of visitors who use cars compared with shoppers who walk (see SUSTRANS, 2006).

Local authorities are in a strong position to work in partnership with the local business sector, voluntary sector, community groups and residents to strive towards local retail and service provision. Strategic partnership working is taking place at a variety of scales in order to promote local access. City wide public and private sector partners are working strategically across Manchester to improve local solutions to food access.

Manchester Food Futures

Manchester Food Futures is a partnership of the public and private sectors working with communities to provide a strategy to improve Manchester's food.

One of the ways in which Manchester City Council have helped to shape outcomes in different parts of the city is to map localities where there are few retail outlets offering fresh food. The City Council offered grants to shopkeepers in convenience stores in these localities to increase the retail offer of fresh food for residents.

A further example in Manchester is 'Herbie', which is a social enterprise which offers a mobile service to areas of East Manchester where residents have limited access to fresh food.

There is a particular challenge with regard to sustaining retail outlets and services in rural areas. As with many other features of rural life, the focus of attention is often upon transport – either bringing a service within reach of residents, or enabling residents who lack access to their own means of transport to gain access to services. Nevertheless, there is a tremendous amount of activity taking place all over the country to promote outlets within smaller rural communities (see for example the work of the Plunkett Foundation and also their dedicated website for rural community owned shops: **www.plunkett.uk.net/**

Flourishing local businesses in rural Oxfordshire are also testament to partnership working in this county, where funding from the district councils and the county council have helped the Oxfordshire Rural Community Council to support local shops and services there.

Oxfordshire Village Shops Development Worker Scheme

Oxfordshire Rural Community Council (ORCC) developed the Oxfordshire Village Shops Development Worker Scheme in response to the closure of many shops and post offices within its rural communities. This project uses a specialist advisor to help existing shops to remain viable and gives advice to communities that are interested in setting up a village shop of their own. It has been running since 1999, giving advice and support both to independently-owned village shops and shops run by community members. ORCC has published two handbooks: 'How 2 Create a Community Shop and Post Office' and 'Village Shop Handbook'.

The Community Council's advisor works full-time for three groups – independent village shop-keepers; communities which run a shop already or want to start one, and communities looking for new ways to replace lost village Post Offices. The help offered includes personal visits, step-by-step guidance on how to set up, staff, stock, lay out and manage a community shop, and pricing, purchasing and marketing advice. Training and networking events are also arranged, and the service produces a useful handbook, with supplier details, and a quarterly newsletter. In the financial year 2008/09, the scheme cost £48,000 to run, including pay, travel, and materials. The money comes mostly from Oxfordshire's four rural district councils and Oxfordshire County Council, with some extra help from Defra and consultancy fees. Small grants of between £500 and £1,000 have been offered to help improve shop performance and sustainability, although the funding source of these grants is likely to be cut in the future.

A measure of the scheme's success is that Oxfordshire has the greatest number of existing and emerging community shops in the country, with 14 open in 2009 and two in the pipeline.

The main learning from the project is that:

- specialist advice from someone with existing retail experience and ongoing support can keep village shops viable, or lead to new ones opening
- local authority support is helpful in unlocking funding
- to succeed, community shops need to win the trust and loyalty of local people, for instance by making sure volunteers feel valued and sharing profits with community organisations.

The previous three examples have highlighted either strategic partnership working across cities, or the contribution of local authorities and community development co-ordination at county level. As the following two examples show, activity at the level of individual communities can also promote features of lifetime neighbourhoods that are centred around local businesses.

Safe and happy older people and parents with pushchairs (SHOPPP) (Camden, London)

This project, to promote accessibility within shops, is community-led and aims to address older people and parents' concerns about accessibility in their everyday lives. The main partners in the SHOPPP scheme are Kilburn Older Voices Exchange (KOVE) and Caversham Elder Persons Organisation (CEPO).

Their work was funded by Camden Local Area Agreement Innovation Fund and supported by Camden Council Older Voices Team. Other partners in the project were Kilburn SureStart and Kentish Town SureStart, Kilburn Town Centre Management and Kentish Town Business Association.

SHOPPP encourages shops and businesses to join the scheme by committing to improve accessibility for all. To be eligible for membership of the SHOPPP scheme shops and businesses must have:

- good, clear access for wheelchair users and other disabled people and parents with pushchairs
- friendly and considerate staff willing to help people, including serving customers at the shop entrance
- clear signs at appropriate levels
- a chair available for customers to rest.

Main learning:

The partners have produced a toolkit to assist other groups or organisations wishing to promote better access to retail outlets in their own neighbourhoods by utilising the SHOPPP model accessed via London Borough of Camden: **www.camden.gov.uk**

Support to local businesses – in the following instance by a housing provider – can also bring about wider benefits for the surrounding community, and which help to foster inclusive environments.

New Earswick, York

The Joseph Rowntree Housing Trust is supporting neighbourhood retailing in New Earswick, which is a suburban part of York. Work by the Trust has resulted in a report that set out a forward programme of support for the local shops, with recommendations on physical improvements, the social environment and security, parking, signage and shop frontages, management arrangements and lease options. A particular focus has been placed upon the physical environment not only in terms of the attractiveness of local shopping, but also of the community's perception of the shopping area. This includes:

- the design of the pedestrian environment
- whether it engenders a sense of security
- the quality of shop fronts and signage
- the availability of secure parking in full view
- the quality of materials, for example, for pavements and street furniture, and
- excellence in street cleansing.

Early activities have included improvements to the street, through a repaving programme, improved signage, and also intergenerational work to help break down tensions between young people and older people. A neighbourhood retail management responsibility was attached to the neighbourhood management approach of a member of Trust's staff.

Achieving features of Lifetime Neighbourhoods through planning gain

The concern by organisations such as the London Tenants' Federation over infrastructure that can help meet the needs of local communities raises the potential of planning gain to make a contribution here. However, research by the Royal Town Planning Institute (2004: 28) found no evidence at that time of planning agreements being used for the benefit of, or to increase provision for, older people. Although Harding (2009) has pointed out the impact of the recession on s106 agreements, future planning gain could be an important mechanism for levering in features that can assist in the development of Lifetime Neighbourhoods. Community Infrastructure Levy, will pay directly for 'community infrastructure'. The intention is that Levy will run in tandem with s106 policies, and whilst the former will pay for local infrastructure needs, the latter will continue to be used to secure mitigation to make the development acceptable and affordable housing. However, the Coalition Government has said that it will consider the merits of allowing Community Infrastructure Levy receipts to be spent on affordable housing provision.

NHS London Healthy Urban Development Unit (HUDU) Health and Urban Planning Toolkit for calculating planning contributions

A potential mechanism for securing inclusive design features through planning agreements can be seen in the approach that the London Borough of Greenwich have taken, whereby they have produced a Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) that provides guidance on the contributions to wider community benefits that can be triggered by particular types of development (see the Planning Advisory Service, 2009). As part of joint working arrangements between primary care trusts and local planners, Greenwich have used a model developed by the NHS London Healthy Urban Development Unit (HUDU) Health and Urban Planning Toolkit for calculating planning contributions from developments for healthcare: **www.healthyurbandevelopment.nhs.uk/index.html**.

The merits of this approach could be explored in relation to design features of lifetime neighbourhoods.

It will be necessary for local areas to take account of viability and balance infrastructure requirements gained through the Levy with s106 agreements on individual applications. This will be particularly pertinent – in rural areas where there may be concerns about levels of affordable housing. Careful judgement will be required to balance the potential gains in terms of affordable housing against wider aspects of neighbourhood design. The use of exceptions sites for affordable housing in rural areas also need to be 'future proofed' in relation to ensuring adequate access for residents. Whilst exceptions sites provide an important source of land for affordable housing in rural areas, their location within, or more likely on the edge of, communities, needs to be borne in mind with regard to designing in accessible features as part of these developments.

The emerging policy framework suggests that community groups themselves may have a greater role to play in the direct delivery of services and the acquisition of facilities as well as in the development of affordable housing. A possible Community Right to Build will give local communities the power to take forward development they want – be it homes, shops, businesses or facilities, if it meets minimum criteria and has the agreement of local people through a community referendum. The form of development, and the type and tenure of any housing would be for communities themselves to decide, but the benefits would need to be retained for the community, managed by a corporate body formed by members of the local community.

KEY THEME: SERVICES AND AMENITIES		
Issue	**Description of approach**	**Further information and case examples**
Promoting well-being	Health interventions within communities	Further information – partnerships between local authorities, health, voluntary and community sectors to join up service and break down barriers to bring about better locally delivered services Linkageplus **www.dwp.gov.uk/policy/ageing-society/products-tools-goodpractice/linkage-plus/** Partnerships for Older people Projects (POPPs) **www.dh.gov.uk/en/SocialCare/Deliveringadultsocialcare/Olderpeople/PartnershipsforOlderPeopleProjects/index.htm**
Local access to retail outlets Accessible food/fresh food	Supporting commercial and community owned outlets	Further information – Rural Shops Alliance **www.ruralshops.org.uk/en/pages/Default.aspx** Further information – Plunkett Foundation: **www.plunkett.co.uk/whatwedo/rcs/ruralcommunityshops.cfm** Case example – Oxfordshire Village Shops Development Worker Scheme, Rural Community Council Further information – London Food link: **www.sustainweb.org/londonfoodlink/** Further information – **www.sustainweb.org/cityharvest/.** Further information – **www.cabe.org.uk/sustainable-places/advice/urban-food-production** Case example – Manchester food futures : **www.foodfutures.info/site/** Case example – Incredible Edible Todmorden: **www.cabe.org.uk/case-studies/incredible-edible-todmorden.**

Chapter 7

Built and natural environments

Working towards a built environment that is inclusive of as wide an audience as possible is not just about a fundamental equalities issue. Outdoor spaces that work well for people have the potential for benefits in terms of sociability, health and well-being. It has been shown earlier that working towards lifetime neighbourhoods can bring cost savings, and in a time of austerity these arguments are essential in making the case to commissioners that investment in lifetime neighbourhood features can bring tangible benefits not only to residents but also financially.

NICE (2008) Promoting and creating built or natural environments that encourage and support physical activity

'Physical activity not only contributes to wellbeing, it is essential for good health (DH 2004). Increasing physical activity levels in the population will help prevent or manage over 20 conditions and diseases. This includes coronary heart disease, diabetes, some cancers and obesity. It can help to improve mental health. It can also help older people to maintain independent lives.

In 2004, the DH estimated that physical inactivity in England cost £8.2 billion annually (this included the rising cost of treating chronic diseases such as coronary heart disease and diabetes). It is estimated that a further £2.5 billion each year is spent on dealing with the consequences of obesity. Again, this can be caused, in part, by a lack of physical activity (DH 2004)' NICE (2008), p10.

A challenge here for practitioners is that cost savings in areas such as health may not necessarily accrue to other stakeholders, so that there may be difficulty in convincing service commissioners of the value of investment in infrastructure and design principles that meet lifetime neighbourhood objectives. Pressures such as this reinforce the need for a central resource for practitioners to access in terms of sharing best practice on an ongoing basis.

Changes to the built environment

A range of guidance already exists that promotes sound design principles into new build, for example:

- Manual for Streets – emphasises joint working among practitioners in the design of residential and other lightly trafficked streets, with a prime consideration that they meet the needs of pedestrians and cyclists: **www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/sustainable/manforstreets/**
- Manual for Streets 2, (which is not a replacement for the first Manual for Streets), widens the scope beyond residential streets (including rural areas) and also sets out aspects of decluttering: **www.ciht.org.uk**
- Papworth Trust, Guide to planning, designing and managing communities that are inclusive of disabled people: **www.papworth.org.uk/downloads/pt_guidetodevelopinginclusivecommunities_2008_100901101523.pdf**

Nevertheless, one consideration is the extent to which current guidance takes sufficient account of the implications of a larger number of older people in future decades. Further, a significant issue is how existing environments may need to be retrofitted to accommodate a growing older population, leading to the following key issues:

- How new developments will incorporate lifetime neighbourhood objectives into masterplanning
- Retrofitting the current built environment, including the potential of regeneration and renewal (for a discussion from the US perspective, see Abbott *et al* (2009) *Re-Creating Neighborhoods for Successful Aging.* Health Professions Press, Baltimore, Maryland)
- Adequate maintenance of the existing infrastructure
- Organisations such as the Young Foundation have undertaken a range of work looking at innovative ways of improving neighbourhoods, with an emphasis not just on ageing, but also a range of other areas such as well-being, communities, and technological innovation: **www.youngfoundation.org/** (see also for example the youcankingston initiative: **youcankingston.com/**).

  Specific design guidance by the consortium Inclusive Design for Getting Outdoors was also highlighted earlier in the report (see also Burton, E. and Mitchell, L., 2006, *Inclusive Urban Design: Streets for Life*, London: Elsevier).

Greenspace

Greenspace encompasses all open spaces, including natural greenspace, parks and gardens, allotments and community gardens, as well as street greenery and planting. The importance of greenspace for health and well-being cannot be underestimated and is an essential component of lifetime neighbourhoods.

Recent reviews of the literature have emphasised that exposure to natural spaces (everything from parks and open countryside to gardens and other greenspaces) has been found to have positive benefits for mental and physical health (Bell *et al*, 2008; Sustainable Development Commission, 2008). Croucher and Myers (2008) highlighted the value of urban green spaces for various groups, noting the particular importance of green spaces in providing opportunities for a range of different types of exercise and play, and as well as contact with nature, which is frequently linked to general improvements in well-being and stress reduction. These findings chime with the seminal work in the UK undertaken by the I'DGO consortium on the value of outdoor spaces for older people (see Alves *et al*, 2008).

The evidence base in terms of health outcomes within the context of quality of life benefits of greenspace has led to valuable developments in terms of links between health commissioning and planning (see also previous section with reference to the NHS London Healthy Urban Development Unit (HUDU) Health and Urban Planning Toolkit for calculating planning contributions). The National Institute for Clinical Excellence, NICE (2008) has published guidance to promote and create built or natural environments that encourage and support physical activity.

Detailed guidance about public open spaces and parks is available from the I'DGO website (**www.idgo.ac.uk/design_guidance/open_spaces.htm**). This notes that the most important aspects of local open space to older people were:

- safety
- having appropriate facilities
- trees and plants and activities to watch
- good maintenance,
- no heavy traffic en route.

CABE has been instrumental in not only highlighting the value of greenspace, but also developing guidance that can be used by local authorities, residents and other stakeholders to develop safe, accessible greenspace. Recent work by CABE has not only identified the poor level of access to greenspace for residents in disadvantaged inner city areas, especially for BME groups (CABE, 2010).

An important aspect of greenspace relates to the degree in which residents can take an active role in developing community gardens, allotments and greenspace as an integral feature of public areas. Planting can take place in even quite small disused or under-used parts of residential areas. Developing greenspace in this way also sits within objectives for improving access to healthy food, especially in urban areas. See for example:

www.sustainweb.org/cityharvest/
www.cabe.org.uk/sustainable-places/advice/urban-food-production

The range of activities that can take place at city-wide level can be illustrated by the range of activities in, for example, London (**www.capitalgrowth.org/**) and Manchester (**www.foodfutures.info/site/**). The following example highlights the way in which residents, businesses and statutory organisations have worked together across Todmorden to produce and promote locally grown food in the town.

Incredible Edible Todmorden, West Yorkshire

Incredible Edible Todmorden is a loose coalition of local people, businesses and schools who are working together to increase the production and consumption of local food in the town. The aim is to make Todmorden self sufficient in vegetables, orchard fruits and eggs by 2018, and ultimately to enable the town to source the majority of staple food locally including meat and dairy. The movement began with a vision for the future of Todmorden as a town that cared about its food and environment.

It has developed into a town-wide initiative supported by local people, businesses, farmers, schools, health services, the probation service and the local authority.

- Northern Rail has donated land for vegetable plots, the council has allocated land for a community orchard and funding for 500 fruit trees and berry bushes has been granted.
- The local church has collaborated with children from the local primary school to cultivate raised beds in the cemetery.
- All schools in Todmorden have also planted up a growing boat, using disused pleasure boats, to grow vegetables in schools. Ferney Lee primary has a small orchard and 26 raised beds for community use. The local secondary school has invested in two commercial size poly tunnels and has integrated growing into the curriculum; they are currently applying for specialist status for agriculture and land-based industries. At the back of the high school dedicated workers look after an orchard and bee hives.

Incredible Edible Todmorden, West Yorkshire *(continued)*

- The local health centre is transforming their flowerbeds into allotments so that patients with long term mental health problems can participate in gardening as part of their treatment. The health centre also operates a 'pick your own' scheme for local people.
- Pennine Housing, the local registered social landlord, provides tenants with land to grow food and offer gardening packs, including plants, seeds and grow sacks to encourage tenants to grow their own.
- Local cafés are starting to supply local produce and market stalls are now advertising their local produce.
- Derelict sites and once-neglected roadside verges have been cultivated for community use. The result has been a visual improvement which adds to a sense of community pride and ownership and has reduced anti-social land uses. The town has started to consider derelict and previously unsightly land as a resource and an asset, rather than as a liability. Incredible Edible Todmorden work hard to avoid single group dominance in their work. Excluded groups are engaged as part of the solution rather than seen as a problem, for example young offenders worked with other local people to plant a community orchard. Leeks, broccoli and cabbages grow side by side with ornamental plants and flowers in public flower beds and planters. Herb planters line the railway stations platforms and signs encourage commuters to help themselves. A herb garden has been established along the main road and a community orchard which includes over 200 fruit trees and bushes has been planted on public land in the town centre (for further information see **www.cabe.org.uk/case-studies/incredible-edible-todmorden**).

KEY THEME: BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENTS		
Issue	**Description of approach**	**Further information and case examples**
New design and retrofitting that promotes inclusive and walkable environments Streets, pavements, footpaths and cycle routes that are sufficiently maintained, clean, well-lit, with adequate road crossing points and seating/places to rest in public places;	Design guidance and resources for practitioners	Resource for Urban Design Information (RUDI). Resource, news and networking site dedicated to urban design and placemaking: **www.rudi.net/** Manual for Streets – emphasises joint working among practitioners in the design of residential and other lightly trafficked streets, with a prime consideration that they meet the needs of pedestrians and cyclists: **www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/sustainable/manforstreets/** Manual for Streets 2 – not a replacement for manual for streets, but widens the scope beyond residential streets (including rural areas) and also sets out decluttering: **www.ciht.org.uk** Further information – Papworth Trust, Guide to planning, designing and managing communities that are inclusive of disabled people: **www.papworth.org.uk/downloads/pt_guidetodevelopinginclusivecommunities_2008_100901101523.pdf** Planning Advisory Service – practice examples to illustrate how local planning authorities are working to incorporate the philosophy and principles of inclusive design into robust planning policies and supplementary planning Documents: **www.pas.gov.uk/pas/aio/40475** Inclusive Design for Getting Outdoors (I'DGO) **www.idgo.ac.uk/index.htm**

KEY THEME: BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENTS		
Issue	**Description of approach**	**Further information and case examples**
Designing and developing environments that promote health and well-being	Design guidance and resources for promoting health and well-being in new and existing developments Guidance on achieving health outcomes from planning contributions	Further information – examples of toolkits and guidance from Scotland for local authorities: **www.livingstreets.org.uk/index.php?cID=124** International example – Provincial Health Services Authority (Canada): **www.phsa.ca/HealthProfessionals/Population-Public-Health/Healthy-Built-Environment/default.htm** NHS London Healthy Urban Development Unit (HUDU) Health and Urban Planning Toolkit for calculating planning contributions from developments for healthcare **www.healthyurbandevelopment.nhs.uk/index.html**.
Design that promotes community safety, including safe streets and play areas for children	Design guidance on community safety	Further information – Secured by Design: **www.securedbydesign.com** Further information- **http://designagainstcrime.org/**
Greenspace	Providing opportunities for social contact. Promoting health and well-being objectives	Further information – Design guidance for public outdoor spaces and parks – I'DGO Consortium: **www.idgo.ac.uk/design_guidance/open_spaces.htm**

Chapter 8

Social networks

As well as enabling residents to meet their daily needs, the inclusive design of physical features of neighbourhoods provides the essential backdrop to enable people to develop their social networks and participate as active citizens in their communities. Social networks enhance the way in which individuals are able to engage with their neighbourhoods and beyond, linking in to different groups, activities and facilities that are available. The Northern Consortium (2010) highlight this aspect of developing age-friendly communities by setting the following objective as part of their guidance on this subject:

> *'A good quality, well-designed neighbourhood can give older people the confidence and support to continue to live independently for longer by aiding access to services and opportunities to engage in community life'.*
>
> (Northern Consortium, 2010, p11).

The practice of developing lifetime neighbourhoods, therefore, includes not only a consideration of physical design, but also developing an understanding of the social factors and events that promote active participation in community life. This theme links closely with social well-being, especially around addressing the lack of confidence that individuals and groups may feel about making full and active use of outdoor spaces around their homes due to fear of crime and anti social behaviour. However, developing lifetime neighbourhoods also aim to address the physical and social isolation that can inhibit the choices that residents make about how they engage with their neighbourhoods. Isolation is often associated with later life, but the impact of this issue on all age groups needs to be factored in to any actions by agencies and organisations.

Promoting social well-being

Intergenerational projects have a key role to play in fostering social networks for all ages. Organisations such as the Beth Johnson Foundation have focused attention on the diverse ways in which local authorities can also draw upon inter-generational practice to help meet policy objectives such as stronger, safer communities, local economy, environmental sustainability, and also improved adult health & well-being and tackling isolation (Beth Johnson Foundation, 2009).

Leeds intergenerational projects

A feature of Intergenerational activity in Leeds is its community led, grassroots nature. Leeds City Council was keen to support and nurture this range of activity, and established the 'Neighbourhoods for All Ages' network. The network aims to support activity and address the isolation that frontline staff may experience by offering training, quarterly meetings and an annual conference. An important aspect of the network's role is to link people together within neighbourhoods, and to try and encourage intergenerational work in primary and secondary schools.

The network is a financially sustainable model because there is no pot of money attached, nor is there a single dedicated post. The approach relies on effective partnership working between agencies and individual officers dedicating part of their role to the network's objectives – keeping the agenda 'live' across a range of departments, rather than a 'silo' effect were it to be located wholly within one department. Crucially, intergenerational working is linked into, and championed, within a city wide partnership 'Harmonious Leeds' rather than embedded in single department. Intergenerational working is now seen by the authority as helping to meet Leeds' strategic plans and targets.

Learning and key lessons:

- In the context of a time of austerity it is essential to provide an evidence base that intergenerational work is not just soft and fluffy but that it does have hard outcomes (see evaluation).
- There needs to be clearer guidance around the role of the Criminal Records Bureau and safeguarding vulnerable adults and young people.
- Make sure that any top down response in relation to intergenerational work is in response to what people have requested: don't assume that a project will work. The most successful projects have worked with people to find out what their needs are and have planned around this.
- There needs to be clear guidance and boundaries for participants. Projects can raise very emotive issues for people and these issues need to be managed in a sensitive way, especially when dealing with anti-social behaviour. A lot of what underpins intergenerational work is tackling stereotypes and fear.
- Support networks – the role of expert bodies such as the Beth Johnson Foundation provide vital advice, information and best practice guidance.

Whilst isolation affects urban and rural areas alike, the following example – a good neighbour scheme – features an approach in the countryside that has been rolled out across a number of areas, as well as highlighting the role that parish councils have played in kick-starting action within their communities. An important message underpinning this approach is that community self help in rural areas cannot be assumed; good neighbour schemes help to fill the gaps in social support that exist within communities.

Good Neighbour Scheme – Suffolk

Suffolk Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE) launched its Good Neighbour Scheme in July 2003 as a way of tackling rural isolation by creating a network of sustainable, individual Good Neighbour Schemes around the county. Despite the apparent affluence and quality of life associated with rural areas, approximately 20 per cent of residents experience social exclusion mainly as a result of their low incomes, inability to access services and higher costs of living. However, their circumstances remain largely hidden from public view because in the majority of rural communities, affluence and poverty exist side-by-side and the need is not picked up by the most widely used government statistics.

Demand for a Good Neighbour Scheme is usually identified in parish plans, though some schemes have come about from a direct approach from parish councils and other local groups. For each scheme a team of volunteers is raised to offer a variety of help, principally to the elderly and vulnerable, although any resident can use the scheme.

The services offered include befriending the elderly and the lonely; giving lifts especially to doctors' surgeries and hospital appointments; minor domestic repairs especially checking smoke alarms and changing light bulbs; help with filling forms and advocacy; and help with pets, especially during a resident's stay in hospital.

The aim of the Good Neighbour Scheme is to:

- fill any gaps in networks of care in a community and to put help within reach of every resident of a community
- provide structured volunteering with support from Suffolk ACRE. All volunteers are subject to Criminal Records Bureau checks so that we can quickly build confidence in the scheme locally.
- encourage partnership working, such as referring a client to another agency if their needs go beyond the scope of the scheme: this might be Age Concern, Social Services, 'Meals on Wheels', a Carers organisation, or any of a number of other agencies.

A Good Neighbour Scheme Co-ordinator has been responsible for developing the 20 schemes that are now up and running around the county. Other partners include Suffolk HomeShield, The Suffolk Older People's Strategic Partnership, Age Concern Suffolk, The Rural Coffee Caravan Information Project, The Suffolk Advocacy Forum, Mid Suffolk Action Partnership, the Healthy Adults and Communities Sub Group of Suffolk Coastal Local Strategic Partnership. The beneficiaries of the project include older and vulnerable people in all the parishes served.

(Continued over page)

Good Neighbour Scheme – Suffolk *(continued)*

Funding

A start-up grant of at least £500 is sourced for each scheme, which pays for a mobile phone; Public Liability and Group Personal Accident Insurance; criminal record (CRB) checks on volunteers £7.50 each via the Suffolk Association of Voluntary Organisations (SAVO) identity cards for volunteers, publicity and stationery.

Most start-up grants have been sourced from county councillors' Locality Budgets, but also from the Suffolk Community Safety office, Suffolk Coastal Community Safety Office, Mid Suffolk District Council, Forest Heath Community Safety Co-ordinator; Forest Heath Crime Reduction Partnership; The Adnams Charity and Community Champions. Once it is up and running each scheme needs to be self sustaining through fund-raising and donations.

The key outcomes and benefits

- There are 21 schemes that are now up and running around the county and a further 11 villages are considering or actively planning to set up a scheme. Suffolk ACRE has developed a toolkit which helps communities to set up and launch their own scheme, and provide guidelines for volunteers. Since the Good Neighbour Scheme was featured on The One Show on BBC 1 the toolkit has been sold to twelve more out-of-county organisations.
- Older and vulnerable people are able to remain living in their own homes as long as possible, reducing pressure on hospital and care beds
- Beneficiaries have better health and stronger sense of wellbeing. Volunteers are mostly older people themselves and they too benefit from better health and wellbeing through being kept active and involved by the GNS.

Overall, the Good Neighbour Scheme has helped to build more cohesive communities. The coordinator who helped to set up most of the schemes running today, describes the Good Neighbour Schemes in this way: '*Every community has good-hearted people who automatically help their neighbours, but the aim of the Good Neighbour Scheme is to fill any gaps in this network of care in a community and to put help within reach of every resident of a community*.'

As a result of work with the Good Neighbour Scheme Suffolk ACRE was invited to join the Safe & Sound Group, a police-led multi-agency panel which combats distraction burglaries. Consequently, individual Good Neighbour Schemes have signed up to an initiative called Nominated Neighbour which helps safeguard elderly and vulnerable people from bogus doorstep callers.

A feature of many projects that have been up and running for some time, and which aim to support people in their communities is that they often provide a range of benefits, as well as helping to achieve lifetime neighbourhood objectives. For example, schemes that aim to address access and transportation issues for older people often also have positive impacts on sociability and inclusion. The project below, based in Northumberland, illustrates an approach that is taking place across many rural areas, and which needs to be nurtured and sustained, as well as replicated.

Northumberland Rural Access Project

This project covers the most isolated areas of England's most rural county, Northumberland. The scheme is operated by Age Concern. It aims to maintain independence in older people by providing opportunities to go shopping, socialise, and take part in cultural and arts activities. Clients of the service are taken out in small groups to shops and market towns – both locally and further afield.

The outcomes of the project have been quite startling, with some participants being able to buy their own goods for the first time in years. One woman was overcome with emotion at finally being able to visit the 'new' supermarket which had been built in her nearest town 12 years ago. Another client was delighted at being able to buy Christmas presents for her grandchildren for the first time in many years.

To make the service as effective as possible, there are three key elements:

- Targeting. The service targets only those older people in the most rural parts of the county, for whom there is practically no opportunity to go shopping or travel to the nearest market town due to lack of appropriate transport services. Their circumstances might be made even worse by mobility problems or financial issues.
- Client involvement. The project started out following discussions with older people in the north of the county about what kind of services they would like. Now that it is up and running, clients' views are evaluated after each and every trip and they are encouraged to choose the destination of each outing. The project has to be as flexible as possible to cope with this.
- Community involvement. Apart from the contribution of local volunteers to provide support on the trips, the project is guided by local steering groups in each area. These are made up of representatives from local community groups, transport partnerships and social workers, and many key decisions such as eligibility for the service are decided on by the steering groups. This makes the service very responsive to local needs.

See: **www.ageconcernnorthumberland.org.uk/services/**

Meeting social well-being objectives for lifetime neighbourhoods also requires engagement with the way in which demographic change may affect diverse groups within communities in different ways, as well as fostering generic approaches which have a universal benefit for all residents.

Older people, digital technology and enhancing social networks

Digital technology has transformed the way many of us establish, organise and maintain our social networks, as well as to the way we access a wide range of services, and sources of information. The report *Digital Britain* (Department of Culture Media and Sport, 2008) suggests however that those over 65 have not been active participants in the digital revolution. There are many benefits from technology for older people, particularly as a means of connecting with other people and taking part in community life (whether in the community where they live or as a member of a virtual community). Barriers to older people's 'digital participation' include: lack of home access to the internet; concerns about cost, and the security of on-line services; low awareness of the potential of technology; misdirected marketing, focusing either on new gimmicky products for young people, or conversely products to assist very frail elderly people; and of course, lack of skills or knowledge about digital technologies (see Independent Age, 2010). Examples of national organisations that can support older people 'getting connected' include:

- Digital Unite, an organisation dedicated to the digital inclusion of older people by that running national campaign, providing IT teaching and training, online learning and the formation of digital communities, and innovative projects.
  See: **http://digitalunite.com/**
- Digital Outreach, a joint venture social enterprise set up by Age UK (formerly Age Concern and Help the Aged), Community Service Volunteers and CEL Group to deliver large-scale community outreach programmes throughout the UK.
  See: **www.digitaloutreach.org.uk/**
- National Institute for Adult Continuing Education. See: **www.niace.org.uk/**
- Get Digital is a collaboration between various organisations including NIACE and Digital Unite to support people living in sheltered housing schemes to get on-line.
  See: **http://getdigital.org.uk/**

Safe communities

The guidance so far has concentrated upon making neighbourhoods as accessible as possible to residents in both physical design terms and positive aspects of sociability. However, the extent to which people may have negative views about their neighbourhood is as crucial as its physical design and characteristics. A significant dimension is how safe

residents feel, both in their homes and getting out and about. A neighbourhood might already be configured in design terms in such a way that it works really well for any age group in terms of accessibility, but if people do not feel safe, then these efforts are undermined.

Edinburgh – A City for All Ages

Edinburgh is working towards meeting the needs of older people within BME groups as part their approach to developing an age-friendly city, centred upon the *Today and Tomorrow Task Group.* Workers from voluntary sector provide support and services to older people within BME groups in the city. This group helps to meet the mainstreaming agenda within the council, which includes a translation and interpretation service. As well as celebrating cultural diversity in the city, they have produced leaflets and also a DVD of black and minority ethnic older people's experiences of services in Edinburgh. Edinburgh's approach has been recognised across the EU, through the EU Active Ageing of Migrant Elders award.

Two aspect of this issue are addressed here. Firstly, *perceptions* of safety and crime may not coincide with the actual risks that people face in the areas where they live. Further, fear of crime may also be based upon misunderstandings between groups and generations, as well as fuelled by media stories. Intergenerational projects have attempted to diffuse tensions between older and younger people around the issue of community safety, and to build greater confidence within neighbourhoods. The following two examples highlight approaches by local authorities, residents and other stakeholders to use intergenerational approaches to address fear of crime, as well as other positive outcomes for participants.

Edinburgh – A City for All Ages: intergenerational projects

Tackling fear of crime was part of the original strategic aim of A City for All Ages. As part of this aim, an initiative was developed entitled 'a safer Edinburgh for us all', which teamed a group of older people with younger people. This group discussed how to plan to address fear of crime in the city, and included a debate on the fear of crime. As part of these discussions it emerged that older and younger people were usually fearful of the same things, and groups of young people that appeared to be intimidating to other people were often just banding together for their own sense of safety. The initiative also explored the impact of the media on fear of crime.

An output of the initiative was a resource pack including video/dvd, which demonstrates the benefits of intergenerational working at local level to groups of councillors and members of the public.

Leeds Intergenerational approach

'A lot of what underpins intergenerational work is about tackling stereotypes and fear' Practitioner, Leeds City Council

Case example 'Building Bridges 2' (Secondary schools)

Purpose: To bring together Secondary school children (ages 11 – 18) and in particular Year 7 pupils, with local older people, to talk, build friendships and share issues. Using the Building Bridges 2 'circle-time' approach, which incorporates different activities and methods to encourage intergenerational conversations. Building Bridges 2 is a unique intergenerational programme for schools and was established in 2008 for Secondary schools, following the success of Building Bridges 1 in Primary schools. The Building Bridges model is unique to Leeds and has been internationally recognised with a 2007 Eurocities Award, for innovation in an era of demographic change. The programme ran weekly, with approximately 15 participants (eight pupils, five older people, two staff). The core group of older people and staff remained constant, the pupils followed the programme for an approximate ten week cycle, and then a new group of pupils was recruited.

Programme Lead:

Adult Social Care, Education Leeds, independent consultant and a Secondary school in inner-city Leeds.

Outcomes:

- improving attendance, learning and achievement in schools for many of the young people.
- Using the communication skills of older people and children to give increased self-esteem and confidence.
- All children and young people safe and supported in stronger communities.
- Older people feel safer in their neighbourhood.
- Tackling fear of crime.
- Increase the percentage of vulnerable people helped to live at home.

Leeds Intergenerational approach *(continued)*

Funding:

Partly Leeds City Council, partly funding from the Secondary school

Learning:

- the high school environment can be intimidating, therefore the older people were introduced gently, through coffee mornings and other preliminary informal social meetings
- the success of any intergenerational programme is often dependent on the willingness and commitment of the staff involved and the willingness of the school to accommodate the timetabling implications
- many of the younger people benefited as a result of being given time and space to learn how to express themselves
- the older people also benefited; they were pleased to have an input into the lives of local.

The following example also illustrates the role that residents can undertake in helping to address fear of crime and build the confidence of individuals within their communities who may be fearful of spending time out of doors.

Kilburn Older Voices Exchange (KOVE)

Working in partnership with the Kilburn Safer Neighbourhood Team and Camden Crime Prevention, KOVE has produced a DVD on crime prevention. The film features the voices of local older people – sharing their concerns about crime but also giving their own tips about being vigil and keeping safe. Filming involved KOVE volunteers and over forty older people from different community groups including Somali and African Caribbean elders. The aim is to reduce the danger of some older people becoming isolated in their homes due to fear of crime, and help to build the confidence of vulnerable older people, as well as helping to keep people safer. KOVE also run an outreach programme, visiting local groups of older people to raise the awareness about crime prevention.
See: **www.kove.org.uk/**

Secondly, the challenge of meeting the diverse needs of communities in different areas can be highlighted in relation to neighbourhoods where the experience of crime and anti social behaviour is not just about perception but is a fact of daily life. In areas where anti social behaviour is considered to be problematic, a priority for developing lifetime neighbourhoods is about tackling these very negative experiences of places.

- Secured by Design (SBD) is a police initiative to guide and encourage those engaged within the specification, design and build of new homes to adopt crime prevention measures in new developments. The 2010 edition of *SBD New Homes* addresses the community safety and security requirements for most types of housing development including individual houses, housing estates and low rise apartment blocks up to a maximum of five stories above ground level. The design and layout and physical security sections of this edition can be applied to both new and refurbished homes, regardless of their existing or future tenure. Additional information for sheltered housing projects and high rise developments is available in separate design guides available from the Secured by Design website: **www.securedbydesign.com.** As well as housing itself, the guidance also includes recommendations about design features such as footpaths, planting, lighting and communal areas. Further information for local authorities, planning applicants and other stakeholders about the incorporation of Secure By Design features into Design and Access statements can be found at the following:
  www.securedbydesign.com/pdfs/safer_places.pdf
  www.securedbydesign.com/professionals/design_advisors.aspx
- The role of the voluntary sector, community groups and the private sector coming together to self organise and address issues related to fear of crime has been emphasised by the Safer Homes Initiative funded by the Home Office, (**www.grantsadmin.co.uk/saferhomes/index.html**). Partnership working between voluntary and community groups, businesses, community safety partnerships and neighbourhood policing teams have led to a number of good practice examples highlighted in the report *Safer Communities* (Pryde, 2010). A range of target hardening measures were provided to vulnerable people living in areas where there are high levels of crime, or where levels of crime are predicted to rise. While older people are one of the groups least likely to be victims of crime, they are one of the target groups for the initiative, based on the recognition of the impact of the fear of crime amongst older people, and the limitations that this imposes on everyday lives. Students were also the focus of this initiative as student properties are often targeted by burglars.

- Recent research in socio-economically deprived communities in South Wales emphasised the importance of addressing the social environment as a result of changing community dynamics and changes in attitudes, values and behaviour, just as much as physical changes to neighbourhoods that aim to address personal safety. The research developed a hierarchy of solutions based on the views of participants:

  1. Higher police presence
  2. More CCTV
  3. Improved street lighting
  4. Better maintained
  5. Alley-gating
  6. Improved environmental design
  7. Parental responsibility and children exhibiting respect
  8. Effective crime prevention
  9. Tenant checks
  10. Social and community change

  (see Waters, *et al*, 2008)

KEY THEME: SOCIAL NETWORKS/WELL-BEING		
Issue	**Description of approach**	**Further information and case examples**
Helping social networks to develop and reduce tensions between residents and groups	Intergenerational projects	Further information – Beth Johnson Foundation: **www.bjf.org.uk/** National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER). Literature review of effective intergenerational practice: **www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/LIG01/**
Supporting social networks/practical help/ Tackling social isolation	Good neighbour schemes	Case example – Leeds intergenerational projects. 'Neighbourhoods for all' network established by the local authority to support grassroots, community led intergenerational work, especially in primary and secondary schools. **www.leedsinitiative.org/assets/0/706/732/818/824/0c18de6f-0e91-43c2-892a-9e31a714e352.pdf** Case example – Suffolk good neighbour scheme: **www.onesuffolk.co.uk/GoodNeighbourScheme/**
Places for people to meet	community centres/ village halls/ community cafés	ACRE guidance and examples of community owned assets – **www.acre.org.uk/our-work/community-assets/index**
Tackling crime/fear of crime and anti-social behaviour		The role of the voluntary sector, community groups and the private sector coming together to self organise and address issues related to fear of crime has been emphasised by the Safer Homes Initiative funded by the Home Office, **www.grantsadmin.co.uk/saferhomes/index.html** Case example – Kilburn Older People's Exchange – Production by community group of DVD on crime prevention to help reduce fear of crime, social isolation as well as helping to keep people safer: **www.kove.org.uk**

Chapter 9

Housing

Wherever we live as we grow older – whether in ordinary housing or specialist housing – our homes have a powerful influence on our capacity to remain independent, socially involved and enjoy a good quality of life. The housing needs and aspirations of older people have been the focus of much research and investigation, and a number of consistent messages have emerged. The majority of people would prefer to have available and realistic choices about where they live as they grow older, whether it is to remain in their own homes, and where possible make changes and adaptations to their properties should their needs change, or to move to housing that is more appropriate for their needs, which may include housing schemes especially for older people.

Aspirations are also changing, especially as the baby boomer generation enters retirement. Research findings show that key issues for older people are the location of homes in relation to services and accessible transport, as well as adequate space within people's homes, not only for storage, but also in terms of the number of rooms available such as a second bedroom which can also be used to allow people to pursue lifestyle choices (National Housing Federation, 2010; Croucher, 2008). The importance of house designs that work well for people is emphasised by the fact that people in later life spend a greater amount of time in their homes. Research has estimated that older people spend about 70-90 per cent of their time in their homes (Sumner, 2002).

As well as the impact of housing itself on well-being is the immediate environment in which people's homes are located. The Inclusive Design for Getting Outdoors Consortium have highlighted the importance outdoor spaces around people homes in enabling people to get out and about in the areas where they live (**www.idgo.ac.uk/older_people_outdoors/outdoor_environment_qol.htm**) . The focus of this chapter is on the importance of house design and housing-related support services in the context of delivering a lifetime neighbourhood.

In the context of delivering lifetime neighbourhoods, a key challenge is to ensure access to a diverse range of appropriate accommodation options within neighbourhoods (or that are within reach of communities if particular housing options cannot be made available in the immediate locality – especially in rural areas). Ensuring the right mix of accommodation options in any one locality will need to take account of the significant current and future variation in housing demand from one area to another. A range of choices – from standard housing through to sheltered or extra care housing would help to maximise the value of neighbourhoods, and the range of choices available to older people.

There are a number of key statistics that set the context for how housing and housing related support services can help to deliver lifetime neighbourhoods:

- thirty per cent of all households are already headed by someone over retirement age
- older households make up 48 per cent of projected growth in households by 2026, with this figure reaching as high as 90 per cent in some areas.
- seventy-seven per cent of households headed by 65-74 year olds are owner-occupiers, **www.communities.gov.uk/documents/housing/xls/139265.xls**
- ninety per cent of people over retirement age live in general needs housing.

The overwhelming proportion of older people living in general needs housing shows that the emphasis of the lifetime neighbourhoods agenda needs to be on retrofitting accommodation, and in delivering housing related support services across existing neighbourhoods, as well as promoting a greater choice of housing options through new build.

General needs housing

As noted above, the emphasis of the lifetime neighbourhood agenda will be on retrofitting existing accommodation. Where there are opportunities, however, to develop new housing and new neighbourhoods, the emerging policy context suggests that residents, local planners and developers will need to work together to determine future new build developments, taking account not only of the requirements of current needs, but also projections of future demands in the coming decades. Edwards and Harding (2008) have highlighted resources for local level planning that links the contribution that housing and housing-related support services can make within the wider neighbourhood in promoting well-being and independence. A key element of this type of planning is to ensure the engagement of diverse members of local communities, and this engagement must take account of the needs of people right across the life course. For example, although planning for the housing requirements of people in later life is a crucial component of this process, the work by the London Tenants' Federation highlights that lifetime neighbourhoods in London need to embrace affordable, appropriately sized accommodation for families.

Where new housing developments are being planned, it is important to consider both neighbourhood design issues, and the design of individual properties (see also National Housing Federation, 2011). The sixteen design standards that comprise the Lifetime Homes Standards (**www.lifetimehomes.org.uk/**) are intended to add to the comfort and convenience of homes, and ensure that buildings can meet changing needs over the life course. The application of such standards to new build properties can contribute to some older people's aspirations to stay in their homes for longer, however provision should be proportionate to need. Property design is outside the scope of this report, but details are available from a range of sources, including, for example: **www.skills.homesandcommunities.co.uk/whatwedo/showcase**

Although new properties can be designed to improve access, and accommodate a wider range of needs, many people live in homes that need some adaptation or alteration, or simply need maintenance and repair. The English House Condition Survey identified some 4.8 million homes (22%) of the 22 million homes in England as having a Category 1 HHSRS hazard. In more than 50 per cent of cases this was due to exposure to risk from excess cold, and the hazards in the majority of the remaining cases were related to the risk of falls. The Building Research Establishment demonstrates that money invested in improving poor housing conditions could result in significant reduction on demand for and spending on health service (Nicol *et al*, 2010), highlighting that the costs of remedial work to address Category 1 hazards is – in many cases – relatively low. The Chartered Institute of Environmental Health has also highlighted the importance of investment in private sector housing, reporting that one in three low income home owners live in homes that do not meet their needs in terms of accessibility or adaptations (CIEH, 2011).[4]

There are a number of services that can support older people to both make choices about their housing, and also assist them with a maintaining, adapting and improving the conditions in their homes. Such services include handyperson services and Home Improvement Agencies (sometimes called Care and Repair or Staying Put schemes).

Good information is a key component of housing related services. First Stop is a free, independent advice service for older people and their families. It is provided by the Elderly Accommodation Counsel and a number of local and national partners (**www.firststopcareadvice.org.uk/**). The service can assist with a wide range of housing concerns.

Many older people, particularly older home owners, find it difficult to undertake small repairs and essential maintenance in their homes. Various organisations including local authorities, housing associations and voluntary sector organisations offer 'handyperson services' which are intended to assist people with a range of small jobs and minor repairs in their homes. In 2009/10 DCLG allocated around £33m over the period 2009/2011 to support the development of handyperson services across England. This funding has been used to set up new handyperson services or extend existing services. From April 2011, handypersons funding will be rolled into Formula Grant payment to local authorities and it will be for individual local authorities to decide how much funding to allocate to handyperson services at the local level.

[4] The CIEH has also produced a cost calculator that allows the health costs of poor housing to be weighed against repair and improvement costs, see: **www.cieh.org/policy/Good_Housing_Leads_to_Good_Health.html**

A number of services have set up innovative projects, addressing a range of local needs and extending the range of services that can be accessed, as the two case studies below illustrate.

Wirral gardening service for people with dementia

Gardens are often a source of anxiety for older people generally, however for people with dementia and their carers there are particular issues about security in the garden, but also a need to enable people to continue doing something they enjoy in the outdoors even if with some assistance. As part of a wider project in the Wirral to improve services for people with dementia, Wirral Home Improvement Agency has established a gardening service for people with dementia. Handypersons from the HIA have been given additional training on how to work with people with dementia. The handyperson will do work in the garden or support people who want to do their own garden but need some help. Although initially the service was free, it now operates with a small charge to service users. Many service users have opted to have a regular gardening service, as apart from helping people keep their gardens tidy and secure, it provides a regular visit from a known and trusted handyperson and sometimes a break for carers.

Knowsley Smart House

The Knowsley Health and Wellbeing Partnership (which includes the Primary Care Trust, Social Services and other council services) has worked with Knowsley Housing Trust to set up a Smart House in Knowsley which has a range of different assistive technologies installed in a domestic setting. Local people can arrange to visit the Smart House where they can see and try out a range of different equipment and aids that can help maintain independence in their homes. Group visits are also encouraged. Trusted assessors are on hand to explain what is available and how things work, and the same individual who shows people around the Smart House will follow up with visits to install the equipment people have chosen. People of any age can arrange their own visits and do not require a referral from their GP or other service; however if they have complex needs they can also see an Occupational Therapist when they visit the Smart House or be put into contact with specialist services. The service has helped to significantly reduce the waiting list for occupational therapy assessments, and has 'gone down a storm' with the local older people's forum. See: **www.careandrepairknowsley.co.uk/SmartHouse.aspx**

Beyond small jobs or maintenance, many people often require assistance with the organising and paying essential maintenance to their homes, or with accessing grants, such as the Disabled Facilities Grant that enables disabled people to have major adaptations and alterations carried out, or grants to improve thermal conditions (for example, improving heating systems and insulation). Home Improvement Agencies are local not-for-profit organisations that assist people who own their own homes or live in the private rented sector and who are older, disabled, or on a low income to repair, improve, maintain or adapt their homes. Home Improvement Agencies are sometimes known as Care and Repair or Staying Put Schemes. Information about the role of Home Improvement Agencies and the type of services they provide can be found on the website of Foundations, the national body for Home Improvement Agencies in England (**www.foundations.uk.com/home**).

Specialist housing for older people

There is considerable variation in provision of specialist housing for older people, and a confusing range of names given to housing schemes that allow independent living in your own home but with additional support and care to facilitate ageing in place and opportunities for social activities and contacts that can help reduce social isolation and feelings of vulnerability (Housing LIN, 2008).

Research evidence gives a number of consistent and positive messages about specialist housing, but also raises some important questions about what specialist housing can and cannot do and what it should look like in the future (see for example, Frontier Economics, 2010; Homes and Communities Agency, 2010). Studies have shown that residents in specialist housing schemes are often very happy with their accommodation and the services that are offered, and believe that such schemes are good options for later life. We know that at the heart of people's decisions to move to such schemes is the combination of independence and security that they offer; and perhaps an unexpected bonus for some is feeling part of a community and having more opportunities for companionship and social activities.

Some older schemes do not meet current design standards around access, or offer accommodation that is very small and in some cases difficult to let. As policy has moved in recent years towards providing support and care to people in their own homes in the community, there is also an issue about how the needs of existing residents in older schemes are sufficiently taken into account. We also know that older residents who have lived in some specialist housing schemes a long time are fearful of some of the changes that have taken place in their schemes, for example, the replacement of resident on-site warden or managers with managers who are only available for certain hours, and the introduction of alarm systems that ring to a central call centre.

In addition, the independent *Housing our Ageing Population Panel for Innovation* (HAPPI), commissioned by the HCA, with funding from the Department for Communities and Local Government, looked at the future of housing for older people. The panel's report published in December 2009 addresses four questions:

- Why is meeting older people's housing needs a national priority?
- What kind of housing will meet our needs as we grow older?
- How can this housing be delivered?
- Who can make this happen?

In addressing these questions the report provides a number of exemplar schemes from both the UK and Europe that demonstrate the best of innovative design and innovation in housing for older people. The report also makes a series of detailed recommendations for the key organisations both in the public and private sector to facilitate future development of housing for older people. The report, as well as a package of on-line resources for designers and developers, is available at:
www.homesandcommunities.co.uk/Housing-Ageing-Population-Panel-Innovation

A common criticism of specialist housing for older people is that it separates the generations; however, many schemes are deliberately designed to act as hubs for older people living nearby, or to have facilities that can be used by the wider community. Hanover , a national provider of housing for older people, reports a number of examples where specialist housing schemes have provided the focus and location of a range of initiatives to improve links between different groups within the community. Examples include: residents from one of Hanover's schemes having lunch at a local school regularly, where they are hosted by the children; young offenders providing a gardening service; and young people with learning disabilities assisting with gardening tasks (**www.hanover.org.uk/public-affairs/inpractice**).

KEY THEME: HOUSING		
Issue	**Description of approach**	**Further information and case examples**
Providing housing choices for people throughout the lifecourse	Design guidance on housing and neighbourhoods for all ages	Further information – design guidance for housing and neighbourhoods on the archived CABE website: **www.cabe.org.uk/housing**; see also: **www.buildingforlife.org/home** New information about CABE and the Design Council will be available from April 2011: **www.designcouncil.org.uk/** The sixteen design standards that comprise the Lifetime Homes Standards (see **www.lifetimehomes.org.uk/**), but also see Manchester's Design for Access 2 for an alternative: **www.manchester.gov.uk/site/scripts/download_info.php?fileID=3521**
	Specialised housing options for older people	Further information – Housing for an Ageing Population Panel for Innovation (HAPPI) was commissioned by the Homes and Communities Agency: **www.homesandcommunities.co.uk/Housing-Ageing-Population-Panel-Innovation**
	Support tools by housing providers to facilitate housing and neighbourhood design	Further Information – Habinteg is developing a new on-line tool to bring together guidance, good practice, research and case studies on all aspects of Lifetime Neighbourhoods: **www.lifetimehomes.org.uk/pages/lifetime-neighbourhoods.html** Further information – Homes and Communities Agency – resource for practitioners and community groups identifying practice examples and guidance on a range of key themes relevant to lifetime neighbourhoods (including built environment, community empowerment and housing): **http://skills.homesandcommunities.co.uk/**
Supporting people to live in their own homes	Housing related support services	Further information – Home improvement Agencies **www.foundations.uk.com/home** Further information – advice for older people (led by the Elderly Accommodation Counsel) **www.firststopcareadvice.org.uk/**

Chapter 10

Lifetime Neighbourhoods: The Starting Point

The central ideas and developing concepts of lifetime neighbourhoods have been outlined above, and examples given of how different aspects of lifetime neighbourhoods have been taken forward in different places and by different organisations to address local concerns and priorities. Currently in the UK the process of taking forward lifetime neighbourhoods is relatively new, although cities such as Manchester, Newcastle, Edinburgh, Southampton and London have put forward long term strategies to make age-friendly cities. As emphasised in this report, however, a considerable range of existing design guidance, projects and service delivery models already contribute to the development of features that promote and support lifetime neighbourhood objectives, even if they are not 'badged' as part of the lifetime neighbourhoods agenda. For example, key principles such as the promotion of walkable environments are well established and embedded in urban design. Reviews of service delivery models in rural areas are another case in point (see for instance Cabinet Office, 2009).

The potential new agenda around localism is starting to be articulated (**www.communities.gov.uk/localgovernment/decentralisation/localismbill/**), and it would seem that taking forward the ideas of lifetime neighbourhoods will be an opportunity to fully involve residents and communities in shaping their future neighbourhoods to address the challenges and opportunities of an ageing society. In developing lifetime neighbourhoods the starting point must be an assessment and understanding of how well neighbourhoods already work and also raising awareness of the coming demographic changes and their local implications. Many neighbourhoods are already 'good places to live as we grow older', but it is also important to stress that lifetime neighbourhoods are not just about older people, the underlying principle is that of inclusion: making neighbourhoods work well for people of any age but recognising that an increasing proportion of the population will be older. In many ways the development of lifetime neighbourhoods will provide a crucial test of how the principles of localism can be applied in practice, and how one of the major global changes of the 21st century can be addressed at a local level.

Existing resources to assist with the development of lifetime neighbourhoods

Community-led planning processes and the development of neighbourhood plans will be a key element in helping to shape thinking about how the design of neighbourhoods and the delivery of services within them, currently work for residents and visitors. They will also be crucial in planning for alterations or new design features that may need to take place to respond to changes in the future, including the needs and aspirations of a growing older population. In this respect, resident empowerment will be an essential process as part of fostering lifetime neighbourhoods, to enable individuals and communities to set their own priorities and agendas in order to bring about change in the area where they live, either by their own actions or to work with providers and commissioners to get the services that they need. There are a range of evaluation tools from other countries, especially the USA and Canada. One example is the *Liveable Communities: An Evaluation Guide* published by the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP, 2005). The guide is intended to help residents identify areas in their neighbourhoods where there are issues of concern and where they can direct their actions for change. It provides a series of detailed survey questionnaires to facilitate resident-led evaluation on different aspects of neighbourhood, including transportation, walkability, safety and security, shopping, housing, health services, recreation and cultural activities, and community. In Canada the Alberta Council on Ageing has produced a resource programme to assist businesses and services assess how 'senior friendly' they are (**www.acaging.ca/senior_friendly_resources.htm**). As already noted, Canada has also developed a toolkit for assessing age-friendly communities in rural areas; Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers Responsible for Seniors (2007) Age-Friendly Rural and Remote Communities: A Guide. Healthy Aging and Wellness Working Group of the Federal/Provincial/Territorial (F/P/T) Committee of Officials (Seniors), Canada (**www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/seniors-aines/alt-formats/pdf/publications/public/healthy-sante/age_friendly_rural/AFRRC_en.pdf**)

In the UK, there are a number of examples where audits of neighbourhoods, and specific features of neighbourhoods have taken place, as a way of helping to assess 'age friendliness', and how well neighbourhoods work for people. Examples cited in this report include:

- *Development of an 'age-friendly' action plan – Eastleigh Southern Parishes Older People's Forum.* A method for focusing thinking at local level about the range and type of issues that go into making up an 'age-friendly neighbourhood' and that could be incorporated into community led planning approaches such as parish plans: **www.espopf.org/**

There are also resources available that include toolkits for street audits that could be applied to foster thinking about how neighbourhoods might be configured to meet future demographic change. For example:

- Living Streets, **www.livingstreets.org.uk/index.php?cID=124**
- Individual local authorities also have examples of evaluation strategies. Information on the 2010 evaluation of Edinburgh's 'A City for All Ages' can be found at: **www.edinburgh.gov.uk/downloads/download/1468/a_city_for_all_ages_final_evaluation**

  as well as engagement processes specifically with regard to the development of lifetime neighbourhoods.
- Manchester's Valuing Older People strategy – development of lifetime neighbourhood in Chorlton.

These and other examples are useful starting points in thinking about how to evaluate a neighbourhood, however in the current climate of austerity, of 'doing less for more' some harder indicators are required that can assist with making the case for lifetime neighbourhoods, and justifying investment. Resources and studies that can assist in this regard include:

- a summary of evidence on the link between physical activity, health and the built environment: **www.livingstreets.org.uk/index.php?cID=124**
- Inclusive Design for getting Outdoors Consortium **www.idgo.ac.uk/index.htm**

An important element of the facilitation role that local authorities and other service providers can undertake with residents is providing information and data that can assist communities in planning for demographic change in the future as part of community planning processes. This facilitation role also extends to the secondary analysis of existing data from a range of sources not only to help with priority setting, but also to help provide a benchmark from which to assess changes taking place within neighbourhoods. See for example,

- Manchester Valuing Older People, Manchester Joint Health Unit: Directory of data sources relating to older people's health, well-being and quality of life in Manchester. **www.manchester.gov.uk/downloads/download/2460/directory_of_vop_data_sources**

Key questions

While pre-existing tools and resources are useful, all neighbourhoods will be different, and each will be starting from a unique point. It would seem that there are a number of questions that need to be addressed to take the process of developing a lifetime neighbourhood forward.

- Who will get the process started?
- Who or what organisation/s should take the process forward?
- What are the existing community groups and organisations? How are they to be contacted?
- How are people who are not part of such pre-existing groups going to be involved? For example: older or disabled, housebound people?
- What is the profile of the neighbourhood or locality? Who lives there now? What is the current age profile?
- What is the current position on services specifically for older people? Are there any changes already planned?
- What is the current position on other types of amenities and facilities? Are there any changes already planned?
- What are the population projections for the neighbourhood?
- How will things be different in the future: the next 5 years, 10 years, 15 years, 20 years?
- What are the best ways to present this information to the local community?

The following checklist sets out the range of issue that residents might want to consider as part of community planning processes and the development of neighbourhood plans. It aims to focus thinking about how well the design of neighbourhoods, and access to services works for different groups within neighbourhoods. It also aims to prompt reflection on the kind of issues that residents may want to consider in terms of how neighbourhoods and services might need to look in response to a growing older population in coming decades. It is suggested that the checklist is considered alongside the features and themes of lifetime neighbourhoods set out in the matrix in Chapter Three.

Checklist:

- How well does our neighbourhood work as a place to live?
- How far does it meet the needs of all the people who live here?
- Are there aspects of the neighbourhood that work well for some people, but not for others?
  - older people
  - families with children
  - young adults
  - children
  - disabled people
  - minority ethnic groups.

- Are there features of our neighbourhood that are highly valued?
  - By whom?
  - Is there a consensus?
- Is there a feature of the neighbourhood, or a service, that we don't want to lose?
- Are there features of our neighbourhood that are less valued?
  - By whom?
  - Is there a consensus?
  - Is there anything we would like to lose?
- How well do we think our neighbourhood will work when there is a larger number of older people in the future?
  - What do we think may be needed in the future?
  - Will new or different services need to be provided?
  - Will the design of the neighbourhood need to alter?
  - How will people be able to access the services they require?

Access

- How well does our neighbourhood work in terms of enabling residents to get out and about? What about the following groups:
  - older people
  - families with children
  - young adults
  - children
  - disabled people
  - minority ethnic groups.
- Are there adequate, safe, well maintained pavements/cycle ways and roads?
- How will access around the neighbourhood need to change when there is a larger number of older people?

Housing:

- Is there sufficient housing that is affordable and that has the space to enable households to make any necessary changes for example as a result of poor health or impairments?

- Is there a sufficient range of housing, including homes that are well designed to meet needs across the lifecourse, which is affordable and that has the space to enable households to make any necessary changes eg. as a result of poor health or impairments?
- How well does the range of housing choices that are available in the neighbourhood work for:
  - older people
  - families with children
  - young adults
  - disabled people
  - minority ethnic groups.
- How well will the housing choices that are available work when there is a larger number of older people?

Information, services and amenities

- Is there sufficient access to information and advice on housing options, wider services and amenities to exercise choice locally?
- How far do residents have local access to services and amenities?
  - How far do people have to travel if there is no provision within the neighbourhood?
  - How do they get there?

Social networks/well-being

- Are there any tensions between members of the community?
- Can these tensions be resolved?
- How safe do we feel when we go out?
- Does this change at different times of the day?

Thinking about the future:

- How can we plan now for the changes we are going to see in the coming decades?
  - What would be our priorities?
- Can we get involved in the design and commissioning of services?

- Who is already involved from within our community when we talk to service providers or commissioners?
  - Who is not involved?
  - How can we get wider involvement?
- What about the design of the neighbourhood itself?
  - Can changes be made to the existing infrastructure?
  - How will the infrastructure be maintained?
- If a new development is going to take place amongst us or near us, what can be done to make sure it meets the needs of as many people as possible?
  - Are there design features we feel are an absolute minimum?
  - What type of community infrastructure would be of most benefit to the neighbourhood?
- If a change is planned in terms of a service or a design feature in the neighbourhood, will there be winners and/or losers?
  - Can this tension be resolved?
  - What opposition is there likely to be to any planned change?
- What information and data is there available about different aspects of the neighbourhood and who lives here?
  - Who can provide this?
  - Do we need to provide this information ourselves?

Conclusions

A key role for practitioners is in facilitating a consideration of the responses necessary within neighbourhoods to address the long term implications of a growing older population. Planning for neighbourhood change might revolve around *engagement* with residents over individual services or more holistic, place-based design of neighbourhoods and services. More fundamentally, practitioners have an important role in resident *empowerment,* and also in providing information about projected population change within neighbourhoods to assist residents in thinking about how neighbourhoods and service delivery may need to be configured into the future.

Nevertheless, there remain real challenges for residents and practitioners who aim to develop lifetime neighbourhoods, including overcoming limited awareness of the implications of demographic change, as well as the potential for neighbourhood design and service delivery to be more inclusive; lack of political will at local level, as well as severe resource constraints to take this agenda forwards.

Where the strategic long term planning for lifetime neighbourhoods at local level may receive a boost is in relation to parallel pressures on communities to consider change in the future. Mitigation and adaptation strategies that address climate change, as well as community led sustainability initiatives such as the transition towns movement all tend to emphasise local environments and services that also help to facilitate lifetime neighbourhoods. The promotion of self reliant and resilient communities – in urban and rural areas alike – with all that implies in relation to local food production, local businesses and transport use, will also help to support the well-being of a growing older population.

There is an imperative to consider the lifetime neighbourhoods agenda in many rural localities since the implications of a growing older population are already becoming apparent, and will continue to do so more rapidly than in urban communities. Whilst the broad principles that underpin lifetime neighbourhoods are similar for any area, the practical outcomes in terms of priorities and emphases will look very different both between rural, suburban, inner city and town or city centres, as well as within different types of rural area. For example, in sparse areas with scattered communities, notions of walkable environments become secondary to providing affordable access to essential services, either by the way that services are configured to achieve local delivery – including the provision of services within rural communities – or by facilitating integrated transportation. Nonetheless, even in remote rural areas, the principle of walkability retains validity in terms of enhancing health, well-being and safety in terms of road design, and safety measures, albeit in a very different guise to emerging practice for residential streets in heavily urbanised areas.

Finally, this report has set out a number of principles and themes for achieving lifetime neighbourhoods. The issues that residents currently face in terms of the design of their neighbourhoods and the range of services and facilities available vary hugely. The priorities that communities decide upon in order to meet the challenges and opportunities of the coming decades will necessarily be diverse. Furthermore, there is already a huge range of individuals, groups and organisations undertaking projects that help to meet lifetime neighbourhood objectives. We would urge communities, service providers and tiers of government to celebrate this diversity, and to encourage residents to articulate their visions and share ideas and innovation at local level, and more widely.

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ISBN 978-1-4098-2973-7

ISBN: 978-1-4098-2973-7