



Developing Spatial Strategies for an Ageing Population: A Quick Checklist

Developing a spatial strategy is about planning the shape of the place where people live and work. It plays a key role in supporting wider social, environmental and economic objectives to create sustainable communities.

from the ODPM "Regional Spatial Strategy Monitoring: A Good Practice Guide"

A 'future-proofed' Regional Spatial Strategy will address the issue of population ageing as an integral part the future make-up of all communities. It will consider and take into account the impact of demographic change on every aspect of the society and environment within which people live.

1. In the Mainstream

- **Does the Strategy offer the best possible chance of health, well-being and social, economic and civic engagement for older people which meet national objectives of communities being sustainable, inclusive, age-friendly places to live, with homes and an infrastructure that enable and support independent living across the lifespan and offer a decent quality of life in older age?**
- **Will plans ensure that older people can live independently and safely and play an active role in mainstream communities for as long as possible?**

90% of older people live in mainstream housing (5% sheltered housing, 5% care home or other) and over 70% are owner occupiers. As they get older the majority of people will aspire to live in mainstream housing and to play an active role in the community . Creating lifetime homes and neighbourhoods which are flexible across the lifespan, are key to enabling this.

2. Data Analysis

- **Is the Strategy based on robust, accurate, longer term analysis of economic, health data, housing supply and demand projections, current data on demographic trends and the an understanding of changes in people's needs and aspirations as they get older?**

Already 30% of households are occupied by older people and in some localities this figure is higher. Older people are the most important national driver in the growing demand for homes and will make up 48% of all new household growth to 2024 – higher in many areas. Older people are also a major economic force, playing both a increasing role in the paid labour market and also as an important source of unpaid labour as the main age group to volunteer their services across a spectrum of activities.

3. Stakeholder Engagement

- **How are older people being involved in shaping a vision for communities and neighbourhoods that meet older people's needs and aspirations in the short, medium and longer terms?**

No matter what their age, most people wish to be part of their local community and have some choice about where and how they live..

Older people, their action groups and forums can play a key role in planning for an ageing society. Not to actively engage with them is to miss out on a wealth of knowledge, skills and experience.

4. Good Specialist Housing, Infrastructure and Service Options

- **Does the Strategy seek to ensure that there is a range of high quality 'specialist' housing? Is a suitable infrastructure being planned, eg. transport, services that will enable independence for a spectrum of older people?**

Older people are as different and varied when they are older as when they are younger. Thus for an ageing society a wide range of housing options will be needed across both private and social housing sectors, from retirement properties, to supported housing options such as extra care, to innovations such as co-housing.

Better housing and services are also needed for particular groups of older people, including those from black and minority ethnic communities, those who are homeless, have learning disabilities, mental health problems or have specific conditions such as dementia.

6. Making the Connections

- **Does the Strategy reflect the centrality of housing and neighbourhood to health and well-being?**

Housing and the wider built environment is central to quality of life in older age. It is also a key contributor to older people's ability to stay healthy and live independently. Thus poor or unsuitable housing supply and badly designed neighbourhoods will impact on the planners and providers in a range of sectors, including the health and social care economies. The involvement of these sectors in developing the strategy is therefore important to future coherent provision.

7. Meeting the Public Service Agreement PSA 17: Tackle poverty and promote greater independence and well-being in later life

- **PSA 17 is a cross Government target. Housing impacts on three of the five indicators from the local performance framework;**
 - *Healthy life-expectancy at age 65*
 - *Over 65s satisfied with home and neighbourhood*
 - *Over 65s supported to live independently*

The strategy will need to reflect how it will contribute to achieving these.

8. A Shopping List

■ Has the Strategy addressed each of the following with regard to older people:

- Using robust data, does it seize strategic opportunities to plan for every aspect of population ageing, based on a positive, inclusive model of active ageing?
- Is there active engagement with older people in the shaping and design of the Strategy?
- Does it look at both the economic implications and opportunities of an ageing population in terms of skills and workforce?
- Are the current and future transport needs of the whole community included?
- Are the principles of Lifetime Neighbourhoods and Lifetime Homes Standards in new build in all sectors embedded in the Strategy?
- Does it including provision and encouragement of lifelong learning and development?
- Has future proofing been incorporated into all plans for regeneration, and housing improvement in all sectors?
- Have all aspects of housing for an ageing society been considered, including new build and the repair/ adaptation of the existing stock.
- Is a better supply of supported housing options being based on accurate population projections, particularly with regard to growing levels of BME elders, disability, special needs, dementia etc
- Is improved inclusion in and access to all services being addressed including paid and unpaid work, education and leisure.

Summary of the Key Messages from Older People Relevant to Planning Sector:

What older people want

- ***Transport*** that is accessible for all to facilitate other activities.
- ***Lifelong Learning*** opportunities to be available to all members of the community.
- ***Employment*** should address both the existence of the older skilled workforce and training opportunities for further employment to improve income and support the local economy
- ***Access to cultural and leisure activities*** of a wide variety
- ***Active Citizenship*** to enable positive engagement with and involvement of older citizens in communities through a range of opportunities, including volunteering.
- ***Housing*** that is well designed with growing older in mind; it should meet the needs of all age groups. All homes should be built to the ***Lifetime Homes standard***.
- We want housing that is both ***affordable to heat and light*** and which is sustainable in terms of the environment.
- ***Design of public space*** should be user-friendly and safe – including the provision of seating and public toilets.
- We want access to green, private space, and a ***safe neighbourhood***. We want housing that is ***accessible*** to good local transport, facilities and amenities.

- **Access to independent information and advice** is vital for all to play a full part in the development of sustainable communities.
- We want support to stay living in our own homes. We need reliable **repairs and adaptations services**, and that bit of help around the home.
- But above all, **we want to be listened to**, to be involved in the design of everything that will affect us, from planning and lifetime homes standards, to the creation of safer, inclusive environments..

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Care & Repair England is a national charity established in 1986 to improve the housing and living conditions of older and disabled people. Its aim is to innovate, develop, promote and support housing policies and initiatives which enable older and disabled people to live independently in their homes for as long as they wish.

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