Creating places that work for Women and Girls

Handbook for Local Authorities, Developers and Designers

Dedication

As Chair of London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC), it is an honour to dedicate this handbook to the late Pam Alexander OBE.

Throughout her illustrious career, Pam had a passion for good design and high-quality public spaces, putting people at the heart of placemaking. In her role as LLDC Board member, Pam was instrumental in placing a major LLDC policy focus on the safety of women and girls.

This work has continued to flourish over the last few years, spanning across all areas of LLDC's work – whether that be day-to-day park operations, planning policy or in the design of future developments.

It was a pleasure to work with Pam and the wider LLDC Board to advance this work, and I hope she would be proud of the progress we have made to date. This handbook is just one part of the brilliant legacy she leaves behind.

I'd also like to pay tribute to LLDC's Women and Girls Safety Board, the Women and Girls Stakeholder Group, and all those who work to enhance safety and inclusivity in the Park.

When we create spaces that work for women and girls, we create spaces that benefit everyone.

Peter, Lord Hendy of Richmond Hill

Chair, London Legacy Development Corporation

Foreword

The design of our urban environments reflects societal structures and for many years, the intersectional needs of women and girls have not been explicitly considered in the design of our cities.

The tragic murders of Sarah Everard and Zara Aleena and other women in recent years has brought the issue of gender informed design and urban planning into sharp focus, and individuals and organisations alike are assessing the role they can play to ensure the safety of women and girls in urban spaces.

Of course, no one individual, organisation or industry can tackle the multi-faceted issue of gender inequality and how it is reinforced in the design of our urban environments independently.

Only a collaborative, multi-disciplinary approach to city-making will help to address the complex mix of challenges women and girls face in public spaces, and we all have a part to play. This Handbook goes some way in articulating what this can look like in terms of practice.

The public safety of women and girls is a priority for the Mayor of London and this Handbook contributes to a suite of documents that are being developed to inform how we reflect and address the needs of women and girls in the design of our public spaces. These include the Women's

Night Safety Charter, MOPAC's Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy and the Women, Girls and Gender Diverse People: Safety in Public Spaces report. While this Handbook has been developed with the LLDC context in mind, the intention is that it could and should be used by local authorities, built environment professionals and practitioners across London and much further afield to allow them to adopt a gender inclusive lens to design and urban planning.

The implementation of gender inclusive design will help us create neighbourhoods that work for women and girls and become destinations of choice for people to live, visit and work, helping us to build a safer, fairer and more inclusive London for all.

Jules Pipe CBE

Deputy Mayor for Planning, Regeneration and the Fire Service

Foreword

Since 2021, LLDC has engaged with over 600 women and girls, listening to their experiences and perception of safety on Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park and surrounding areas.

This engagement informed our award-winning 'Safety of Women and Girls Consultation Report' - published in May 2022 in collaboration with Arup - and provided an evidence base to inform our work to create safer and more inclusive spaces.

That report revealed a clear link between how we plan and design the built environment and gender equality.

Factors such as public lighting, the distribution of land uses, security measures, and natural and passive surveillance all play significant roles in shaping the experiences of women and girls in urban environments.

Over the last number of years, we've been working in close collaboration with stakeholders on several positive interventions. These include the development of a Safety Charter, as well as initiatives to improve lighting across the Park and to create teenage girl focussed spaces.

This Handbook is the next step forward in our work to create more inclusive spaces. It shines a light on the relationship between urban design, planning and gender equality, and highlights how consideration of the intersectional needs of women and girls can be integrated into planning and design processes.

Such learnings can and should also be applied more generally to wider populations of vulnerable people, as we look to drive change that can positively impact all.

Indeed, the Handbook offers a step-by-step guide that seeks to influence the way the built environment is shaped to deliver equitable spaces and offers practical and easy to use tools that will help built environment professionals integrate inclusive thinking into the heart of a project lifecycle.

From proposals such as establishing a gender inclusion champion to identifying opportunities for women and girls to co-design projects that align with their needs, a variety of solutions are presented that can help individuals and organisations challenge the status quo of embedded gender biases in urban design.

These proposals have been directly informed by and co-created with a diverse group of local women and girls, and the many local and international stakeholders who have been involved in the Handbook's development.

I'd like to extend my thanks to all those who have shared their insights, experience and expertise, including LLDC's Built Environment Access Panel and Quality Review Panel, the Growth boroughs, Mayoral Design Advocates and the GLA, Make Space for Girls, and UN Habitat (Her-City Programme).

Lyn Garner

Chief Executive, London Legacy Development Corporation

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Executive Summary

A more inclusive world benefits everyone, prompting the need to reshape how we design cities for diverse communities.

In the context of gender, town planning and urban design are often perceived as gender-neutral, assuming that people of all genders are affected in the same way. In reality, cities have been predominantly designed by and for men in positions of authority, lacking an understanding of the lived experiences of women, girls, and gender-diverse people. This approach has embedded gender biases into every aspect of city design, compounding gender inequalities.

Emerging research confirms specific aspects of design which directly impact the lives of women and girls. Urgent action is required to eliminate these biases through the adoption of gender-informed approaches in town planning and design. This handbook sets out practical steps that local authorities, developers and their design teams can take to ensure a gender-informed approach is applied. By incorporating gender-informed urban design principles, built environment professionals can play an important role in addressing gender inequality.

Gender informed approach means:

- Establishing clear commitments for systematic implementation of gender-informed processes in all projects and decisions.
- Adopting mechanisms and governance frameworks to ensure continuity of these commitments and their effective delivery.

- Informing decisions, strategies, and designs based on a genuine understanding of women's and girls' lived experiences through participatory-led approaches. This requires multi-stage data gathering, from evidence-based research to local knowledge acquisition at a project-specific level.
- Adopting a holistic approach, with cross-boundary and cross-sector collaboration with key stakeholders, including education, social services, and policing.
- Measuring impact and successes to identify lessons learned, patterns, emerging trends, and good precedents.

- For local authorities, this includes:
  – Establishing an action plan/corporate strategy.
  – Implementing mechanisms such as gender budgeting and gender-sensitive procurement.
  – Forming a working group to ensure systematic implementation of gender-informed processes, alongside establishing a stakeholders group.
  – Gathering local evidence.
  – Practising Gender-Informed town planning by adopting a gender-informed planning policy, producing planning and design guidance, using planning obligations to secure delivery and long-term management, including collecting financial contributions. Up-skilling development management to support the process.
  – Setting Local Plan objectives/targets/KPIs.
  – Monitoring, assessing progress, and learning from experiences.
- For developers, this includes:
  – Embedding gender-informed principles in the development brief.
  – Nominating a gender champion and ensuring diversity within the team.
  – Engaging women and girls through a participatory-led approach (e.g., exploratory walks).
  – Collecting gender-disaggregated data.
  – Informing design based on participatory assessment and other collected data.
  – Demonstrating approaches taken through the planning process via submission of relevant planning documents.

Key objectives

To ensure that the voices and lived experiences of women and girls are incorporated into all development projects, design solutions, strategies, and decision-making processes.

To improve perception of the safety of people and create safer conditions in the public realm.

To help meet the objectives of the London Plan 2021 and LLDC Local Plan 2020.

To complement the LLDC Inclusive Design Standards, Design Quality Policy and other relevant Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD).

To give practical guidance to LLDC and those working within the area on how development schemes and urban interventions can achieve a gender informed urban environment through design and management.

To become a benchmark for gender informed guidance in and beyond London.

Introduction

In cities across the world, women and girls experience a range of physical, social, mental, economic and symbolic barriers and vulnerabilities in public spaces that shape how they go about their daily lives. This includes but is not limited to gender-based discrimination, inequality, violence, poverty, unpaid care work, limited control over assets and limited access to adequate sanitation facilities. These are made worse by global drivers of change such as climate change and rapid urbanisation.

This is a result of a society which, for hundreds of years, has omitted the consideration of the needs of women and girls. The built environment professional sector is male-dominated; data sources are gender-biased; Land use patterns and transportation systems are often designed based on traditional gender roles, where it is assumed that men typically commute to work and women stay at home; urban spaces do not celebrate women in statues, road names, and other monuments. The list goes on.

It is the experiences, priorities and decisions of this male-dominated environment that we have inherited and continue to use today when designing everything from planning policy and criminal laws to residential developments and transport networks. The impact this has on women and girls' safety, health and mental wellbeing, equity and opportunity for progress is immeasurable. It influences how they behave, the places they visit, the routes they walk, the transport they use, the clothes they wear and the opportunities they take. In short, women and girls shrink their lives to navigate safely.

The aim of this project is to challenge traditional views on urban design and planning regarding their intersection with gender equality. The objective was to explore how planning and design could benefit women and girls and address gender disparities.

The handbook is produced to provide practical tools for creating more equitable and inclusive urban places that take into consideration needs of women and girls.

It is written to offer practical tools and share best practices through case studies, aiming to inspire gender-informed processes in urban design and planning. While the participatory-led approach and the overarching goals of the handbook are applicable to any actor in the built environment, the practical solutions provided are specifically tailored for local authorities (including mayoral development organizations) and developers — two pivotal decision-makers in urban development.

Defining 'women' and 'girls'

There is not, and there never could be, a static definition of 'women' and 'girls' that is inclusive of diversity in the identification of gender and in the intersectionality with other personal identities and circumstances. In order to secure equitable environments for women and girls, we must rethink the category of 'women' to include an inclusive range of gender identities beyond the Oxford English Dictionary definition of 'adult female human being'. In this handbook, our definition of women and girls is trans-inclusive and additionally includes those who are gender fluid or prefer to self-describe their gender.

Wider application and future opportunities

Though the handbook is focused on women and girls, the proposed design solutions will ultimately result in the creation of better places for everyone, including gender-diverse people, men and boys and all people with protected characteristics.

While this document is written with empathy towards young men and the complex challenges they face, its primary objective is to address a critical data gap by delving into the specific experiences faced by women and girls. Understanding their experiences and acting on this knowledge has been chronically overlooked and demands attention.

The absence of data from LLDC research on the specific experiences of gender-diverse people is not due to unwillingness to engage but rather difficulty in obtaining relevant information within the project's scope. Nonetheless, the handbook has been tested on live local projects, and nuanced insights from engaging with gender-diverse individuals are detailed in tool **E1**. The gap in data does not diminish the importance of understanding the specific issues faced by gender diverse individuals. We encourage everyone to actively address this gap, comprehending the unique challenges of gender-diverse populations, and to continue adding to the evidence base to inform future application.

It should be also noted that, whilst there is a focus within the handbook on the built environment, this is not to imply that the built environment is the sole solution to this complex problem; quite the opposite. Many other government functions or private sector services may exert even more influence, such as education, health, policing, transport, environmental services, and housing. Cross-sector collaboration is important, and actions set in the handbook will achieve little if looked at in isolation.

Why We Need to Take Action

That cities' design restricts the freedom of women to live their life is unacceptable, moreover, that it can create conditions leading to their assault is unbearable.

Designing cities that cater to women and girls will make public realm safer and more equitable and inclusive for everyone. By adopting gender-informed urban design principles, built environment sector can play an important role in addressing gender inequality. This can ensure fair access to services and opportunities, thereby advancing the socio-economic mobility of women and girls. This will not only improve, protect, and empower the lives of women and girls but will also unlock the full potential of both our public realm and individual developments to influence wider issues such as climate change mitigation, sustainable development, and economic growth.

Adopting a gender informed approach to city planning and design should be understood as an integral solution in meeting the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), of which the UK is a signatory. The Goals target equality, fairness and prosperity for all by 2030.

How to use this document

The following chapters set out steps to navigate through key information to support your role in making effective change:

Part 1 provides evidence from LLDC and international research to inform the reader about the most common barriers experienced by women and girls in public spaces and illustrate how these issues intersect with design and planning.

Part 2 explores your role as a local authority or developer and identifies tools to be implemented at the organisational level, as well as at each stage of a project.

Part 3 is for all parties and sets out how to apply the knowledge through showcasing interventions and case studies to prompt you and your teams to question: How does this apply to my project and scope? How can my project contribute to improving gender equity through these interventions?

Case studies are incorporated throughout to showcase good practice. These examples demonstrate how processes or principles have been successfully applied in various contexts, serving as evidence for the recommendations.

It should be recognised that there is no singular 'correct' approach, nor should this process be seen as a 'box ticking' exercise. The suggestions contained within the handbook should be used to initiate conversation and action about gender informed design and improve awareness of the experiences and needs of women and girls. This handbook should also be used in conjunction with other requirements and assessments, such as the **Healthy Streets Approach**, to ensure that any overlaps are coordinated, requirements are aligned and that the approach to gender inclusion is considered holistically across different areas.

In addition to the tools outlined in this Handbook, there are excellent resources available to further support the implementation of the objectives set forth. One such resource is Her City, a joint urban development initiative by UN-Habitat and the Shared City Foundation. Her City aims to support cities in scaling up and mainstreaming girls' participation as part of their long-term strategies to build sustainable cities and societies. More information about Her City can be found at: https://hercity.unhabitat.org

Further resources and information are provided in Appendix A of this Handbook.

We aspire for this Handbook to serve as an inspiration for more initiatives of this kind. We are committed to sharing knowledge and fostering collaboration to create more inclusive and sustainable urban environments for all.

Embracing Complexity: A Journey of Listening and Learning

We are listening and learning. The handbook has been informed by robust local evidence, including two rounds of evidence gathering involving over 600 women and girls, as well as emerging national and international studies and approaches. In this process, LLDC collaborated with gender equity experts, as well as others who are leading research and campaigning in this field. Most importantly, the work has been directly informed by and co-designed with a diverse group of local women and girls, to whom we send sincere gratitude for providing their expertise and supporting us in this process.

Despite our efforts to incorporate the most recent learnings and to test and adjust the proposed principles, it is important to acknowledge the intricate and multifaceted nature of this subject. The lived experiences, needs and realities of women and girls are incredibly wide ranging.

Many of the challenges we aim to tackle are rooted in social norms, rather than mere design factors. This complexity deepens further when we introduce intersectionality and the concept of gender into the equation, as well as the specific context of particular sites. Recognising the complexity of the topic, it should be acknowledged that the aspiration for the handbook is not to answer all questions but to start the conversation and initiate action.

LLDC welcomes feedback from users, aiming to capture what has worked well and areas that could be improved. This handbook should be treated as a live document, and processes, recommendations and interventions reviewed as new evidence is collected, to refine and collectively work closer towards the mainstreaming of gender inclusion in the built environment.

Glossary – terms and definitions

Some of the terms and definitions below are from the 'Safety in Public Space: Women, Girls and Gender Diverse People' produced by Publica for the Mayor of London. While not all terms are used in this report, we believe they are helpful in terms of understanding the context for the report.

Throughout the report, 'woman'/'female' and 'man'/'male' are used interchangeably and include people of all ages.

Blue space
Outdoor areas that predominantly feature water.

Care work
Work that includes both direct care activities such as feeding a baby or nursing a family member as well as indirect care such as cooking and cleaning. This work is often an unpaid but essential dimension of the world of work (Addati et al., 2018).

Cisgender people
People whose gender identity is in alignment with the gender assigned to them at birth.

Co-design
A design methodology that uses creative and participatory approaches with the aim of sharing knowledge and power in the design process (Beyond Sticky Notes, 2022).

Developers
Organisations and landowners with decision-making responsibilities that procure land and finance projects, in addition to design team members they employ including urban designers, architects, landscape architects,transport professionals, engineers, project managers and contractors.

Gender diverse/transgender
Interchangeable umbrella terms for people whose gender identity and/or gender expression exists on a spectrum outside of their sex assigned at birth.

Gender equality
A human rights issue that refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of all genders.

Gender equity
Refers to equal outcomes across genders, which may require specific interventions (such as benefits, opportunities and resources) for those who have historically been excluded.

Gender sensitive
Ensuring that a particular action (e.g. project, policy, behaviour, etc.) proactively involves, listens to and gives power to people on an equal basis and avoids bias towards or against a particular gender.

Gender-informed
An approach to decision making that includes an explicit understanding of how gender dynamics shape both the problem and appropriate responses.

Gender mainstreaming
The process of integrating a gender perspective across all policies, plans and programmes in a given institution.

Gender norms
The generally held social beliefs about how different genders should and/or do behave.

Green space
Outdoor areas predominantly covered by vegetation.

Intersectionality
Term to describe how systems of inequality based on gender, gender identity, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, class and other forms of discrimination 'intersect' to create unique dynamics and effects (Center for Intersectional Justice, 2022; Crenshaw, 1989).

Local authorities
Local, combined and devolved authorities or specialist organisations who have a planning function such as development organisations.

LGBTQIA+
An abbreviation for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual. The plus at the end refers to the many other communities and gender/sexual identities that exist.

Participatory engagement
Participatory engagement is a collaborative decision-making process that involves key stakeholders and beneficiaries of a project, such as development or a strategy. It aims to understand their lived experiences in depth and how projects will impact their lives. This approach incorporates various methods, including exploratory walks, co-clienting, co-designing, and similar techniques. By incorporating the perspectives gathered through these methods, participatory engagement ensures that any decision or intervention in the built environment responds to the needs of the people involved.

Public space
The space between and within buildings that is publicly accessible (e.g. pavements, alleyways). Some internal or elevated spaces can also be considered as part of the public realm, such as markets, shopping malls, museums or station concourses.

VAWG
Violence Against Women and Girls, which is defined by the United Nations as 'any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life' (United Nations, 1993).

Woman
An adult female. This includes both cisgender and transgender women.

Call for action

While this handbook was developed within the LLDC context, its principles are applicable to other local authorities and developers beyond the LLDC area. Therefore, we advocate for the broader adoption of the gender-informed processes outlined in this handbook.

We recommend that local authorities incorporate the handbook into local legislation and policy, leveraging feedback from live projects to refine legislation, policy, and approaches to gender-informed design relevant to local contexts.

Although the work is grounded in current available information and knowledge obtained through extensive research and engagement with women and girls, further research is necessary to address existing gaps. Refinement efforts are also required to ensure continued improvement.

We encourage stakeholders and those involved in design and planning to become *champions* of the handbook and advocate for the adoption of a gender-informed perspective in design and planning activities.

Break down silos and collaborate with organisations in intersecting sectors, as only by leveraging collective expertise and building partnerships can we address the multifaceted challenges faced by women, girls, and gender-diverse individuals in public spaces effectively.

This could involve:

Implementing gender informed design solutions at all project stages.

Improving awareness of gender related challenges.

Training to further people's understanding of gender inclusion.

Promoting male allyship.

Keeping informed about latest legislation, policy and schemes impacting on gender inclusion.

Engaging with women, girls and gender diverse people.

Sharing good practice and lessons learnt to continue to evolve gender inclusion.

Pledging to advocate for gender inclusion, including raising voices of women, girls and gender diverse people.

Fostering positive relationships between organisations and the community.

Part 1:
Setting the scene

Experiences, context and aims

Part 1 provides evidence about the most common barriers experienced by women and girls in public spaces.

Experiences, context and aims

Understanding lived experiences

This section presents some of the lived experiences of women and girls that are common and transferable to other public spaces and locations. The questions presented have been taken and consolidated from the lived experiences shared with us during the consultation and co-design activities for this project, as well as global research.

The following pages expand on each of these questions, highlighting the challenges that women and girls have communicated to us, and expanding on the items that local authorities and developers need to consider and action as part of their work. These questions are a good reminder of why it is crucial to assess impacts in a coordinated way that goes beyond the site boundary. **This is not to say that presumptions should be made; therefore, participatory-led engagement is key to understanding specific issues of the local community in the project context, alongside this evidence base.**

Which mode of transport should I use?

Walk/Cycle/Drive/ Public Transport

How much time do I have?

Should I take a short cut?

What time of day is it?

Morning/Afternoon/ Evening/Night

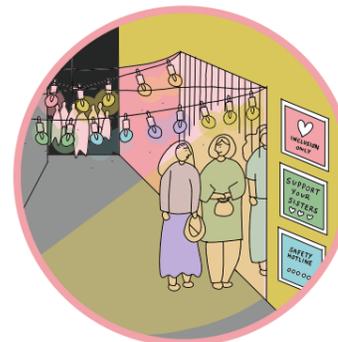**Who am I with?**

Children/Adults/ On my own

What am I wearing?

Footwear/Clothing

How busy are my surroundings?

Is this positive or negative?

How visible will I be to others?

Can I see where I am going?

Which mode of transport should I use?

Is my journey to/from the train station or bus stop safe?

Who else is here?

Will the station be accessible?

Am I going to be safe if I travel at night?

In cities around the world, many women and girls feel unsafe when moving through public spaces. Across London, women are nearly twice as likely as men to list personal safety as a barrier to walking, cycling and taking public transport. Sexual harassment is one of the most common barriers, ranging from staring and catcalling to stalking, indecent exposure and non-consensual physical contact. Girls in the UK as young as ten years old have experienced sexual harassment, with over half of all girls aged 13 to 18 having received unwanted sexual comments in public. In addition, 62-73% of transgender people in the UK have experienced public harassment and violence, including sexual assault and harassment. Sexual harassment can have extremely damaging implications for its survivors, affecting their confidence, health, opportunities and quality of life. Whilst there are seemingly safer travel options, like the use of a personal car, these might not be an option due to financial reasons.

Transport hubs can be just as unsafe for women and girls as the transport itself. Train stations and bus stops are often centres for crime and anti-social behaviour, particularly at night when they lack lighting, visibility and passive surveillance.

Transport hubs can also be a space for people to gather and dwell, which may have both positive (sociable) and negative (anti-social) impacts, depending on how these are designed.

Public transport can also be unreliable. In the absence of real-time information systems, women and girls regularly must wait for unknown lengths of time, making them feel more vulnerable.

An additional barrier to women and girls' mobility is road safety. Women and girls experience and perceive road safety differently from men and boys. Fast cars, narrow pavements and limited crossing points can all contribute to creating an unsafe and intimidating environment for women and girls who opt to walk from A to B. Women and girls are also less likely to cycle than men and boys, due to a lack of cycle lanes and issues surrounding confidence and harassment.

Unpaid caring responsibilities can also limit women and girls' transport options. Whilst men typically follow the 'home to work and back again' travel pattern, women, more generally, make a succession of shorter trips throughout the day, known as 'trip chaining'. This increases women's reliance on a more expensive and time-consuming combination of public transport facilities, or personal car use.

Inaccessible public transport or poorly designed walking and cycling infrastructure is another barrier for women wanting to move through public space, especially for those with reduced mobility and/or with children. Where step-free access, lifts (designed to feel safe) and unobstructed pathways are lacking, women and girls who are users of wheelchairs, canes, or prams are at a particular disadvantage.

Ask yourself: How can we design places where everyone feels safe and comfortable to use sustainable transport methods?

How much time do I have?

Should I take a shortcut?

**Does this space feel safe and welcoming for me to dwell and wait in?**

Do I have to pick up the kids from school?

The expectation that women and girls are primary caregivers is a key challenge globally. More commonly than men, women and girls must balance work and education with errands and caring responsibilities, such as looking after children, visiting older relatives and grocery shopping. Women around the world perform at least two and half times more household chores and unpaid care work than men, resulting in less time to engage in paid labour, education, social activities, and leisure. The pressure of these duties can lead to women and girls moving through public spaces that they typically would not perceive to be safe, such as taking shortcuts through side roads and alleyways. These options often lack adequate lighting, maintenance and surveillance, whilst fostering anti-social behaviour and crime; all of which can negatively impact on both perceptions of safety and actual safety.

We have spoken about lack of time, but spaces for women and girls to dwell and wait are equally important. However, some spaces in our cities are designed to be more easily used by groups of men, rather than for women and girls. An example of this might be the multi-use games areas (MUGAs) in the UK.

Ask yourself: Does design prioritise the safety and comfort of women and girls, especially considering their additional care giving responsibilities and potential need for spaces to dwell and wait?

What time of day is it?
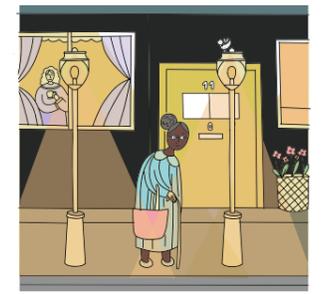
Should I wait on the train platform after dark?

Should I take the longer, but better lit route home?

Who will be around when I finish work at midnight?

In cities after dark, peoples' perception of risk increases, with a combination of factors contributing to this. A key factor is lighting and visibility. Dark routes and spaces can cause fear and unease, whilst poorly implemented lighting can also increase feelings of insecurity. Another consideration is that unsocial working hours lead to people needing to access services for health and well-being at night.

Many cities cannot afford high-quality lighting year-round, and balance is needed to minimise the impact on wildlife. Limited passive surveillance at night is another factor, as it can foster feelings of isolation and vulnerability. In contrast, night-time spaces dominated by large groups of people, particularly men and boys, can be intimidating.

The daytime comes with its own challenges. Busy periods, such as rush hour, can impede the safety and accessibility of public spaces (e.g. for disabled people or those travelling with prams). The additional visibility and surveillance that comes with travelling during the day can also put some people on edge, causing them to be hyper vigilant and modify their behaviour.

Ask yourself: How do we make it possible for more women and girls to occupy public spaces at all times of day and after dark?

Who am I with?

Will I be able to chest/breast feed if I take my baby out with me?

Will I have access to adequate sanitation facilities?

Will I be safe if I walk home on my own?

Will I be vulnerable (or feel vulnerable) to harassment from others?

Travelling alone can increase negative perceptions of safety, as well as feelings of isolation and vulnerability. However, women and girls moving in groups, particularly at night, can also garner unwanted attention, intimidation and sexual harassment.

People also face accessibility issues when travelling with others, due to narrow routes, a lack of ramps, accessible toilets, baby changing facilities and breast and chest feeding spaces.

For older women, disabled women and children, who may need the toilet more often, and non-binary and transgender women (who may face violence for using public facilities and spaces where others perceive they should not be), the impact goes beyond inconvenience, from increased wait times, impact on physical and mental health and on their confidence to leave the house.

Ask yourself: How can facilities be provided that will make people feel less vulnerable?

What am I wearing?

Will I be harassed because of the fit or length of my clothes?

Are people going to treat me differently because of my clothing choices?

Can I run in these shoes?

As a result of common misconceptions surrounding sexual violence, women and girls often feel the need to change how they present themselves in public spaces. In the UK, for example, 55% of men and 41% of women believe that a woman is more likely to be assaulted if she wears revealing clothing. This assumption is not borne out of any evidence and only serves to further entrench victim blaming into our society. People are opting to wear darker, oversized clothing and headphones to avoid harassment.

The type of shoes people wear can also influence the routes they take. When wearing trainers, women and girls may choose to follow a route they wouldn't typically perceive as safe, such as through a park, as they would be able to run away if necessary. Women may avoid wearing heels or shoes that cause echoes to feel less vulnerable.

In the public realm, consideration of walking surfaces (to consider comfort and safety) and seating (to provide privacy), amongst other things, can be designed to better serve women and girls.

Ask yourself: How can the design of public spaces make women and girls feel more comfortable?

How busy are my surroundings?

How many men are around?

Should I take the quieter route home?

Should I walk through the city centre?

In quieter spaces, people's perception of risk to safety increases due to a lack of visibility and passive surveillance, leading to feelings of isolation and vulnerability. Busier spaces, however, especially those featuring crowds of men, can also be intimidating. As such, people may avoid certain spaces, such as side streets with spill out from bars and clubs, in order to feel safer.

People may feel safer in a populated space if that space is dominated by other women and girls or by a more diverse population in general. Globally, over the last few years, there has been a rise in women-only spaces and queer spaces, including bars, nightclubs, gyms and public transport. Whilst such interventions have received backlash from some, many people have responded positively. They should be implemented with care, and in consultation with the community, as not to exclude transgender women and women of other identities and to make sure that these spaces are not designed in isolation from connecting spaces.

Ask yourself: How can design and planning be used to minimise potential conflicts of use and provide options that cater to different people's needs?

How will I be visible to others?

Can I rely on help from that police officer?

Will CCTV cameras be able to identify me?

Am I safe to be present as my true self?

Am I e-connected?

Can I see where I am going?

Sightlines that allow you to see your surroundings and where you are going, as well as both passive and active surveillance in the public realm, are important considerations.

Whilst surveillance, such as police presence, CCTV and passive surveillance, can make some people feel safer and more visible in public spaces, it can have a negative impact on others. For people whose identity or characteristics make them feel more vulnerable to harassment, surveillance can provoke feelings of fear and cause them to alter their behaviour. These identities and characteristics include race, ethnicity, faith, disability, age, gender identity and sexual orientation.

The evidence from the LLDC **Safety and Belonging for Women and Girls in Public Spaces** report, and participatory events from this project also show that women and girls rely on staying e-connected with others when out, so data coverage and charging points will be of particular importance.

Ask yourself: Do we know enough about the community using this place to make key decisions?

Policy context

National, London, and local planning policies, as outlined here, require inclusive and accessible environments for all users. However, there is currently a lack of planning and design guidance to support the implementation of these policies concerning gender equality and meeting the needs of women and girls. This handbook seeks to fill this gap by providing guidance and tools for incorporating gender-informed principles into planning and design processes.

Policies

Equality Act 2010
The Equality Act 2010 is a law that protects people from discrimination based on protected characteristics. The Public Sector Equality Duty it is a legal duty under the Equality Act that holds public bodies responsible for proactively promoting equality.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021
The NPPF requires planning policies and decisions to achieve 'healthy, inclusive and safe places' and 'to provide the social, recreational and cultural facilities and services the community needs', which may benefit women and girls from a holistic perspective.

London Plan 2021
Policies: D5 Inclusive design, D8 Public realm, S3 Education and childcare facilities, S4 Play and informal recreation, S5 Sports and recreation facilities, Policy S6 Public toilets, HC6 Supporting the night-time economy, T2 Healthy Streets.

LLDC Local Plan 2020
Policies: Policy BN.6: Requiring Inclusive Design– ''Lifetime' neighbourhoods that can be enjoyed by everyone, regardless of disability, age, gender, sexual orientation, race or faith.'

Other relevant Local Plan policies: BN1: Responding to Place, BN.4: Designing Development, BN.5: Proposals for Tall Buildings, BN.9: Maximising Opportunities for Play, T.9: Providing for Pedestrians and Cyclists, S1: Health and Wellbeing, S.12: Resilience, Safety and Security.

Supplementary Documents
The handbook is not to be used in isolation. LLDC have a suite of policy and guidance documents to be used alongside, including but not restricted to: Planning Obligations SPD, Evening and Night Time Economy SPD. Other relevant documents: LLDC Inclusive Design Standards, Design Quality Policy, and Park Design Guide.

UN Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs)
SDGs seek to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls (Goal 5). To achieve the goal, gender equality must be a key focus of national policies, budgets and institutions, with political leadership, policy reform and appropriate investment needed.

Driving Policy Change

The difficulties encountered by women and girls in public spaces are becoming widely acknowledged. Many commendable initiatives have been initiated to address these challenges. However, there remains a need for clearer planning policies. This necessity is gaining momentum, driven by the ambitious efforts and research of various organizations and charities, including the Greater London Authority (GLA), Make Space for Girls, and LLDC. Tower Hamlets and Newham have already embraced this by proposing specific gender-informed policies in their draft revised Local Plans.

Further research and policy documents are listed in **Appendix A**.

Initiatives

Mayor of London Women's Night Safety Charter
Reference to this charter is required by LLDC in the planning of new developments, the design of individual venues and their operation in the LLDC area. The guidance does not specifically outline inclusive design. However, recommendations for design considerations, which may benefit women and girls, are included.

Mayor of London Public London Charter
The Public London Charter sets out principles that landowners and managers of public spaces need to follow to ensure that any new public spaces in London are safe, accessible, attractive and inclusive.

GLA Good Growth by Design
A programme to ensure that the built environment supports and enables the aspirations of Londoners. The programme promotes efforts being made across the GLA Group to support quality and inclusion. It notes an aspiration to create a city that is safe for everyone, particularly women, girls, and gender diverse people.

GLA 24 Hour London
This document outlines the importance of providing vibrant opportunities for all Londoners, regardless of gender and gender identity and the importance of the safety and wellbeing of residents, workers and visitors to provide a welcoming and accessible nightlife.

Build Back Better High Streets and 'Safer Streets Funding for High Streets'
Vision 4: Create safe and clean spaces includes specific measures related to women and girls. This Vision links to the 'Safer Streets Funding for High Streets', which includes £70 million allocated to help improve the safety of public spaces for all and help combat violence against women and girls.

Homes England Inclusive Spaces and Places for Girls and Young People
This guidance was designed by Homes England to help local authorities understand the key elements of considering teenage girls in planning and where to access further information and support.

Unlocking Wider Benefits through Gender-Informed Approach

Gender-informed urban design promotes equity by ensuring inclusive and accessible public spaces, enhancing well-being and opportunities for all. Additionally, it drives economic growth by facilitating women's engagement and generating economic gains, while also contributing to sustainability by creating environmentally conscious and community-oriented spaces.

Equity

Women and girls make up 51% of the UK population and so it is our moral responsibility to ensure that they feel comfortable and are empowered to use the public spaces that we design. Good design will be good for everyone, considering all identities, circumstances and intersectionalities. Good design will improve opportunities for participation and access to green and blue spaces, and thus improve health and well-being.

Economy

The importance of gender equality in urban design extends beyond social justice and inclusive design; it is a vital component of a city's economic development. The layout of urban spaces has a profound impact on women, particularly those involved in shift work, influencing their active engagement in the city's economic activities. For example, professions like care work and nursing, common among female night workers, are substantially affected. The challenges hindering women from entering these fields extend beyond urban design, impacting the strain on the entire healthcare system and its contributions to economic growth.

Accelerating gender equality in the public realm will directly generate economic gains through the equitable distribution of opportunities, resources, and choices. This is particularly crucial in the LLDC area, which has experienced unprecedented growth. High-profile developments such as the East Bank will bring unparalleled investments and job opportunities to the area, and appropriately and equitably designed public realms will play a key role in unlocking and enabling residents to access these opportunities.

Sustainability

The climate crisis is not 'gender neutral' and has a disproportionate impact on women and girls, which in turn amplifies existing gender inequalities.

In a research study from 2022, 76% of survey respondents believed access to green and blue infrastructure is vital in making an area a healthy place to live.

Not providing access to these spaces will create limitations in choice for mobility across the built environment, especially in relation to sustainable and affordable modes of transport (walking, cycling, public transport).

The key to sustainability lies in the longevity of the spaces we create, eliminating the need for constant demolition and reconstruction, which poses challenges such as embodied carbon emissions. This could be avoided in part by engaging with the local community, ensuring everyone's voices are heard, including women and girls, who can provide insights into the needs of the broader community, allowing neighbourhoods to be designed in a way that genuinely reflects everyone's needs. This would promote sustainable, long-term plans and encourage better environmental consciousness and active participation in community life.
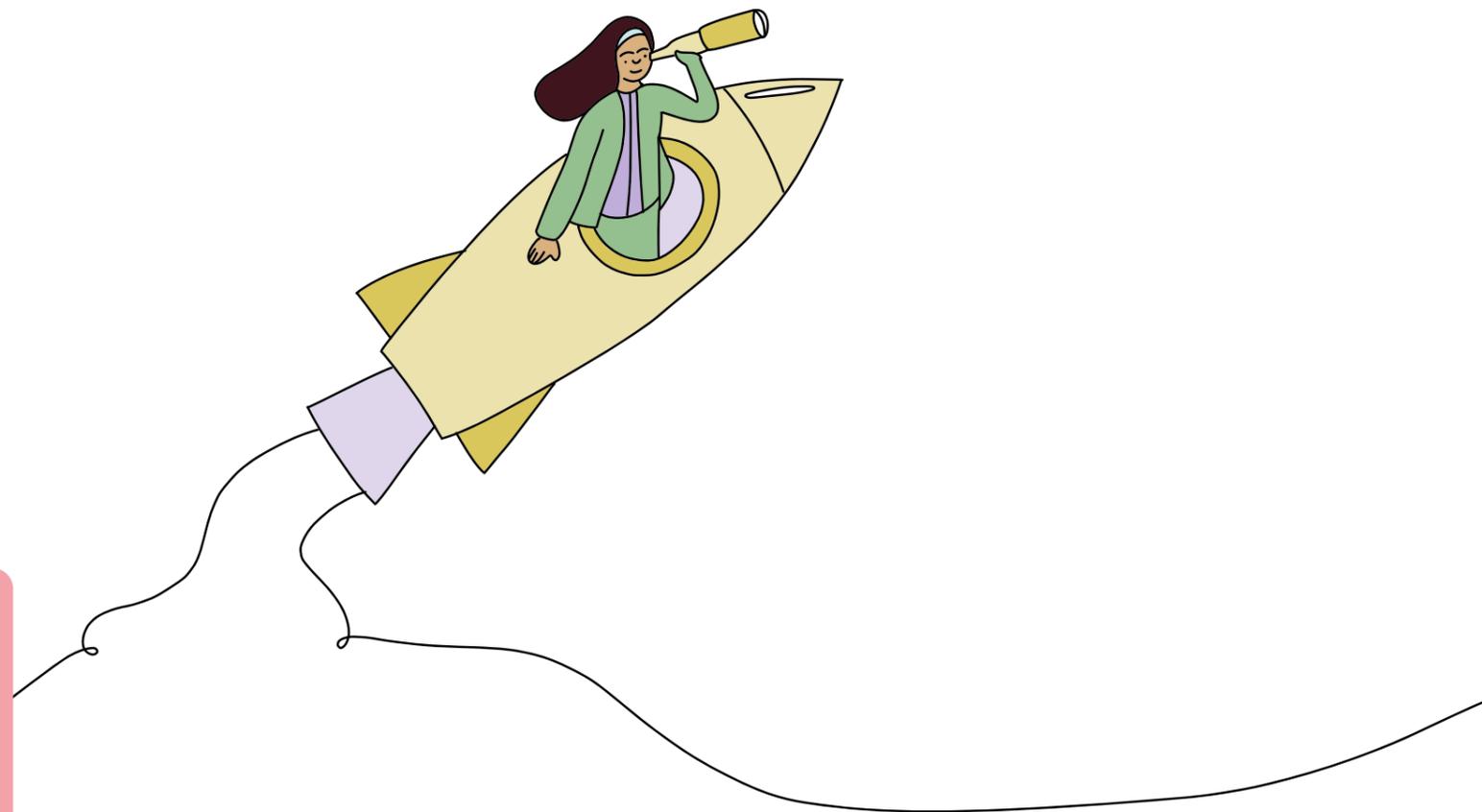
Building on Evidence: Our Baseline for Improvement

LLDC project context

The primary objective of this document is to ensure that all relevant development projects and decisions made within the LLDC area take into consideration the voices of women and girls. The goal is to improve upon the baseline established in 2021, which identified common issues experienced by women and girls in the area.

The evidence was collected in 2021, and findings are reported in the document "Safety of Women and Girls **Consultation Report**. " (Consultation Report) dated May 2022. This handbook is intended to pinpoint actionable steps that LLDC and developers can take in their decision-making and development projects to improve upon this baseline.

The Consultation Report identified seven hotspot areas, listed below, which were reported by participants as feeling unsafe and unwelcoming. Further details of the hotspot areas are provided in the Consultation Report. Diagram A indicates the general location and extent of these areas. The seven hotspot areas are:

- Stratford International and Westfield.
- Pudding Mill Lane
- The Greenway
- Canals and waterways
- East Village
- Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park – North
- Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park – South

Public realm interventions and developments falling within the hotspot areas must specifically address the issues outlined in the Consultation Report and provide evidence of how they intend to make improvements. This approach aims to foster a coordinated and holistic improvement strategy, rather than addressing issues in a piecemeal manner.

However, this does not negate the importance of conducting site-specific participatory-led engagement and data collection. We also anticipate that the baseline and evidence will continue to be updated as we gather knowledge through engagement with women and girls on a site-by-site basis and as the area continues to change.

It is recommended that no more than every five years, new site-wide evidence is gathered to understand how the actions of this handbook have impacted the baseline and reassess this list of hotspots.
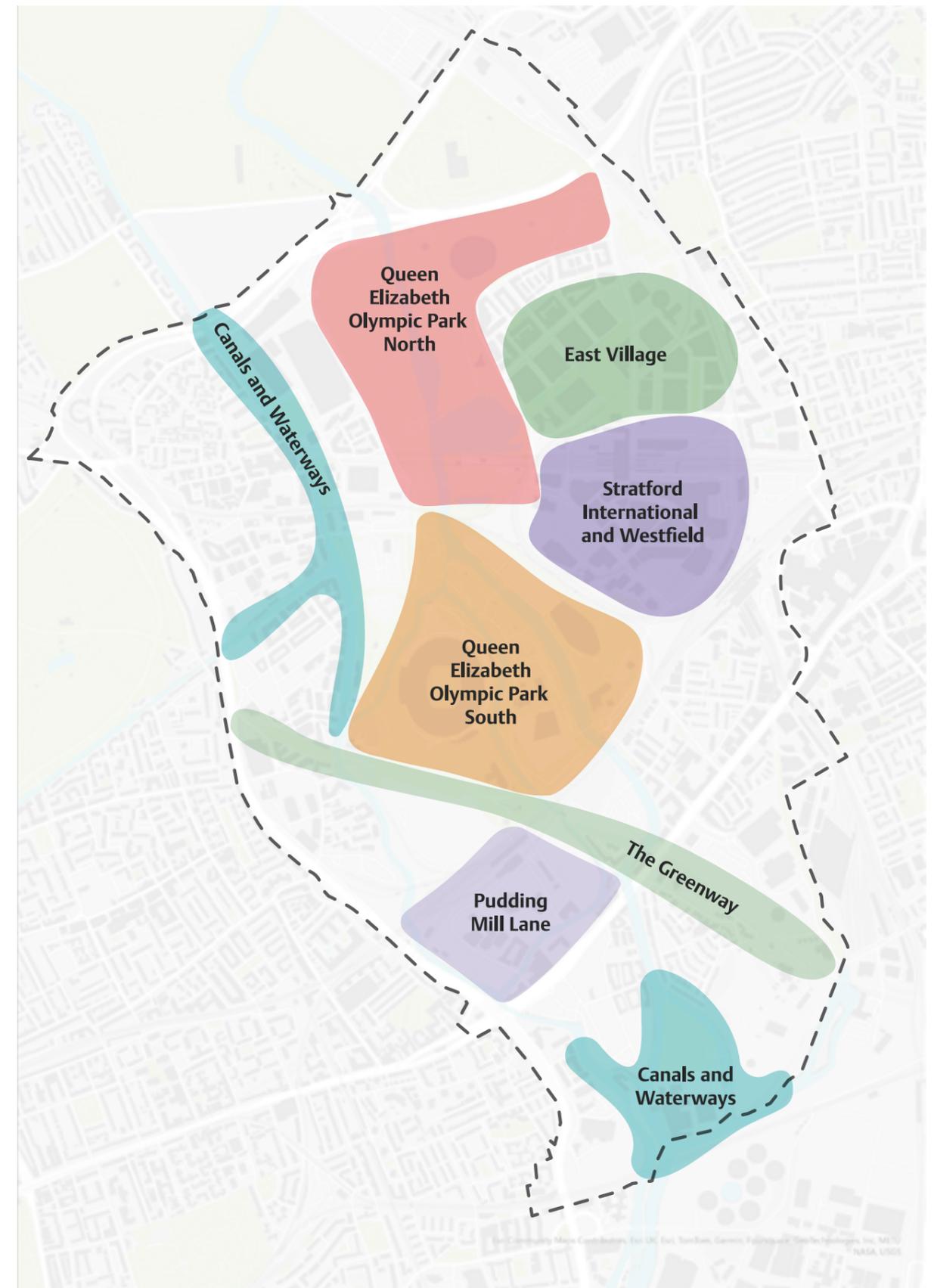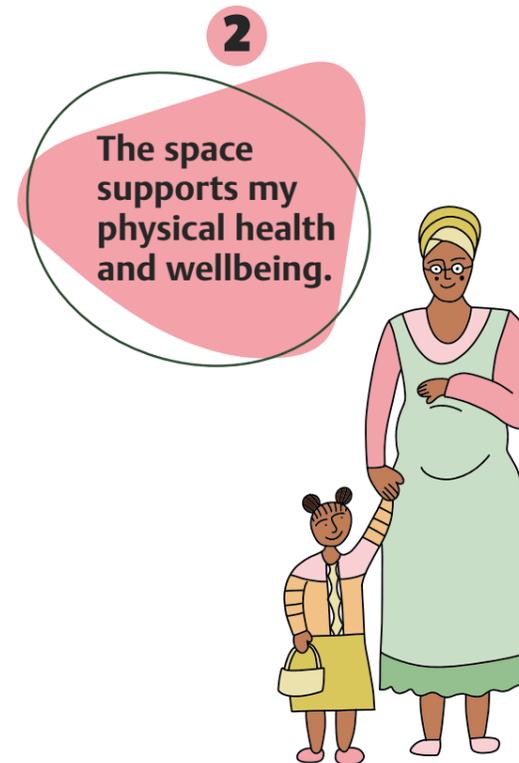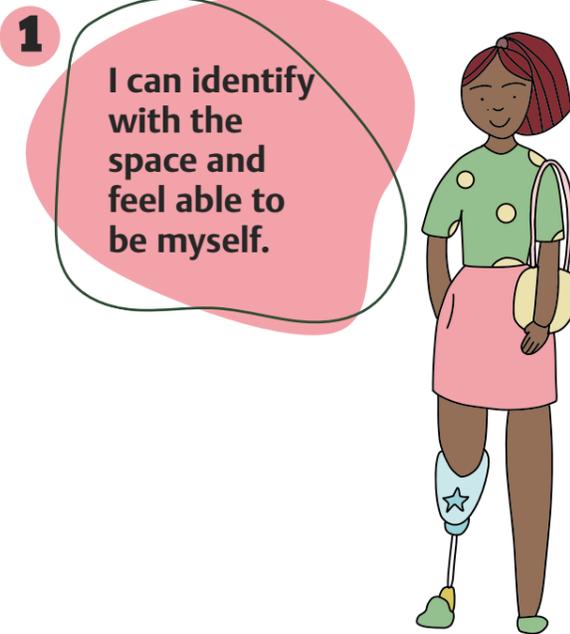

Diagram A – LLDC boundary and key hotspot areas as identified in 2021.

Five aims to guide you when taking action

1 I can identify with the space and feel able to be myself.

2 The space supports my physical health and wellbeing.

3 I can make choices and have influence over the space.

4 There is action being taken to include people in this space.

5 My journeys feel seamless and efficient.

To achieve gender-informed places, we encourage you to use the following five aims, that have been identified through our collaboration with women and girls, whilst thinking about actions and solutions in this handbook. The aims define the attributes of a 'positive space' as identified by women and girls in research and consultation for this project.

The Five Aims

1) Sense of ownership, belonging and identity
I can identify with the space and feel able to be myself. I quickly and easily know what the space is about. I have a sense of belonging and inclusion here. I care about the space.

2) Health and hygiene, comfort and safety
It is safe and comfortable for me to be here. I am happy to stay as long as I want. The space supports my physical and mental health and well-being.

3) Empowered and enriched
I can make choices and have influence over the space. I am aware of the location of appropriate facilities, information and activities. I can make informed decisions about where I want to go and where I want to be.

4) Accessibility and access to public realm and services
There is action being taken to include people like me in this space. There are suitable communication methods to support my hearing and visual requirements. I can access the services and facilities I need.

5) Mobility and connectedness
For me, the space is well connected to the wider context and there is a social presence. I have a choice of active travel and public transport options. My journeys feel seamless and efficient.

Part 2: Mainstreaming Gender-Informed Processes

Actors and tools

Part 2 highlights key actors and tools to create a gender-informed environment

PLAY

KIOSK

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Actors and their tools

This section outlines the roles of key actors and tools that can be used to enhance gender equity in the built environment.

The core message underlying the tools provided in the handbook is that achieving gender equity is a process that relies on partnerships and collaboration among all those involved. It is important to remember that engagement with women and girls must sit at the heart of the process.

Diagram B summarises the key tools for local authorities and developers to consider when applying gender-informed urban design and planning process. It illustrates the cyclical nature of the processes, including the potential interface between project objectives and stakeholder interests. The handbook specifies how these tools can incorporate a gender-informed perspective throughout a development process.

Each of the tools is discussed in more detail on subsequent pages.

Local authorities

Local governments, local planning authorities or specialist organisations who have a planning function such as development organisations.

- **A** Corporate function
- **B** Project board approach
- **C** Planning function

Developers

Organisations and landowners with decision-making responsibilities, who procure land, finance projects, and appoint a design team. They employ several experts including urban designers, architects, landscape architects, transport professionals, engineers, project managers, and contractors.

- **D** Project approach
- **E** Design function

Community at the heart of planning and development

A1 Gender responsive corporate strategies
A2 Gender responsive procurement mechanisms
A3 Gender responsive project financing

B1 Project board
B2 Stakeholder group
B3 Local evidence base
B4 Gender inclusive long-term stewardship
B5 Key performance indicators (KPIs)
B6 Impact assessments
B7 Lessons learnt log

C1 Strategic planning
C2 Infrastructure planning
C3 Development management

D1 Gender inclusion plan
D2 Gender equity champion
D3 Diverse and informed team

E1 Participatory-led Engagement Toolkit
E2 Gender-informed Design Statement
E3 Guidance for construction sites

Diagram B – Summary of the tools for local authorities and developers

Importance of Participatory-led Engagement

The experiences, needs, and realities of women and girls are diverse and influenced by many factors such as intersectionality and site-specific conditions. Therefore, there is no one-size-fits-all solution. The key to creating successful places for women and girls lies
in integrating their voices into decision-making and development proposals through participatory-led engagement methods. This will foster long-term relationships, build trust and empower women to take ownership
of public places and build their capacity to participate in future local decision-making.

Diagram C highlights the difference between enforcing or manipulating development proposals with little or no participation from the community, and the participatory methods advocated in this handbook.

We consider this integral to the current requirement for public engagement, rather than an additional component. It involves a genuine approach to engagement, where participants are involved before the design phase, appropriately rewarded for their contributions to improve design, create better more resilient places for existing communities and new residents/occupiers and remain engaged throughout the process.

To assist in this process, the handbook offers step-by-step guidance on how to prepare and conduct fair and inclusive participatory-led engagement (See Tools E1 and E2).
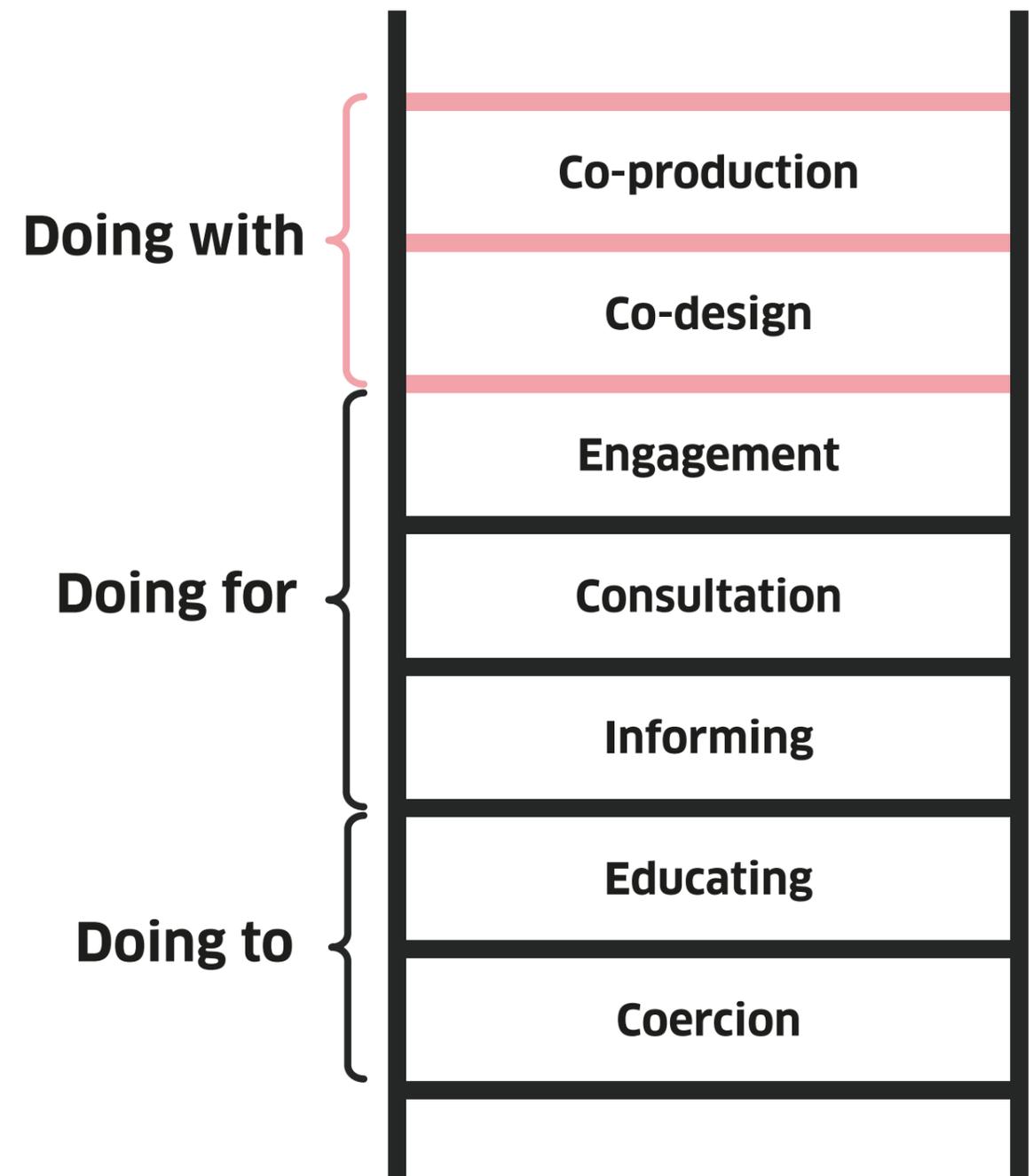
"I really enjoyed the day that was inclusive of local women and girls. In a workshop format we started the day describing existing spaces and our lived experiences. Then we listened to a presentation about Emotion Sound Scope Theory and learned about another placemaking project in the city. This empowered us prior to our local site visits.

We visited local destinations and recorded how the places made us feel. They were a mixture of good and bad examples of placemaking and reinforced the earlier discussions. It was wonderful to see everyone enjoy and appreciate the knowledge. By the end of the day everyone had bonded."

Handbook engagement participant, 2023

Doing with
- Co-production
- Co-design

Doing for
- Engagement
- Consultation
- Informing

Doing to
- Educating
- Coercion

Diagram C – Co-production ladder of participation

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Local authorities

Achieving gender mainstreaming (i.e. integrating a gender-informed process) requires changes at strategic and governance level to ensure that what happens on the ground, achieved via planning and development, is supported comprehensively.

These organisational shifts are essential for encouraging an environment where gender considerations are not only integrated into policies and strategies but are actively upheld and practised throughout all aspects of the organisation's function. By addressing governance structures, an organisation can effectively champion gender mainstreaming, fostering a culture equality in all its endeavours.

Tools have been categorised into three areas:

- **Corporate function ('A' tools)**.
- **Project board approach ('B' tools)**.
- **Planning function ('C' tools)**.

Although this handbook primarily focuses on the built environment, it also recognises that achieving gender equality cannot be achieved in isolation. Planning efforts will not be as successful if other functions within local authorities are not aligned towards the same goal and lack coordination. While this handbook does not cover all functions

held by local authorities, it does address key aspects essential to delivering changes through planning and development. This is because the handbook was written using LLDC experience and our remit is limited to delivering regeneration, development (as a landowner), planning, management and maintenance across the LLDC estate.

We recognise that other functions are crucial, such as housing, social care, licensing and similar services, and local authorities should aim to expand and incorporate these functions. For inspiration on how successfully this has been done elsewhere, we encourage you to explore gender mainstreaming resources prepared by Vienna, Austria.

Local authorities

Local governments, local planning authorities or specialist organisations who have a planning function such as development organisations.

A Corporate function

B Project board approach

C Planning function

Diagram D – Summary of the tools for local authorities

- A1 Gender responsive corporate strategies
- A2 Gender responsive procurement mechanisms
- A3 Gender responsive project financing
- B1 Project board
- B2 Stakeholder group
- B3 Local evidence base
- B4 Gender inclusive long-term stewardship
- B5 Key performance indicators (KPIs)
- B6 Impact assessments
- B7 Lessons learnt log
- C1 Strategic planning
- C2 Infrastructure planning
- C3 Development management

Community at the heart of planning and development

- D1 Gender inclusion plan
- D2 Gender equity champion
- D3 Diverse and informed team
- E1 Participatory-led Engagement Toolkit
- E2 Gender-informed Design Statement
- E3 Guidance for construction sites

A1 Gender responsive corporate strategies

Create gender-responsive corporate strategies, informed by engagement and analysis, explaining how the findings from the local evidence base (**B3**) will be addressed.

The corporate strategies should be fully embedded and integrated with other policy documents and strategies, for example, local transport plans, economic growth strategies and local planning documents.

They should identify any policies or laws which need to be introduced to promote gender equality and set relevant organisational key performance indicators (**B5**) that lower-level policies and strategies should be measured against.

A2 Gender responsive procurement mechanisms

Adopt gender-responsive procurement mechanisms to articulate and evaluate tenders.

Mechanisms should use a balanced scorecard approach and criteria linked to the local evidence base (**B3**) within an area.

Criteria could include:

- Equal opportunities policies adopted by companies
- Women-owned businesses
- Percentage of diverse women in the company at all levels and across all roles
- Training provided on female allyship.

This requirement should extend throughout the supply chain.

A3 Gender budgeting

Gender budgeting is an approach to budgeting that considers the various needs of a diverse population by using an intersectional gender lens to respond to the different experiences of women, men, and gender-diverse groups.

This should include an assessment of how financial contributions generated and secured via development are used, including the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and CIL Neighbourhood Portion.

An example of this can be seen in acknowledging and addressing the unfair allocation of funds between women's and men's sports. Women in Sport, a charity committed to improving sports for women and girls, seeks to rectify budgetary decisions to ensure equal benefits for women and girls alongside men and boys through the practice of 'Gender budgeting'.
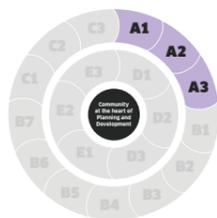
B1 Project board

Practising gender mainstreaming and gender-informed urban design and planning requires a coordinated approach within an organization. This involves establishing a project board dedicated to integrating a gender perspective into all relevant projects and decisions. The project board should comprise of representatives from all departments, encompassing diverse expertise, to ensure a multifaceted examination of the issue from various angles.

Each representative is tasked with the responsibility of representing and informing their department of ideas developed by the project board. This tool encourages a comprehensive understanding of gender considerations and ensures that they are woven into the fabric of every relevant project and decision undertaken by the organisation.

LLDC Women and Girls Project Board

Case Study

LLDC has placed gender inequality in public spaces at the top of its agenda, demonstrating its commitment to addressing this issue. In 2021, LLDC established the Women and Girls Safety Project Board, comprising representatives from various departments including planning, development, park operations and venues, finance, regeneration, procurement, communications and human resources. Monthly board meetings are a crucial platform for promoting collaboration among departments, ensuring a unified and concerted effort toward mainstreaming gender-informed principles. LLDC's success in advancing this initiative is attributed to the support from all departments, providing continuity and guaranteeing that all projects are undertaken with a gender lens. Furthermore, the Board makes sure that collected data is centralised and used to support workstreams. The members act as gender champions, promoting the topics with stakeholders and the community.

For insights into effective gender city-level governance, check out the **Gender Equality Committee of Umeå City**.
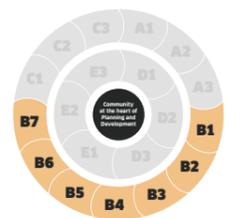
B2 Stakeholder group

Although gender inequity can be spatially reinforced by design, the issue is all-encompassing. This is why the establishment of a stakeholder group focused on gender equity in the public realm is imperative.

Engagement with stakeholders could include, but is not limited to, key landowners, educational institutions, law enforcement, transport providers, local businesses, community organisations and others.

This approach recognises that the multifaceted challenges of gender equity demand a collaborative effort between parties.

By promoting inclusive dialogue among diverse stakeholders, we pave the way for holistic solutions that address the complex interplay of factors contributing to gender inequality in public spaces.

LLDC Stakeholder Group and the Safety Charter

Case Study

The issue of gender inequity goes way beyond the built environment profession or any one organisation; this is why it can only be meaningfully tackled if all stakeholders work together towards a shared vision. For instance, LLDC data highlighted issues related to important factors that are not within the remit of LLDC, such as antisocial behaviour, issues on private land or lack of management of public highways. In response, LLDC created a specialist stakeholders group for the safety of women and girls in the public realm. The group consists of key landowners, developers and construction firms, relevant local education officers, social services officers as well as national and regional bodies responsible for managing public spaces within the LLDC area. The group meets on a regular basis and has signed a Women and Girls Safety Charter demonstrating buy-in and shared responsibility for and commitment to delivering change. Implementation through collaborative and integral work will enable significant change to occur.

B3 Local evidence base

Collecting a local evidence base (or local needs analysis) is crucial in understanding how we make spaces that work for women and girls. While a range of data collection methods could be used, it should be ensured that the process is fair and inclusive. An intersectional approach is also essential so that the data collected represents the diversity of the community.

This process aids local authorities and decision-makers in effectively directing resources towards improvement initiatives and ensuring that decisions are evidence based. It is also a valuable tool for ensuring accountability by establishing a baseline for measuring progress. Additionally, it serves as a resource for developers, offering insights that inform their initial contextual analysis of a place. Evidence gathered should inform the preparation of strategic documents such as local plans, infrastructure delivery plans, corporate strategies and individual projects.

The focus of the local evidence base as a minimum should include engagement with women and girls, and gender diverse people to understand needs. Depending on the project specifics it may also include:

- Legislative and policy background
- Baseline data (e.g. population data, crime statistics, etc.)
- Trend data (e.g. expected trends over a preceding time period)
- Predictive data (e.g. anticipated outcomes of change over time, such as infrastructure requirements)
- Professional assessments (e.g. analysis from subject matter experts, as needed)
- Case studies
- Lessons learnt (**B7**) from other projects, and previous evidence base information.

London Borough of Tower Hamlets (LBTH) - This is for the Majority

Case Study

To inform a review of its local plan, LBTH prepared an evidence base of how women and girls across the borough experience public spaces. The LLDC evidence base served as both an example and a baseline for LBTH, contributing to the definition and expansion of this work. The engagement methods were diverse, inclusive, and designed to anticipate barriers that women and girls might encounter when participating. This included street interviews, digital walks, workshops, and surveys. The initial scoping involved 50 street interviews from which key themes were established, initiating an iterative process that tailored engagement to each theme. For instance, LBTH's community safety team supported anonymous digital walks using Google Maps for safe exploration of spaces. During the walks, women shared details about their chosen routes and discussed the reasons behind their choices. The first phase of evidence gathering concluded with a series of listening exercises with established women's groups and organisations such as Tower Hamlets women's network, the NHS, students at Queen Mary University and Account 3, a charity set up to support women from minority groups. These listening exercises enabled testing of emerging themes and principles. A report of the findings 'This is for the Majority', provides both an evidence base and planning policy recommendations to address identified issues. This has resulted in a draft planning policy that mandates gender sensitive design.

B4 Gender inclusive long-term stewardship

Various individuals and organisations may act as 'stewards' for different aspects of the built environment. They carry out organisation and management duties in either a formal or informal capacity, for instance, management of the UK waterways by the Canal & River Trust. Depending on the scale of the space, this may be in the form of community groups, or a public programming initiative (e.g. at **Canary Wharf**).

Developers, as well as landowners or land managers, should identify and engage with existing stewardship groups within the local area to ensure their active involvement. If a stewardship group does not exist, they should work to establish one, bringing in the women and girls they initially engaged with to ensure the group is representative of local residents and communities. Stewardship training should also be provided.

Stewards should be given an active and valuable role in public spaces, for example, in the planning and delivery of activities and the everyday supervision and maintenance of spaces. This will allow the women and girls acting as stewards to achieve a sense of ownership and belonging in the space.
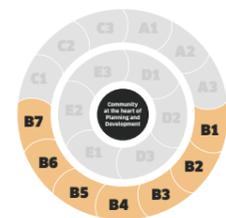
B5 Key performance indicators (KPIs)

Quantifiable KPIs, set by the gender-responsive corporate strategies (**A1**), can measure the success of gender-responsive interventions.

The project board (**B1**) should monitor and report on KPIs.

Gathering feedback identifies changes that may be needed to allow for continual improvement.

Areas and demographics will also change over time and so too will the needs of communities; ongoing monitoring captures whether interventions are still effective over time. The evidence base should be updated no more than every 5 years to capture changes.

Key performance indicators could include:

- Crime statistics directly and/or indirectly involving and/or impacting women and girls
- Perception of safety by women and girls
- Number of women and girls attending engagement events
- Funding for projects with outcomes for women and girls
- Dwell time of women and girls in the public realm
- Number of public spaces such as streets and cycleways named after women and girls.

B6 Impact assessments

Once delivered – and while in operation – any gender responsive intervention should be monitored to identify whether the anticipated outcomes are being achieved. This should include an impact assessment and engagement with women and girl user groups to understand their experiences of the changes.

A coordinated approach to impact assessments between stakeholders is recommended to maximise positive outcomes.

The impact assessment should be conducted by the delivery team (e.g. the developer, if this is a built environment project, or the local authority if this is a plan/policy) and should include:

- Understanding of the evidence base
- Assessment of gender equity aims and key performance indicators (**B5**) against the proposed design, plan and policy, reporting on potential positive and/or negative impacts
- Potential impact on relationships between different groups, and considering intersectionality
- Any key actions/mitigating factors to address the negative impacts identified.
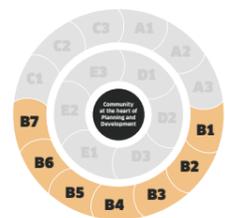
B7 Lessons learnt log

Every project involving engagement should collect gender-disaggregated data. It is essential that local authorities keep a lessons learnt log and share it with other stakeholders to inform knowledge and understanding of the needs of local people, understanding potential differences in relation to gender, as well as the success of interventions.

The lessons learnt log should be used to update the local needs analysis by local authorities. It should also be used on future projects ensuring that knowledge and understanding of best practices is shared and carried forward.

The frequency of reporting and format of the lessons learnt log should be discussed and agreed upon the start of the project between local authorities. It should include:

- Outcomes of any participatory approaches, including feedback received, how it has been addressed or mitigated and clear identification of items to carry forward into the next stage of the project
- Record of any decisions made and how these have addressed feedback received. Where feedback has not been implemented into solutions, clarity on the reasoning behind this is needed and identification of mitigation measures and future solutions to consider as part of wider development in the area.

The lesson learnt log can be shared with the project board (**B1**) to inform the evidence base for the area and policy and infrastructure planner activities and to identify opportunities and ensure that planners can request Section 106 funding to enhance these areas.

C1 Strategic planning

Strategic and local development plans, alongside supplementary planning documents, design guidelines and masterplan solutions, as well as various relevant initiatives, should be informed by the gender-informed local evidence base (**B3**). The evidence base can also contribute to standalone local plan policies that explicitly mandate the consideration of local issues identified by women and girls in all developments, as well as influencing more targeted interventions, such as policies guiding site allocations and highlighting specific geographic areas (identified as 'hot spots' in the **LLDC consultation report**) requiring improvements.

Local plans must also include an integrated impact assessment to assess the social, economic and environmental impact of proposed policies. As part of this, an equality impact assessment can be used to understand the potential impacts (both positive and negative) that the local plan may have on women and girls and address or mitigate these. Similarly, a health impact assessment can be used as a systematic approach to predict the potential health and wellbeing impacts of the local plan on women and girls and identify actions that can have positive effects on health and/or reduce social inequalities.

Local plans should also include key performance indicators (**B5**) to monitor improvements from the baseline condition.

A coordinated approach is necessary, involving neighbouring boroughs in conversations (**B2**), as well as across other policy documents and strategies (including local transport plans, economic growth strategies and other local planning documents) to ensure consistency at scale.

By adopting gender-informed planning policies, local authorities provide developers with confidence and clear guidance from the beginning to ensure a holistic strategy across its administrative area and secure the implementation of the objectives.

C2 Infrastructure planning

Infrastructure planning has an important role to play in creating equitable spaces for women and girls, with infrastructure planners working not only to secure improvements that are necessary to ensure the safety of development, but also to build and manage an evidence base that can inform future investment and policy decisions.

Development should be viewed in its wider context; effective infrastructure planning, particularly the use of Section 106 obligations, can help to secure improvements both within and beyond a site boundary.

Through participatory-led engagement (**E1**), it is expected that safety concerns and a range of potential mitigations, both within and beyond the site's boundary, will be identified. For instance, improving lighting along a key route to the site, delivering a new, more direct route to a site, or activating an underpass that future residents and occupiers are likely to use.

Section 106 obligations will be expected to respond directly and proportionately to the concerns identified during this process to ensure that a development is safe and inclusive for future residents and occupiers and therefore, acceptable in planning terms. Such obligations may be either financial or in-kind.

In certain instances, numerous developments may be coming forward in an area that requires extensive investment in infrastructure to provide a safe environment for future residents and occupiers. In such cases, infrastructure planners may pool Section 106 contributions to reach the necessary critical mass to deliver meaningful change.

The participatory assessment toolkit (**E2**) will also create a rich source of data for local authorities and demonstrate that the Regulation 122 tests are met. It is expected that infrastructure planners will create a record of areas of concern and potential mitigation, which can then inform key documents such as the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and the accompanying Infrastructure List. This in turn opens the potential for Community Infrastructure Levy receipts to be applied to projects identified through the participatory assessment process (**E2**). Indeed, in producing the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP), local planning authorities should ensure consideration of the range of infrastructure required for the safety of women and girls.

Lastly, Section 106 obligations can be used to ensure that the needs of women and girls are considered over the lifetime of a development. In particular, Section 106 agreements can be used to secure ongoing monitoring and reporting to the local planning authority on residents' perception of safety, with the potential requirement for remedial action where concerns continue to exist. This can in turn enrich the evidence base (**B3**).

Where the Regulation 122 tests are met, local planning authorities may also wish to secure 'commuted sums' for the future maintenance of infrastructure required to improve safety and the perception thereof. For example, if access to a site necessitates investment in CCTV infrastructure managed by a third party, such as the local authority, a financial contribution may be secured for its operation and maintenance.

C3 Development management

This tool outlines a step-by-step process for applying gender-informed principles in the development management process.

Policy requirements for gender inclusion are listed on page 22 of this document.

The interventions should be proportionate to the scale and impact of the proposed development on people's experiences and interactions with the public realm and privately accessible open spaces.

Gender equality in urban design, transport, and planning requires an understanding of the topic and the involvement of a diverse range of voices from women and girls in the planning and design process. As a starting point, the key principles should include:

- Ensure that, from the outset, the voices and lived experiences of women and girls are heard, considered, and directly incorporated into the design process. This input should inform the design and decision-making process

- Ensure that a gender champion is appointed within the developer's team to lead participatory engagements. This will ensure that the process maintains fairness, diversity and sensitivity

- Ensure that the gender-informed principles established at the project's inception, through engagement with women and girls, are consistently applied throughout the delivery and long-term management of the development. This includes securing planning conditions and, where necessary, other planning obligations to achieve the project's aims

A step-by-step guide on how to implement these is provided overleaf.

Toolkit for Planning Officer: Gender-Informed Planning Principles

Step 1: Before the initial meeting with the prospective developer

At this stage, the planning officer should:

- Familiarise themselves with gender-informed urban design and planning principles (Read **Part 1 of this report**).

- Initiate discussions with the organisation's gender inclusion project board (**B1**) or gender champion (**D2**).

- Check whether the proposed development is within a hotspot area (Diagram A) and review any relevant evidence base, such as the LLDC Consultation Report, to understand the issues raised. Development within a hotspot area should directly respond to identified issues.

- Consider whether the development is proximate to, and/or relies upon, infrastructure identified as requiring improvements in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan or Infrastructure List and understand the significance of this infrastructure in relation to the objectives of this handbook.

Step 2: Initial meeting with the prospective developer

- Request that the applicant identifies a gender champion(s) (**D2**).

- Communicate expectations that the applicant team should be comprised of individuals with diverse backgrounds (**D2**).

- Brief the applicant on gender-informed design and the relevant hotspot area (**Diagram A**) issues raised in the local evidence base, equivalent to the LLDC Consultation Report. Expectations around gender-informed design and the applicant's role in addressing the issues should be outlined (refer them to this handbook).

- Direct the applicant to relevant infrastructure requirements identified in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and/or Infrastructure List and highlight any implications for women and girls.

- Explain to the applicant the importance of early engagement with a diverse range of women and girls to inform proposals, including the following:
  - For any public engagement activity, the applicant should provide gender-segregated data and demographic information of respondents in the Statement of Community Involvement.
  - To inform site-wide design and strategies, the applicant would need to employ participatory-led engagement (**E2**), with exploratory walks as the preferred method for larger development proposals, to engage with beneficiaries of the proposal (e.g. current and prospective residents and users, university students if purpose-built student accommodation is proposed, etc.).
  - Where an element of public realm and/or open space is proposed, the applicant should involve women and/or girls in design of these spaces, using participatory-led engagement methods such as co-design, co-clienting or similar (E1).

- Inform the applicant of the requirement to:
  - Prepare a Gender Sensitive Engagement Plan (E1) to demonstrate how women and girls will be engaged, outlining the most appropriate participatory engagement methods, and ensuring the process is fair and inclusive.
  - Prepare Gender-Informed Design Statement (GIDS) . Guidance on approaching an acceptable GIDS (E2).
- Offer an optional gender-informed design and planning session to the applicants' gender champion and design team, to provide specialist advice/awareness raising specific to the proposal and improve participatory-led engagement activities (**E2**). This should be secured within the Planning Performance Agreement (including relevant fees to cover planning officer costs).
- Define expectations for gender sensitive design in the applicant's planning submission. Confirm to the applicant that the planning officer report will include an assessment of gender-informed design and that the Planning Decisions Committee will review this topic when considering the planning application.

Step 3: Follow up meetings

- Ensure that the applicant's gender equity champion(s) (**D2**) attends meetings.
- Include gender-informed design and planning as an item in all follow-up meetings to follow the progress of the participatory assessment (**E2**) and emerging design.
- The applicant must demonstrate, throughout the process, how gender principles and the voices of women and girls have informed the emerging design.
- Refer to gender-informed design in written feedback to applicants as a key consideration in planning decisions.

Step 4: Assessment of the planning application

- Consider how the proposal addresses the needs of/improves the environment for women and girls against the existing baseline (page 26) and participatory-led engagement findings (**E2**). This will be demonstrated by the applicant via the Gender Informed Engagement Plan.
- Review GIDS that show the data gathered during the exploratory walk and initiate a conversation with the applicant on the use of Section 106, or other planning obligations, to secure necessary improvements outside the site boundary (**C2**). This process should be part of general negotiation and applicant obligations should be proportionate to the scale of the scheme. Please refer to the **LLDC Planning Obligations supplementary planning document**, paragraphs 11.59 to 11.62 under the heading 'Infrastructure Planning'.
- Engage the local planning authority's internal gender champion (**D2**), gender inclusion project board (**B1**), or, in absence of these, Section 106 officers and the relevant infrastructure team to share the data gathered during the exploratory walk that can be used to inform the local planning authority's Infrastructure List.

Step 5: Planning decisions, officers, and committee report

- Refer to the relevant planning policy, LLDC Consultation Report and this handbook.
- Assess applications on gender-informed design, including:
  - Proposals to achieve gender equity
  - Response to the needs of women and girls
  - Response to the issues identified in the LLDC consultation report and findings from participatory assessment as outlined in a Gender-Informed Design Statement (**E2**).
- Consider the extent of gender-informed design in all relevant aspects of the application (e.g. land use, transport, community facilities, ground floor uses, public realm, landscaping, play space, entrances, lighting, etc.).

Step 6: Construction and post-occupation management

Ensure that conditions and planning obligations are used to secure a gender-informed demolition and construction phase (**E3**) and that post-occupation management is secured long-term (**B4**).

Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy obligations may be used to secure ongoing monitoring of and reporting on, residents' and occupiers' safety and perception thereof. Where applicable, ensure that reports required through Section 106 obligations are submitted in a timely manner and identify appropriate remedial action where required.
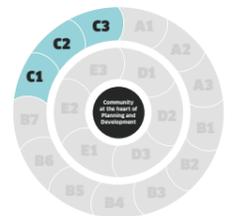
Developers

Developers, landowners and their design teams also have a role in addressing urban challenges faced by women and girls.

Tools have been categorised into two areas:

- **Project approach ('D' tools)**.
- **Design function ('E' tools)**.

The project approach tools deal with overall project organisation and strategies. The design function tools are about the specifics of the project and design implementation.

When should developers apply these tools?

The toolkit at D1, overleaf, is structured to align with the RIBA Plan of Work and its inclusive design and engagement principles, while allowing flexibility to accommodate the varying scale and nature of different projects. While the framework follows RIBA stages, we understand that certain activities may differ depending on the project. For example, in the early stages, a full consultant team may not yet be commissioned, but specialist advisors could be appointed to the client team to provide strategic advice and design input.

The purpose of this matrix is to illustrate that developers can implement the recommendations of the handbook throughout a project's lifecycle, from the initial brief, via stakeholder engagement, design and construction, through to implementation, maintenance and monitoring.

Developers

Organisations and landowners with decision-making responsibilities that procure land and finance projects, in addition to design team members they employ including urban designers, architects, landscape architects, transport professionals, engineers, project managers and contractors.

D Project approach

E Design function

Diagram E – Summary of the tools for developers

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D1 Toolkit for Developer: Gender-Informed Principles

RIBA Stage 0: Strategic definition

At the start of any relevant project, a gender champion from the client team should be identified and appointed (D2). The client gender champion should:

- Conduct initial research on the principles of gender-informed urban design and planning.
- Review existing local evidence data such as the LLDC Consultation Report and relevant ONS statistics to understand the area's demographics and identify barriers faced by women and girls.
- Based on this research, define a vision and commitments for the project, considering how to achieve gender-informed urban design principles to be include in the project brief.
- Ensure that the Inclusive Design Strategy includes a specific section on gender-informed design that reflects previously set vision and commitments. Clearly outline how this will be achieved throughout the project, aligning it with broader social value, sustainability, and diversity and inclusion goals. This section may be further developed with input from consultant gender champion(s).
- Plan time and budget to undertake participatory-led engagement (E1) throughout the project life-cycle.

RIBA Stage 1: Preparation and brief

Based on the Inclusive Design Strategy, embed place and project-specific gender-informed principles within the project brief. Depending on the scale and nature of the project, early-stage engagement can be conducted using participatory-led engagement to inform the project brief (E1 and E2). The extent of the engagement can be adapted to the scale of the project.

An illustrative project brief could include:

- *Integral to [insert project name] is a dedicated commitment to gender-informed design principles and gender equality, ensuring that every aspect of our project caters to the diverse needs and experiences of all genders, fostering a truly inclusive and empowering environment; and that these principles are carried across the life cycle of the project. This includes, but is not limited to, ensuring that the design solutions are directly informed by the lived experiences of a diverse group of local women and girls, as well as being built on the latest knowledge on this topic, such as that found in the LLDC Creating Places for Women and Girls Handbook, Greater London Authority: Safety of Women and Girls, and Gender Diverse People, among others.*

Define the project scope and allocate an appropriate budget to carry out participatory-led engagement throughout the project (E2).

continues overleaf

Appoint a diverse consultant team and an appropriate appointee for the role of consultant gender champion(s) in the project. This could be any member of the consultant team —architect, landscape architect, planning consultant, or engineer. Larger or more complex projects could benefit from multiple gender champions within the consultant team. When appointing the consultant team, it should be ensured that:

- The team is diverse and well-versed in inclusive design (D3).
- The consultant gender champion(s) have knowledge of gender-informed design principles to guide the development of gender-informed objectives.
- The topic of gender-informed design should be included on the agenda of all initial project meetings. The client gender champion should introduce this topic and ensure that gender-sensitive project objectives are integrated into project management elements, such as the program and deliverables.
- Regular inclusive design workshops should be allowed for in project programme, with gender Inclusive design as an agenda item. Gender champions should identify skills gaps amongst the wider team and ways to bridge this through the project lifespan. Such as introducing an inclusion moment and continuing professional development for the client and design teams.

Conduct an initial Equality Impact Assessment (B6) to set expectations, as well as determining how the existing site accommodates women and girls.

RIBA stage 2: Concept design

To inform the concept design, analyse the existing site and its surroundings using gender-informed design principles. Section 3 of this handbook can guide site analysis. This should include participatory-led engagements to understand how women and girls currently experience the area.

The site analysis must consider the context beyond the red line boundary. This should include:

- Desktop review of the relevant local evidence base such LLDC hotspot areas (Diagram A) as identified in the Consultation Report, as well as any other relevant information provided by the planning officer.
- Consideration of whether the development site is proximate to and/or relies upon infrastructure identified as requiring improvements in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan or Infrastructure List, and understanding the significance of this infrastructure in relation to the objectives of this handbook.
- Preparation of a gender-sensitive engagement plan (E1) to demonstrate how women and girls will be engaged, outlining the most appropriate participatory-led engagement methods and ensuring the process is fair and inclusive. Where applicable, it should be presented to the planning officer for agreement and feedback as part of the pre-application process

continues overleaf

- Participatory-led engagement sessions (E2) with a group of women and/or girls who are identified in the gender-responsive engagement plan as beneficiaries of the proposal (e.g., current and prospective residents and users, university students if purpose-built student accommodation is proposed, etc.).Discussions with Secured by Design officers should be informed by the information collected during the participatory assessment. These discussions should take place early in the design development process, and the outcomes should be communicated back to the planning officer.

The consultant gender champion(s) should produce the Gender-Informed Design Statement (GIDS) by recording engagement outcomes and presenting the findings to the client and consultant team, including relevant specialist consultants (e.g., transport consultants, lighting designers).

It is key to ensure the client gender champion is present and reflects on the project aspirations and planning requirements (C3).

The GIDS should outline the overall strategy detailing how the development will directly address feedback received through design, long-term management, and maintenance, and where relevant, how wider improvements can be achieved via the use of planning obligations. Guidance on approaching an acceptable GIDS (E1).

At the planning submission stage, the design and access statement , should clearly outline how the findings presented in the GIDS have been addressed during design development and in the final proposal, including in all relevant strategies such as landscape, lighting, wayfinding, signage strategies, and any design codes.

Regular reviews of design solutions should be conducted using Section 3 of this Handbook as a template, with the gender champion(s) attending regular meetings and workshops throughout the design stage.

The evolving design should demonstrate how it addresses the feedback from participatory-led engagement as outlined in the GIDS (E2) and the design brief.

The client team should instruct the consultant team to test and refine the design through ongoing engagement with women and girls, documenting the outcomes and demonstrating how this has informed the detailed design.

The planning submission should clearly address all planning requirements (**C3**).

RIBA Stages 3 and 4: Spatial coordination and Technical

The roles of the client and consultant gender champions are expected to continue throughout the lifespan of the project. In cases where this is not possible, a handover should take place to ensure that discussions on project objectives to date are captured.

Any new project or team member should be introduced to the project's gender informed aspirations and how they will be delivered.

Contractors and delivery consultant teams should identify gender champions upon appointment.

continues overleaf

During detailed design, all building and public realm management strategies should be reviewed to assess how successful the spaces are for women and girls to inhabit and navigate. Reference the Gender-Informed Design Statement data to ensure that the strategies address issues previously highlighted by women and girls.

Regular reviews of design details with the design team and transport team should be conducted to ensure that and value engineering proposals do not compromise the gender sensitive objectives. The objectives of gender-inclusive design intent are delivered.

RIBA Stage 5: Construction

Adopt responsible procurement mechanisms.

Develop gender responsive guidance for construction sites (**E3**).

Reviews temporary structures for the construction site (e.g. hoardings) with the design team to improve how the site is experienced by women and girls during construction phase.

Update the Equality Impact Assessment (**B6**).

RIBA Stage 6: Handover and close-out

Ensure that gender equity is mentioned in built and operational and management manuals completed by the client.

Complete a final design compliance review of the project in relation to design intent and planning consent prior to handover.

Update the Equality Impact Assessment (**B6**).

Plan for gender inclusive long-term stewardship (B4).

RIBA Stage 7: In use

Review the built scheme against the approved design proposals, including the gender inclusion strategy and strategies related to the intervention found in this Handbook (Part 3).

To successfully address the gender sensitive project objectives, the ongoing management strategy should review how successfully the development performs for women and girls.

Post-occupancy evaluation should include gender segregated for all relevant KPIs. Document lessons learnt (B7) on project to inform future projects.

Review monitoring reports secured through Section 106 (C3) and take appropriate action where necessary.

D2 Gender champion

A gender equity champion should be appointed at the beginning of a project and retained through to completion. Their role is to promote a gender informed design approach and ensure that women and girls are considered, and their needs integrated, at every step of the project. They should also work to improve understanding amongst all stakeholders of the challenges faced by women and girls and promote the importance of male allyship.

This role is not exclusive to women. The champion should have appropriate experience, for instance, acquired through training and/or previous experience working with, and on behalf, of women and girls.

The role of the gender equity champion should be made clear as part of the design brief. The role should sit within the governance structure of the project and the role-holder should have clarity on what the role entails and be supported to actively develop their skillset. They should be aware of any specific tasks they will be involved with and when they will be involved in design team tasks. They should have appropriate resources, support and time to be able to perform their role and tasks.

Role of gender champions throughout design development

Gender champions should have oversight to steer discussions at all key meetings. They should be able to facilitate meaningful dialogue and drive the implementation of gender inclusive practices. They must ensure gender-informed urban design is clearly defined in all project objectives and be mindful of how this feeds into other priorities, such as transportation, sustainability and inclusive design. They should ensure focus is maintained on women and girls while developing the project and during community engagement.

Gender champions should:

- Disseminate research and example cases studies to inform project design and processes, have an awareness of work in the industry and actively converse on the topic with peers and pursue opportunities to upskill themselves and the wider team.

- Support set-up of project teams during RIBA Stage 0-1 and objectives for the project (e.g. explaining why these are important both to women and girls and in terms of planning approval).

- Help collect gender segregated data to better understand differences between how women and girls use and interact with space and the issues that impact them (e.g. differences between men and women or between younger and older women in public space).

- Review all detailed design development and value engineering proposals to ensure these do not compromise the gender informed objectives and undertake monitoring of gender equity.

- In all RIBA stages but particularly 1-4, support the design team with the planning application, report writing, communications and engagement (e.g. support with both considering women and girls in pre-application, design team activities, documenting what is being done and communicating this to relevant stakeholders as necessary). Design team meetings and end of stage reports should refer to the original project objectives and progress statements should be included at the end of each RIBA stage.

- For best practice, continue the role throughout the lifespan of the project. When this is not possible, a hand-over should take place, to ensure the project objectives and discussions to date are captured.

D3 Diverse and informed team

Establish a diverse team that understands the intersectional challenges faced by women and girls. Where there are gaps in representation, these should be addressed through engagement (**E1** and **E2**).

Ensure that the project team is multi-disciplinary. Including a wide range of disciplines can provide a diversity of perspectives and thus better design outcomes. Inclusive design specialists, diversity and inclusion consultants, sociologists and psychologists are just a few examples of alternative disciplines that could be involved to achieve more inclusive outcomes.

It is important to understand where a team, including client and consultant, currently stands on team diversity. For example, is the team diverse, and are there women and/or gender-diverse groups within the company? For local authorities, make team diversity a requirement at the pre-application stage so that awareness of gender equality for women and girls is a priority.

Project teams should understand the concepts of social value and equality, as well as the diversity and inclusion commitments for the project, to ensure everyone can help deliver these commitments within the project programme and outcomes. Each delivery partner should take shared responsibility for fulfilling these commitments. The commitments could be delivered through the project itself and/or through community outreach.

It is equally important to establish a commitment to gender equity amongst the project team. This should include a clear vision and objectives for delivering gender equity through the project as well as respectful working practices and mutual respect. Empathy is key so that biases can be positively challenged.

The project manager or team leader should ensure that 'Inclusion Moments' are a standing agenda item for every team meeting. This creates a culture of caring and respect. It could include highlighting how recent project work factored in the needs of women and girls, sharing industry best practice, or bitesize team training on inclusion topics, such as the use of pronouns or menopause support.

Include gender equity as an agenda item in the project's inception meeting to discuss local demographics, gaps and different strategies that will be implemented to address these.

Organisations should provide and encourage the uptake of training to educate and raise awareness for staff around the need to design for women and girls and the methods to do so. Unconscious bias training should also be provided to ensure employees are always thinking and acting inclusively. As well as educating their own employees, organisations should offer training to local community groups, schools and small-to-medium sized enterprise to upskill those who may not have access to resources elsewhere and to influence the next generation of gender equity experts.

E1 Implementing participatory-led engagement

**The role of participatory-led engagement in gender-informed process**

The only way to design places that work for women and girls is to engage them in the decision-making and design processes. Participatory-led engagement is a collaborative process that involves key stakeholders and beneficiaries. It aims to democratise the process by bringing lived experiences directly into decision-making and design. By incorporating these perspectives, it ensures that any decision or intervention in the built environment directly responds to people's needs.

Involving women and girls in the decision-making and design processes ensures that the outcomes meet their needs and aspirations, while also empowering them to continue participating in processes that affect their lives.

There are various methods for conducting participatory-led engagement, including exploratory walks, co-designing, co-clienting, and similar approaches. The appointed gender champion should select the method that best suits the project's scale and nature. The handbook provides further guidance on these methods, showcasing best practices as tested by the LLDC.

The key to successful participatory-led engagement is planning and preparing a fair and inclusive process that overcomes all recognised barriers women and girls face in participating. It also requires a clear commitment to demonstrating how their input has directly informed project solutions. To achieve this, the following steps should be followed:

- Develop a gender-sensitive engagement plan
- Recruit participants for engagement
- Conduct participatory engagement activities
- Analyse the results and prepare a Gender-Informed Design Statement (E2).
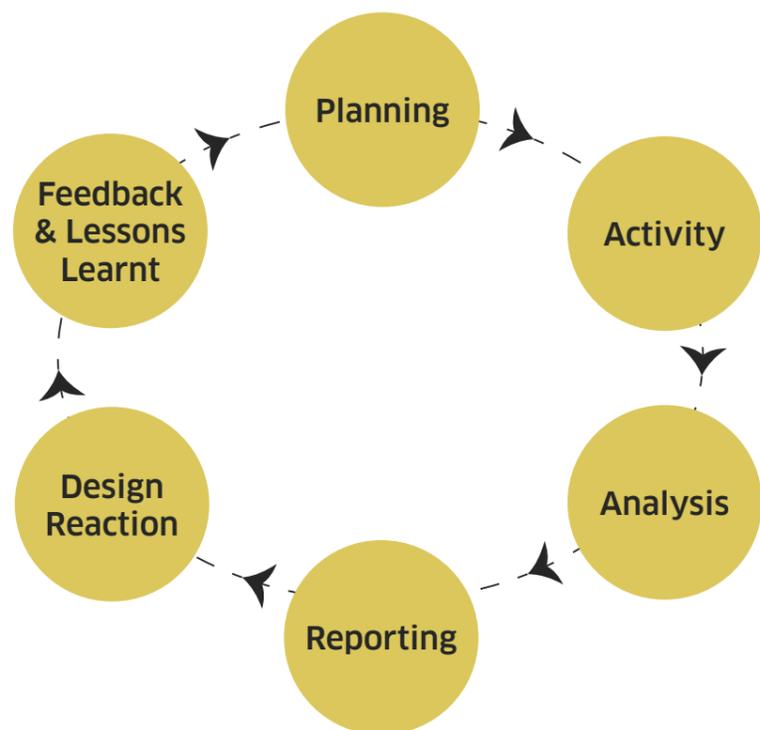
Diagram F – iterative nature of an engagement plan and statement

Gender sensitive engagement plan

The gender-sensitive engagement plan should outline who will be engaged and how the fairness of the recruitment process and engagement activities will be ensured.

It should be created as early as possible in the project (for design projects, RIBA Stage 0-1) and evolve to adapt to increasing complexity and project specific context at later stages.

Where applicable, the Plan should be presented to the planning officer for agreement and feedback as part of the planning application process.

Considerations when creating a gender sensitive engagement plan

The gender champion should be responsible for, or closely involved in creating, delivering, and monitoring the engagement plan.

The success of engagement extends beyond the sessions themselves and lies in building a long-term relationship of trust with the participants. This can be facilitated by encouraging their future involvement and keeping them up to date with the process.

The scope, programme and budget for the engagement should be set from the outset.

Key considerations when preparing the engagement plan:

- Identify key groups to engage with based on the project's context, impact and purpose, ensuring diversity and representation of local demographics and future users/occupants
- Have consideration that women's perception of spaces can notably differ between day and night due to factors such as safety concerns, lighting, and social dynamics.
- Engagement should

be planned to be conducted both during daylight hours and after dark.

- Identify the barriers to the participation of women, girls, and gender-diverse people in the engagement process and outline how these barriers will be overcome. This could include:
  - Financially rewarding the participants to recognise their time and expertise, and to reduce financial barriers to participation
  - Awareness of power dynamics: holding workshops with specific groups only to help amplify under-represented voices or employing community researchers
  - Provide awareness and support around potentially sensitive topics. Engaging with certain groups through organisations, charities, or community groups that regularly work with or support them
  - Identifying an appropriate engagement team to create a comfortable and inclusive environment acknowledging that some women and girls may feel uncomfortable or may hold back without proper support
  - Ensure engagement sessions are held at various times, dates, venues, etc., that enables them to participate (e.g. around work schedules, caring responsibilities, etc.). Multiple sessions may be necessary to meet different needs
  - Considering the needs for providing refreshments
  - Considering mobility needs and offering suitable solutions.

A gender sensitive engagement plan should also:

- Outline how and when the design team will work together/consult with women and girls and what will be the scope/extent of their responsibilities

- Outline how women and girls will be supported to participate throughout the project
- Outline how the information will be recorded and communicated to the client and project team
- Provide guidance on appropriate conduct, for instance, during meetings, to ensure women and girls are respected, recognised and encouraged to contribute
- Trial engagement methods to understand what is effective and opportunities for improvement
- Outline how progress and learnings will be documented throughout the project to improve practice in the future
- Ensure engagement results are integrated throughout the development of proposals, so women and girls know their contributions will be respected and acted upon, setting realistic expectations. A 'you said/we did' exercise could be a valuable tool to achieve this.

As part of the gender responsive engagement plan, a gender inclusive community engagement statement should be considered. A statement will provide overarching guidance for the entire project, including an agreed set of actions which all members of the design team should understand and adhere to. A gender engagement statement should:

- Outline project and design team values ('we are…') and ambitions ('we will…') relating to women and girls.
- Allow for, and outline how, women and girls will be involved in the project. For instance, how will they be able to define design priorities, steer design/be involved in decision-making, etc.

- Actively recognise the agency/role of women and girls – designing 'with' rather than 'for'.
- Be included in the Design and Access Statement.

Recruitment of the participants

Participants should be financially rewarded. This can directly enable women to participate, especially those who might otherwise face barriers due to associated expenses or time constraints. This should be clearly communicated in the invitation.

Group size can vary depending on the type of engagement activity and the project's scope. For example, the optimal number for an experience walk would be between 5-12 participants. However, when engagement is aimed at informing wider strategic plans, a much larger group should be engaged using methods like interviews employing community researchers, focus groups, and similar. The diversity and composition of the group are more important than the number of participants. It should be demonstrated that the group is representative of the area's demographic.

An invitation should be written using plain language, outlining the purpose of the engagement and how the outcomes will help shape the design proposals. The importance of women and girls' participation in the process and their potential to impact change should also be emphasised. This can be a strong incentive for potential participants to engage in the process. Translation into different languages, sign language interpreters and the use of Braille, etc.

After selecting participants, ensure they are given a consent form to sign before the engagement session takes place (**Appendix D**).

Pre-Engagement meeting

It is recommended that a pre-engagement session is organised to:

Explain the project, highlighting how potential participants can influence the proposal while also outlining all limitations in an open and honest way (e.g., acknowledging that some aspects are beyond the design team's control, even when striving for improvement).

Familiarise participants with the concept of gender-informed urban design and planning.

Recognise the value of women and girls' contributions in improving the quality and inclusiveness of design.

Encourage women and girls to prioritise themselves during the engagement and challenge 'normalised' design and experiences. They may need support to engage with a gendered lens, as they might not perceive themselves as valid stakeholders or may respond from a 'gender-neutral' viewpoint to be conditioned not to think about their needs.

Maintain the focus on women and girls, ensuring the discussion stays on topic.

Participatory-led engagement methods

This section details some participatory-led engagement methods. Applicability will depend on the scale and context of the project.

Exploratory Walk

Exploratory walk is an effective method for larger development proposals. Its main purpose is to understand how the area beyond the site's boundaries is experienced by women and girls, recognising that key issues often arise on routes to and from the site. This knowledge is to be used as an evidence base to inform the design and relevant strategies of the proposed project or development.

Preparing the exploratory walk

It is recommended to organise a pre-walk meeting to identify and map with the participants all the potential key destinations around the site to create a route for the exploratory walk. Destinations should not be assumed but directly informed by the participants. Destinations can include but are not limited to: key public transport stations (daytime/night time), town centres, parks/public realm, schools/colleges, local grocery stores and similar.

Compiling the prompt questions to cover the various profiles of women, including how they use the urban space, and their feelings and perception of the urban space.

Conducting the Exploratory Walk

Begin with a brief introduction and allow for questions and answers. Use inclusive, gender-sensitive and accessible language. Avoid jargon and simplify specialised terms where possible.

Show the pre-determined routes and verify with participants whether the established priorities are accurate. Make amendments if necessary.

Take the group for the 1-2 hour walk along a route. Depending on the methodology,

size of the group and distances, it may be beneficial to split the group if there are enough people who can facilitate the discussion and capture and record data.

There are many ways in which data can be captured, with permission, such as video or audio recording, taking notes and photographs. There is no right or wrong way. The method should be decided beforehand by the gender equity champion to suit both their skills and the needs of the project.

There are already many toolkits and examples of methods used to conduct exploratory walks that can serve as a good example. An overview of various youth engagement methods is provided by **CivAct**.

Ask prompting questions to explore the desires, needs and feelings of women and girls regarding their experience of the place, but the most important is to listen.

Along the route, participants could pause to focus on key themes and potential interventions (**Part 3**) and have a discussion.

Conclude the walk with groups delivering briefings about their experiences and inform the participants of the next steps.

Equal Saree, Barcelona

Since 2017, Barcelona City Council has implemented its 'Urban planning with a gender perspective', which includes several tools for integrating a gendered lens into its urban planning policies to achieve a safer, fairer and more equal city for women.

To improve daily life for women, gender criteria will be applied to all redevelopment projects in the city, including the development of the Neighbourhood Plan. Various actions and activities have already been implemented to apply a gender inclusive perspective in the development of public spaces, including exploratory walks in the city's neighbourhoods.

Exploratory walks have involved site visits with municipal technicians, local neighbourhood stakeholders and experts in gender and safety. In total, 278 women have taken part in 12 exploratory walks around different neighbourhoods in the city. The aim of these walks is to identify the needs and experiences of women, elements and spaces that create insecurity and challenges to mobility and safety and the changes required to enhance safety, mobility and comfort of women in public space.

Equal Saree ('a team of architects, gender experts, mediators, artists and researchers who propose architecture and urban design of feminisms and co-creation with the people who inhabit them') have facilitated many of these walks. For example, a night-time exploratory walk with women in the Roquetes district was carried out as part of the Barcelona Barris Plan. The aims of the walk were to identify the impact of the current configuration of public space on the daily lives of women and identify how to improve the vitality of public space for women and improve lighting and maintenance to improve feeling of safety at night.

The walk involved:

- Identifying local neighbourhood stakeholders to take part in the walk and planning the route

- Making proposals for improving spaces and identifying priorities for women

- More broadly, the exploratory walks will be used to draw up a city map to identify where public space needs improving in relation the needs and experience and women and will act as a guide for future actions.

Co-design

Co-design is the process of intentionally involving end users during the design process, to make sure that the lived experiences of the community are embedded into the design solutions. It should be an iterative process, allowing for two-way communication.

Even though co-design relates more to the design stages of a project, a co-design approach could be implemented when assessing sites and/or proposals and collaboration with the project team should be conducted throughout to understand what is needed from the project and how a co-design approach could be implemented. It is proposed that this should include:

- Exploration and generation of ideas for participatory assessment.

- Training community as engagement assistants and/or champions to carry out research into local/community needs.

- Involving the community in developing the method to analyse insights from participatory assessment to inform the project and base design decisions on the evidence and feedback collected.

- Determination of how decision-making responsibility will be shared (especially relevant where a consensus cannot be reached).

Co-design can be used at multiple stages of the project, for example, when prototyping and testing solutions.

Co-clienting

Co-clienting is an approach that goes beyond co-design in terms of community involvement and decision-making powers. In the context of project delivery, co-clienting includes the involvement of the community from the start, to help influence key aspects of the project, including the project brief, how the proposal develops, the final proposals, and the delivery/implementation of them. In essence, this provides a collaborative approach with the community to:

- Embed lived experiences into the decision-making

- Empower the community to shape their spaces based on local needs and wants

- Create trust and transparency in the processes

- Create continuity in the relationship, discussions and decision-making.

- Build local capacity.

Co-Clienting: Waterden Green Play Area

In 2023, LLDC innovated a 'co-clienting' process to explore different ways of running community engagement and to test best practices. The project was run with seven young women aged 17-23 years old from Elevate, the former LLDC Youth Group (co-client team), and the project was supported by the GLA and MDAs.

The project aimed to 1) explore different ways to engage with teenage girls and young women, an underrepresented demographic in public spaces; 2) to co-create a design brief with girls and young women for a small space within the Waterden Green site that is safe and fun for girls aged 12-18. Waterden Green is a green space dedicated to teenagers, located adjacent to the Eastwick and Sweetwater residential development in the north of Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park.

The 'co-clienting' method entailed the LLDC team members and the co-client team working together in a bespoke client team to develop a design brief. As the project transitions through design development, the co-client team will continue to influence the project and test the implementation of the design brief.

LLDC found that co-clienting offered the following key benefits when compared to more traditional engagement:

- **Continuity:** by forming a co-client relationship, the knowledge and voices of the community are embedded throughout the project, ensuring that the views of the intended end users of the space remain central as the project progresses. This has been supported and strengthened by organisation-wide support across the LLDC.

- **Shifting Power:** by virtue of being part of the client team, the girls and young women had an influential role in decision-making processes as opposed to a more traditional engagement in which consultees provide feedback to a separate decision-making body. LLDC reinforced this by intentionally keeping the engagement flexible and open-ended to allow the co-client team to have more control over the briefing process; and by taking steps back from their expert roles where appropriate, valuing the expertise of others (e.g. Elevate, MDAs) and celebrating and managing differences within the group. This created collaborative and two-way exchange and learning.

- **Capacity Building:** due to the structure of the project, based around a small paid primary engagement group and multiple varied and engaging sessions (e.g. role-playing, walkabouts), LLDC could better invest (time and resources) in and support the skills and knowledge of the co-client. They particularly focused on learnings around budgets, power dynamics, safety / inclusion, and different roles within a complex development. This structure and content made planning and design processes feel more accessible and approachable to the co-clients; was essential for confidence, skill, and trust-building, empowering the co-clients; and allowed for more informed and nuanced participation.

- **Grounded Findings:** Co-clienting created briefing principles and a design brief that was much more grounded in the wants and needs of local young women.

Marshgate Lane – Engaging with gender diverse people

In its early evidence base gathering, LLDC encountered difficulty in reaching gender-diverse people using more standard approaches to engagement, such as surveys and focus groups, even when these were intentionally organised to be diverse and representative of the variety of the local area. As a result of this, LLDC identified in its Action Plan that further effort is required to address this gap.

In response, LLDC seized the opportunity to engage with a group of non-binary, young and local people on a live project, Marshgate Lane Greenway Links. The project is being delivered by LLDC using Community Infrastructure Levy money.

The Marshgate Lane Greenway is situated in a challenging location with numerous issues and was identified as a hotspot area in LLDC's evidence base. The project aims to address two key issues identified at the site: 1) improving the physical accessibility of routes through the site and 2) the perception of safety. These are not mutually exclusive but require different approaches.

Due to a recognised lack of expertise in engaging with gender-diverse people, the project team sought support from the Mayor's Design Advocates, as part of the upcoming GLA Design Guidance on Safety in Public Space: Women, Girls and Gender Diverse People. The Advocates played a pivotal role in guiding the team on how to approach and interact with gender-diverse people.

This collaboration highlighted the importance of more intensive and specialist engagement, emerging as a crucial tool and a focal point of the engagement process.

Informed by knowledge and the insights gained during the development of

this Handbook, the team prepared a commission brief for an engagement specialist. The team actively encouraged diversity in leadership and involved procurement colleagues from the early stages. The engagement task was assigned to a spatial design practice led by women and members of the queer community.

Typically the commission brief does not require a methodology to be provided at tender stage; rather, defining the methodology is part of the commission itself. The technical response requirement instead included questions on how the team might approach engaging with the community, as well as its resourcing and experience. This allowed for an element of research within the scope, with passion for the subject clearly evident in the winning bidder's proposal.

In discussion with the selected consultant, it was felt that the experience of gender-diverse people was missing from the previous survey results, and more generally that gender-diverse people are a seldom heard group across similar consultations. The LLDC's strong commitment to narrow gender inequity in public spaces gave permission to explore gender-diverse people's perception of space specifically, with the understanding that improving conditions for gender-diverse people would benefit everyone.

An existing local group was approached to help facilitate contact with individuals who might want to take part and help broker the relationship with gender-diverse young people between the ages of 12-25.

A diverse project team, able to relate to gender-diverse peoples' specific needs and reassure them that the process was open to their requirements and views, was selected to help with engagement.

Case Study

The 'open' brief was risky as the team did not have a view of the outcome at the start. The engagement consultant had also not worked with gender-diverse people before, but it would prove a good continuation of previous research and practice in the area.

Creativity was a helpful tool to catalyse engagement by including a writer, photographer and choreographer on the team. Trust was built up over a series of four workshops, including being on site in the spaces in question.

Outputs of the engagement included informing a future art/wayfinding brief for the site – a selection of reflections and findings are listed below:

- Young people are hyper alert and cautious in public space: 'I can't be myself walking down the street'

- Opportunities for greening, even within dark spaces, make them more welcoming, along with glimpses of nature

- Enclosure of spaces, lighting, materiality and sense of dereliction all affect the sense of safety

- Alternative routes for movement and curiosity are important

- Glare from light sources and changes in light levels are a challenge for neurodivergent people

- Diverse and inclusive activities are seen as a positive contributor to making spaces more welcoming

- Gender-diverse people may feel more comfortable in spaces where they are seen less. In a bleak environment queer people can stand out and draw attention

- Gender-diverse people feel more welcome in places with signposting that they might relate to, for instance, emblems such as the pride colours or diversity of activity

- A space that is familiar feels safe. Familiarity and a sense of belonging are linked.

For the Marshgate Lane project, the team have been able to use the feedback to inform design solutions within the site boundary and its associated strategies (e.g. lighting, wayfinding, signage and management) within the site area.

Outside of the site boundary or applicants' direct control, an exploratory walk will look to assess the key routes to and from the site. During the walk a log of wants, needs and issues identified will be created. LLDC will use this information to identify projects for potential addition to the Infrastructure List.

Use of Section 106 may be considered to secure financial contributions for implementing specific improvements, as outlined in the LLDC Planning Obligations SPD. This process, however, will be integrated into the broader planning negotiation process. Any financial contributions made will be proportionate to the development's impact and the necessity of the improvement for the development's progression.

Community asset mapping

Involving local women and girls to identify the assets of their local neighbourhood provides a positive approach, proactively looking for solutions, rather than focusing on deficits and problems.

Assets could include buildings, institutions, facilities, services, spaces, community groups or individuals and their skills, talents and capacities. The purpose is to understand what a place is like, how it works and what is valued from the perspective of women and girls. It can also help make 'invisible' networks and assets visible.

This may help developers, planners, etc., to identify opportunities and priorities for a site, particularly beyond the site boundary (e.g. integrating assets, unlocking further potential, maximising existing assets rather than duplicating, understanding which assets are under threat, etc.) and encourage further engagement with women and girls when development may impact on existing assets.

Community asset mapping can also help developers, planners, etc., understand the demographics of women and girls who use different assets, how they use them and whether they could be used by other demographics and/or in different ways. This type of information could improve allocation of funding and maximise the impact of funding (e.g. Section 106; Community Infrastructure Levy).

Other participatory approaches

Observational studies • Observe how women and girls currently use a site and its spaces (e.g. what are women and girls doing and when? how long do they stay?). Use this to map user stories.

Outreach and street engagement • Conversations (both informal and structured) either with individuals or in small groups in the community (e.g. on the street, in parks, local business, community facilities, etc.). This can help reach women and girls who won't normally come to exhibition events, workshops or other formal processes. This is a very important method in reaching the wider community and less heard groups and can be used at any stage.

Workshops • Focused sessions with specific community groups or a mixed audience, shaped around exploring specific themes or questions.

Focus groups • Different to a workshop in that they are smaller and may focus on a particular aspect of the project or scheme. Focus groups are useful in gathering a small peer group to share views and enable ideas to flow and develop between participants.

Games and interactive challenges • Interactive ways to seek feedback and increase understanding of the process of design and planning. Activities completed, time spent, and behaviour conducted could all be monitored. This method can help to communicate the project requirements from the perspective of women and girls and ensure that the needs of women and girls are considered throughout the project.

E2 Gender-Informed Design Statement

Following participatory-led engagement, a Gender-Informed Design Statement (GIDS) should be prepared to outline the findings of the engagement and provide a set of design and strategic recommendations to respond to the feedback received.

The client/project team should submit this to the local authority for their feedback and as part of the planning application process.

The planning officer should share the log with the internal project board to ensure that findings are recorded and contribute to the wider local authority's knowledge of the issues.

GIDS should:

Provide an understanding of aims as detailed within this document.

Set out outcomes of gender site analysis to demonstrate an understanding of the site and its surroundings and how the space accommodates women and girls.

Provide details of how the participatory-led engagement has been conducted, provide evidence of who was engaged, and what methodology of engagement and data collection and analysis was used.

Results of the participatory-led engagement, where relevant, including a log of issues found beyond the site boundary, and potential mitigation measures. This should include summary of issues and aspirations voiced by local women and girls engaged in the process.

Analysis of other public consultation responses, categorised by demographic and gender data of the respondents.

Present an overall strategy detailing how the development/project will directly address these issues through design and planning obligations.

The statement needs to establish how these findings will inform the following:

- Design and Access Statement
- Landscape Strategy
- Lighting
- Strategy
- Wayfinding and Signage
- Management and Maintenance
- Ground Floor and Commercial Strategy
- Security Needs Assessment and the relevant documents.

E3 Guidance for construction sites

Develop gender-informed guidance for construction sites which identifies mitigation measures for the temporary impacts arising during construction and for the inclusion and comfort of women and girls on sites.

The impact of hoardings on sightlines and passive surveillance and the increased number of men in an area (due to the construction industry being male dominated) should also be considered and coordinated with the appropriate Highway Authorities.

Role of others

In addition to local authorities and developers, this Handbook should be made available for use by all stakeholders to educate and upskill themselves and their teams on gender-informed planning and design, to advance gender equity and improve the experience of women and girls.

This includes:

Built environment professionals, such as project managers, planners, urban designers, architects, landscape architects, access and inclusive design consultants, security consultants, construction professionals and all of their sub-disciplines.

Built environment professionals have the opportunity to influence physical design, consultation, policy, regulation and processes to mainstream gender equity and can use the Handbook to do so.

Urban designers and architects, including landscape architects and visualisers, should derive interventions through an in-depth understanding of context, users, space and potential.

Whilst it is important that solutions are addressed through cross-disciplinary efforts, use of this document may vary across professional teams.

Inclusive project management is key to delivering a project with equitable outcomes for women and girls. The appropriate recommendations and practical tools provided within this Handbook should be implemented throughout the programme by project managers to mainstream gender equity across the project lifecycle.

The guidance and principles should be used by the project manager to define the aims and objectives of the project to the wider team. This should include the production of a gender-informed project plan and engagement strategy that sets out how women and girls will be given a voice in the project.

Planning specialists and consultants, including planning agents, town and transport planners, engagement specialists, access and inclusive design consultants and environmental consultants, have a responsibility to influence design, policy, processes and regulations and will have to work alongside the developer to adopt and implement gender equity principles as part of the design proposals.

A commitment from the planning agents that schemes will be carried out to support the gender-informed principles set out in this Handbook and to identify a gender champion (**D2**) to implement this throughout the project, will help to place gender equity at the forefront of instigating positive change in the built environment.

On a broader scale, by applying the recommendations and tools in this Handbook, planners could make planning processes, such as Section 106 agreements, more inclusive, influence policy change within local and national plans and advocate for women and girls as statutory consultees in engagement.

This Handbook should also be used by construction teams to design and set up safe, accessible and gender inclusive construction sites (**E3**), for both workers and passers-by.

Local community groups, especially those that are women-led or girls-led, can use this Handbook to advocate for change and the right to be engaged and become active leaders in the planning and development process.

By adopting a community-led approach when using the practical tools in this Handbook, other stakeholders can also help local community groups build their agency and stewardship of the places they live in. For example, by adopting gender-budgeting (**A3**) that prioritises local groups that are women-led or girls-led, or by creating a gender sensitive engagement plan (**E1**) that includes these groups.

It is imperative that first-hand research involving local women and girls and future users of the site is conducted for each project/process to inform development. This Handbook advocates using a participatory-led engagement (**E1**) and outlines the steps to set this up.

The playbook of interventions (**Part 3**) also provides possible design interventions that draw from common themes identified through engagement with a local group of women and girls in developing this Handbook.

Property and building managers, have an active role to play in ensuring that inclusive design intents are carried out through maintenance and appropriate management policies.

Part 3: Playbook of interventions

Practical interventions for achieving gender sensitive places

Part 3 outlines design considerations, physical conditions and interventions to address inequalities.

Playbook of possible interventions for design and engagement

The Playbook provides ideas, solutions, examples and case studies of how gender sensitive design can be achieved. The aim is to highlight interventions that can be made to make spaces work better for women and girls. The Playbook is a selection of tools and prompts that in cases are explained in more detail in other guidance or toolkits. Competent design teams should be considering these topics and using these interventions as part of the design development process.

There are 10 interventions which respond to the issues identified in the LLDC consultation report, analysis of the hotspot areas and engagement in the LLDC area.

Intervention 1: Lighting • Continuous and appropriate level and quality of lighting, considering balance with ecology and nature and the relationship with other solutions, such as activity and security and surveillance. Lighting design to contribute to vibrant and safe public spaces for women and girls all day/night and year-round.

Intervention 2: Security and surveillance • Making women and girls feel safer in key routes and spaces by encouraging both passive and active measures. This includes elements such as active frontages, programmed activation of spaces after dark, CCTV and presence of authorities.

Intervention 3: Nature and planting • Encouraging access to and positive interactions with nature, to improve the experience and the health and wellbeing of women and girls. This includes elements such as community planting, accessible water features and quality parks.

Intervention 4: Mobility infrastructure • Seamless and safe connections between modes of travel and improved transport infrastructure to match women and girls' needs. This includes elements such as train stations and bus stops.

Intervention 5: Movement network • Improving women and girls' mobility and sense of safety along key routes, especially those with limited exit and entry points, restricted lighting and where activity and visibility is limited. This includes routes like shortcuts and ecological areas used as active travel routes.

Intervention 6: Public realm furniture, equipment, facilities and accessible features • Providing public spaces, services and facilities that are inclusive, welcoming and comfortable for women and girls. This includes elements such as toilets, seating, shelter and amenities.

Intervention 7: Land use and site layout • Creating vibrant and active public spaces for all uses, routes and delivery stages. This includes elements such as ground floor activation, mixed use development, meanwhile use and mitigating blank façades/hoardings.

Intervention 8: Boundary treatments and spatial proportions • Design of boundaries to enable natural surveillance from buildings, adjacent sites and good visibility. It also includes spaces that are well integrated with surrounding areas beyond the site boundary, to avoid women and girls feeling isolated and/or trapped.

Intervention 9: Wayfinding, signage, art and interpretation • Improve navigation by providing intuitive public spaces and elements to support women and girls to make informed choices. This includes both digital and physical wayfinding and signage.

Intervention 10: Maintenance and monitoring • Good quality long-term management of public spaces make a significant difference to how places feel. Visible maintenance staff who can, for example, fix lighting easily and keep places clear of rubbish, leads to places that are cared for and welcoming, considering all the senses.

Built environment conditions

The following conditions of the built environment are covered in this Handbook. The examples provided refer to the LLDC context; however, the conditions are applicable across London and beyond.

Connecting spaces:

- Bridges e.g. Thornton bridge, connecting Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park with the wider area.
- Roads and streets e.g. Montfichet Road.
- Paths (pedestrian and cycle) e.g. the Red Path.
- Underpasses e.g. Pudding Mill Lane underpass.
- Transport hubs e.g. Stratford Station or Pudding Mill Lane DLR station.

The edges of:

- Development sites at all scales.
- Frontages of buildings towards streets, key routes and towards public space.
- Service routes, back of house areas and construction sites.
- Threshold spaces i.e. the semi-enclosed areas between buildings and public realm.
- Railways and canals.
- Communal gardens, private gardens, front gardens and front doors/thresholds.

People spaces:

- Parks and green spaces, from small semi-public play spaces to Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park.
- Public realm and squares e.g. Copper Gardens.
- Shared, communal spaces e.g. the courtyard in the Fish Island development.

Design considerations for urban planning, development and design

Proportion and scale

Development and spaces, from masterplans and street widths in proportion to building heights to placement of street furniture and trees, that are suited to context in terms of building or urban density and its impact on pedestrian experience.

Example: Design which considers the detail of elements that are used at human scale (e.g. handrails, seating, lighting columns, building/street proportions etc.) and, in the case of gender inclusive design, considers the size and ergonomics of women and girls.

Proximity

Ease of access to, due to location and good movement networks, a diverse range of public spaces, services, facilities and places where women, girls and gender diverse people feel welcome, comfortable and/or safe.

Example: Proximity to people, activities, accessible facilities and nature. Reasonable travel distances, preferably using active travel modes, between transport hubs, homes, workplaces, nurseries, schools, green spaces, shops and spaces specifically designed for women and girls.

Experience

Feelings, perception and sense of place evoked by public spaces and its impact, occupation and use by women, girls and gender diverse people.

Example: Multi-sensory spaces where nature, planting, artwork and lighting are used to mitigate noise and bad smells to create a positive experience for the user.

Vibrancy

Ensuring public spaces support a diversity of social interaction, community programming and activity at all times of day/night and year.

Example: Mixed use public spaces with varied opening times, including during darker hours/night time and ground floors occupied by businesses or tenants who create active frontages to the street or spaces that can have regular markets or community events.

Uniqueness

Extent to which a public space has a distinct character and identity and/or provides a unique variety of spaces, services and facilities.

Example: Interactive public art can provide a more attractive and engaging urban environment, in turn making a public space. Places that have a 'name' or are identified with ease through a description.

Programming/temporality

Planning short term or meanwhile use activities for vacant and underutilised public spaces and buildings.

Example: Community allotments on derelict or underused land or temporary entertainment venues or food and beverage outlets.

Variety

Provision of a range of public spaces, services, facilities and experiences, including different layouts and architectural forms, mixed uses and choice about how spaces can be used, accessed and experienced.

Example: Creating smaller spaces within larger public spaces using planting, seating, wayfinding elements, different materials, etc., to zone intimate spaces whilst still retaining openness.

Flexibility

Providing public spaces that can adapt to the different needs, objectives and activities of women and girls, as well as other stakeholders e.g. business owners.

Example: Park spaces that can be used by individuals or groups for various permanent and temporary activities, including walking trails, playgrounds, sports and outdoor gym facilities, performance venues, fairs, festivals, etc. Features such as lawn areas or seating that can be used for picnicking, sunbathing, informal play, performance and fitness training.

Continuity

Public spaces, services and facilities that are consistent in character, design and function across the site and in relation to the context and/or existing development.

Example: Visual, spatial and/or digital continuity when designing signage, considering consistency in size, design style, level of information, etc., throughout a route and across site and development boundaries. For example, digital bus time messaging at shelters and transport hubs providing real time information. Wi-Fi or mobile phone coverage which is reassuring in terms of journey planning and accessing help.

Materiality

Choice of materials, finishes and construction methods.

Example: Softer materials that may make seating more comfortable. Walkable surfaces that enable walking quickly, running in different types of footwear or make it difficult to manoeuvre with a buggy. Surfaces that make footsteps sound softer rather amplified or echoed. Robust materials that have consistent maintenance requirement. Diversity in design and a clear aesthetic intent that feels welcoming and makes women and girls want to dwell and makes families bring their children.

Containment and permeability

Distinction of, within and between public spaces, achieved through a range of physical boundary elements, such as walls, roads and buildings.

Example: Clear and distinct public space along a canal or river, designated by the edges of built environment and/or frontage and the natural feature. Contained public space to indicate change in functions (e.g. for leisure) yet connected to wider surroundings through entry points and visibility through buildings.

Active versus passive

Direct involvement with the space, its function, services and facilities and/or other users or simply observing and/or transiting.

Example: Various routes and wider spaces that allow people the choice of engaging with facilities, such as play spaces or outdoor dining area, or observing. Diversity in design and a clear design solution/response that makes women and girls welcome and want to dwell.

Intervention 1: Lighting

Lighting is consistently referenced when talking to people about sense of safety. It is a complex topic and it is always advisable to have an expert guide the process of introducing it as an intervention. When presenting the overall design of a place, it is crucial to include information about the after-dark design. This should include visualisations of the overall lighting effect as well as mock-ups of lighting fixtures as a minimum.

When considering a lighting scheme, many elements require consideration that will be site specific and could influence an overall design if part of a masterplan. Lighting must be strategically designed to respond to the wider context through night time assessment audits and, importantly, via participatory assessments with local stakeholders.

A coordinated approach involves considering the overall environment, neighbouring structures, dark sky principles, ecologically sensitive areas, future changes delivered via other developments and the community's needs. Careful consideration needs to be given to how lighting interfaces with the other interventions as part of a successful placemaking process.

Some areas will need special attention include service routes or back of house facilities, canals, parks and greenspaces, constructions sites (hoarding), ecologically important habitats and corridors, railway arches and underpasses.

Key considerations

Varying/layering light • street lighting is designed (high) to ensure highways are illuminated to the appropriate standard whilst minimising the number of columns or building attachments, but it can leave a place feeling bleak despite being lit to the correct lux level. In contrast, layering to include accent lighting (low level lighting, vertical lighting, etc.) to make a place have a more human scale which can enhance feelings of security.

Consistency of lighting/uniformity and contrast • a balance is needed to avoid creating 'dark spots or dark corners'. Drastic changes in lighting levels can mean that places with acceptable lighting levels can seem uncomfortably dark when transitioning from a highly lit area. If well-balanced, shadows and patterned light, such as those created on Tessa Jowell Boulevard, can create playful atmospheres, visual interest and help give a sense of place.

Lighting as wayfinding and landmarks • the design of the lighting column or luminaire housing. This can create a feature that can be recognised from a distance which helps people understand where they are in their journey, often to the point of being able to give a place a name. This choice of design should consider ongoing maintenance with ease of replacement if damaged.

Wayfinding signage • should work by day and after dark. Integrated lighting into wayfinding or other solutions are recommended to enhance visibility of signage after dark.

Colour rendering • of lighting affects how colours are perceived. UCL research found that people feel safer if they can tell the colour of the clothing people are wearing, even if facial features are not as clear.

Girls of the light by Hanna Benihoud Studio

An interactive art and lighting project, inspired by women's experiences and safety behaviours whilst walking in London during hours of darkness. The artwork consisted of animated women projected on the walls and other built environment infrastructure in dark spaces around Tottenham. By illuminating these dark corners of London – that women avoid during darker hours – the spaces were temporarily illuminated and made more welcoming.

"Well-designed, welcoming light is important"

Handbook engagement participant, 2023

Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park Lighting

Lighting strategies have been guiding the development of the Park and surrounding area since 2013. This was followed by the London Community Schemes planning permission that introduced a strategy in 2017 which included the neighbourhoods. London Legacy Development Corporation is reviewing the lighting in the Park and neighbourhoods to complete the next iteration of strategy. The review includes a perception study to give a holistic approach to lighting changes including the information gathered from local communities and the Women's Safety Project 2021.
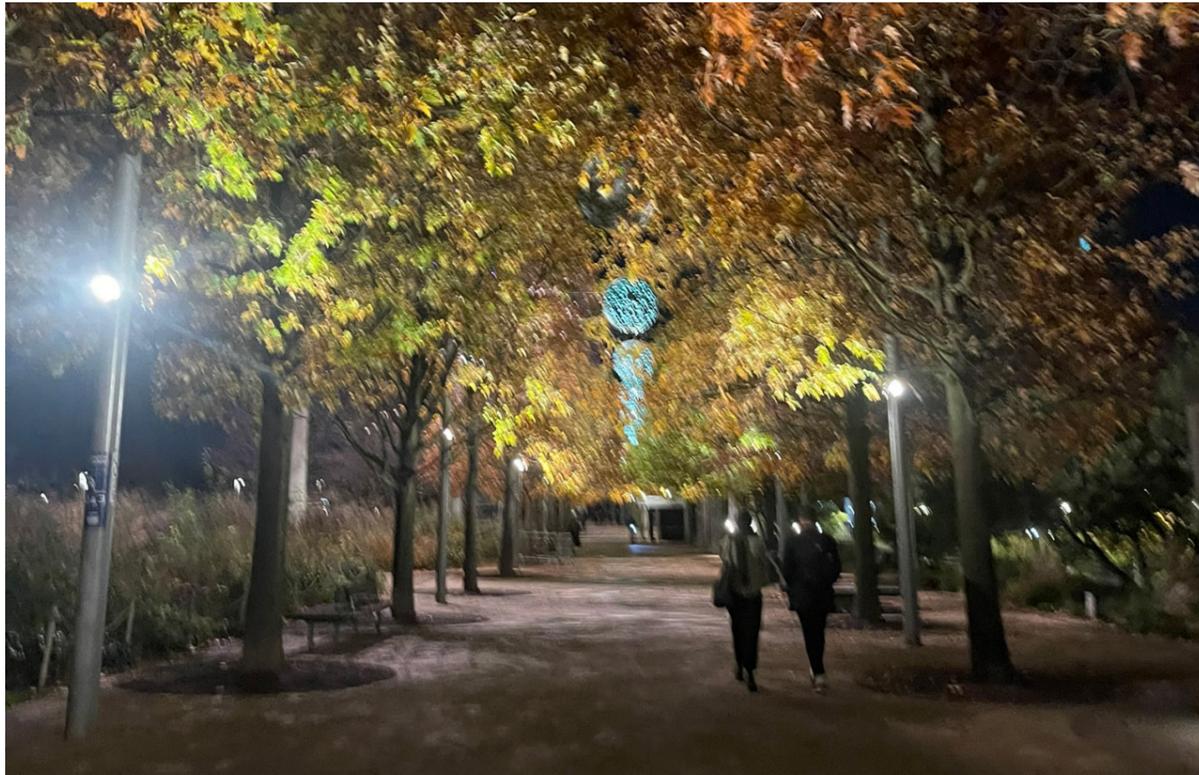
Key considerations (contd.)

Colour temperature • warmer or cooler coloured lighting can create a special effect or atmosphere depending on the place and purpose. Warmer colour temperatures tend to be associated with a 'cosier' atmosphere encouraging dwell time.

Limiting glare • by adjusting the height and position of the luminaire. The quality and the glare of the lighting fixture should be reviewed after dark.

Placement of light sources • is critical to ensure spaces feel safe and secure. Proximity to things which may obscure the light, like trees (which need to be considered as they grow and are managed) as well as building edges, signage, fences etc. need to be considered. Light spill from buildings, particularly shop fronts, restaurants and public houses with the associated activity and opening times, will influence people's experience of a place. Conversely, unlit edges, particularly to parks, can create the opposite effect and limit the natural surveillance of the space and diminish the sense of safety.

Colour and reflectiveness • of adjacent surfaces can change how a place feels and is experienced. Materials and surfaces can have an impact on how lighting is reflected and perceived. Close collaboration between landscape architects and architects can enhance the sense of place and avoid underlit or overlit spaces. .

Feature fittings • that can create patterns and colours can be used to make a place feel different and special after dark. Art or feature lighting can be used in particular locations to create a change in atmosphere or draw attention to specific features.

Lighting controls systems • can be designed to vary the intensity and colours of lighting, turn lights on or off and respond to motion activation resulting in more sustainable and energy efficient solutions. In addition, the ability to control lighting can support other activities such as temporary events and respond to different uses of public space.

Maintenance • in most cases is managed by a public authority. Lighting should be easy to maintain and have a system that allows quick replacement and for repair to be responsive to damage or vandalism.

Intervention 2: Security and surveillance

Places that feel welcoming balance interventions that are designed, with active or passive surveillance and management presence. Places that encourage more women and children to occupy them as part of their journey, exercise, play or socialising often feel safer and more inclusive.

Attracting more people and greater use of spaces creates 'passive surveillance'. However, this can also lead to more incidents being recorded although within Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park these tend to be of a less serious nature.

Quality spaces that can be easily maintained to a good standard are consistently found to feel safer (see Intervention 10: Monitoring and maintenance) beyond the principles of good design and security staff. Note that surveillance such as CCTV or security staff can be comforting for some people and for others can be intrusive, oppressive and generate fear.

Key considerations

Active surveillance • can include having maintenance operatives on site, maintaining planting or clearing refuse, or a security team or park ranger service. Training for staff, who perform a safety function, can make a difference including toolbox talks for construction workers. CCTV can be a way to help support security staff to identify people who may need assistance or may be preparing to do something they should not be doing.

Passive surveillance • can be sensed through active frontages of shops and cafés, overlooking from residential properties, people using a place, by CCTV cameras (recording) or signage that reminds people they are observed.

Incident locators • can be used to help people who need assistance such as help points at transport hubs, numbered lighting columns, visible street names or places that can be easily described like an artwork or lighting feature.

WalkSafe app

The app was founded in 2020 with the aim of giving users as much information about their surroundings as possible.

Founder Emma Kaye developed the app after experiencing harassment and unsafe situations. WalkSafe allows users to plan their safest route home by analysing recent crime data.

Features of the app allow users to set a specific place and a specific time and share their journey plan with family and friends, with a notification sent if the user doesn't complete their journey, as well as share real time data about their location with family and friends to help users feel safer on their journey.
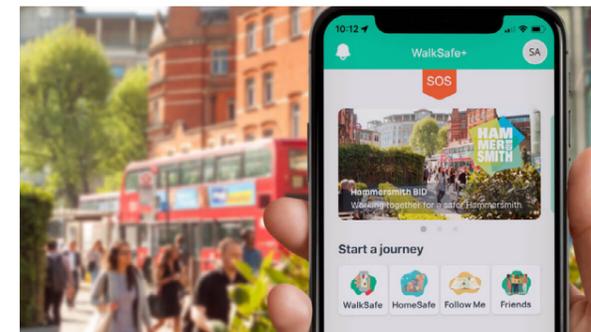
Ask yourself and your participants…? Challenge your assumptions

How do visible security measures, such as guards or CCTV cameras, impact your experience of places?

How do security measures, including fences or help points, that look well managed and maintained, make you feel?

How do different security measures, such as CCTV or help points, make you feel?

How do you use your senses to help you feel safe? Such as listening for someone walking behind you, or looking out for people who can help you if you needed it.

How would you reach help if you needed it?

How would you describe to someone where you are?

How close to a place of safety do you feel?

What difference does it make to you if you can see someone looking after the place or a security team presence?

How does the sense of safety differ depending on the time of day?

How does the experience of feeling visible and different in a space impact on your sense of safety?

"Buildings should have security if they close late at night"

Handbook engagement participant, 2023

Intervention 3: Nature and planting

Access to nature is an important part of urban living and creates positive associations with a place that supports our mental and physical wellbeing. Planting has seasonal interest and can transform a place such as blossom season or autumn leaf colour. People can be intrigued and delighted by wildlife that is enhanced by habitat creation. This is supported by conversations with women, who stressed the importance of access to nature, especially for those with caring responsibilities.

Equally, 'wildness' can be something that makes people feel uncomfortable and fearful. Poorly managed green spaces can be thought to encourage antisocial behaviours and/or be occupied by groups, causing women to avoid them, or to walk further away to access better managed or more pleasant green spaces. Furthermore, the women expressed a desire to take more ownership of their neighbourhood which can be achieved through participatory community gardening activities.

Key considerations

Visible maintenance • of planting can create a sense of safety with the presence of staff or residents maintaining front gardens or communal spaces, water management, community gardening/allotments helping to foster a sense of community.

Location of planting • and habitat for biodiversity can be balanced to have the best outcomes for people. Consideration must be given to the maintenance required to make them feel safer such as mowing the edges of wildflower meadows to help with visibility and sense of care.

Sensory experience • can be created through planting that is visually attractive (greening the grey), encourages bird song, has a tactile quality and provides fragrance. This can give a place an identity and, with interpretation, can help people understand more about the natural environment.

Nature-based landmarks • can come in the form of parks, greenspaces, trees of significance, waterways, meanwhile uses, green walls/hoarding which can improve air quality and help with how people find their way around.

Connectivity of green infrastructure • such as tree avenues, hedges, green walls/balconies/roofs/window boxes/planters, waterways or ecological strips, is important for people and wildlife due to their visible and physical presence. These can become vital habitat corridors as well as wayfinding markers.

Proximity • to other features such as play areas, lighting, CCTV, pinch points and traffic can be used in a positive way. For example, segregation from busy roads with rain gardens, can encourage active travel and provide sustainable drainage (SuDS). Managing planting, so that route widths can be maintained, CCTV and lighting are all effective and make places look cared for.

Resourcing • good quality planting and habitat management can be funded through planning agreements like section 106.

Safer Parks Guidance

Clear guidance has been produced by the University of Leeds, West Yorkshire Combined Authority, Green Flag Award (managed by Keep Britain Tidy) and Make Space for Girls on how to create parks in which women and girls feel safe and welcome. It builds on the research led by Dr Anna Barker and forms supplementary guidance to the Green Flag Award - the UK Government-owned international quality standard for parks and green spaces. The ten principles and case studies provide inspiration for how parks can be designed to be gender inclusive and sensitive so that more women and girls can use and enjoy them.

Ask yourself and your participants...? Challenge your assumptions

How does planting make you feel about a place?

How does observing wildlife like birds and insects change your experience?

Does the space feel cared for? Is it well managed and maintained?

Would the place feel welcoming and 'softer' with the presence of planting?

Does seeing people looking after planting (green infrastructure) make you feel better?

How does planting and nature effect the way you think you would use a place?

Does it smell pleasant?

Do natural features and wildlife make you want to stay longer?

Are there some types of planting that make you feel better or worse about using a route?

Do you notice how places feel in different seasons due to the planting?

Is there a special tree or greenspace in the area?

"When I go on walks and I am looking at nature and water, I feel more relaxed"

Handbook engagement participant, 2023

Intervention 4: Mobility infrastructure

Streets and roads provide the main infrastructure for movement and it is best to refer to the TfL Healthy Streets toolkit for detailed information. Improving mobility infrastructure helps people feel they can make choices in their daily lives that feel comfortable rather than stressful or unsafe. This includes consideration of pre-planning journeys as well as real time experience.

Key considerations

Nodes of safety • can be transport hubs, where there is staff support, help points, real time transport information, quiet waiting spaces, toilets and natural surveillance, busy high streets or popular greenspaces/play areas.

Good quality street furniture and surfaces • that enable continuous and direct routes to frequently used destinations. Infrastructure that allows continuity for walking, wheeling and cycling is important, such as dedicated cycle routes, dropped kerbs, appropriate/adequate crossings, regular intervals for resting (benches or perch seating), cycle parking (for all types), cycle hire and surfaces that have a good texture and colour that helps those with visual impairments.

Digital information • provided through apps websites, bus stop/train digital displays, Wi-Fi or mobile data providers. Variable messaging systems can make a difference if plans change or there are transport incidents.

Pinch points or isolated spaces • can be treated in such a way to make them more attractive and welcoming. Negative impacts can be reduced by considering the location, duration of the travel experience, and proximity to places of perceived safety when mitigating their effect on journeys. Large transport infrastructure creates places such as underpasses and bridges where the treatment of the approaches and undercroft spaces need careful consideration.

Signage • whether it is temporary or permanent can be used to make places work better for everyone when other design measures are not able to indicate specific purpose or identity. It needs to be informative and accessed easily to reassure people using the place. It needs to have a positive effect on people's behaviours and perceptions. Negative signage such as 'No Loitering' tend to have limited effect and signal undesirable behaviours which may not exist. Signage on Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park indicates where there are lit routes across the parklands.

Enjoy Waltham Forest

As part of the Enjoy Waltham Forest programme, improvements have been made to key routes in the borough to make walking, wheeling and cycling easier and more accessible for all, improve road safety and lessen barriers to active travel.

Alongside structural upgrades, the Council has also funded local community projects that aim to encourage residents to be more active, including Cycle Sisters, a charity that inspires and enables Muslim women to cycle, and Carry Me Bikes, which has supported mothers with babies to cycle. In addition, All Ability Cycling Clubs are held, with a large range of adapted cycles to suit all needs - including relaxed tricycles, recumbents, wheelchair bikes, hand cycles and side-by-side bikes - available for loan.

"As women, we have a lot of thought processes because if we don't plan, we don't get to places"

Handbook engagement participant, 2023

Ask yourself and your participants...? Challenge your assumptions

How do you feel in transport hubs or interchanges used as part of your journey?

Does it make a difference if you are familiar with the transport interchange? How does signage or preplanning help you if you are unfamiliar with a hub?

What does the place sound like? Is it visually cluttered? Is there sensory overload?

Are there security measures? Can you call for help or ask for assistance?

Can you access different spaces and modes of transport easily, either by yourself or when accompanying others?

Does the time of day matter when using or visiting this space or transport hub?

How will you use the space in this transport hub?

What are boundaries of the space and their adjacent uses? Does this make the space feel safer?

Are routes between key local destinations and the transport hub or interchange or mobility infrastructure clear and accessible?

What makes the place feel comfortable waiting for a bus or a taxi?

Does the place feel safer when busy or quiet?

Does the place feel well cared for? Are there any maintenance staff around?

Intervention 5: Movement network

The framework set out at a larger masterplan or city level is an intervention that can mitigate the issues created by transport infrastructure, including elevated roads, railways, tramways, waterways, dual carriageways, underpasses, bridges and roundabouts. Having the ability to plan, at a neighbourhood level, can enable co-location of facilities and land uses that support good movement corridors to activity hotspots such a civic buildings, high streets, shopping centres, education or places of worship. Waterways are important wildlife corridors but where crossings are insufficient, they also create barriers to people movement.

When the position of infrastructure creates a pinch point or limits visibility and is unable to be mitigated in the wider context, other interventions are required.

Key considerations

Underpasses and tunnels • are particularly challenging for pedestrians and cyclists depending on the proportions (width, height and length) and sightlines. Existing underpass or tunnel infrastructure can be retrofitted with lighting, artwork or material choices. However, this has less effect than visibility from the approaches as the ability to look through the tunnel or underpass to see who may be approaching from the other side makes a considerable difference.

Bridges • as with boundaries, the visibility through and the height of the parapets changes the experience of using a bridge. It will also influence how much a bridge will contribute to overlooking or natural surveillance. Bridges can also help with placemaking and legibility as they are recognisable landmarks and may have some heritage or design features that give them an identity.

Canal towpaths and riverside walks • can vary in path width and edge treatment to the water and adjacent boundaries. They are often more naturalistic and, as important habitat corridors, are often intentionally dark. It is therefore essential that hiding places created by infrastructure or planting are minimised, and entry and exit points are clearly marked and, where possible, lit.

Elevated footpath/cycleways • such as the Greenway or elevated sections of disused railway, can feel isolated and give a feeling of being trapped. Entrances and exits need to be easily identifiable and well lit, with good access choices and overlooking to provide passive surveillance and viewpoints or places of interest to activate the route. They can be made attractive through planting, art and interpretation so that they become popular destinations or pleasant off-carriageway options. Routes in cuttings with large retaining walls must have similar solutions with good exits and entrances, overlooking from buildings and bridges and attractive planting to encourage people to be in contact with nature.

Parks, parklets and greenspaces • can be a positive contribution to the movement network if they are well maintained and have features that provide a pleasant multi-sensory experience. They can provide opportunities to connect people and wildlife and incorporate good quality green and mobility infrastructure.

The Red Path Project

The Red Path Project is an innovative community co-design initiative, which puts local young people and residents in charge of the redesign of the Red Path. The path is an important pedestrian and cycling path which connects Hackney Wick to Hackney Central and Homerton. The project is being delivered by urban design collective Space Black, youth construction and design specialists Build Up and youth charity Hackney Quest.

"As a woman, I feel more comfortable walking in routes that are visibly nice"
Handbook engagement participant, 2023

Ask yourself and your participants…? Challenge your assumptions

What is your experience of the street?

Is multi-sensory signage provided?

Will the route (surfaces) hinder your ability to walk, wheel and/or cycle?

Does it smell pleasant?

Can you hear your surroundings?

Do you feel like you should be using this route?

Can you call for help/request assistance if needed?

Are there active frontages that provide ambient/indirect lighting and visibility?

Do you have good visibility e.g. of the carriageway or development sites?

Is it clear where you are going and what route you need to take?

Is signage consistent and well-located to support you on your entire journey?

Is it easy to understand the space if you are not familiar with it?

Are routes connected to destinations and facilities?

Can you see where you are going/the route ahead?

Does the space feel the same when both busy or quiet?

What are the boundaries of the route?

What are the adjacent uses?

What are the proportions of the route?

Is there distance between you and the carriageway, parked vehicles, entrances, etc.?

Intervention 6: Public realm furniture, equipment, facilities and accessible features

Public realm design uses the placement of street furniture, equipment, and facilities to support and enhance the function and use of spaces. For streets, the TfL Healthy Streets toolkit is a useful starting point. For other public realm areas, it requires a design professional, such as a landscape architect, working with local people, to develop a strategy or design for the site. The combined effect of all these elements will make a difference to how people feel in the space and how much they would like to occupy the space, whether transiting or dwelling.

Key considerations

Materials and furniture • that has a long-term lifespan and is easy to repair (see Intervention 10: Monitoring and maintenance) as well as being vandal resistant will serve the community better. It is important that the quality of design and material choices, selected to enhance a place, work better than using equipment or furniture that looks vandal proof and robust but is unattractive. The use of art, naming, colours and textures enhances the sense of place and can create a welcoming effect.

Toilets • which are stand-alone are challenging to implement with minimal maintenance and management. Location of cafés or kiosks that can provide toilets, drinking water, lighting, seating, litter bins and other facilities, where there is natural surveillance and people present, should be considered. Clean and safe toilet facilities make places more accessible for elderly people and those with caring responsibilities.

Shelters • similar to seating, require careful consideration to be given to their design and location in order to provide shade and protection from wind and rain in addition to being a presence in a space due to their height and potential colour, transparency and lighting.

Seating • comes in a multitude of configurations and materials. The LLDC Inclusive Design Standards and Park Design Guide set out features that help make them feel inclusive and Make Space for Girls advocate social configuration of seating rather than straight benches (which indicate use for adults rather than teenagers). Location is important to provide resting places but also should consider congregations of people that make others feel uncomfortable.

Litter bins • working with the maintenance operators in choosing the location, capacity, and design of litter bins will determine how well they are looked after and avoid being an attractor for litter which then overflows or where refuse sacks collect.

Play equipment or play-on-the-way features • will in some cases signal a specific use but may also be integrated into the urban fabric such as small walls that children walk along or steps and slopes. Playable public realm features can encourage more women and girls to occupy the space more comfortably.

Steps, ramps, and dropped kerbs • are used to help navigate a change in level. Levels delineate spaces and create viewpoints or places that are obscured by their presence. Steps and ramp infrastructure can create unwanted voids beneath them and their design can be intimidating. Inclusive ramps can be extensive if there is a large level difference but are preferable to outdoor lifts which are often unreliable and create the need to wait in uncomfortable places. Dropped kerb locations need to reflect the routes required by people with wheelchairs, wheeling, children cycling, prams and buggies to avoid creating barriers to active travel.

Community Toilet Scheme (CTS)

Participating shops, restaurants and bars in the City's Community Toilet Scheme (CTS) supplement the City of London's public toilets by giving the public free access to their toilets during their trading hours. Maps are accessible via a digital mapping tool.

"Toilets should be well kept, clean and safe"
Handbook engagement participant, 2023

Ask yourself and your participants...? Challenge your assumptions

What equipment and facilities are needed to make you feel safe and comfortable?

What equipment and facilities make a difference to the experience of the place?

Can you access features easily, either by yourself or when accompanying others? For example, can you reach the toilets with your buggy?

Does the time of day matter when using these facilities?

Does the equipment or furniture indicate who this place is for?

How does the furniture make you think you can use this place?

Are features co-located with spaces you use e.g. routes to children's school? Are routes between facilities clear and accessible?

Does the space feel safe and comfortable when it is busy? What about when it is quiet?

What are the proportions of the spaces and facilities? Do they feel tight or spacious?

Can you choose how you want to use them?

"Seating isn't usually very comfortable in some places; not always places to park the pram"
Handbook engagement participant, 2023

Intervention 7: Land use and site layout

Locations of active frontages can encourage positive human activity along key routes and spaces and improve how places feel. Back of house areas, maintenance yards and construction sites can make unwelcoming parts of the city. Land use will change the nature of the area, such as the location of logistic centres or industrial sheds. Uses that have limited active frontage need to be mitigated in some way if not forming part of a mixed use development.

Some land uses have temporal activation of the public realm such as office areas that are quieter at weekends and major entertainment venues (like the London Stadium and Copper Box Arena) that create pulses of large crowds associated with events. Schools generate gatherings of people and children at certain times of the day as do places of worship.

Empty sites and those under construction can be problematic, but this can change with temporary activation and meanwhile use.

Key considerations

Threshold spaces • for more antisocial land uses can be designed to accommodate public activity and improve the sense of welcome and safety, including meanwhile use.

Construction sites • phasing to ensure continuous activation, especially in periods of significant disruption. Meanwhile uses could be implemented and consideration given to activating hoarding by making them interactive, 'green' and dynamic (see Intervention 3: Nature and planting and Intervention 8: Boundary treatments).

Service access routes and back of house • can be located to minimise their negative impact and consideration must be given to women workers using these routes, especially night shift workers (see Intervention 1: Lighting and Intervention 2: Security and surveillance).

Frontages and ground floors • positioning flagship occupiers and utilising flexible permissions or short term, incentivised leasing can help to encourage ground floor use. Planning should enforce meanwhile use if a site will be vacant for a specific amount of time. Types of meanwhile use should prioritise community benefit e.g. a community hub or affordable workspace. Planning should enforce requirements on sequencing e.g. bring forward commercial and/or non-residential uses to build community before all residential units are occupied or a requirement for delivery of a percentage of non-residential use prior to occupation of a percentage of a building/s. Section 106 agreements could be used to enforce non-residential uses coming prior to residential occupation.

ABBA Voyage Arena

Complex and long-term planning and design processes can mean some public spaces, buildings and land can be vacant or underutilised for long periods while development decisions and construction activities take place. As an example of meanwhile use, the ABBA arena in Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park is a purpose-built, 3,000 capacity arena located on Pudding Mill Lane, immediately opposite the station, that opened in May 2022. The arena was designed to activate the site during darker hours. During development of the Handbook, the project team engaged during night hours at Pudding Mill Lane. The site was generally experienced positively by respondents, with the sounds and lights from the ABBA arena and the increased footfall and activity generated by ABBA arena visitors, helping to make people feel safer across the site.

Ask yourself and your participants...? Challenge your assumptions

What is your experience of the place?

Is it clear how the space is/should be used?

What uses and activities are needed to make you feel safe and comfortable?

What uses and activities make a difference to the experience of the place?

Can you access different spaces easily, either by yourself or when accompanying others?

What can you do here?

Who can you do things with e.g. families, friends, etc.?

Who is this place for?

Does the time of day matter when using/visiting this place?

Is it easy to understand the function of the space if you are not familiar with it?

Does the space feel safe and comfortable both when busy and quiet?

What are the adjacent uses of this space?

What are the activities in this space?

What are the proportions of the space?

Can you choose how you want to use the space?

Is there natural surveillance?

"No more 'no man's lands'"
Handbook engagement participant, 2023

Intervention 8: Boundary treatments and spatial proportions

Boundary treatments have a significant effect on the perception of public realm and are the next level of design once the urban design or masterplan sets out the land uses and urban grain. Boundaries can be formed by buildings, walls, fences, hedges and other public realm furniture or features (like studs in the ground to define café spill out areas).

The proportions of a space and the height and transparency of the boundary treatment will influence how a space feels. Tall buildings will enclose a space and cast shadows, while open spaces or elevated spaces can feel isolated and exposed. High boundaries which you cannot see through combined with narrow paths which cover longer distances are unpleasant to use due to the feeling of being trapped and isolated.

Examples such as the Red Path are difficult to retrofit successfully, and the condition should be avoided at a masterplan level.

Key considerations

Communal gardens • can be separated from private amenity space with lower level fences and walls combined with planting or hedges to give a sense of community within a perimeter block or podium garden. Talking over the garden fence with your neighbours within a perimeter development can help with social cohesion and access into communal spaces can be good for families by encouraging access by children independently from their carers.

Front gardens and thresholds • can be designed to improve activation through gardening and accessing front doors. Well-designed refuse bin or recycling storage areas reduce fly tipping and rubbish being left in the public realm and can be used to include planting with green roofs. Encouraging personalised front garden space with planters and pots can make residential streets feel more attractive and welcoming.

Access routes • on developments which are narrow and fenced off with high walls or close boarded fencing have issues with antisocial behaviour or theft as these spaces or alleyways are not overlooked.

Planting • along industrial, large shed building boundaries, where there are no windows or overlooking, can help to make places look better and give buffer space adjacent to footpaths.

Railings and gates • can be used to restrict access at different times of day but can be more transparent and can be associated with hedging and planting. Railing can also be used for safety - the Tumbling Bay uses hedge planting with railings to separate the road from the playground.

Hedges • can be used when space is limited but vegetation at height is helpful. They create continuous green infrastructure which is beneficial for wildlife particularly when native plants are used. Hedges can be clipped to maintain their height and shape in formal situations such as the East Village front gardens.

Fences • often form boundaries and can be designed to be secure while being attractive and promoting safety. Transparency of fences in public spaces is generally preferred so that they do not create hiding places. Anti-climb designs should be utilised as the presence of harsh deterrents like razor wire can make a place feel more frightening than secure.

Green Hoarding Pilot Project

Working with the NHS and Vertical Meadow, Tower Hamlets Council have installed a 'green wall' on an existing construction hoarding along Whitechapel Road and New Road. The 'green wall' is embedded with thousands of seeds that will bloom by Spring 2024 into a vertical wildflower meadow consisting of native UK wildflowers that will attract a variety of birds, bees, butterflies and insects and improve the biodiversity and the appearance of the local area. The 'green wall' will also soften the existing hoarding while helping to contain dust and can reduce noise by up to 15dB in the local area. The existing construction hoardings regularly attracted graffiti and flyposting and were generally unattractive, all factors that would likely impact on feelings of safety of local people, particularly women and girls. The new 'green wall' will create an interesting and visually attractive screen for the community that may indirectly improve feelings of safety.

Ask yourself and your participants…? Challenge your assumptions

What is your experience of the place?

Is it clear how the space is/should be used?

Can you access different spaces easily, either by yourself or when accompanying others?

Does the time of day matter when using/visiting this place?

Does the time of day impact access/use of the space e.g. does an access close at night?

Is it easy to understand the space if you are not familiar with it?

What are the boundaries of the spaces?

What are the adjacent uses?

What are the proportions of the space surrounding development plots and other sites?

Is it comfortable to be in the space?

Is there natural surveillance?

Are you visible to others?

Intervention 9: Wayfinding, signage, art and interpretation

All these elements occupy space within the public realm for a particular function with art able to fulfil several functions including creating a sense of place and giving a place identity. Wayfinding, signage and interpretation is usually a combination of images, iconography and words where other design elements are not obvious or can highlight something of interest (ecological or historical) through interpretation, directional information or facilities like toilets.

Key considerations

Wayfinding • is useful to help with orientation at decision points with maps for longer distance planning. However, creating local landmarks such as murals, architectural features, statement trees or sculpture, help with navigation through the city. These interventions along with street names can support representation of the diverse communities that live in the LLDC area.

Public sculpture • can provide the opportunity to give places an identity , legibility, and add to successful placemaking. Careful commissioning of artworks can curate art in the public realm that is representative and gender informed.

Cultural programming • can be used to enhance the uniqueness of a place which can be anchored in a physical place through art or interpretation.

Programming/temporality • develop short-term and long-term plans for maintenance.

Digital assets • can be programmed to provide flexible and responsive wayfinding, signage, art and interpretation. They can also provide a civic function which could include a clock or indication of the air temperature.

Attock Park Crafts

This project builds cultural confidence for under served groups within Bradford. It is a project originally designed for and by women to share their skills and build friendships with other women in their community. As a result of the project, two women's groups now run on Sundays and Wednesdays in a designated space at Attock Park. The space allows local women to focus on art, crafts and culture, in a women-led space at the heart of their community.

Ask yourself and your participants...? Challenge your assumptions

What does the space sound like?

Can you hear your surroundings?

What does lighting and any other design features of the space do for your experience of place?

What features are needed to make you feel like you belong in this space?

Can you access and interact with artwork as expected, either by yourself or when accompanying others?

What can you do here?

Who can you do things with e.g. families, friends, etc.?

Who is this place for?

Does the time of day matter when using/visiting this place?

Is it well-located and/or accessible to get to?

Is it co-located with spaces you use e.g. route to children's school?

Is it easy to understand the space if you are not familiar with it?

Does the space feel safe and comfortable both when busy and quiet?

Does the artwork feel well cared for?

What is the perceived identity of the space?

"Knowing where you are on a map is so important. Not feeling lost helps people feel safe too"
Handbook engagement participant, 2023

Intervention 10: Maintenance and monitoring

Maintenance and management plans are a requirement of planning but are often drawn up without an operator or staff involved. How the public realm is maintained has frequently come up in conversations with women and girls as an important element of how they feel in public space.

Places that do not appear to be cared for are less appealing to visit or dwell in. Specific interventions can be designed to help maintenance staff care for places efficiently and effectively.

Key considerations

Maintenance systems • need to be able to deal with issues of refuse collection and unpleasant smells due to poor drainage. These can be addressed alongside initiatives like food growing or sensory planting through maintenance operations.

Maintenance staff • that understand how their presence can change how a place is experienced (positive and negative) helps make a difference. Examples like the Poppy Estate in Hackney show that maintenance staff working closely with the community make neighbourhoods feel better as places look and are cared for. Local people can get involved, repairs can be carried out quickly and management activity prioritised.

Setting key performance indicators • or targets that can be monitored to produce the best outcomes for places need careful consideration and staff that can carry out the monitoring process. This should feed back into the maintenance planning with lessons learned.

Lovecleanstreets app

Lovecleanstreets app is a good example of how the community can get involved in maintenance. The app is available to the public to report any waste and environmental issues for the relevant teams to take care of. Using such digital tools can help to reinforce evidence-base of hotspot areas.
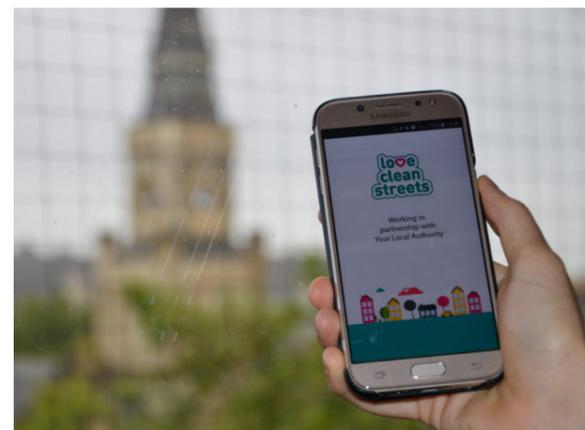
Ask yourself and your participants…? Challenge your assumptions

Is the space well managed and maintained?

How is your experience impacted by maintenance, or lack of maintenance, of the space?

Does it smell pleasant?

What maintenance activities make a difference to the experience of the place?

Does the time of day matter when using/visiting this place?

Is additional maintenance required when the space is busy?

Does it feel well cared for? Are there any maintenance staff around/ adjacent to this space?

Are other people you identify with visible to you?

"It is important to feel like you can stand up against racism and discrimination when you are in public space"
Handbook engagement participant, 2023

"People will vandalise if (the space) is already run down"
Handbook engagement participant, 2023

Appendices

Appendix A:
Additional resources

To understand the current baseline thinking and aspirations for safe and inclusive design for women and girls across London and the UK, a comprehensive literature review of policy and guidance was undertaken. International examples were also considered to support an overall understanding of the current context.

This review considered key gaps across current policy and guidance to gain an understanding of areas where the Handbook could provide the most benefit.

We invite you to explore these additional resources to help build on the ideas, principles and solutions outlined in this Handbook. A selection of books, reports and toolkits related to gender inclusive design are provided, alongside intervention-specific resources.

Not all resources focus on women and girls specifically; however, recommendations for process, engagement and design may incidentally benefit women and girls. Certain documents, such as Secure by Design, are based around safety and security in a traditional manner, and should be applied mindfully.

Gender inclusion:

Books / publications:

Designing for safety and inclusion in our cities – Hassell

The Feminist City – Leslie Kern

Invisible women: Exposing data bias in a world designed for men – Caroline Criado Perez

Matrix Open: Feminist architecture archive

Navarrete-Hernandez, P., , A. and Concha, P., 2021. Building safer public spaces: Exploring gender difference in the perception of safety in public space through urban design interventions. Landscape and Urban Planning, 214, p.104-180.

Women's Safety Charter – Greater Cities Commission

Reports:

Cities Alive: Designing cities that work for women – Arup

Gender inclusive climate action in cities – Women4Climate

Queering cities in Australia – Arup

Queering public space – Arup

Safety in public space: Women, girls and gender diverse people – Mayor of London

Solutions for gender fair cities: an international action research report – Womenability

Unsafe in the city: the everyday experiences of girls and young women in the city – Plan International & Monash University

Brigham Young University – Study visually captures hard truth: Walking home at night is not the same for women

LLDC Womens Safety Report

Toolkits:

Her4Climate: a women-centered tool for assessing responses to climate impacts in cities – Cities Alliance & Arup

Municipal Literacy Toolkit: A guide to help women and girls advocate for their rights in Toronto – Toronto Women's City Alliance

Planning for equitable and inclusive cities – City For All Women Initiative

Planning for safer and more inclusive places for women and girls safety in the public realm – Essex City Council

Women working: urban assessment guide from a gender perspective – Col·lectiu Punt 6

Case studies:

LLDC Research Kaizen Partnership report – Safety and Belonging for Women and Girls in Public Spaces

Umea Kommun – Gender, power & politics!

LLDC Women's Safety Stakeholder Charter

Equal Saree – Architecture and Urbanism with a Feminist perspective

Women's Equality Party – Girls of the Light: art installations in Tottenham

WalkSafe – WalkSafe app

West Yorkshire Combined Authority – Safer Parks Research and Guidance

Waltham Forest – Community Walking and Cycling Fund

Richmond – Community Toilet Scheme

Queen Elisabeth Olympic Park – Abba Voyage

Love Clean Streets – Love Clean Streets app

The Leap – Attock Park Crafts: Building Cultural Confidence for Underserved Groups

Tower Hamlets – Green Hoarding Pilot Project

Waltham Forest – Enjoy Waltham Forest

Groups:

Gender, equity, architecture – Parlour

Parlour is a research-based advocacy organisation working to improve gender equity in architecture and the built environment professions.

Make Space for Girls

Make Space for Girls campaigns for parks and public spaces to be designed for girls and young women, not just boys and young men.

Per theme or solution:

Lighting

Developing a night time strategy: Part 1 Guidance on process – Mayor of London

Developing a night time strategy: Part 2 Guidance, precedents and case studies – Mayor of London

Guidance Note 08/23: bats and artificial lighting at night – The Institute of Lighting Professionals & Bat Conservation Trust

Perceptions of night-time safety: women and girls – Arup, Monash University, Plan International & Crowd Spot

Safety after dark: creating a city for women living and working in Sydney – Committee for Sydney

Security and surveillance

ISO 22341:2021 – Security and resilience: protective security: guidelines for crime prevention through environmental design

Planning, urban design and management for crime prevention handbook – AGIS: Action Safepolis

Secured by Design: Homes 2023

Secured by Design: Commercial 2023

Secured by Design: Construction site security guide 2021

Secured by Design: Crime prevention advice for specialist and supported housing schemes

Security Overlay to the RIBA Plan of Work – National Protective Security Authority, Royal Institute of British Architects & Police Crime Prevention Initiatives

Standards for public cycle parking – Secured by Design, Bicycle Association & Sustrans

Youth shelters and sports systems: a good practice guide – Thames Valley Police

Nature and planting

Green Flag Award

Guidance Note 08/23: bats and artificial lighting at night – The Institute of Lighting Professionals & Bat Conservation Trust

London Plan guidance: urban greening factor – Mayor of London

Biodiversity net gain – Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Transport and mobility

Cycling for everyone: a guide for inclusive cycling in cities and towns – Sustrans & Arup

Guide to the healthy streets indicators: delivering the healthy streets approach – Transport for London

The inclusive transport strategy: achieving equal access for disabled people – Department for Transport

Making London child-friendly – Mayor of London

Transport assessments – Transport for London

Travelling in a women's shoes – Arup & Transport Infrastructure Ireland

Walking for Everyone: making walking and wheeling more inclusive – Sustrans, Living Streets & Arup

Manual for streets – Department for Transport

Manual for streets 2 – Department for Transport

Public realm equipment and facilities

Inclusive spaces and places for girls and young people – Homes England

Safer parks: improving access for women and girls – Safer Parks Consortium

What makes a park feel safe or unsafe? The views of women, girls and professionals in West Yorkshire – University of Leeds & West Yorkshire Combined Authority

Land use and activity

Proximity of care: design guide – Arup & Bernard van Leer Foundation

Wayfinding and signage

Wayfound Victoria – Melbourne Visitor Signage Committee

Art, heritage, culture and identity

The community mapping toolkit: a guide to community asset mapping for community groups and local organisations – Preston City Council

LDN WMN – Mayor of London

Accessible features

Building access: universal design and the politics of disability – Aimi Hamraie

Designing collective access: a feminist disability theory of universal design – Aimi Hamraie

The Disordinary Architecture Project: A handy guide for doing disability differently in architecture and urban design – Jos Boys

The universal design ideal – Anna Leahy

Policies and initiatives

Growing up in Hackney: child-friendly places supplementary planning document (SPD)

LLDC – Inclusive Design Standards

Canary Wharf – Canary Wharf Group Joins Forces with The Felix Project to Tackle Food Poverty

Warwick District Council – Guide to Equality Impact Assessment

Planning Advisory Service – Evidence for Plan Making: A focus upon proportionality

Women in Sport – Gender Budgeting

UN Sustainability Development Goals (SDGs)

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021

Equality Act 2010

London Plan 2021

Mayor of London Public London Charter

LLDC Local Plan

LLDC Planning Documents

Mayor of London Women's Night Safety Charter

Greater London Authority (GLA) Good Growth by Design

Greater London Authority (GLA) 24 Hour London

Build Back Better High Streets and 'Safer Streets Funding for High Streets'

Homes England Inclusive Spaces and Places for Girls and Young People

Appendix B:
About LLDC

London Legacy Development Corporation (LLDC) was established as the first ever Mayoral Development Corporation in 2012, to take forward commitments made in the original London 2012 bid in relation to the physical and socio- economic regeneration of Stratford and the surrounding area.

LLDC's responsibilities include the development of land in and around Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, the management of Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, the coordination of strategic investment to the area and the delivery of socioeconomic outcomes which ensure that local communities can benefit from that investment.

As a Mayoral body, LLDC is also an important vehicle for delivery of Mayor of London policies, for example in relation to responsible procurement, the climate emergency response and more recently the Covid-19 London Recovery Programme.

LLDC fulfils all its responsibilities in conjunction with the four Boroughs neighbouring Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park: Newham, Hackney, Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest, collectively known as the Growth Boroughs.

It also works closely with strategic partners including the Mayor of London, the Greater London Authority, Transport for London, central government, the East London Host Boroughs, the Lee Valley Regional Park Authority (a significant land and asset owner within the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park), the innovation and technology campus at Here East, residents in neighbouring local communities, local organisations, businesses and regeneration agencies and national and international sporting, cultural and leisure organisations. Programmes and activities are co-designed and, in many cases, co-delivered, with a wide range of partners as well as with local communities.

LLDC's mission is: 'To use the opportunity of the London 2012 Games and the creation of Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park to change the lives of people in east London and drive growth and investment in London and the UK, by developing an inspiring and innovative place where people want – and can afford – to live, work and visit'.

LLDC has a range of different levers for delivering its objectives, exercised through its different roles as:

Landowner

LLDC owns public land and buildings within Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, as well as smaller development sites at Hackney Wick and Bromley-by-Bow. Much of this is leased to or operated by other organisations on its behalf, such as the venues and what will become East Bank. LLDC also owns several significant development plots which are being developed in partnership with private developers or via joint venture arrangements.

Local planning authority

As the local planning authority for the Mayoral Development Corporation area, LLDC is responsible for setting and implementing clear planning policies which meet its strategic objectives, as set out in the LLDC Local Plan 2020 to 2036. These include:

- Preparing and reviewing planning strategy and policies.

- Collection and allocation of Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy to support infrastructure priorities and managing operation of the Neighbourhood Priorities Fund and the Carbon Offset Fund.

- Supporting developers through pre-application negotiation to achieve best outcomes.

- Making decisions on development proposals which will fulfil strategic priorities (e.g. in relation to delivery viability versus levels of affordable housing).

- Working with communities on Neighbourhood Planning proposals.

Regeneration agency

LLDC works with a wide range of partners to deliver shared objectives for Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park and the surrounding area. This involves contributing resource, levering in third party funding, coordinating programmes and activities, establishing delivery routes and brokering relationships between organisations. It also involves ensuring that its strategic objectives support and complement those of the Growth Boroughs and working with them to attract inward investment and support broader socio-economic and regeneration objectives for east London.

LLDC powers and transition

It is anticipated that many of LLDC's objectives will have been delivered by 2025. Plans are currently being developed for the delivery of ongoing functions and the long-term operation and oversight of the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park.

As a Mayoral Development Corporation, the powers and responsibilities of the LLDC are limited. As a result, it has limited ability to execute some relevant policies and interventions that fall within the remit of other authorities. This includes:

- Certain specific interventions, such as policing of anti-social behaviour and fly tipping.

- Providing support to victims training and educational programs.

- Design interventions in public realm, where these fall under the remit of other relevant authorities or stakeholders, such as the four London boroughs and the Canals and Rivers Trust.

- Any space outside the bounds of the LLDC area.

Where identified issues or recommended interventions fall outside of LLDC's remit, LLDC has committed to working in partnership with relevant authorities to communicate these and encourage action to be taken.

The Mayor of London has agreed that LLDC's Town Planning functions will return to the four boroughs of Hackney, Newham, Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest on 1 December 2024, and LLDC will remain a Mayoral Development Corporation beyond 2025 with a reduced area, and a reconstituted Board and governance structure.

The Growth Boroughs and LLDC are committed to working together to ensure the Park is retained as one 'Great Estate' that delivers long-term, financially sustainable, social and economic benefits for local people, with a commitment to enabling genuine community involvement in the evolution of the LLDC estate.

Appendix C: Acknowledgments

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All character illustrations have been produced by Shanice Abbey.

Appendix D: Consent form example

This example is a starting point and should be adapted to the specific requirements of a project. It should always be ensured that the consent form is clear, easy to understand and complies with relevant data protection and privacy laws.

Public engagement consent form

- Project information:
- Project name:
- Project location:
- Date of public engagement:
- Organising entity:

Purpose of engagement: Briefly explain the purpose of the public engagement, such as gathering feedback on proposed changes to a public space or new development.

Information collection: Detail the type of information you will collect from participants, such as demographic information and opinions on specific design aspects.

Participation consent: I, [Participant's Name], hereby give my consent to participate in the public engagement process for the [Project Name].

Data usage: I understand that the information I provide may be used for the purposes of analysing public opinions and informing the urban design process. My personal information will be kept confidential and will not be shared with third parties without my explicit consent.

Photography and recording: I give my consent to be photographed, recorded and have my comments documented during the engagement events. I understand that these materials may be used for reporting and documentation purposes.

Anonymity: I understand that my responses may be anonymised and aggregated with others in any reports or presentations.

Contact information: I agree to provide my contact information for the purpose of receiving updates about the project and any follow-up questions related to my engagement. This information will not be used for any other purposes.

Signature: [Participant's Signature] [Date]

Appendix E: Endnotes

1 Centre for London – All Londoners should be free from the threat of sexual harassment on public transport

2 Girlguiding – New research reveals 80% of girls don't feel safe outside

3 The Crown Prosecution Service – Context and characteristics of hostility towards sexual orientation and transgender identity

4 Nation – Why road safety in Africa is a gender equality issue

5 Cycling UK – Why don't more women cycle?

6 UN Women Headquarters | Redistribute unpaid work

7 The Independent – Majority of men believe women more likely to be sexually assaulted if wearing revealing clothes, study suggests

8 European Network Against Racism – Forgotten Women: The impact of Islamophobia on Muslim women

9 Arup – Cities Alive: Designing cities that work for women