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## Consultation Response

### **TITLE: A City for all Londoners**

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## About Age UK London

Age UK London raises the voice and addresses the needs of older Londoners. We promote and represent the views of older Londoners; we campaign on real issues that make a difference to older people; we work with older people's organisations across London to enhance services; we offer a range of products and services tailor-made for the over 50s (via Age UK London Trading). We are part of the national Age UK network and work in partnership with the national charity Age UK and with London borough Age UKs. We also link to over 500 local older people's groups in all London boroughs, many of them volunteer led.

For a number of years Age UK London has partnered annually with the Mayor and other agencies to deliver "Know Your Rights", a London-wide campaign to increase uptake of benefits which people are entitled to.

### 1. Introduction

We are pleased to have the opportunity to make an input to the consultation on "A City For All Londoners". We strongly welcome the Mayor's overall emphasis on social integration and on tackling inequality. As a charity focussed on ageing and older people, our key concern is to ensure that older people are part of this, contribute to it and benefit from it. We want older people to feel well, be safe at home, have enough money, be active in communities and have access to quality health and care services.

We call on the Mayor to work towards making London an Age Friendly City in the areas identified by the World Health Organisation and others: housing; outdoor environment and neighbourhoods; transport; social, cultural and civic participation; employment, skills and income; community support and health services; communication and information; and respect and social inclusion. The Mayor's roles and responsibilities give him a mandate to take this forward.

### 2. Key points and recommendations

#### Part 1 – Accommodating Growth

We welcome the acknowledgement in the section on "Infrastructure for people and communities" that the expected ageing as well as growth of London's population needs to be taken into account in overall development plans. While in this section the implications of ageing are put essentially in terms of health and social care needs, in reality there are implications across all of the policy areas that the Mayor addresses: see in particular our comments on Part 2, Housing and Part 3, Economy, below. The impact of ageing includes a potential to increase the contribution already made by older people to the economy and society. The GLA previously commissioned research on ["Older Londoners and the London Plan"](#) (March 2016) identifying implications of ageing in a number of key areas.

In the section on “Infrastructure for people and communities”, while we share the approach described it would be helpful to specifically identify social care as well as healthcare since these are two separate while complementary sectors supporting older people and others.

## **Part 2 – Housing**

Housing was one of the key focus areas in Age UK London’s asks to Mayoral candidates in 2016, and Sadiq Khan made some positive manifesto commitments such as “to Improve planning and design policies to offer older Londoners more choice, whether they are active older people, downsizers or in need of specialist and extra care homes, and by making it easier for owner-occupiers to adapt their homes when they want others, including carers and lodgers, to live with them.”

Not only are many older people seriously affected by London’s housing crisis: enabling older Londoners who so wish to “rightsize” to suitable homes would make many larger properties available for younger families who need them.

### Affordable Housing

In principle we could agree to a target of 50% of new homes built in London to be affordable. However this does beg the question of what is meant by “affordable”: “affordable” housing according to various existing definitions based on percentages of the market level is clearly not affordable to most Londoners of all ages.

### London Living Rent

This is the most concrete proposal so far to provide more affordable housing and in principle we welcome it. However, the eligibility criteria need to be age-inclusive. If as stated, the LLR aims to help people save for a deposit to buy a home, that is implicitly targeting younger people. Realistically, older people on low incomes are very unlikely ever to be able to save for a deposit to buy a property, particularly in London. Older people on middle incomes may still be excluded from buying because mortgage lenders operate upper age limits. Older people struggling to cope in the private rented sector (see below) must not be excluded from London’s flagship programme for affordable renting!

If the main intention is to focus on working people for this tenure, we would point out that with increased longevity, rises in the state pension age and the scrapping of default retirement ages, steadily increasing numbers of older people are in employment.

## Private Rented Sector

We welcome the Mayor's focus on improving this sector. On current trends, increasing numbers of older Londoners will in future be living in the PRS. (This is referred to in the GLA research mentioned above). Our current research, which is being shared with the GLA, is still in development but initial findings suggest many older private renters in London may experience problems in areas such as:

- Security of tenure: assured shorthold tenancies do not meet the need of most older people for secure homes at a rent they can afford;
- Affordability: even in Registered Fair Rent properties, the permitted level of rent increase outstrips rises in pension income;
- Condition of homes and difficulty in obtaining repairs and adaptations. This type of issue, including difficulty in heating homes, can potentially have serious health effects on older people;
- Feelings of powerlessness in relation to landlords and in relation to obtaining their rights. This may contribute to older tenants "not daring to ask" for repairs and adaptations;
- Neglect by absent or inattentive landlords (the latter including property companies).

## Homes for Londoners

We welcome the creation of this new team and urge that its remit should be explicitly age inclusive, ensuring that a range of suitable, accessible and genuinely affordable housing options (to buy and to rent) are available for people of all ages in all London boroughs.

## Different and innovative housing tenures for older people

We have just seen the opening of Older Women's Co-housing's development in North London, achieved after a long struggle by its members who had to overcome many obstacles. Mayoral policies should facilitate the development of innovative forms such as co-housing and co-operatives to meet older people's needs.

## **Part 3 – Economy**

We find this section the most disappointing part of "A City for All Londoners", simply because it does not acknowledge the economic implications of an ageing population or the economic contribution of older people.

People are living longer and will want/need to work longer, so economic development needs to include areas (geographic and sectors) that mean these older people still have the ability to find jobs. Older workers are also a key part of the workforce in terms of reliability and knowledge, and also in training and the passing on of skills.

Another key area for consideration absent from the document is the considerable and growing importance of older people as consumers, the so-called “grey pound”. Do companies in London market themselves so as to reach this large and growing market segment?

The GLA published in 2013 a substantial piece of research on [The Economic Contribution of Older Londoners](#) which identifies and quantifies the large contributions made to London’s economy by older people as paid workers, volunteers and carers for adults and children.

We urge the Mayor to build on this recognition in future policies and consider how to make the most of older Londoners’ contribution, working to overcome barriers to their participation in the labour market..London Councils among others have pointed to [poor outcomes for older and disabled people in employment support](#).

Other areas which we would recommend for inclusion in London’s economic development strategy, are:

- The role of the voluntary and community sector as a major employer in London – see for example [LVSC’s The Big Ask](#).
- Sectors such as health and social care which are vital to the wellbeing of many Londoners, and are also major employers: the social care sector in London may be particularly vulnerable to the impact of Brexit because of the makeup of its workforce.

## **Part 4 – Environment, Transport and Public Space**

### Air Quality

In general we welcome the Mayor’s intention of improving the quality of air in London. We welcome the consideration of possible vulnerability of older people among others to poor air quality, and suggest that some further London-specific research on this link could be beneficial. Age UK London’s network of local older people’s organisations offers a channel to involve older people in work on air quality and other environmental issues.

### Carbon Reduction and Energy Efficiency

We welcome the outline of the Mayor’s aims including the link between energy efficiency and helping people in fuel poverty. We also appreciate the recent opening of discussions with the Deputy Mayor for Environment on these issues. There is a need to ensure that actions do reach older people in fuel poverty and vulnerable to winter issues – and those living in existing homes as well as newbuild.

We recommend that the remit of the new body Energy for Londoners should include supporting older people and others in fuel poverty.

We wish to recommend the following:

- (a) Evaluation of existing London activities such as RE:NEW and planning of future activities such as those of Energy for Londoners should focus clearly on the impact on people in fuel poverty including older people. People in fuel poverty must be able to contribute to the design of future programmes;
- (b) The forthcoming review of the London Plan and policies arising from it should ensure adequate attention to tackling fuel poverty, and cover the impact on vulnerable people of winter cold as well as summer overheating;
- (c) A holistic package of support including advice, support with home adaptations and improved incentives needs to be made available to fuel poor older people in order to allow them to benefit from energy saving initiatives. Obstacles to be overcome include for example, older and disabled people needing support to remove heavy objects from lofts to allow insulation to be installed;
- (d) Better solutions need to be found for the situation of many older homeowners who are “asset rich and income poor” and find this an obstacle to accessing insulation. Older private sector tenants also need to be on the radar of all agencies addressing energy efficiency and fuel poverty.

### Cycling, Walking and Road Safety

We welcome the Mayor’s aim of promoting walking and cycling as priorities in comparison with private cars (see below re cycling facilities)..There is a need to allow for disabled people who need motor transport to get around, and some traffic schemes may create concerns among older people in a locality about issues such as access for emergency vehicles or displacing vehicle traffic to other areas.

An ageing population is likely to lead to increasing numbers of older people using mobility scooters and similar vehicles to get around London: consideration of how these travellers are accommodated in streets and public transport appears to be less advanced than consideration of other transport modes.

### Cycling measures

Like other organisations we have been concerned about the impact of, in particular, bus stop bypasses on older and disabled pedestrians and bus passengers. We welcome the reference to “learning the lessons from previous developments” and urge that this should include avoiding the creation of further bus stop bypasses.

### Inclusive Neighbourhoods and Healthy Streets

Promoting inclusive neighbourhoods bringing together people of different ages, ethnicity and socio-economic backgrounds is an objective which fits with work we ourselves are developing and we strongly welcome it. There is an obvious link with

Healthy Streets as described in Part 1, Accommodating Growth. We would be strongly interested in helping link older people in to the development of these themes through our network of local organisations.

### Public Space

Age UK London shares the principles set out in this section. We consider that well designed public space should include for instance:

- Public toilets
- Well designed benches or other seating to allow people both to stop and enjoy their surroundings, and simply to rest and avoid having to walk excessive distances.

Such facilities are appreciated by many older people, and also help to make public spaces accessible and enjoyable for many others of all ages.

## **Part 5 – A city for all Londoners**

We very much welcome the Mayor's focus on social integration as a cross-cutting issue across all policies, building stronger communities and enabling all Londoners to actively participate in decision-making and the life of the capital as a whole. We also strongly welcome the discussion of how economic and social injustice and discrimination contribute to disadvantage.

These forces disadvantage many older Londoners. Official statistics published in 2015 and 2016 (Households Below Average Income) showed up to 24% of pensioners in Inner London living below a widely used measure of relative poverty (60% of national median income) with an even higher proportion in material deprivation. The 2015 edition gave analysis linking this to high costs of housing. Age UK estimated in 2016 that 94,000 older Londoners with long term care needs get no support from the official social care system. An estimated 44,000 older Londoners are chronically lonely.

Older Londoners may also experience multiple discrimination and disadvantage because of disability or because of their gender, their sexual orientation, the ethnic or faith community they belong to, in addition to their age.

### Strong communities and active citizenship

We believe it is of key importance to ensure that older Londoners have every opportunity to contribute to strengthening communities whether as volunteers, carers, grandparents or community members in general. A huge contribution can be made by intergenerational work where older people both benefit from the skills of younger generations and pass on their own valuable experience and know-how.

## Healthy London and Health Inequalities

We welcome the Mayor's overall approach as described, while urging that strategies and partnership work include social care delivered through local authorities as well as NHS services. Social care is a key resource for many older and disabled people, but currently extreme funding cuts lead to the system failing older people, which in turn leads to increased pressure on the NHS.

It is welcome to see the consideration of improving support to mental health needs. We would also like to see the Mayor working towards making London dementia friendly.

## A Good Public Transport Experience

We absolutely agree with the emphasis on ensuring good public transport experiences for all Londoners including older and disabled people. Good public transport is seen by many older people as one of the most important factors helping them have a good quality of life in London. As we have done in the past, we are eager to go on helping link the voice of older people into Transport for London and the Mayor's transport planning.

## Safer and More Secure Communities

We urge that the MPS priorities should continue to include tackling crimes such as scams, which particularly target older people, and engaging with and listening to older people at local level.

## Participation in Culture

We welcome the aim of increasing participation in culture and urge development of a campaign to promote older people's participation in arts and culture, as participants as well as audience members. Participation in culture has major health benefits for older people and others, and as such deserves support from boroughs and the NHS. The Mayor has opportunities to promote cultural participation thorough his strategic planning role as well as through initiatives like the Borough of Culture and Love London.

## Digital Inclusion

The one disappointment in this section is its lack of consideration of digital inclusion. The "digital by default" agenda is creating many problems for the majority of Londoners aged over 75 who are not online, and for other digitally excluded people. Supporting digital inclusion is key both to enabling people to access the services they need, and to enabling participation in culture and involvement within communities. Part 3 on the economy briefly mentions the role of the Chief Digital Officer, including support for digital inclusion. This role and approach need to be developed in the context of social inclusion, social integration and stronger communities.