

Gender and Spatial Planning

RTPI Good Practice Note 7

1. About this guidance

Spatial planning can only deliver a safe, healthy and sustainable environment for all if it is sensitive to all needs. Developing gender sensitive policies and practices helps everyone.

This Good Practice Note coincides with the introduction of the duty to promote gender equality in Great Britain, the first decade of Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 which incorporates gender, and the European Year for Equal Opportunities. The note builds on the work of the RTPI Gender Toolkit published in 2003¹.

The note is essential reading for all those involved in developing and implementing planning policy at the national, regional and local levels and for those involved in development management.

It complements both an Oxfam Briefing Note² which summarises the key issues for decision-makers and the requirements of the Equality Standards for Local Government³.

The note examines definitions of equality, the legal responsibilities of planners and the key gender issues affecting spatial planning. It then focuses on specific areas of planning, setting out key facts and good practice.

The RTPI maintains its good practice notes under continuous review. However, the law in relation to equalities is dynamic and there can be no substitute for members seeking additional advice when in doubt.



"How space is planned has a critical impact on women and men's different life experiences. It can play a key role in making it easier or more difficult for them to escape from poverty and deprivation. Oxfam endorses RTPI GPN 7 on gender and spatial planning as a significant contribution to the understanding of all involved in the planning process, demonstrating why taking gender into account is important." Oxfam, UK Poverty



RTPI

mediation of space · making of place

¹ RTPI (2003) Gender Mainstreaming Toolkit, Executive Summary. Available from <http://www.rtpi.org.uk/download/369/Gender-Equality-Toolkit.pdf>
Supporting Research: <http://www.rtpi.org.uk/download/766/Gender-Equality-and-Plan-Making-Mainstreaming-Toolkit-case-studies-and-pilots.pdf>

² Oxfam (2007) A Place for everyone? Gender equality and urban planning
<http://www.oxfam.org.uk/resources/>

³ Improvement and Development Agency (2007) The Equality Standard for Local Government. Available from: <http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/aio/6531086>

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3. Legal Responsibilities

The Gender Equality Duty came into force in April 2007 and requires designated authorities in England, Wales and Scotland to promote gender equality and eliminate sex discrimination, using Equality Schemes to set out priorities and Gender Impact Assessments (GIAs) to evaluate impacts. Local planning authorities are subject to this duty.

Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998 also requires gender to be considered as part of Equality Impact Assessments. The British and Northern Ireland legislation includes services procured by local authorities from private and voluntary agencies.

Equality Schemes set out the actions which a public authority has taken or intends to take to assess the impact of its policies and practices on equality between women and men.

Gender Impact Assessments may form part of a broader Equality Impact Assessment and both can be integrated into Sustainability Appraisals as a key method of:

- demonstrating that the social theme is addressed and
- ensuring that the gendered nature of environmental impacts are also considered.

GIAs are also useful in implementing the Equality Standard for Local Government, helping planners contribute to the overall assessment of how planning can help address inequalities⁴.

4. Understanding Equality

The following working definition of equality emerged from the UK Government's Equality Review⁵.

'An equal society protects and promotes equal, real freedom and substantive opportunity to live in the ways people value and would choose, so that everyone can flourish.

An equal society recognises people's different needs, situations and goals, and removes the barriers that limit what people can do and can be.'

⁴ Improvement and Development Agency (2007) The Equality Standard for Local Government. Available from: <http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/aio/6531086>

⁵ Cabinet Office (2007) Fairness and Freedom: Final Report of the Equalities Review. http://www.theequalitiesreview.org.uk/publications/interim_report.aspx Page 143

5. Spatial Planning and Gender Equality

Space defines what people can do, how people interact and feel about themselves and their communities. Planning is about creating better places and spaces. Spatial planning involves understanding and responding to how people in different equality categories use, experience and feel about places and spaces. It should seek as far as possible to eliminate inequalities that are due to differential use, experience and perceptions about places and spaces.

Decisions affecting where people live, for example, what types of housing are built, where land for jobs is allocated and new retail stores encouraged, impact on men and women differently. Although these examples are given, almost any type of spatial planning decision has the potential to have gender effects.

Spatial planning that is sensitive to gender therefore addresses issues of particular concern to women as well as men and takes account of the different social roles, choices and aspirations of men and women of different ages, race, disability and sexual orientation.

By recognising and valuing the differences and similarities between women and men and their varied roles and aspirations, spatial planning can ensure safe, healthy, sustainable and enjoyable environments for all.

- A gendered understanding of spatial planning highlights issues of safety and security, and ensures that the quality of places and spaces reflects everyone's needs.
- A gendered understanding of how people use space and places improves our ability to achieve economic, social and environmental goals.
- A gendered understanding of how people see their environment is important in developing policies to combat climate change.
- A gendered understanding of design ensures that places and spaces work well for everyone.
- A gendered understanding of what local facilities people need ensures that we create places that are useable by everyone.
- A gendered understanding of how people want to live their lives ensures that places and spaces incorporate the facilities everyone needs.

6. Key facts and good practice

Involvement and participation

Public authorities are already obliged to involve those affected at each stage of policy development and planning applications. A gendered approach ensures that the planning system is accessible to everyone.

The facts

The ability of women and men to engage with the planning process differs. Women can find it more difficult to engage in planning processes since they are more likely to provide unpaid care and the timing and places of consultation may not recognise caring responsibilities.

Women from some minority ethnic groups may not wish to attend mixed gender consultation meetings.

Studies by the Women's Design Service show an under-representation of disabled women in consultation processes.

Women are less likely than men to access Information Communication Technology (ICT) and the World Wide Web (www) and an over-emphasis on ICT could exclude women⁶.

Good Practice

- Find out how women and girls in the area want to be involved.
- Ask women directly what the environment is like for disabled women, women of different ages, minority ethnic women, lesbians and transgender people.
- Ensure that the statement of community involvement addresses the needs of women as well as men and that there is a gender balance and diversity on youth liaison groups, including gays and lesbians.
- Ensure that all materials are gender-proofed and that publicity material portrays women and girls as well as men and boys positively.
- Produce child-friendly versions of policies and ensure child-friendly approaches to involvement, targeting girls and boys.
- Use gender-neutral or inclusive language to communicate and avoid the risk of excluding and therefore offending people.
- Ensure adequate resources are provided to allow equality of access to the planning processes.

⁶ Office of National Statistics Focus on Gender <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/CCI/nugget.asp?ID=1659>

- Provide for caring needs, ensure that the timing of events is convenient and access to Information Communication Technology (ICT) is fully considered. Involve women in the design of web-based approaches to ensure that websites are gender sensitive and user friendly.
- Ensure that People's Panels and Citizens' Juries are sufficiently large for information to be disaggregated by equality categories including gender, race, disability and age.
- Hold meetings with men and women separately as part of community consultation, acting on the differences in need that emerge.
- Ensure timely feedback to different equality groups to encourage ongoing involvement.
- Refer to the RTPI Good Practice Note 1⁷ on effective community involvement and consultation which looks at hard to reach groups and, for those involved in regeneration projects, check out the Oxfam Guide 'Into the Lion's Den'⁸.

Examples

- At least sixteen London Boroughs have been involved in the Disability and Regeneration project run by the Women's Design Service. Working with disability organisations the project identifies the most appropriate methods of engaging interested disabled women, for example accompanying disabled people to facilities, home visits and using the Internet sensitively⁹.
- Modeled on Access Groups, Women's Design Groups are being set up by the Women's Design Service in Manchester and the London Borough of Islington to provide gendered feedback on planning proposals¹⁰.
- Community and Technical Aid Centre (CTAC) organised a series of events in youth centres and local primary and high schools to establish what young people want to see in their local neighbourhood regeneration¹¹.
- Birmingham City Council makes use of an electronic network to encourage feedback from women's organisations about major developments. Concern about access arrangements to the Bullring led to better design solutions¹².
- Glasgow City Council has produced a short Good Practice Guide on Language Matters for use by all Council staff and members¹³.

⁷ RTPI (2005) GPN 1. Available from: <http://www.rtpi.org.uk/item/1007/23/5/3>

⁸ Oxfam (undated) Into the Lion's Den: A Practical Guide to Including Women in Regeneration. Can be ordered from: <http://www.oxfamgb.org/ukpp/resources/intothelionsden.htm>

⁹ Women's Design Service Publications including: 'What to do about women's safety in parks from A to Y?'; 'Disability and Regeneration'; and 'Making Safer Places'. Can be ordered from: www.wds.org.uk

¹⁰ Op Cit

¹¹ Communities and Local Government (2005) Diversity and Equality in Planning, London: CLG. Available from: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/diversityequality> Page 45.

¹² Op Cit Page 122.

¹³ Glasgow City Council (undated) Language Matters: A Guide to Good Practice. Available from: <http://www.glasgow.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/6E29C668-896B-47D3-9591-42809C964019/0/LanguageMatters.doc>

Plan-Making and Policy Development

Plans set out policies and proposals affecting every part of the UK. There is a National Spatial Plan for Scotland, a Wales Spatial Plan and a Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland. Local and regional areas throughout the UK have development plans, which in England extend to include regional plans called Regional Spatial Strategies.

During the plan-making process planners are obliged by legislation to ensure that policies and practices promote equality between different equality categories. It is crucial that the evidence base for policies is disaggregated so that gender differences and equality gaps can be identified.

Below are some of the gender differences in the UK relevant to planning.

The Facts

Research for the RTPI Gender Toolkit¹⁴ showed that the following issues feature highly for women:

- Safety (personal safety, fear of crime)
- Environmental justice
- Access and mobility
- Affordable housing
- Local facilities including shops, community facilities for children and elder care, schools, meeting places, parks, leisure facilities and play spaces, accessible recycling facilities, seating and shelter
- Public toilets

There is very little evidence that policies are routinely subject to Gender Impact Assessment.

Other gendered considerations include:

- Despite being less likely to be the victim of violent crime (4.7 per cent of men; 2.5 per cent of women) 24 per cent of women and 9 per cent of men have a high level of worry about attack¹⁵.
- The Equality Review estimates that, at current rates, it will take until 2085 before the gender pay gap is closed¹⁶. Women in full-time work earn 88 per cent of male earnings in Northern Ireland and only 77 per cent of male earnings in London¹⁷.

¹⁴ RTPI (2003) Gender Mainstreaming Toolkit, Executive Summary. Available from: <http://www.rtpi.org.uk/download/369/Gender-Equality-Toolkit.pdf>

¹⁵ British Crime Survey (2006/7) Available from: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs07/hosb1107.pdf> Page 122.

¹⁶ Cabinet Office (2007) Fairness and Freedom: Final Report of the Equalities Review. http://www.theequalitiesreview.org.uk/publications/interim_report.aspx Page 24.

¹⁷ Department of Trade and Industry (2002) Women and Men in the UK, Page 95.

- In 2001 the owner-occupation gap between single men and single women in Great Britain was 14 per cent (54 and 40 per cent, respectively). The pattern was reversed for widowers and widows, particularly for those owning their homes outright: 57 per cent of women compared with 51 per cent of men. For divorced or separated men and women there was no difference in owner-occupation, with half of both sexes owning their home, whether with a mortgage or outright¹⁸.
- In 2004, one in four dependent children lived in a lone-parent family. Nearly 9 out of 10 lone parents were lone mothers. One of the consequences of this is that women are more likely to live in social housing and are more affected by fuel poverty, lack of local shops, childcare and employment opportunities¹⁹.
- An EOC survey found that 83 per cent of women and 68 per cent of men would like a job that would allow them to combine work and family life²⁰.
- Girls use open space in different ways and with less confidence than boys, especially in the age groups 10 -13, and prefer a reserved zone for girls. Research also shows that girls become much less active than boys in their teenage years and drop out of physical activity and are almost half as physically active as boys well before they reach their teens²¹.
- Women are the main users of town centres yet are under represented in city centre partnership agencies²².
- Women are less likely than men to have access to a car and although men are three times more likely to cycle to work women, are more likely to be injured in accidents.

Good practice

- Integrate gender into each stage of the policy and implementation cycle and undertake Gender Impact Assessments²³ to examine the potential impact of proposed policies, on the promotion of gender equality and the removal of gender inequalities. GIAs also ensure that the gender needs of disabled women and men as well as the gender needs of BME groups are considered.
- Where appropriate, integrate the Gender Impact Assessments and Equality Impact Assessments into the Sustainability Appraisal. This will add to the quality, effectiveness, legitimacy and likelihood of implementation of policies.

¹⁸ Office National Statistics Focus on Gender <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/CCI/nugget.asp?ID=433&Pos=6&ColRank=2&Rank=224>

¹⁹ National Housing Statistics Focus on Gender <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=433>

²⁰ Fuller, A. et al. (2005) Employers, young people and gender segregation (England). EOC: Manchester:

²¹ Armstrong, N. (2001) Director of the Children's Health and Exercise Research Centre at Exeter University <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/1455088.stm>

²² Women and Men in Managerial Positions. Available from: http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/women_men_stats/out/measure_out4311_en.htm

²³ The CEHR has produced general advice on GIAs. Other useful advice includes: Reeves Associates and published by Echelon and Gender Proofing Handbook by Crawley and O'Meara. Available from: http://www.ndpgenderequality.ie/publications/publications_01.html

- Gender-proof approaches to information gathering and spatial demographics. Ensure that statistics and data are disaggregated by sex, race, age and disability and if necessary commission bespoke surveys and commission fact sheets by equality group, in preparation for plan-making²⁴.
- Ask women of different ages, disability and income levels directly about their experience of the environment and how it can be made safer, more healthy and sustainable.
- Ensure that levels of poverty, income and pay gaps for different groups of women are taken into account when developing housing, employment and shopping policies.
- Provide policies that enable the grant of planning permission for appropriately located and designed women's refuges and social housing.
- Consider the location of jobs and homes so that women, who take on most of the caring roles, have an equal chance to access job opportunities and men can take on more caring responsibilities.
- Ensure consideration is given to transport gaps and their effects on women when designating land for new jobs.
- When using tools like 'Place Check', ensure that the results are disaggregated by gender²⁵.
- In relation to the 24-hour economy policy, ensure that the views of women are considered. Evidence shows that in certain locations, lap dancing and exotic dancing clubs make women feel threatened or uncomfortable.
- The development of appropriate leisure space and facilities for girls and boys creates a level playing field of opportunities. Think about the conditions needed as part of planning policies, conditions and agreements.
- Ensure that regeneration and new developments incorporate public toilets; too often seen as insignificant to urban design.
- Obtain evidence that consultants have a knowledge and understanding of gender issues and how to promote women's equality and take appropriate action.

²⁴ Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) (2000) A Checklist for Gender Proofing Research, Manchester: EOC.

²⁵ Place Check. Available from: <http://www.placecheck.info>

Examples

- One way of achieving a better foundation for development management decision-making is to build into policy making the results of gender safety audits which should indicate the improvements needed to the public realm²⁶.
- The Gender Equality Unit in Ireland has a series of Gender Relevance Sheets for measures under Ireland's National Development Plan 2000-2006. Each sheet includes sections on gender equality and gender mainstreaming, the relevance of gender to the particular measure and suggested actions for the measure.
- The Women's Design Service has developed a Making Safer Places process in Bristol, Wolverhampton, London and Manchester using an exercise called a 'fearometer' to find out what makes women afraid. Women then conduct audits of their local neighbourhood, estate or park to identify features of the physical environment which encourage crime or the fear of crime and make recommendations for improvements such as moving or removing vegetation, rerouting paths or installing fences.
- In Stockwell gender considerations have led to the inclusion of the Women's Refugee Centre in the Master Plan for the area following the involvement of women's groups²⁷.
- The Women's Environment International Journal reports that women are more likely to suffer the long-term consequences of climate change because of their different positions and roles in many societies around the world. Yet they are less likely to be in scientific or technical jobs involved in developing solutions, or in decision-making positions in company boardrooms or in politics²⁸.

²⁶ Making Safer Places (2004) Available from: http://www.unhabitat.org/downloads/docs/4484_86597_SafetyAwardsEng%20.pdf Page 27.

²⁷ Communities and Local Government (2005) Diversity and Equality in Planning, London: CLG. Available from: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/planningandbuilding/diversityequality> Page 133.

²⁸ Women's Environment International (2007) Climate Change and Canada by Eyzaguirre, J. Spring/Summer, Page 18-20.

Implementation and Decision Making

Spatial planning policies are implemented through the development management / control process as well as through joint working with community planning partners, regeneration and strategic partnerships.

The Facts

Only a third of local authorities reached level two of the Equality Standard of Local Government in 2005-2006.

Women are under represented in the senior levels of the planning profession and on planning committees. Women are still under-represented on many project groups for local strategic partnerships²⁹, strategic planning, partnership boards, regeneration boards, city centre liaison groups, transport strategy groups.

Good Practice

- Create advisory groups of women to comment and advise on large development proposals.
- When negotiating planning agreements, take into account the facilities women need and want.
- Use the following equalities checklist for decision-making, designed by the Equal Opportunities Commission and the Commission for Racial Equality³⁰.

Checklist to consider when gender proofing

1 What is the policy for? Who is the policy for? What are the desired and anticipated outcomes? Does the policy properly consider the needs of diverse groups of women and men? Remember that certain groups face multiple discrimination for example disabled women and ethnic minority women.

Have equalities dimensions been explicitly addressed? Keep in mind that the goals and outcomes of policies can either perpetuate or overcome existing inequities between men and women and amongst different ages and social groups.

Continued Overleaf

²⁹ Oxfam (2007) Where are Women in Local Strategic Partnerships? London: Urban Forum.

³⁰ Scottish Parliament (undated) Equality Checklist Available from: <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/business/committees/historic/equal/reports-02/eor02-05-01.htm>

2 Is there full information and analyses about the impact of the policy upon all equalities groups? If not, why not? Is the data broken down by gender, age, race and disability? Assume that there is an equalities impact then look for information to prove or disprove that assumption. Who has been consulted? There is a need for both experts and 'ordinary' voices to be heard. Has the fact that it is harder for some groups than others to speak out been taken into account?

3 Has the full range of options and their differential impacts on equality groups been presented? What is the impact of values, assumptions and stereotypes on the options presented and the options favoured? How might your own values, opinions and experiences influence understanding of the issue?

4 What are the outcomes and consequences of the proposals? Have the indirect, as well as the direct, effects of proposals been taken into account?

5 How have the policy makers demonstrated they have mainstreamed equality?

6 How will the policy be monitored and evaluated? How will improved awareness of equality implications be demonstrated?

Equalities Checklist developed by the Equal Opportunities Commission and the Commission for Racial Equality

Examples

- National Parks have used Section 106 residency conditions for affordable housing to ensure that specific groups are included. One of the priority categories is those returning to the area to care for a relative.
- Plymouth City Council carried out a gender analysis of its Local Plan in 2001 and developed a sustainability matrix to provide a framework for analysing the impact of policies on different groups of women; see Appendix B.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation is often seen as the end point in the policy and project cycle and yet the data requirements for monitoring and evaluation need to be built in at the start. The performance indicators used to assess whether a policy or project is actually achieving its goals are best established early on. This helps focus discussion on how best to achieve gender equality.

The Facts

Research for the Review of Section 75³¹ in Northern Ireland has shown that monitoring and evaluation is still not routinely built into the policy development process.

Research by Breitenbach³² found that more gendered statistics are being produced at the level of central government. However, they tend to be based on existing data sources which historically may not have taken full account of gender or issues of particular concern to women.

Indicators are important. They drive implementation. Often gender is not considered relevant to high level indicators and in fact it is.

Good Practice

- Develop monitoring processes at the start of policy making which pay attention to gender.
- Ensure that the statistics collected reflect the priorities and needs of men and women.
- When evaluating policies and projects ensure that the views of women as well as men are automatically sought in order to avoid development outcomes that exclude potential users.
- Ensure that gender is incorporated into briefs for evaluations of projects.
- Develop evaluation exercises which ask women directly whether and how their environments are safer and healthier.

³¹ Reeves Associates (2007) Independent Audit of Compliance. Available from: <http://www.equalityni.org/archive/pdf/AuditofCompliance231107.pdf>

³² Breitenbach, E. (2006) Gender statistics: an evaluation, Working Paper Series 51, Manchester: EOC. Available from: http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/Documents/EOC/PDF/Research/wp51_gender_statistics_evaluation.pdf

Example

- To increase knowledge of gender issues and empower women at the local level within cities in Sweden and Finland, the European '3 R' concept was used³³.

The 3 R's stand for Representation, Resources and Reality.

Representation (1R) showed a low representation of women in decision groups in all the case study cities and technical boards with a high representation on social boards.

The Resources (2R) showed that resources (space, time and money) to a greater extent were allocated to areas and groups where men were represented.

The Reality (3R) showed a tendency towards promoting values and needs representing male interests.

Appendix A Sources of information

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Scotland

The Portal to Resources and Information on Mainstreaming Equalities (PRIME).

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Appendix B Example of Sustainability Matrix used by Plymouth

Planning Policy or Proposal	Relevant Gender specific data	Ongoing community feedback	Gender Implication	Planning Implications	Policy Recommendations
Relocate office development beside motorway outside town	60% of office workers are female 80% of public transport users are female, with only 30% of women having potential daytime use of car	Existing complaints about journey times Lack of support facilities More children suffering from asthma	Lack of access to new site for those without cars Reduces female employees job opportunities so affects economic viability of town	New scheme not linked to schools, shops, public transport Reduces proximity for trip-chaining of journeys, increases time travelling Acts as magnet for further decentralisation	Ideally do not proceed with this proposal If other factors require progression, then improve public transport links and seek to co-ordinate future policy on adjacent location and access to schools, shops, housing, local centres Implement by means of tariff system and planning agreement
Pedestrianise key central area streets as part of urban design programme	Check gender of pedestrian users, street crime rates and reasons for using these routes	Check feedback on what local people want as well as consultants	Decrease in access, reduction in safety, longer distances to bus stops	Check that scheme meets user needs Avoid design features that are anti-social such as lumpy paving stones and steps	Specify detailed requirements, possibly back up by revised Central Area Design Guide Consider allowing cars back in during evenings to increase surveillance and provide better lighting, toilets and bus stops

This guidance was written for the RTPI by Reeves Associates with the Women's Design Service (WDS), with input from an RTPI steering group. It provides advice that is relevant to planners working throughout the UK.

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