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AGEING AND THE ENVIRONMENT: DEVELOPING AGE-FRIENDLY CITIES

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Background to AFCs

- Concept developed by World Health Organization. Part of a policy to develop supportive urban environments as a way of encouraging ‘active ageing by optimizing opportunities for health, participation and security in order to enhance quality of life as people age’ (WHO, 2007)

Background to AFCs

2006 World Health Organization 'Global Age-friendly cities project' – to identify factors which make urban environments 'age-friendly'. Publication of check list & guide (WHO, 2007)

2010 Launch of Gobal Network of AFCs (currently c.200 countries)

2011 1st International Conference on Age-Friendly Cities (Dublin)

2013 2nd International Conference on Age-Friendly Cities (Ottawa)

WHAT MAKES FOR AN AGE-FRIENDLY CITY? WHO GUIDE (2007)

- Outdoor spaces and buildings (e.g. public toilets, well-maintained pavements)
- Transportation (reliable, frequent)
- Housing (affordable, support to 'age in place')
- Social Participation (outreach for those isolated)
- Respect and social inclusion (anti-discrimination)
- Civic participation and employment (good quality employment, volunteering)
- Communication and information (good access to information about services & activities)
- Community support and health services (good range of services, community emergency plans in place).

Research on cities on older people

- 80% of the time of people aged over 70 is spent at home; hence the importance of a high quality physical environment (Horgas et al., 1998).
- **Contrast between *ageing in place (>40 years)* and highly *mobile* populations (<5 years)**.
- Fear of Crime/Feelings of insecurity (despite low levels of victimisation) may limit participation in 'normal daily life': 33% -50% of people 60 and over may feel unsafe moving around their neighbourhood at night (British Crime Survey; De Donder et al., 2010)

Research on cities and older people

- Various factors increase vulnerability to changes in the environment, including: longer duration of exposure, cognitive changes, changing patterns of spatial use, and reliance upon community sources of support (Wight et al., 2009).
- **Neighbourhoods with poor physical environments and limited access to services may increase feelings of insecurity and vulnerability (Belgian Ageing Survey, Buffel, 2012)**
- **'Institutional Disengagement'** may contribute to social exclusion. (Scharf et al., 2002)
- **Extreme weather conditions and impact on older people.** (Klinenburg (Chicago), 2002; Ogg (France), 2005; Muramatsu and Akiyama (Japan), 2011).

Advantages of cities

- **Infrastructure of public facilities** – 'public affluence' versus 'privatized consumerism' (Davis, 2002)
- **Specialist resources for minority groups** – may be of particular importance in old age (Buffel et al., 2011).
- **Broader range of social networks** – importance of strangers & neighbours as well as friends and family (Gardner, 2011)

Building a Strategy for Developing Age-Friendly Cities

- Developing the '**social city**'.
- Developing '**rights to the city**' which reflect changing needs across the life course.
- Developing strategies for '**creating connections**' within cities.

BUILDING THE SOCIAL CITY

- The **'social city'** is a city that promotes and supports connections between people.

- '**Social**' development becomes as important as 'physical' development.

- Recognition that the way in which cities are built and developed can help or hinder **social** connections.

Developing Rights to the City

Cities viewed as drivers of nation's economic and cultural success but often to the detriment of those outside the labour market.

Ensuring full rights of older people as 'urban citizens' essential to achieving an age-friendly city including:

- the 'right' to *appropriate and supportive* urban space
- the 'right' to *participate* in decision-making surrounding the production of urban space
- the 'right' to *shape* strategies for urban planning and regeneration

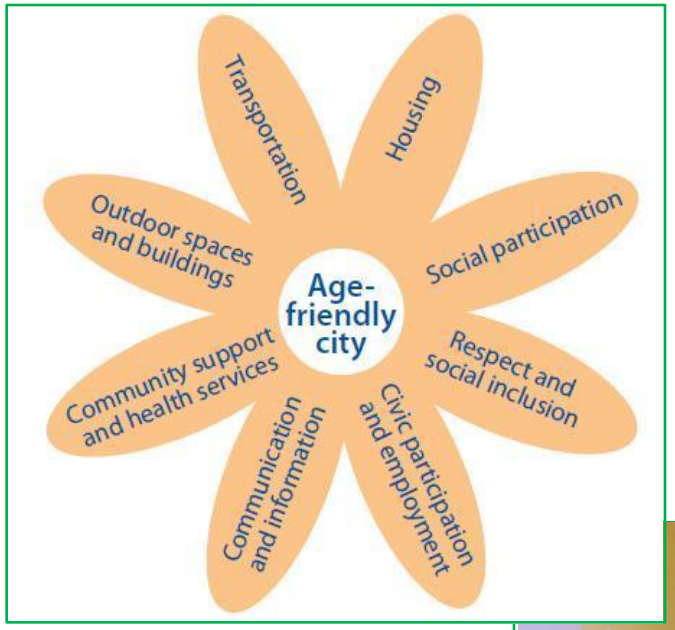
Developing strategies for 'creating connections' within cities

Public Space:
Parks/Libraries/
Awareness of local spaces/street space/

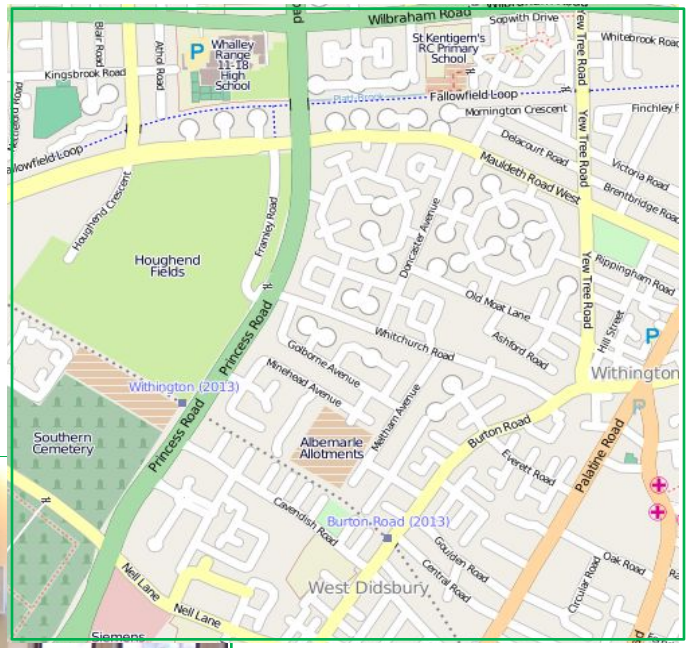
Private Space:
Supporting interaction in 'third spaces':
cafes/shops/shopping centres

Local participation and empowerment:
Resident control over Neighbourhood change

WHO **Research Domains**



City **Neighbourhood**



OLD MOAT

IN AN AGE FRIENDLY MANCHESTER

WHO **Principle of active ageing**

Community Audit

How Age-Friendly is your neighbourhood?

An age-friendly community is one that supports all age groups. For older people it should encourage social participation and healthy ageing within the neighbourhood.

So how do you rate the age-friendliness of Old Moat and Withington?

Community Auditor's Name _____

6. General information

It would be really helpful if you could answer the questions below to help us to understand our survey participants a little better.

— Are you: **Male** ☐ 1 **Female** ☐ 2 — How old were you on your last birthday ☐

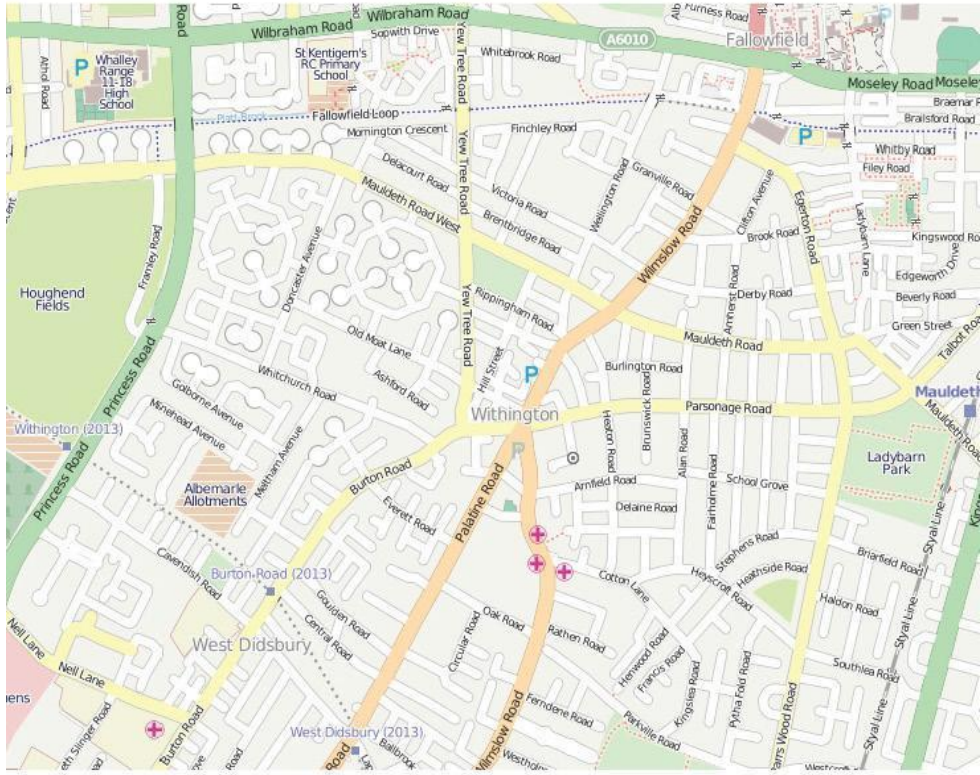
— Do you own your home or rent?

Own ☐ 1 **Have a mortgage** ☐ 2 **Private rental** ☐ 3

Public rental (including Housing Association) ☐ 4

Other (please specify) ☐ 5 .....

— Roughly, where do you live? **[Mark an 'X' on the map]**



— If you live somewhere not on this map, what area do you live in? .....

THREE ISSUES

- **NURTURING INFORMAL SPACES, THIRD SPACES, COMMUNITY SPACE**
- **RECLAIMING VACANT SPACES/DISUSED BUILDINGS**
- **FUTURE-PROOFING AGE-FRIENDLY CITIES – LINKS WITH DEVELOPERS**

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