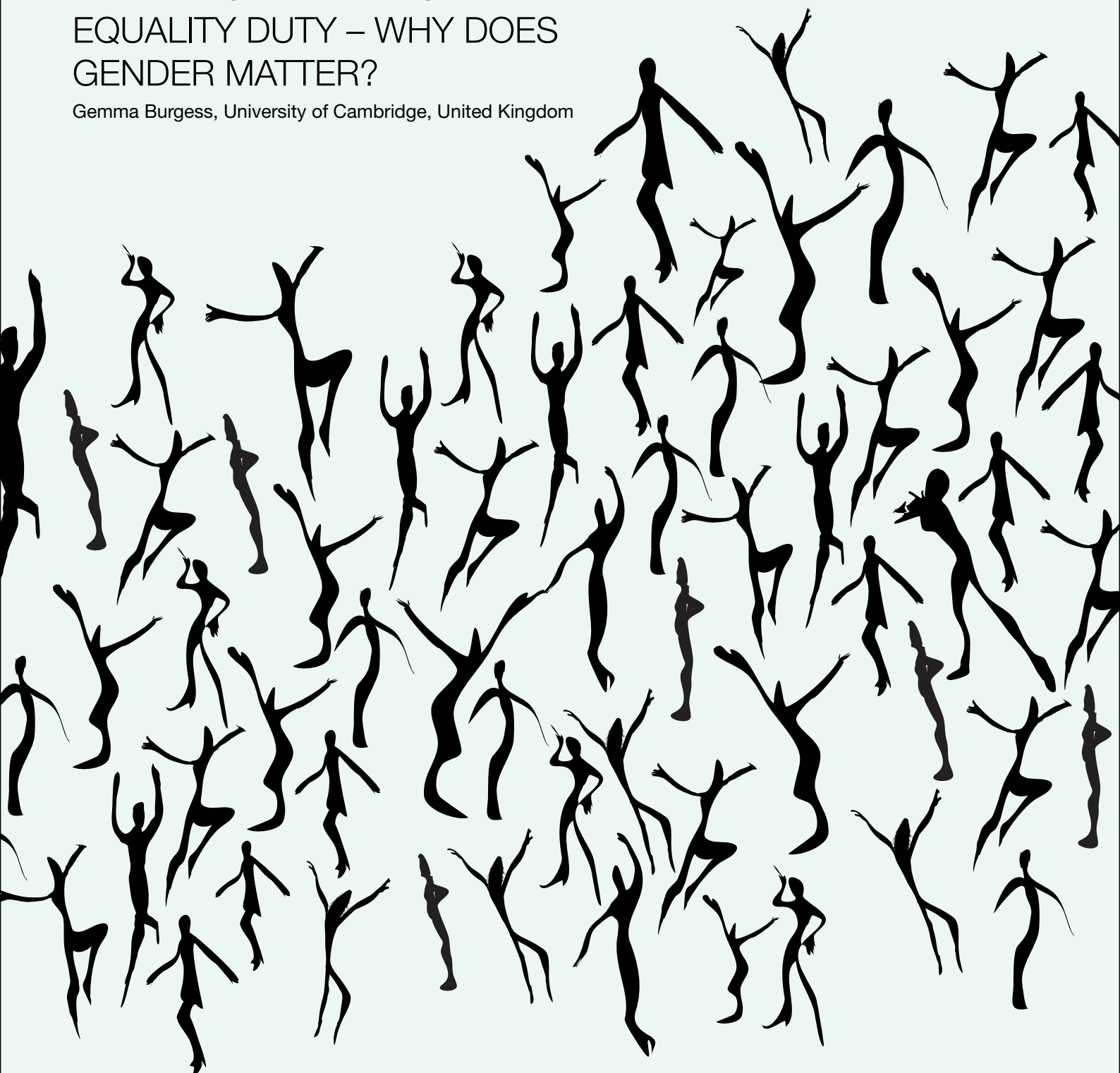


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PLANNING AND THE GENDER EQUALITY DUTY – WHY DOES GENDER MATTER?

Gemma Burgess, University of Cambridge, United Kingdom



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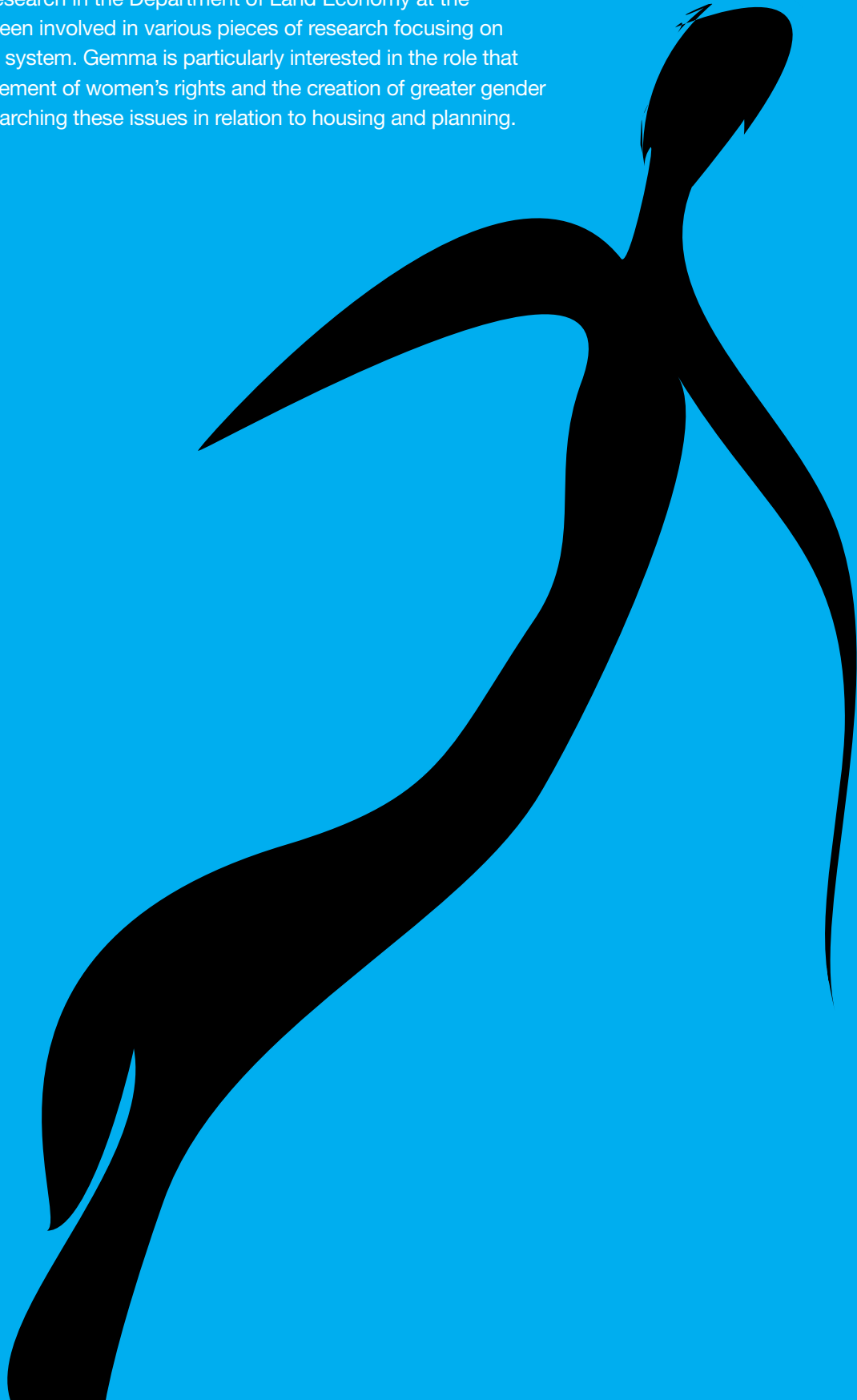
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©RICS – RICS March 2009
ISBN: 978-1-84219-477-5

Published by: RICS,
12 Great George Street,
London SW1P 3AD,
United Kingdom

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This work was funded by the RICS Education Trust, a registered charity established by RICS in 1955 to support research and education in the field of surveying and the Higher Education Funding Council for England.



Contents

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Executive summary	04
01 Introduction	07
02 Aims	08
03 Methods	09
04 Literature review	11
05 The Gender Equality Duty	14
06 Research findings	17
07 Conclusions	32
Annex A: Spatial Planning and Gender Equality	33
Annex B: Useful resources	35
References	36

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Executive summary

In April 2007 the Gender Equality Duty came into force. This new legislation is part of the Single Equality Act (2006) and requires all public authorities to promote gender equality and remove gender discrimination as both employers and as service providers. Local authorities are one set of public authorities to which the Gender Equality Duty applies. They are now required to promote gender equality across all of their services, including across the range of services that come under the broad label of planning and regeneration.

The Duty implies that a more explicit consideration of gender is needed in both how planning is delivered and in its wider impacts. Planners and practitioners involved in urban regeneration programmes and spatial planning will need to examine who benefits from their projects – men and/or women – and to take appropriate action on the results. It is argued that the integration of gender into spatial policy-making would result in a more sustainable, equal and accessible built environment for all members of society (Greed, 2005).

This research was funded by the RICS Education Trust and the Higher Education Funding Council for England. The aim was to explore the early impact of the Gender Equality Duty on spatial planning practice and policy.

The research involved interviews with local authority officers and related planning practitioners to explore what difference the Duty has made to their work, what barriers they face in implementation and in what ways they are now working explicitly to consider gender in planning. The research also involved discussion with organisations interested in gender and planning and the new Duty, such as those involved in Oxfam's 'ReGender' training programme and the Women's Design Service.

Interviewees reported a general lack of awareness of the existence of the Duty or what it means. They said that there was a lack of awareness, even hostility towards, gender equality issues more generally. It was very clear from the research that whilst the legislation is framed around gender equality, in practice the focus tends to be on women. Of course, this is for good reasons as most statistics point clearly to women experiencing gender inequality far more than men.

It was very clear from the research that as yet gender equality is not prioritised, or measures introduced to address it, to the same degree as the other equality duties such as race, or in the context of planning, as disability.

Participants in the research felt that there is a lack of practical knowledge and a lack of examples of how to take account of gender in planning. Participants had often been involved in raising awareness of gender inequality within their organisations and had had some opportunities for knowledge-sharing with other individuals engaged in similar efforts in other organisations.

The research suggests that individuals play a very important role in promoting the Duty in local authorities. Gender equality may be championed by one individual who frequently raises it as an issue, regularly pushes for change and encourages others to learn and be involved.

Executive summary

The research found that there are marked differences between local authorities in how far they have engaged with the equality duties. Some local authorities do not have Gender Equality Schemes (GES) in place yet despite the legislative requirement nor do they carry out Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) that consider gender equality. Many of the local authorities involved in the research had Gender Equality Schemes in place. However, planners said that they were often over-long and unwieldy and thus difficult to engage with in practice.

Some research participants found the EIAs to have been very helpful in taking gender into consideration in planning. They said that conducting EIAs is a learning process and they are improving all the time. However, some felt that EIAs were often seen as a bureaucratic burden rather than an opportunity to improve services.

For gender to be considered in planning practice, it needs to be considered in planning policy at every scale. The links between gender and planning need to be made explicit in equality schemes. However, the research found very few examples of gender equality schemes that specifically referred to planning related issues and few local authorities with any reference to gender equality in planning policy.

Public participation and consultation are widely sought on planning and regeneration issues but in order to address the needs and concerns of both men and women they need to be equally and appropriately involved. The research found examples where awareness of the Gender Equality Duty led local authority planners to reflect on the consultations they were conducting and to make changes to ensure they were enabling both men and women to participate. The introduction of the Duty had also encouraged some local authorities to develop new ways to involve women in planning activities.

Executive summary

Some local authority officers are explicitly considering gender in their work, but at different scales and in different depths. They tend to consider it primarily in terms of women's safety and women's participation in consultation. Whilst the Gender Equality Duty is leading to the introduction of new policies and procedures and some changes in practice, the full potential of the Duty has yet to be realised. It could be used to try and shape the fundamental social relations that underpin our society, but is as yet being interpreted quite narrowly.

Findings from the research have previously been published in an academic journal and this research report draws on this article and expands upon it:

Burgess G. (2008) 'Planning and the Gender Equality Duty – why does gender matter?' *People, Place & Policy Online*: 2/3, pp.112-121.

The research has also been reported on by the BBC and *The Guardian* and the researcher was invited to discuss issues related to the research on a number of radio programmes in 2008. A summary of the research was published in the RICS Land Journal, February–March 2009.

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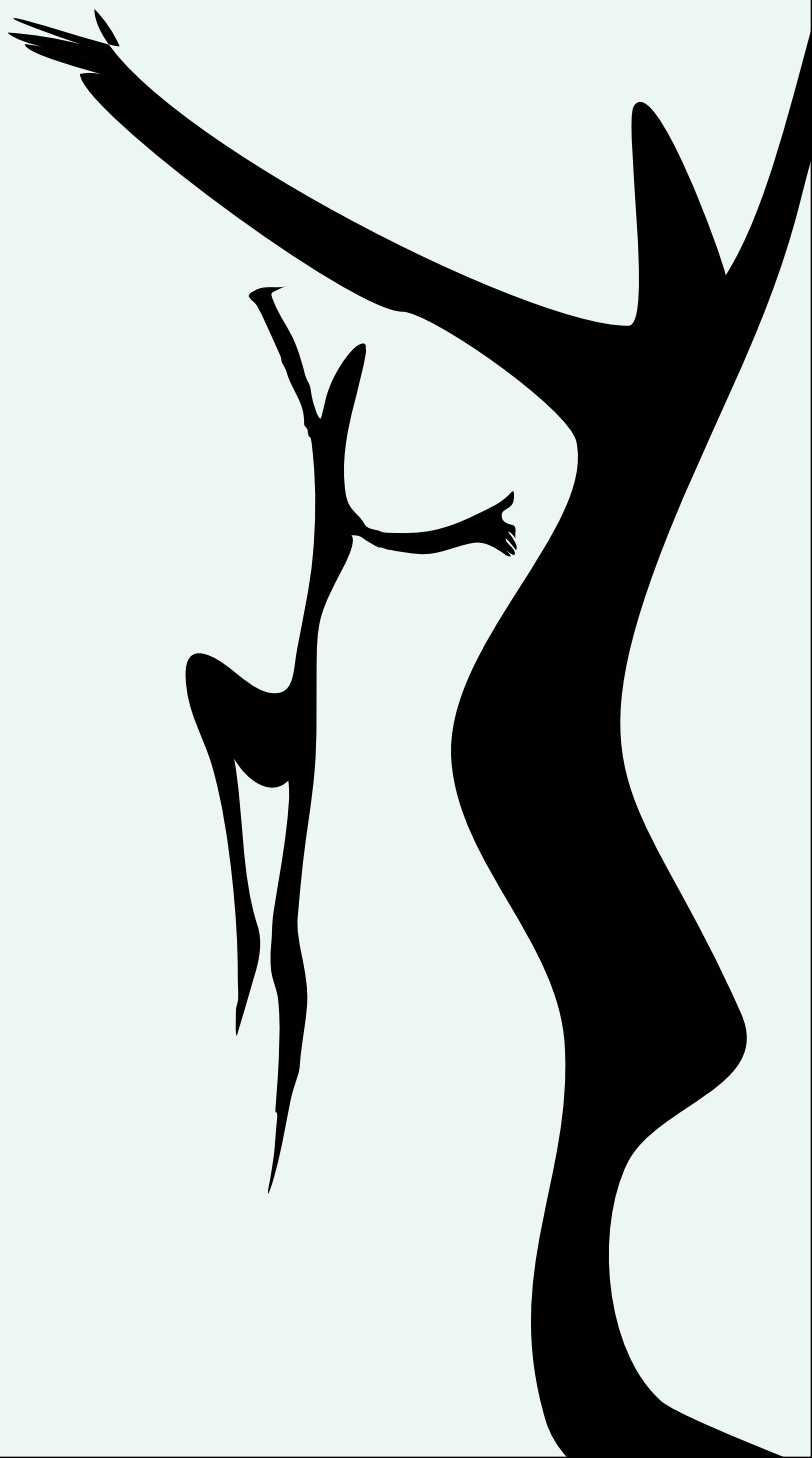
01 Introduction

Planning policy has tended to ignore the fact that women and men use public space differently and have different concerns about how it meets their needs. In April 2007 the Gender Equality Duty came into force, requiring public authorities to promote gender equality and remove gender discrimination. The Duty implies that a more explicit consideration of gender is needed in both how planning is delivered and in its wider impacts. Planners and practitioners involved in urban regeneration programmes and spatial planning will need to examine who benefits from their projects – men and/or women – and to take appropriate action on the results. It is argued that the integration of gender into spatial policy-making would result in a more sustainable, equal and accessible built environment for all members of society (Greed, 2005).

In the light of UK policy intended to create sustainable, mixed communities through regeneration and the planning system and the new legislative framework to impose greater promotion of gender equality in all public bodies, it is an opportune moment to consider how gender is being taken account of in planning policy and practice. Previous research looked at how planning has already been affected by legislation around issues of equality and diversity (Booth et al, 2004). This work argued that planning policies and processes can unwittingly be insensitive to some groups and/or individuals, and may well, unintentionally, discriminate against some sections of society (ibid).

This report is based on research conducted at the University of Cambridge, funded by the Higher Education Council for England and the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors. It looked at examples of local authorities that have made efforts to take gender into account in planning and/or where the Gender Equality Duty has made an impact. The Duty required that public authorities have Gender Equality Schemes in place by April 2007 and that they report on their progress in April 2008. Thus whilst the legislation has only recently been introduced, it is possible to look for early examples where the Duty has engendered changes to planning policy and/or practice.

The research involved interviews with local authority officers and related planning practitioners to explore what difference the Duty has made to their work, what barriers they face in implementation and in what ways they are already working to explicitly consider gender in planning. The research also involved discussion with organisations interested in gender and planning and the new Duty, such as those involved in Oxfam's 'ReGender' training programme and the Women's Design Service.



02 Aims

In April 2007 the Gender Equality Duty came into force, requiring public authorities to promote gender equality and remove gender discrimination. The Duty implies that a more explicit consideration of gender is needed across all services, including in both how planning is delivered and in its wider impacts.

The aim of this research was to consider how gender is being taken account of in planning policy and practice in response to the introduction of the Gender Equality Duty.

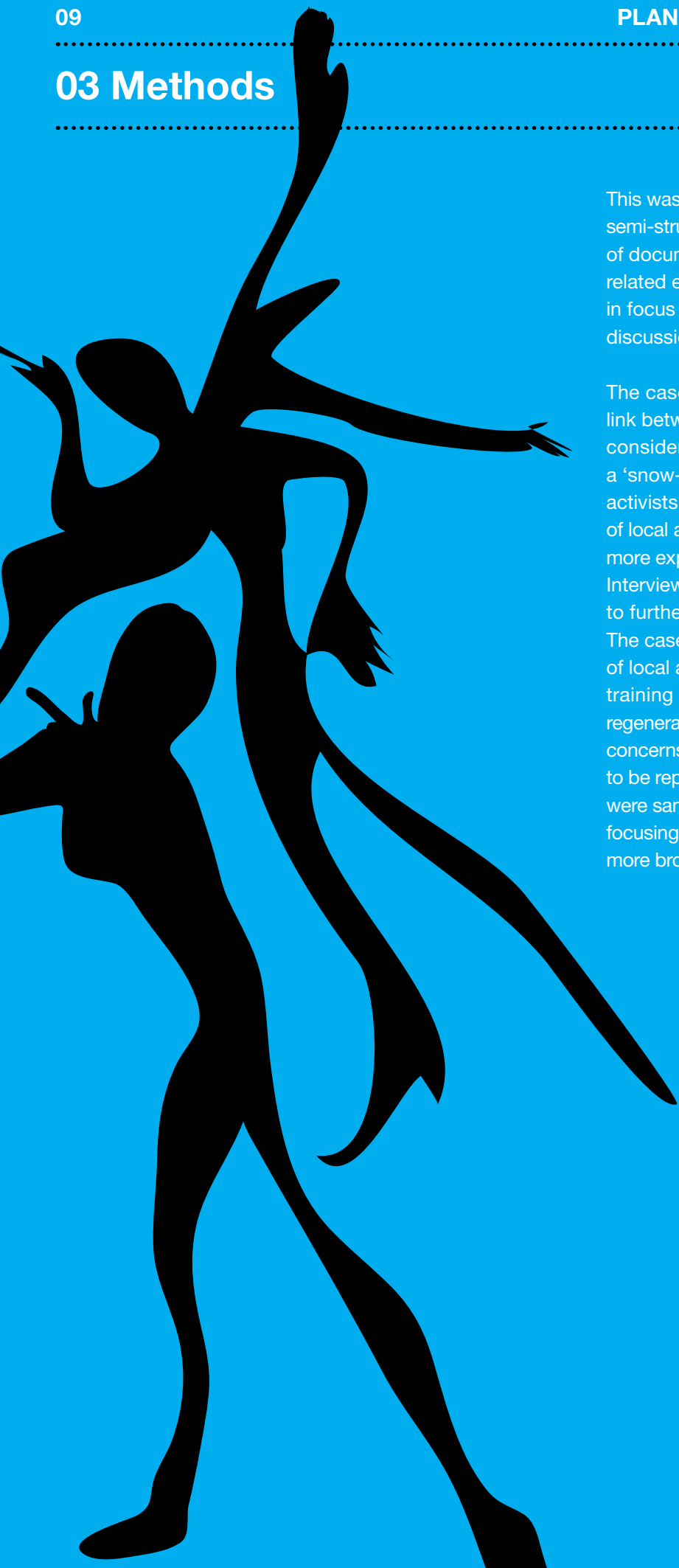
The research was not intended to be representative of all local authorities. As the introduction of the Gender Equality Duty is quite recent and research has shown that gender is not a common consideration in planning activities, the research aimed to find examples of practice where gender is being explicitly considered and/or where the Duty has been engaged with in some way by the planning team of a local authority. The aim was to explore possible barriers to implementing the Duty in this field but also to highlight the possibilities for using it in practice in planning to improve service delivery and meet the requirements, and fulfil the potential, of the Duty.



03 Methods

This was a qualitative research project based mainly on semi-structured interviews and the collection and analysis of documentary data. The researcher also attended related events and conducted interviews, participated in focus groups and engaged in formal and informal discussions with those working in this field.

The case studies were 34 local authorities. As the link between gender and planning is not commonly considered, the case studies were selected through a 'snow-balling' process. Interviews with experts and activists working in this field led to some suggestions of local authorities that were perhaps considering gender more explicitly in planning and/or regeneration activities. Interviews with officers at these local authorities led to further suggestions of local authorities to contact. The case studies include a relatively large proportion of local authorities with regeneration areas. The Oxfam training and awareness raising programme had a regeneration focus so attracted planners with regeneration concerns. The case study local authorities were not chosen to be representative of particular types of authorities but were sampled because they were reported to have been focusing on the Gender Equality Duty or gender issues more broadly in some particular way.



Methods

The case studies involved interviews with local authority officers and related planning practitioners to explore what difference the Duty has made to their work, what barriers they face in implementation and in what ways they are already working to explicitly consider gender in planning. The local authority officers interviewed included those working directly in planning and regeneration, consultation officers and equality and diversity officers. Some interviewees were happy for their local authority to be referred to by name, but some participants in the research preferred that they remain anonymous. This confidentiality enabled participants to speak freely and voice criticisms and concerns.

The research also involved interviews and discussions with organisations, experts and activists interested in gender and planning and the new Duty. These included:

- Those involved in running Oxfam's ReGender training programme
- People who have participated in the ReGender programme
- Members of the Women's Design Service
- Representatives of Planning Aid
- Representatives of Communities and Local Government
- Academics focusing on gender and planning
- Representatives of the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

There were issues that some participants had not perhaps considered before that were raised in interviews and in focus groups and discussions in which the researcher participated. This made the research an active process of knowledge transfer in both directions in some cases. The researcher was asked for information by some participants, such as suggestions for reading.



04 Literature review

Gendered space

The relationship between gender and space has been long explored (for example, see McDowell, 1983; Massey, 1994). Looking through the lens of gender shows how notions of maleness and femaleness have influenced our built environment, the locations in which we invest meaning, and the ways we live, work and travel (Domosh and Seager, 2001). The place of women in the built environment has been explored (Bowlby, 1984) and the gender relations of the places in which we live have been theorised.

The urban has been identified for some time as a key spatial scale through which gender is experienced and constituted (McDowell, 1983). As a conceptual framework, the urban shows how space and place, as materially grounded social constructions, shape the ways gender identities and relations are played out, reinforced or modified (Bondi and Rose, 2003). Urban form and process and locational differences within cities thus actively construct gender as well as other social relations (ibid). This is an active process, cities and the places in which we live are not just the scenery for the playing out of gender (Garber & Turner, 1995), but the built environment plays a role in shaping gendered identities, practices and power relations.

Feminist geographers have examined the multiple gendered (re)makings of urban public space (Bondi and Rose, 2003). During the 1990s one of the main foci of urban studies enthusiastically embraced by geographers (Mitchell, 1995), was the development of critical perspectives on material and representational dimensions of public space and their implications for social identities and citizenship (Bondi and Rose, 2003). Geographers have understood public space to be constituted by impositions, negotiations and contestations over which groups comprise the 'public' that has access to these spaces, for what purposes these spaces are used, and what visions of society urban public space embraces, enforces, produces and promotes (ibid).

Central to understanding the impact of social relations on the city is recognising the specific imprint of gender relations (Little, 1994; McDowell, 1983; Bondi and Christie, 2000). Social relations have a spatial context and are underpinned by relations of power. There is a

correlation between power and space - what gets built, where, how and for whom (Beall, 1997). Cities are literally concrete manifestations of ideas on how society was, is and how it should be (ibid). The way the urban environment, our cities, towns, suburbs, villages etc., are designed and built are imbued with particular understandings of how they will be used that are not gender-neutral. This applies to all the spaces in which we live, work and travel, both the urban and the rural, all are planned and designed with underlying, if implicit, assumptions about gendered social relations.

Members of the 'women and planning' movement, comprising urban planners, geographers, architects and urban designers, have long been active in trying to change spatial-policy and urban design (Greed, 1994a; Roberts, 1991 and Greed, 2005). They have argued that the integration of gender into spatial-policy-making would result in a more sustainable, equal and accessible built environment for all members of society (Greed, 2005).

Literature review

Gender and spatial planning

This section addresses more explicitly the gender issues that planning policy and practice ought to address and highlights some of the problems that result from gender-blind planning. It has been recognised that gender has affected urban planning and the design of the spaces where people live and work (Fainstein and Servon, 2005). Although there are many gendered patterns in the use of space, planning policy tends to ignore the fact that men and women use public space differently. It has been argued that urban and suburban spaces support stereotypically male activities and planning methodologies reflect a male-dominated society (Fainstein and Servon, 2005). Gender differences have implications for all aspects of spatial planning and the design of the built environment (Greed and Reeves, 2005), from the interior design of housing (Roberts, 1991) to the planning of entire cities (Darke et al, 2000). It has been argued that it is most commonly women who suffer disadvantage within a built environment that has often been developed with little reference to their needs (Greed, 2005).

There are many examples of the differently gendered uses of space. Women make more complex journeys than men (Blumenberg, 2004), often travelling to childcare, school, work, and shops in journeys that are often referred to as 'trip-chains' (McGuckin and Murakami, 1999; Greed, 2005). More than twice as many women as men are responsible for escorting children to school, seventy-five per cent of bus journeys are undertaken by women and only thirty per cent of women have access to the use of a car during the daytime (Greed, 2007). Poor public transport and lack of caring facilities and shopping outlets near employment locations restrict women's access to the labour market. Women feel less safe than men being out alone after dark (Whitzman, 2007), especially in the inner city, or social housing estates. Poorly considered land-use zoning policy separates residential areas from employment locations, with a greater impact on women's mobility.

There are other examples of the relationship between gender and spatial planning. These include:

- 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.
- 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 opportunities.
- 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 life.
- Women are the main users of town centres yet are under represented in city centre partnership agencies.
- 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 partnerships, strategic planning, partnership boards, regeneration boards, city centre liaison groups, transport strategy groups. (RTPI, 2007)

For more examples of the relationship between spatial planning and gender equality, see Annex A.

Literature review

What could considering gender in planning achieve?

It is argued that there would be a number of consequences if gender were really taken into account in planning. Oxfam have been involved in raising awareness of the need to consider gender. They argue that when planning takes into account the different needs of women and men, this would lead to public transport routes that support women's travel patterns, measures to make public space feel safer at night, employment opportunities locally, meaning more mixed use development. The result, Oxfam argues, would be that more women would be able to take employment, training, and leisure opportunities, economic development opportunities would be increased and social inclusion programmes would be more effective (Oxfam, 2007).

There are detailed suggestions as to what can be done in terms of making planning policy and implementation more gender sensitive. For example, consultation around plans, policy and regeneration projects should involve both women and men (Brownhill and Darke, 1998; Escott and Whitfield, 2002). Women should be fully involved in the decision-making processes both as officers and as members of the public (Greed, 2005). Statistics and data need to be disaggregated by sex, race, age and disability and if necessary bespoke surveys may need to be commissioned for plan-making (RTPI, 2007). Data need to be collected for both women and men's activities, in respect of travel, work, care duties and leisure requirements (Greed, 2005). The location of jobs and homes must be considered 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 (RTPI, 2007). A fully integrated public transport system would be developed, and ancillary facilities (such as crèches, baby changing facilities, public toilets with disabled facilities, public seating) would be provided in a manner that was convenient to women's and men's needs, travel patterns and trip chains (Greed, 2005).

Greed argues that there would not be a division between city-wide and local-level policy issues, but they would be included side by side in all strategic documents. This is because the most basic local factors (such as lack of street lights or inaccessible building locations) can undermine high-level urban sustainability strategies. All these policies would reduce the need to travel, create more sustainable cities that were also more accessible for all, whilst creating a higher quality of urban design (Greed, 2005).

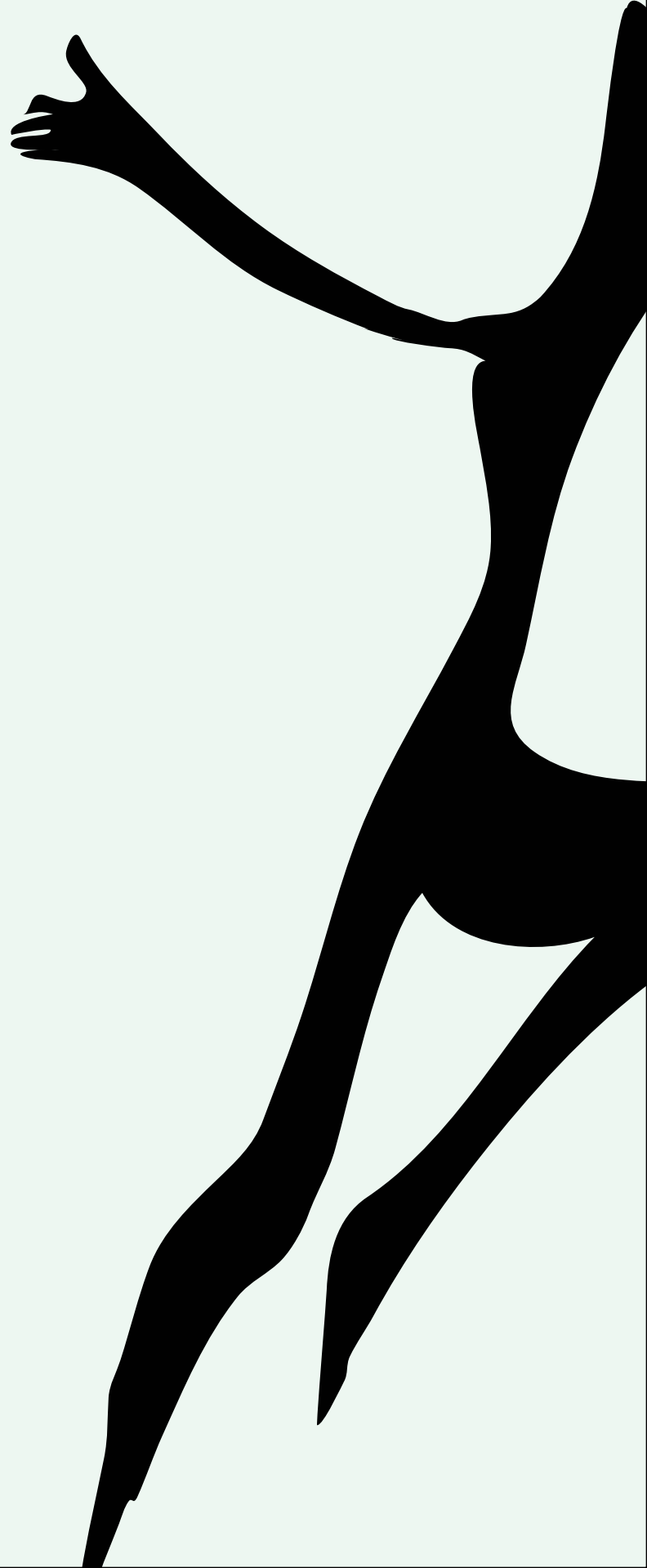
Whilst it is clear that a consideration of gender could help make regeneration and planning more successful for the communities involved, gender is a relatively 'new' explicit consideration for planners and local authorities. Planning contributes to a wider policy agenda and the planning profession and public sector managers more generally have, until recently, overlooked the importance of gender. However, this consideration is now a legal requirement through the Gender Equality Duty.

05 The Gender Equality Duty

The UK policy agenda has not been completely devoid of a focus on gender. Gender mainstreaming was endorsed as the official policy approach to gender equality in the European Union and its member states in the Amsterdam Treaty of 1997 (Rees, 2005) and broadly means putting a gender equality perspective into mainstream policies. However, gender mainstreaming has not been well understood. It has tended to be approached in a technocratic way and to be non-systemic in compass, and is underdeveloped as a concept (Daly, 2005). It has been hard to discern the mainstreaming of gendered perspectives into general policy-making (Squires and Wickham-Jones, 2004) and gender has not yet been effectively mainstreamed into the work of local planning authorities in the UK (Greed, 2005). The Gender Equality Duty presents an opportunity for gender to be considered in policy making in a way the mainstreaming agenda did not achieve, given the legislative requirements of the Duty.

Achieving a gender duty has been a long struggle for activists. A public sector duty to promote race equality has been in place since 2000, following the Stephen Lawrence inquiry, and a similar duty in relation to disability was introduced in 2006. The Gender Equality Duty emerged as part of this general shift in legislation. The Equality Act (2006) amends the Sex Discrimination Act (1975) by placing a statutory duty on all public authorities when carrying out their functions to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment (CLG, 2007). Following the models established for race equality (2002) and disability equality (2006) in public bodies, the Single Equality Act 2006 introduced in Part IV of the Equality Act the Gender Equality Duty. The Duty is the equivalent of a lawful overarching obligation on public authorities which will require them as employers and service providers to promote equality of opportunity between men and women (CLG, 2007).

In November 2006, Ministers laid the Secondary legislation before Parliament which from April 2007 required public authorities (PAs) to draw up and publish a gender equality scheme which should identify gender equality objectives and show the steps that PAs will take to implement them. PAs are also required to address the causes of any gender pay gaps.

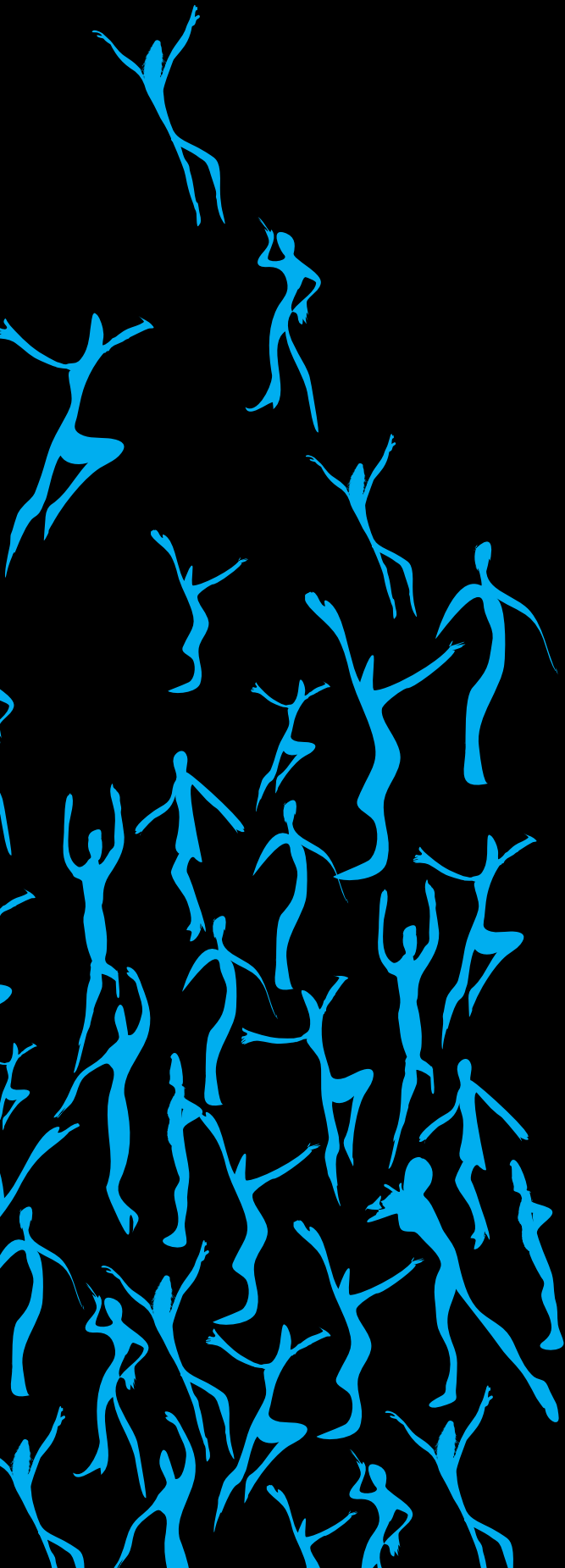


The Gender Equality Duty

The Race Equality Duty came after the Macpherson report into the murder of Stephen Lawrence that revealed institutional racism. It was argued that existing laws to remedy discrimination were not enough and we needed stronger tools. The new duties place positive obligations on public bodies. The traditional discrimination acts, such as the Sex Discrimination Act discrimination, required an individual to have suffered discrimination, to take action against it, to prove it took place in order to achieve legal recognition and remedy for the individual. The new duties are intended to promote equality not just to prevent discrimination. They are statutory bodies and so are legally enforceable.

Fundamentally, the duty requires more than equal treatment for men and women (Equal Opportunities Commission, 2007). Public bodies must promote and take action to bring about gender equality. This involves looking at gender equality issues for men and women, understanding why inequalities exist and how to overcome them and creating effective service provision for all, so that everyone can access services that meet their needs (ibid).

Public authorities also have to ensure that they assess the impact of new legislation, policies, employment and service delivery changes. In complying with the specific duties, they must now consult with employees and stakeholders when drawing up gender equality schemes and impact assessments. They have to publish and be accountable in what they do and through their actions demonstrate their commitment to gender equality. This means that local authorities will be required to promote gender equality in the design and delivery of services provided to the public, not just within their own workforce. In addition, individuals will no longer have to bring cases against local authorities in order to get gender inequalities dealt with. The onus will now be on local authorities to eradicate discrimination and to promote gender equality. This means that planners will increasingly be required to show explicitly how they have considered the gendered impacts of regeneration programmes and spatial plans.



The Gender Equality Duty

The Gender Equality Duty is legally enforceable but individuals cannot themselves take legal action against public bodies to enforce the specific duties. Enforcement of the general duty can only be achieved by judicial review in the High Court. Responsibility for enforcement of the specific duties resides with the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC). The Commission will be assessing public authorities' schemes to see how they meet the Duty and will be following the progress of different public bodies in implementing their schemes. The Commission has produced general guidance and codes of practice for public authorities, but there is currently no specific guidance for planners on what the Duty means for their work.

The EHRC believe that the GED shifts the onus from the individual to the institution and helps to create a cultural/organisational change. They posit that the Duty will help to deliver public services that meet needs, as PAs will gain a better understanding of the needs of service users and staff, resulting in better policy development and implementation. The EHRC see the Duty as placing an emphasis on the equality of outcomes rather than simply on equality of access. For example, there may be equality of access to bus services, but there are differences between men and women in the use of public transport. Women tend to take radial journeys off-peak, longer trips, more journeys and have longer waits but services do not always support this, resulting in an inequality of outcomes for the service.

The general duty of the GED requires PAs to have due regard to the need:

1. to eliminate unlawful sex discrimination and harassment – including for transsexual people
2. to promote equality of opportunity between men and women.

Due regard means that the weight given to gender equality needs to be in proportion to its relevance. This means prioritising the significant areas of gender inequality and focusing efforts on the areas where public bodies can have the most impact. For example, if women and men in deprived areas experience poverty differently – what responses are proportionate and relevant that could make the most difference?

The specific duties of the GED require PAs to publish a gender equality scheme and action plan. These must include how the PA will collect and use the information it needs to meet the duties, how it will use the information to review the effectiveness of its implementation of the duty and to prepare subsequent schemes, information on how the PA will gender impact assess existing and new policies and practices, how the PA will consult relevant employees, service users and others (including trade unions) and it must indicate how the objectives will be achieved. PAs must report on their gender equality schemes annually and review them every three years. The first reports were due in April 2008.

Individuals and civil society organisations can be involved in ensuring the duties are met by putting pressure on PAs, for example by asking for equality impact assessments, by participating in consultations, by using the EHRC toolkit of letters to lobby PAs and by reviewing gender equality schemes and gender annual reports.

The key concepts within the GED are the specific duties that exist to achieve the general duty and frame thinking around it. The Duty mainstreams gender equality, equality is not an add on. There can be legal enforcement of gender equality, promoting gender equality is not simply a good idea, but it is now the law. The Duty is significant because it covers employment (including the need to address the gender pay gap) and service delivery. The notion of due regard is also significant; actions should be guided by proportionality and relevance, meaning the biggest action on biggest issues.

06 Research findings

The research found a number of ways in which gender is being considered in planning policy and practice. There are practical steps that can be taken by planners and regeneration practitioners to begin to implement the Gender Equality Duty and the examples given below reflect the efforts that some practitioners are making. In carrying out this work, participants in the research also raised a number of issues and challenges, discussed below.

Policy making

For gender to be considered in planning practice, it needs to be considered in planning policy. The links between gender and planning need to be made explicit in equality schemes. For example, the Greater London Authority (GLA) has been very proactive in taking the equality agendas into account in policy making and this includes gender equality. The GLA's Gender Equality Scheme deals explicitly with regeneration and urban planning. The Scheme recognises the need for involving women in consultation, stating the need to 'ensure the effective engagement of girls and women in London's regeneration and ensure regeneration meets their needs' (GLA, 2007). In regeneration policy the GLA states that, 'women need access to employment and training opportunities close to home, access to good local services, access to affordable childcare, access to convenient, affordable and safe public transport and an urban environment well-designed for personal safety' (GLA, 2007).

Few local authorities involved in the research had such explicit reference to planning issues in their gender equality schemes, although some did mention gender differences that needed to be thought about in regeneration activities. Planning policy itself did not make any explicit reference to gender equality in any local authorities. For those trying to ensure that planning practice involves some consideration of gender equality, it would be helpful if this was written into policy from the beginning. If gender equality schemes mentioned spatial planning explicitly, there would be more onus on practitioners to think about issues of gender equality.

Participation and consultation

Public participation and consultation are widely sought on planning and regeneration issues. However, to address the needs and concerns of both men and women they need to be equally involved. The research found examples where awareness of the Gender Equality Duty led local authority planners to reflect on the consultations they were conducting and to make changes to ensure they were enabling both men and women to participate. For example, in a local authority community alliance in Nottinghamshire, local authority officers noticed that it was harder to engage men in consultations. The majority of people involved were mothers working part-time. They trialled different approaches to achieve a more even gender balance in their work. For instance, they extended their opening hours to include some evenings and weekends. This helped increase the involvement of working women and men. They have also tried to engage with men in different places such as bookmakers and working men's clubs. This helped to make involvement in consultations closer to half men and half women.

Disaggregating data from consultations can help show any differences between men and women, ethnic groups, age groups etc:

We now disaggregate data from consultations which we never did before, or not as much. Corporately we looked at perceptions in areas but before it was not disaggregated. Now it is and we see very different and distinct needs. We can check plans with particular groups where issues have been raised. We no longer have a blanket approach. We try not to use the usual suspects in consultation etc. (Sheffield)

Gender budgeting is being considered by one interviewee:

We have been thinking that we would like to do something on participatory budgeting and make them more gender specific in future. These are where we allocate budgets with community involvement so community members have a say in how it is spent. (Sefton)

Research findings

Involving the community

Other local authorities have worked with local women's groups to encourage their input into high level urban plans. Local authority officers are involved in plan-making that will shape the development of cities and often work with consultants. The Duty prompted some local authority planners to re-consider how these plans were made and to try and involve local women. For example, in a South Yorkshire local authority officers piloted a 'community safety audit' in a Neighbourhood Development Frameworks (NDF) area. The NDF will provide a strategic framework for investment, planning and development in parts of the city over the next decade. The audit recruited a group of local women to go on a 'walkabout' around the city with designers. The women's views have since been written into the designer's planning brief. The local authority now requires all designers and consultants to include proposals for including consultation with local women in tenders for any new developments:

Oxfam Regender opened our eyes to opportunities to actually how we work effectively with local women on new developments. The physical environment has an impact on how people feel about places and how they perceive them to be. We consider this more now. Before when we put out an ITT to build something we would work on the framework, the development plan etc. Now, we like the designers to commit to a community walkabout with local women. Beforehand we conduct a workshop with the women to see how they feel about the area and the plan. Then the designer does the walk about and it is incorporated into the brief. This way, personal views, people's views, are in from the beginning. This stops it all becoming being about timescales and costs. (Sheffield)

Knowledge-sharing

The introduction of the Duty has led to a degree of knowledge-sharing and awareness-raising amongst practitioners. The local authority mentioned above has been particularly proactive in engaging with the requirements of the Gender Equality Duty, for example, organising a seminar with key decision makers from within the local authority and the city more broadly to debate and discuss how gender impacts on regeneration and planning in all areas of the city. Staff have participated in Oxfam's ReGender programme and regeneration and other policies have been revised to make them more gender sensitive.

The ReGender training programme was designed to guide practitioners on how to take account of gender in regeneration and planning. Participants described different ways in which they have been trying to do this, in ways which will help them to meet the requirements of the Duty.

Regender was helpful, but frustrating as I came away wanting to do lots of things but can't. It has made me think about regeneration in a different way. I didn't think gender was such a factor, and that it is men as well. There are projects where men are marginalised, in the way the projects are organised. (Sefton)

Some participants have been raising awareness amongst colleagues through seminars and newsletters. One planning officer had been involved in an impact assessment of a regeneration schemes to assess the impact of local initiatives on women and to make recommendations for improvements.

Research findings

How gender is considered

Some local authority officers are explicitly considering gender in their work, but at different scales and in different depths. They tend to consider it primarily in terms of women's safety and women's participation in consultation. The ways in which gender is usually considered were found to be in terms of:

- Women's safety in the built environment
- Women are more likely to live in deprived areas and poor housing
- Women are more likely to be involved in community groups but not in decision making positions
- Women's need considered in crime and | disorder partnerships
- Women tend to rely more on public transport
- Poor health as a result of poverty presents itself in different easy for men and women.

The use of open space was one issue often considered in a gender aware framework:

Men and women use open space differently. Multi-use game areas tend to be allocated for football or basketball which are male sports. Young girls want something different, somewhere to hang out or play netball. (Cambridge)

Thinking about gender can be helped by using an impact assessment, but is often limited to concerns about safety:

Need to raise awareness at an early stage. The way it affects areas is not always apparent. When a developer puts in an application we do an EIA. We look at the possible impacts on the design of buildings, on designing out crime, on safety (quality lighting, the location of play areas, street layouts with no blind corners). (Cambridge)

One respondent described how they have been reviewing services in the light of concerns about gender:

In our work on youth provision we have increased the focus on young women. We carried out a basic overview of the projects and looked to see why there were more focused on young men. In some cases there were good

reasons why as young men needed more attention, but in other cases there was a need to increase the focus on young women. For example, there were projects all on sport that were attracting only men so we have increased the number of projects that will appeal to young women. (Sefton)

Gender equality is generally not being reflected upon in a more fundamental way that captures gendered social relations or any explicit desire to shape these relations through planning. Academics in the field have revealed the inter-relationships between gendered social relations and space, implying that a shift in one will influence the other. There is currently little reflection upon gender equality in high level planning. It can be difficult to think about how gender relates to this work:

If you unpick it and think about how local people use the area it is easy to understand as it is real, but it is hard to understand at a broader level. (Sheffield)

Concerns of gender equality do not really appear in terms of land use planning which could have a wider influence on society. For example, women bear the greatest responsibility for child care responsibilities which are often problematic in combining with employment whilst men tend to have longer commutes to employment locations. A consciousness of gender equality may suggest a preference for more mixed use development, allowing employment and residential land use to be closer and more integrated, thus allowing women more opportunities to combine employment with domestic work and allowing men in employment to spend more time with their families. One respondent said:

At a strategic level regarding issues such as employment provision and residential locations we have not considered it much yet and it needs more work. With mixed use development the aim is to normally reduce transport use not to think about gender but it will increase. (Cambridge)

Research findings

Gender equals women

It was very clear from the research that whilst the legislation is framed around gender equality, in practice the focus tends to be on women. Of course, this is for good reasons as most statistics point clearly to women experiencing gender inequality far more than men.

All of the interviewees for the research were women. Almost all participants at events relating to gender and planning and/or regeneration were also women. Some local authority officers said that there was a broad division between the work done by men and women:

Female project managers I work with predominately project manage “female areas” such as health, children centres, and community hospitals. Male project managers I work with work on large scale projects relating to town centre redesign, planning, transportation routes, street lighting, crime and projects that involve heritage such as rivers and mills (all related planning redesigning and building up of Stockport). (Stockport)

Some interviewees said that they found it easier to raise gender as an issue as they have female colleagues:

Most of the staff here are women, this makes a difference. It is unusual in other places I have worked, there are normally few women. (Sefton)

Differences between local authorities

The research found that there are marked differences between local authorities in how far they have engaged with the equality duties, even though the research looked for examples where local authority officers were involved in some way thinking about gender in their work. Some local authorities do not have Gender Equality Schemes (GES) in place yet despite the legislative requirement nor do they carry out Equality Impact Assessments (EIA).

Research participants felt that training made officers more aware of equalities and that this varied between different authorities:

It is different between local authorities because of individuals. In Cambridge officers have had training and been on courses. Different local authorities have different views on the value of consultation; some see it as a tick box exercise that has to be done, others as a chance to really find out what people think. (Cambridge)

Some local authorities have specific departments that promote equality and diversity and this is increasingly the norm.

The council has equality advocates and an equality panel that consists of both members and staff. This has been running for a few years. Cambridge is quite progressive as a LA. They are working towards the joint legislation and have 6 staff groups for each equality strand. Cambridge has a GES. (Cambridge)

The responsibility for putting the GED into action or promoting gender equality in service lies with different departments in different local authorities. As mentioned, some local authorities have specific departments that promote equality and diversity and this is increasingly the norm. A few local authorities have held training and awareness raising events for all departments and the responsibility for equality promotion is more devolved.

Some local authorities have directed more resources at this issue than others:

There is variation between local authorities. I asked at the ReGender event to see who did a similar role as me and the same role is being done in very different ways. Sunderland has 9 people in the diversity department but other local authorities have only one and they may be located in Personnel which makes it seem just a personnel issue. (Sunderland)

The research found that there are local authorities that do have a GES but are struggling to action it.

One respondent described the struggle to raise awareness of gender issues and said that the organisation does nothing to try and take gender into consideration in their activities:

We do not offer our services outside of core working hours so women can fully access them. We have never discussed this being an option. We have never carried out gender specific consultations to get feedback on our services. Our newsletters go to male heads within the council. (Stockport)

Research findings

Resources and training

Participants in the research felt that there is a lack of practical knowledge and a lack of examples of how to take account of gender in planning. They felt that some simple, practical examples of steps that could be taken to work towards gender equality in their work would be very useful. Many research participants said that more training was needed to raise awareness of the GED and gender inequality, but highlighted that training is time and resource intensive and local authority planning officers have many roles to balance:

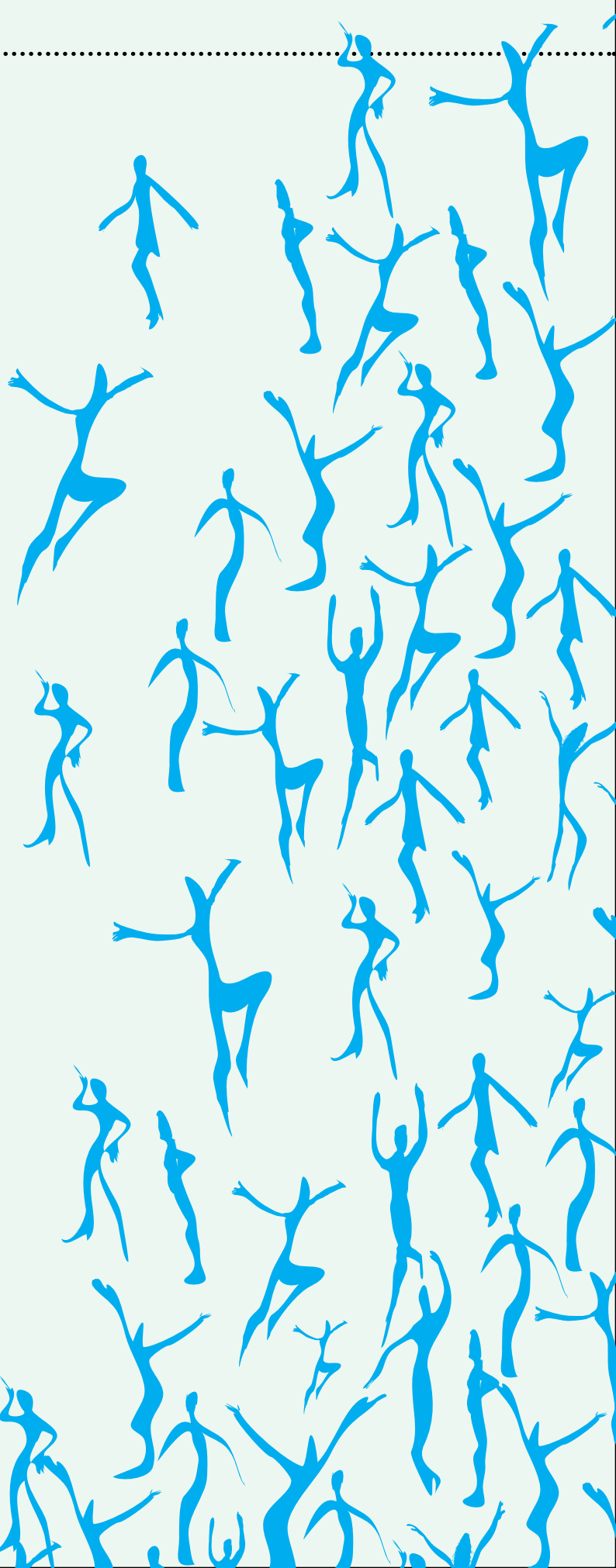
It is a training need, but only one of many. The role is very diverse, one day negotiating with developers the next something else and it is a lot to ask of staff. This is why it is a resource issue, it would be better to outsource it. (Sheffield)

When I worked on ReGender it took a lot of time, there were a number of days away from the office, follow up mentoring sessions, at least eight days. Over that time you learn, but it is a lot of time. It is only one thing amongst many others, this is a resource issue. (Sheffield)

People are often dismissive of planners' ability to respond to something new and engage, but whereas the police etc have only recently been engaging the public, planners have been doing it since 1947. They will look at equalities and respond, they are aware. There are lots of pressures on planners, from the building industry, environmental, economic, the public; they are one person trying to please everyone. (CLG)

Equality Impact Assessments

An equality impact assessment (EIA) is a tool for identifying the potential impact of a council's policies, services and functions on its residents and staff. It can help staff provide and deliver excellent services to residents by making sure that these reflect the needs of the community. By carrying out EIAs, a council may also ensure that the services that it provides fulfil the requirements of anti-discrimination and equalities legislation. EIAs should make sure that equality is placed at the centre of policy development and review, as well as service delivery.



Research findings

Some research participants found the EIAs to have been very helpful in taking gender into consideration in planning. They said that conducting EIAs is a learning process and they are improving all the time:

EIAs have helped massively in policy and planning. Before officers did not think about gender differences. EIAs give a better over view and we are getting better at doing them. We look back now at earlier ones and think of other things we could have thought of. It is a learning process. We also do sustainability appraisals that look at social impacts which are often done by consultants. Now the Planning Inspectorate want to see the EIAs. But only a few months ago officers from X local authority had not even heard of EIAs. It will take time to improve, we go back over the EIAs, it is a learning process. (Cambridge)

Interviewees valued the EIAs and thought that they are improving, but had some concerns about the quality of some assessments:

For me I think the equality impact assessment tool is key. I also think that there may be issues around quality of completed impact assessments which if not picked up in-house will need to be addressed externally through external audit and measurement e.g. audit commission. (Wakefield)

Some local authorities are revising EIAs continuously but find that some officers see them as an administrative burden:

Everyone that provides a service, when a new project or service is planned they have to do an EIA and they have to evidence these. They have been in place for some time but are continuously evolving, we change the wording, the questions etc. They have to help provide an assessment. It is a learning process. They have been revised several times. We update and train managers. They are not popular with the departments. Some do understand their value; some see them as a burden. It varies with their understanding of the perceived value to themselves and to the public. They should use the EIAs to inform future provision. We try to encourage them to use them for future improvements and evaluations of services. But this does not always happen. There are some departments in particular that do not see the value, such as planning. (Sunderland)

Interviewees said that using examples can help to show colleagues the use of EIAs:

I have been able to bring more examples and show how to mitigate against impacts. I explain it is not just a box to tick on the EIA but something that has real impacts on people. The GES and GIA can just be a tick box but we do try to make it real. They need reviewing to have real meaning. (Sheffield)

There is a need for people to understand equality issues and the need to address them if EIAs are not simply a tick-box exercise that does not shape practice or services:

Things will not be done if people do not understand them and there benefits. If people do not understand the need for equality impact assessment then it becomes a tick box exercise with nothing done as they think, "I thought about it and it has no impact". (CLG)



Research findings

Using Gender Equality Schemes

From April 2007 amendments to the Sex Discrimination Act (SDA) 1975 will require public authorities to comply with a general duty to pro-actively promote gender equality. To support authorities in meeting the general duty, there are a series of specific duties applicable to key public bodies, one of which is to produce a Gender Equality Scheme (GES). Some GES refer specifically to planning and/or regeneration activities e.g. Salford, others are more generic:

We have a GES in place but there is nothing specific on regeneration or planning. It is generic to be applied to all departments. (Sunderland)

Some local authorities have GES in place but officers are struggling to use them. One planning officer said that their local authority GES was over 100 pages long and they were over-whelmed by it and did not have to resources to engage with something so large and complicated. Another also said there are challenges in using the schemes:

Equality schemes are not useful till they are used. People have training but then do not have much to do with it. The GES is unwieldy. (Cambridge)

Importance of individuals – gender ‘champions’

The research suggests that individuals play a very important role in promoting the Duty in local authorities. Gender equality may be championed by one individual who frequently raises it as an issue, regularly pushes for change and encourages others to learn and be involved:

You need a champion to push gender and the EIAs. Not every woman is sympathetic to gender issues. (Cambridge)

Awareness has increased; we are working with other council departments. I speak to other departments, the feedback I get varies. Sometimes they just switch off and think ‘it is just X going off on one again’. It has helped to have people like me as champions of the issue. There have been more telephone enquiries now, we have diversity officers. It is increasingly mainstream and not an add on like before. It is a slow process, to slow, but we are seeing differences. (Sheffield)

This is very useful for raising awareness but can place all the onus of responsibility for action onto one person and the impetus may be lost when they move on. It can be difficult for one individual to influence practice on a wider scale:

[X] is very conscientious in promoting gender, she is one individual who is very passionate about it but the challenge is how to influence others and practice. (Sheffield 2)

There has been some training on gender for planning which has been helpful in relation to our own work. We have had group discussions which have been good. If you do it by yourself it is difficult. (Cambridge)

Research findings

Hierarchy of equalities

It was very clear from the research that gender is not prioritised or measures taken to address it to the same degree as the other equality duties such as race, or in the context of planning, as disability:

Staff are not aware generally about the Duty. But is also more fundamental in that people are not also aware of the differences between men and women. Officers are more aware of the Disability Duty as it is more obvious to them what it means and how it should be applied, but they are less clear about gender equality and what that means for the work they do. (Cambridge)

It is a bit of a challenge. Gender has been local authorities in people's response to the equality agenda. Race has been emphasised more and for longer. We have senior women in management in Sheffield and are trying to get gender equality back on the agenda as a priority. (Sheffield)

Disability equality is easier to understand, in the form of access issues etc. But people misinterpret gender, they don't know what a gender issue is so they can't see how it is relevant. (Sunderland)

Lack of awareness of the GED and gender equality

Interviewees reported a general lack of awareness of the existence of the Duty or what it means:

There are often officers in Equality Impact Assessment (EQA) meetings who cannot understand or see the differences in their work or the policy regarding gender.... The women in the council tend to be white middle class with care arrangements in place. They are not always aware of the differences in women's lives or they do not want to/will not recognise problems. (Cambridge)

The GED is useful for dissemination, to hang it on. I do not understand the GED; I do not understand what my responsibility as an officer in a LA is, what it means in practice. It feels so big. People are aware of it, for example in the procurement of work they are well up on what is expected. I just do what needs to be done. For me the Duty is just a way to bring it out. Loads of people have not even heard about it. It is not real, not tangible and people are not using it. We have equality standards but

even they are sketchy, the legislation is even more woolly so it is no wonder people do not understand. What we are doing is not in reference to the Duty. There has been no information about the Duty. If I had not done ReGender I would not know anything about it. Internally there has been one article about it on the intranet. X has worked and raised awareness, but it is awareness not understanding. (Sheffield)

I was only made aware of the Duty on attendance on the ReGender course. The council does nothing to promote Gender Equality Duty through general training packages. (Stockport)

Concerns were raised about the lack of enforcement of the Duty:

It has no bite. No one does anything about it, it is not well publicised, most people do not know anything about it; people do not think gender is an issue anymore, which of course it is. It has no impact. It is statutory but if no one gets into trouble then they will not do anything. It needs backing to enforce it. It is difficult to implement and examples would help. (Sefton)

At the moment the right questions about gender equality are not being asked and when challenged (by me) as a result of doing the course nothing is being done about asking these questions. (Stockport)

Research findings

Interviewees said that there was a lack of awareness, even hostility towards, gender equality issues more generally:

In the LDF consultation on use of space we asked if they had considered gender in any way and they looked at me as if I had two heads. Some just do not see it as relevant to their service. The main barrier is ignorance. People don't understand what a gender issue is. They think it is radical feminism, or 'Fathers for Justice' etc, or they just don't think about it at all. Or if they do, they just look at the numbers of men and women and don't think about why they are different. (Sunderland)

There is a view that gender i.e. work on women's issues has 'been done'. There is also a subtle backlash in terms of the impact of the equal pay agenda i.e. "this equal pay issue is bringing financial pressure on Councils and the public sector". (Wakefield)

One challenge that the Duty has created is its use in attempts to close down single sex services:

People have used the GED to say that you cannot have any single sex services without considering the context. Some of this is wilful misinterpretation, using the Duty as a way to withhold funds from women's organisations. This is definitely happening. Gender is not fashionable in the funder world anyway; the Duty can make it more problematic. There is a project in Sunderland, the Bridge project, set up by women in the community that has been very successful but has struggled for funding for years. The GED is a risk for taking away funding. (Sunderland)

Some interviewees highlighted the role that professional bodies such as the RTPI could play in raising awareness:

There is a role for professional bodies to help raise awareness such as the RTPI and CABE. The planning and development industry is male dominated... The RTPI publication is useful as it shows that gender inequality exists and that we are letting gender equality down so it is useful to argue that it is important. It is good to have evidence regarding gender inequality from a professional body such as the RTPI so we can say that the EIA has to take account of gender. (Cambridge)

Impact of the GED

Some interviewees felt that it is too early to see the impact of the new legislation:

The GED is an opportunity but we have not as yet seen the impacts, it is too early to say, ask in five years time. (Sunderland)

In terms of the GED there has been negligible impact on the ground so far. It has been a year. Policies should have had a gender impact assessment – have they? Have local authorities looked at the impact on policy? (CLG)

A few respondents felt that the Duty had made no impact as people still were not considering gender equality, despite this now being a legal requirement:

The Duty has had no effect on the way plans or regeneration is implemented. It is mainly a resource issue. For example we have only just had our Working Neighbourhoods Fund allocated for the year. It is difficult to get people to look at issues in a gender specific way, for them to see that there could be benefits. And most people do not see things as a gender issue and this is a problem. (Sefton)

Most interviewees were optimistic that the Duty would bring benefits. They believed it would lead to improved services:

It is difficult to say what the impacts will be as we are not on the ground with any of the plans yet. We are confident that it will be better for the end user. In the past the fact that there is an end user tended to be forgotten. The way we approach projects and our systems for engagement structures has improved. (Sheffield)

If implemented correctly it will lead to real change for both men and women. But gaining recognition of its importance is a challenge, as is translating it in actions that can be easily identified. (Knowsley)

Research findings

Most felt that the new legislation had given more legitimacy and clout to efforts to have gender issues taken seriously:

The Duty has given us some clout and the ability and backing to do something. (Sheffield 2)

The main impact of the Duty has been as a catalyst for work that should have been going on for the last ten years or so but has not. It has been a chance for people who have been waiting in the wings to take things forward. It has changed the law. Before, you had to prove there had been discrimination. But now the responsibility is with the public sector to be proactive and this is a big shift. They should take it seriously now. It is now on the agenda but was not before and it should have been. The onus is now on them. They need prodding and pushing but they have to show they are doing something. Local authorities have to respond to targets and show what they are doing to be a good local authority. (Sunderland)

Hopefully the GED will bring women's issues back into the mainstream:

- Economically
 - Environmentally
 - Socially and
 - Morally
- (Wakefield)*

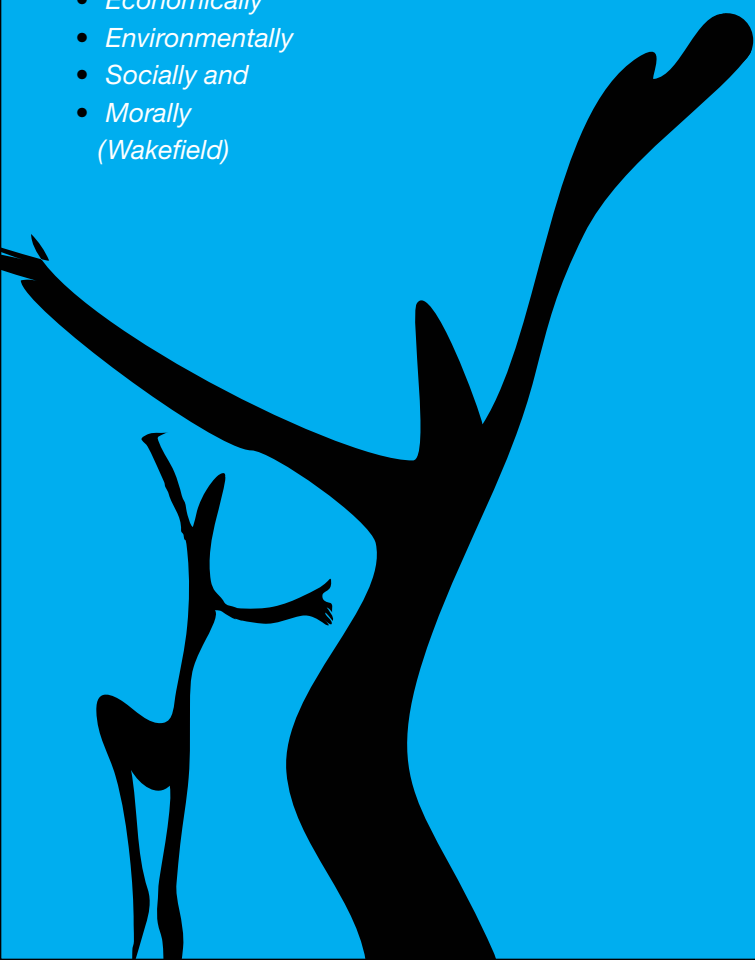
Barriers and limitations to change

The findings detailed above suggest that there are number of barriers to the implementation of the Gender Equality Duty in the context of local authority planning activities and possible limitations to the impact of the legislation.

It is clear so far that many local authorities have not yet managed to engage with the real implications of the legislation. Some gender equality schemes are not yet in place and gender impact assessments have in some cases not been completed.

Local authorities seem to find it easier to consider gender equality internally in terms of their organisation itself, for example by reviewing policies relating to recruitment and equal pay, than to engage with the gendered impacts of the services they provide and the policies they implement.

Interviews with local authority officers during the research suggest that there are a number of barriers to realising the potential of the legislative change. They have found that other strands of the equalities agenda have been prioritised over gender. A number of participants in the research said that they found it difficult to understand the legislation and what it means in practice. There were very few local authorities that have directed extra resources towards implementing the requirements of the Duty in planning departments. Some interviewees described a lack of interest and even a degree of hostility from colleagues when they returned from training around gender equality in their sector. Perhaps unsurprisingly, most of the local authority officers who have been on training around gender, planning and regeneration are women. In local authorities that have been more proactive and engaged, it is the result of one or two passionate individuals or senior women in management roles in the council who have been driving the efforts, rather than a broader commitment to gender equality. One interviewee said that the legislation now gives their efforts to have gender taken seriously some real 'clout', but said that it 'is a slow, tortuous process'.



Research findings

Challenges

The research has highlighted a number of challenges to implementing the Gender Equality Duty.

- Getting the message across about gender equality, especially to men. There is a need to consider why they do not engage with the issues and come to training events.
- Public sector power hierarchies are male dominated; women in council top posts can sometimes merely replicate the same structures. Entrenched sexism within public sector organisations makes it difficult for senior women to speak up. Women high up do not always want to be the ones using the 'gender card'. It is difficult to get changes instigated in a male dominated environment.
- Resistance to change. Gender is often absent in decision making but there can be limited thinking about how to change it. There is a need to target different levels within public authorities to achieve real change, from corporate level to front line staff.
- There is a challenge in getting gender equality on the agenda in its full sense; people tend to be aware of gender and unequal pay, but lack awareness about broader gender equality issues.
- There is a lot of work to do to both raise awareness of the GED and change people's thinking about gender equality before the Duty is really engaged with.
- People working on or championing gender equality can feel isolated and can find it difficult to persuade others to support their efforts.
- Hostility to the concept of gender equality and actions related to achieving it is often encountered. Without focused analysis people tend to think gender inequality does not exist anymore.
- There is limited resourcing which constrains what can be achieved. Equalities tend to be viewed as an 'add-on' and are one of the first things to be dropped when time/resources are low.
- In implementation and action there is a hierarchy of equalities in which gender is at the bottom.
- There is often no new training on the GED or gender equality. There is often no cascade of knowledge of gender training to disseminate knowledge to others. GED has been felt to have been downgraded as piece of legislation as people realise it is difficult to enforce.
- Enforcing the GED is a problem and there is little evidence so far of enforcement.



Research findings

Key factors for success

The research suggests some key factors for successfully getting gender onto the agenda in local authorities:

- Awareness raising – at the organisational, community, and individual levels.
- Gender champions and encouraging the involvement of people, especially men, who believe in the need to address gender inequality.
- Having opportunities to think about issues and discuss them with others.
- Developing solidarity and networks with others working on similar issues.
- Leadership to coordinate action.
- The use of clear messages about the need to focus on gender equality - using examples, anecdotes, case studies, facts and figures.
- Knowledge-sharing.
- Ensure continuity of support and maintain momentum once gender is on the agenda.

Practical efforts

The research highlighted some practical steps that can be taken to ensure gender is taken account of in planning policy and practice:

- Take a gendered approach to community involvement, consultation and participation.
- Monitor consultation and adjust as necessary.
- Disaggregate data.
- Make use of Equality Impact Assessments; see them as something positive that can improve service delivery, not merely a bureaucratic burden.
- Take advantage of external training opportunities.
- Focus on awareness-raising with colleagues.
- Make use of existing guidance, particularly the RTPi 'Gender and spatial planning: RTPi Good Practice Note 7' which details good practice. (See Annex A)

07 Conclusions

On a positive note, many local authorities have Gender Equality Schemes in place and are placing a growing emphasis on ensuring they meet equalities legislation. There are individuals in the planning and regeneration teams of some local authorities who are very committed to gender equality and are striving to make achieving it part of their work. A number of planning and regeneration practitioners have undertaken training to increase gender awareness in their roles, so there may be more examples of good practice emerging in the near future.

However, whilst a number of examples of gender being considered in regeneration and planning have been identified, it is clear that as yet the impact of the Gender Equality Duty on planning has been limited in this field. The research has found that engaging with gender issues in planning and regeneration is not yet established practice. There are cases where good practice is evident, but they are not the norm. The research also suggests that initiatives to consider gender tend to be driven by one or two individuals with a particular interest in this issue, rather than being widespread through planning or regeneration teams.

There are implications for local authority planners, both professional implications for planning officers in terms of the skills required and in terms of the senior management commitment that will be required to really implement the Duty. Resources will need to be allocated to support implementation, particularly in terms of allowing time for local authority officers to engage with Gender Equality Schemes etc. In order to have a broader impact, the importance of considering gender needs to have corporate backing across a local authority or city to prevent actions being undertaken by only a handful of interested individuals. More advice and training is needed to give planners and regeneration practitioners information about how to turn the requirements of the new legislation into practical actions. Implementation of the Gender Equality Duty will need to be linked with the other equality duties and more work still needs to be done to raise awareness of the Duty.

There are limits as to how far the Duty goes in relation to monitoring and evaluation of outcomes. Public authorities were required to have Gender Equality Schemes in place by April 2007 and should have reported on the schemes in April 2008, although the EHRC are aware that many have as yet failed to do so. It is not clear how the EHRC will review the schemes or what the results of this review process will be.

The research suggests that local authority planning officers are mostly addressing women's disadvantage in terms of issues of access, transport and safety, rather than issues of gender income disparities, educational achievements or poverty inequalities. Planning and the built environment is just one aspect of a more complex whole and there has been acknowledgement of the limits to what planning can achieve (Booth et al, 2004). The other parts of the market system and the policy processes that combine to produce inequalities also need to be readjusted to ensure more equal treatment of women or disadvantaged groups more generally. The reliance on legislation to progress gender inequalities is positive, but must also be supported by broader changes in policies and practices to address gendered disadvantage. Planning and the built environment alone cannot redress fundamental inequalities.

However, given the inter-relationships between gender, space and power, the form and function of the built environment can make a difference and should not be over-looked. This legislation could be used to try to bring about quite radical transformations in the nature of urban space and the social relations within it. Rather than simply leading to policy changes that support the status quo, such as recommending the locating of childcare facilities near to women's employment, the Duty could be used to encourage more fundamental shifts in how we live and work and the gendered social relations that underpin these activities. The Duty was welcomed by feminists for its radical potential in transforming the gendered social relations of urban space. Whilst there are examples of positive engagement with the legislation, its transformative potential is yet to be realised.

Annex A: Spatial Planning and Gender Equality

Good Practice Note 7: Gender and spatial planning (RTPI, 2007)

<http://www.rtpi.org.uk/download/3322/GPN7.pdf>

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 and an over-emphasis on ICT could exclude women.
- Research for the RTPI Gender Toolkit¹ 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

¹RTPI (2003) *Gender Mainstreaming Toolkit, Executive Summary*. Available from: <http://www.rtpi.org.uk/download/369/Gender-Equality-Toolkit.pdf>

Annex A: Spatial planning and gender equality

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 attack².
- The Equality Review estimates that, at current rates, it will take until 2085 before the gender pay gap is closed³. Women in full-time work earn 88 per cent of male earnings in Northern Ireland and only 77 per cent of male earnings in London⁴.
- 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 outright⁵.
- 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 opportunities⁶.
- 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 life⁷.
- 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 teens⁸.
- Women are the main users of town centres yet are under represented in city centre partnership agencies⁹.
- 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.
- 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 partnerships¹⁰, strategic planning, partnership boards, regeneration boards, city centre liaison groups, transport strategy groups.

²British Crime Survey (2006/7) Available from: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs07/hosb1107.pdf> Page 122.

³Cabinet Office (2007) *Fairness and Freedom: Final Report of the Equalities Review*. http://www.theequalitiesreview.org.uk/publications/interim_report.aspx Page 24.

⁴Department of Trade and Industry (2002) *Women and Men in the UK*, Page 95.

⁵Office National Statistics Focus on Gender <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/CCI/nugget.asp?ID=433&Pos=&ColRank=2&Rank=224>

⁶National Housing Statistics Focus on Gender <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/cci/nugget.asp?id=433>

⁷Fuller, A. et al. (2005) *Employers, young people and gender segregation (England)*. EOC: Manchester.

⁸Armstrong, 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>

⁹*Women and Men in Managerial Positions*. Available from: http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/women_men_stats/out/measures_out4311_en.htm

¹⁰Oxfam (2007) *Where are Women in Local Strategic Partnerships?* London: Urban Forum.

Annex A

The RTPI suggests the following is good practice in considering gender in spatial planning:

Community involvement and participation

- 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.
- 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.



Annex A

Plan-making and policy development

- Integrate gender into each stage of the policy and implementation cycle and undertake Gender Impact Assessments 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.
- 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-making.
- 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 gender.
- 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.

Annex A

Implementation and decision making

- 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 Equality.

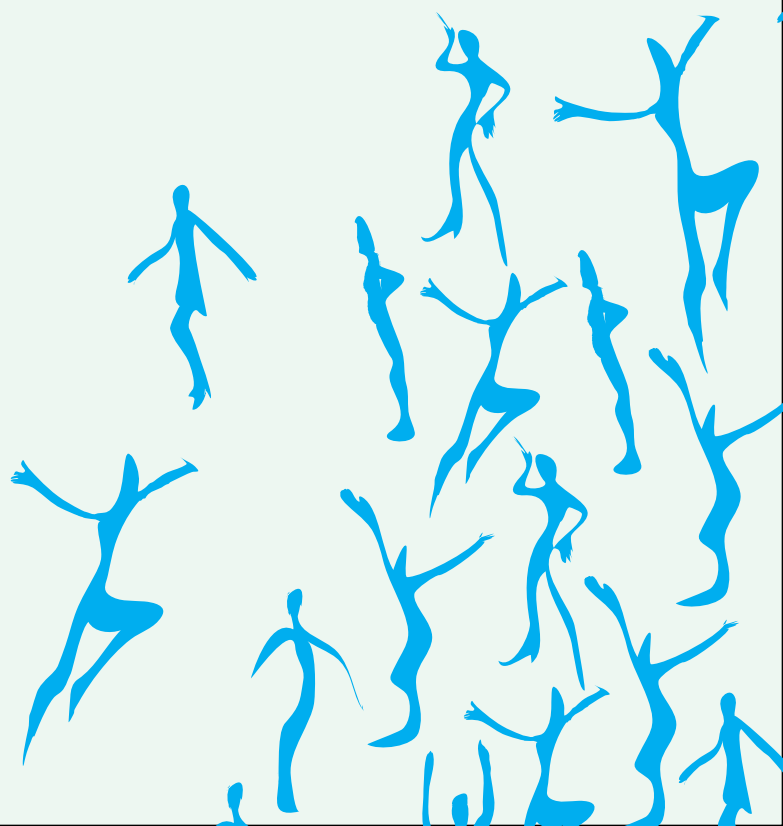
Checklist to consider when gender proofing:

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.
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.

Monitoring and evaluation

- 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.



Annex B: Useful resources

The Gendersite

<http://www.gendersite.org/>

Oxfam ReGender

<http://www.oxfam.org.uk/resources/ukpoverty/regender.html>

RTPI

Gender and spatial planning: RTPI Good Practice Note 7

<http://www.rtpi.org.uk/download/3322/GPN7.pdf>

Women's Design Service

<http://www.wds.org.uk/>

World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index

<http://www.weforum.org/en/initiatives/gcp/Gender%20Gap/index.htm>

The UK has fallen lower down the world league table on gender equality for the third year running, and is now ranked 13th out of 130 countries in terms of women's pay and work opportunities, political power, health and education. Last year Britain came 11th in the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index, while in 2006 it held 9th place. The biggest decline in performance was in the ranking for equal pay, where Britain dropped 20 places to number 81.

EHRC Sex and Power Report

<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/projects/workingbetter/sexandpower/Pages/variationSiteDefault.aspx>

A snail could crawl the entire length of the Great Wall of China in 212 years, just slightly longer than the 200 years it will take for women to be equally represented in Parliament.

Women hold just 11 per cent of FTSE 100 directorships and only 19.3 per cent of the positions in Parliament. This year, there are fewer women holding top posts in 12 of the 25 categories for which figures are available. The report traditionally estimates the number of years it will take for women to achieve equality in key areas at the present rate of progress. This year's report indicates it will now take 15 years longer (55 years in total) for women to achieve equal status at senior levels in the judiciary, and women directors in FTSE 100 companies could be waiting eight years longer (73 years in total). If women were to achieve equal representation among Britain's 31,000 top positions of power, the Commission estimates nearly 5700 'missing' women would rise through the ranks to positions of real influence.

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