

Planning for a Caring City.

A paper by [Co Produce It CIC](#)¹ with support from the [Bartlett Development Planning Unit, UCL](#) as part of the Horizon Europe funded [Fairville Project - Facing inequalities and democratic challenges through co-production](#)².

Introduction

This paper proposes a different framework for the Greater London Authority to consider its review of the London Plan. Our case is built on the evidence that London is an increasingly unequal city with those from disadvantaged groups finding it harder and harder to survive, buy homes, start new businesses and access quality service provision. Rather than follow entirely the growth plan for London which assumes growth will be the main driver for resolving the city's many problems – from lack of infrastructures, services and housing to sustainability concerns, air pollution and increased inequality. Our case is that developers pursuing profit and growth give back less to communities through social provision and s106/CIL than would an approach that stems from investment and care of communities in the first place. We provide a short evidence base and links to other documents to support this argument.

There is much evidence that the current approach to development only serves those already holding enough resources to buy land or housing. However, that land is a right that everyone needs to access and that an approach that starts by looking at the needs of citizens, at creating more shared resources for public good rather than private resources for economic gain and that is based on a broad commitment to community involvement will better address increasing social inequality. We agree with UCLG (below) that allowing inequality to increase is unacceptable. Instead, we propose that London develops based on a caring city and one in which more resources are planned, developed and managed by communities acting in common.

¹ [Co Produce It CIC](#) is a not for profit that supports projects developed with co production principles.

² The Horizon [Fairville Project](#) (2023-2026) is an international research initiative funded by Horizon Europe. It aims to tackle urban inequalities and their impact on democracy by strengthening **co-production**—a collaborative approach that empowers communities disconnected from formal decision-making. Fairville advocates for **resourced participation, access to professional expertise, and stronger advocacy** to ensure meaningful coproduction. The project brings together civil society groups, researchers, advocacy organisations, and local authorities to address key issues: **the environment, risks, and access to decent housing**. It also emphasises **citizens' rights in the face of democratic decline**.

To avoid ever widening inequality we propose that instead of a growth agenda London's urban planning should be set through a "caring city" lens. Systemic failures in housing, care infrastructure, equity and inequality cannot be met through the current system. Instead, planning must return to its origins and bring forward radical alternatives centered on public held land, land value taxation, community-led solutions, intergenerational support, and climate justice.

If we accept that access to land is a basic right and appropriate use of land is at the heart of the public sector planning duty then a new approach can emerge. Unfortunately in London, its role as an international city has meant that land has become an asset class which now does not serve the needs of the wider community but only the rich few able to hold and access that land. We consider that the now limited land available should be owned in public-community partnerships and developed to meet the needs of all Londoners (housing, health care, education and economy).

Where has this idea come from?

The concept of care has come from feminist movements which want to recognise the invisible and unpaid work that sustains the reproduction of life. It also comes from other movements: anti racism; class where people's labour is not adequately valued. The concept of Care Commons was inspired by ecosystems and partially by writings of Thomas Allan whose approach is that 'economy of care can make visible the interdependence and reciprocity that are fundamental parts of our social world'³. By placing care focused approaches at the core of strategic frameworks it is possible to turn entrenched ways of thinking on its head and resolve negative externalities created by the mainstream system. It is possible to show that care has many positives applicable to societal structure and economies.

Caring Cities concepts also flow from the Global Health Crisis created by the pandemic and aims to be a more suitable basis which will allow for greater preparation and less devastating outcomes in the face of a future crisis akin to the pandemic.

It is also considered to be an approach more suited to finding solutions to the sustainability crisis and a framework which can ensure we better measure social and environmental value, unquantifiable outcomes and build care for both human and nonhuman resources.

³ [Care as Commons: A Brief Introduction - resilience](#)

In London the grassroots and voluntary sector came together after the pandemic to look at how better to plan services to ensure better outcomes for Londoners especially those in poorest health, greatest deprivation and from marginalised communities.

This approach requires a real understanding of the evidence base, both quantitative and institutional/academic, and a need to consider the increasing inequality over time which is being caused by the current market/developer led approach and which will not be fixed by it. This paper provides a background to some of that evidence base and suggestions for policy approaches that will support 'the caring city'.

The evidence base

- London City Resilience Strategy 2020, Feb 2020, GLA

A response to the pandemic this strategy developed by the Mayor Sadiq Khan aimed to build a resilient London by 2030. This strategy seems to have been overlooked by the current London Plan team but at the time provided evidence for the fact a new approach was needed. The plan noted that social inequality is stark: half of London households own 5 percent of the total household wealth.

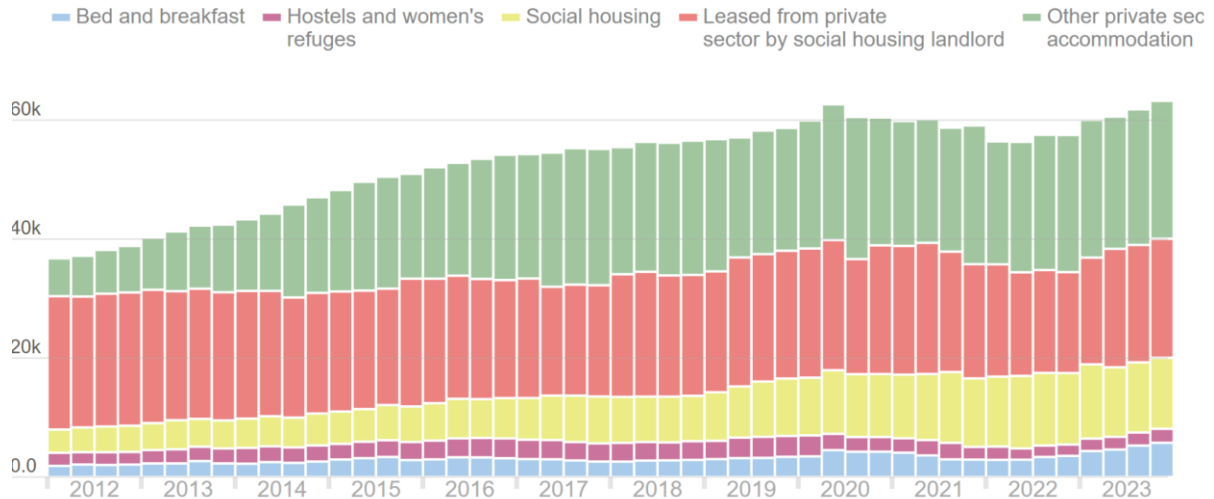
Resilience is the capacity of individuals, communities, institutions, businesses, and systems within a city to survive, adapt, and thrive no matter what kinds of chronic stresses and acute shocks they experience - 100 Resilient Cities, pioneered by the Rockefeller Foundation.

- **Vision of a Resilient London:** Emphasizes the importance of adaptability, preparedness, and community engagement to ensure the city thrives despite future uncertainties.
- **Features of City Resilience:** Identifies characteristics such as inclusivity, integration, adaptability, and robustness that contribute to a resilient urban environment.
- **Managing for Resilience:** Highlights governance structures and policy frameworks that support resilience-building efforts.
- **London & 100 Resilient Cities:** Discusses London's participation in the global **100 Resilient Cities** initiative, which provides tools and methodologies for resilience planning.
- **Opportunities to Build Resilience:** Identifies potential shocks (e.g., climate change, economic instability) and chronic stresses (e.g., inequality, aging infrastructure) that could impact the city.
- **Key Statistics:** Presents data on London's economy, population, diversity, and infrastructure to contextualize resilience challenges.

The City Intelligence reports ⁴(update 2024) show the increase in homeless households in London from 2012-2023.

Homeless households in temporary accommodation arranged by London borough

Number of households



- **Actions to Build Resilience:** Introduces specific projects aimed at enhancing resilience in three areas—**People, Place, and Process**—through community engagement, infrastructure improvements, and governance reforms.

● Housing data

[G15 | G15 calls for Treasury to invest in Affordable housing as critical national infrastructure](#)

[G15-RG_Letter-to-Angela-Rayner-re-NPPF-consultation_final_200924.pdf](#)

[Social Housing Residents Face Widespread Stigma, Report Finds - Social Equality](#)

[Households on Local Authority Waiting List, Borough - London Datastore](#)

[The life-changing effects of homelessness on children | The Children's Society](#)

[What Are The Impacts of Homelessness? | Crisis UK](#)

⁴ [State of London Dashboard](#)

- Health inequality data

[London Calling: Health Inequalities In The Capital | The King's Fund](#)

[The Latest On The NHS Estate | The King's Fund](#)

The Case for Care

The approach is endorsed by a number of sources, some of which are summarised below. These are:

- Just Space - Towards A Community Led Plan for London 2017; A Community Led Recovery Plan for London 2022; Just Space Manifesto 2024
- The EU Horizon Fairville research programme 2023-2026
- UCLG Global Observatory on Local Democracy and Decentralisation VI and VII (The Mayor of London is part of this network)
- The London Assembly Scrutiny into Social Value in Planning and Regeneration

JUST SPACE

Since 2016 Just Space has been developing and refining a series of policy approaches that would better serve the needs of all Londoners. Three publications are presented here in summary and in chronological order to show the development of the approach.

[Towards a Community-Led Plan for London](#)⁵, was produced in 2017 by Just Space, a network of community groups advocating for fair, inclusive, and sustainable planning in London. It outlines a vision for a more participatory and community-driven planning process and proposes alternatives to the existing London Plan, which is seen as overly influenced by financial and real estate interests.

Key Points:

1. Community Participation in Planning

- Advocates for genuine involvement of local communities in decision-making, beyond mere consultation.
- Calls for a **Social Compact** between Londoners and the Mayor to ensure continuous engagement.
- Proposes the development of a **Mayor's Statement of Community Involvement** to formalise participation processes.

2. Economic Vision for London

⁵ [just-space-a4-community-led-london-plan.pdf](#)

- Criticises London’s reliance on financial and real estate sectors, which have contributed to inequality and displacement.
 - Promotes a **fair, green, localised, and diverse economy**, emphasising sustainability and opportunities for all.
 - Highlights the need for economic policies that support secure, well-paid jobs and community-led businesses.
3. **Housing, Health, and Wellbeing**
- Argues for better protection of existing homes and prioritisation of **not-for-profit rented housing**.
 - Pushes for quality housing policies that enhance health and wellbeing.
 - Supports community-led approaches to housing policy rather than developer-driven projects.
4. **Environmental Sustainability**
- Advocates for making London a **Blue-Green City** with strong climate targets.
 - Calls for better **air quality, water management, biodiversity, and green spaces**.
 - Supports local food production and infrastructure that promotes sustainability.
5. **Transport and Mobility**
- Encourages policies that **reduce the need for travel** and improve **active, affordable, and accessible transport**.
 - Pushes for better public transport options, tackling congestion, and integrating freight movement efficiently.
6. **Implementation and Delivery**
- Criticises the current London Plan’s failure to properly implement policies.
 - Proposes **community infrastructure, lifetime neighbourhoods, and social impact assessments** as essential tools for monitoring and enforcement.

A Community Led Recovery Plan for London 2022⁶:

The **Community-Led Recovery Plan** by Just Space outlines a vision for a fairer, greener, and more inclusive London, shaped by grassroots organizations. It highlights the inequalities exposed by COVID-19 and proposes policies to address social justice, economic sustainability, and environmental concerns.

⁶[recovery-plan-4-april.pdf](#)

Key Themes

- **Caring City:** Advocates for a care-led recovery, emphasizing the importance of social care jobs in a green economy and a strongly **people-centered** framework that supports communities and corrects disadvantages. The chapter emphasizes that **London must shift towards a Caring City model**, where planning and development serve communities rather than financial interests. It calls for **radical changes** to governance, funding, and policy-making to ensure a fairer, more inclusive future.

Current concerns in London that demand such an approach include:

- **Underpaid and Undervalued Care Sector** – Care work, both paid and unpaid, is undervalued, with gender inequalities making women disproportionately responsible for care.
- **Lack of Community-Led Health and Care Services** – The current system does not sufficiently involve communities in shaping health and care services.
- **Overemphasis on London as a ‘Global City’** – The focus on financial and development interests often neglects local communities and their needs.
- **Limited Support for Care Workers** – Many care workers face precarious employment conditions, including low wages and zero-hour contracts.
- **Inadequate Community Spaces** – There is a lack of accessible, affordable spaces for communities to meet, organize, and support each other.

Recommendations made include:

1. **Care-Led Recovery** – Integrate social care jobs into the green economy, recognizing their low-carbon footprint and societal value.
2. **Community Wealth Building** – Establish partnerships between local institutions and community organizations to strengthen care services.
3. **Care Hubs on High Streets** – Create local hubs where care services are integrated and accessible, supporting both paid and unpaid carers.
4. **Social Licensing for Care Providers** – Implement regulations ensuring fair wages, stable contracts, and continuous training for care workers.
5. **Community Review Panels** – Establish panels and assemblies to ensure historically disadvantaged groups have a voice in planning decisions.
6. **Funding for Small Organizations** – Revise funding structures to prioritize smaller grassroots organizations that struggle to access financial support.

Other chapters cover:

- **Participation:** Calls for meaningful community involvement in planning, including co-production and citizen assemblies.
 - **Community Review Panels** – Establish panels and assemblies to ensure historically disadvantaged groups have a voice in planning decisions.
 - **Accessible Community Spaces** – Ensure multi-purpose, affordable spaces for communities to meet, organize, and support each other.
- **Fairness:** Addresses racial justice, intersectionality, and the need for inclusive language and policies. Ideas include:
 - **Inclusive Planning Policies** – Require planning decisions to consider racial justice and intersectionality, ensuring equitable access to housing and public spaces.
 - **Youth-Focused Spaces** – Develop planning policies that prioritize safe and accessible spaces for children and young people.
- **Housing Crisis:** Examines lessons from COVID-19 and proposes policies for affordable and secure housing.
 - **Community-Led Housing** – Support cooperative housing models and community land trusts to ensure affordable and sustainable housing.
 - **Retrofitting Over Demolition** – Prioritize retrofitting existing buildings over demolition to reduce environmental impact and displacement.
- **Lifetime Neighborhoods:** Promotes community hubs and local engagement to foster stronger neighborhoods.
 - **Community Hubs** – Develop neighborhood hubs that integrate essential services, fostering local engagement and accessibility.
 - **Walkable Neighborhoods** – Ensure planning prioritizes pedestrian-friendly infrastructure to enhance local connectivity.
- **Nature & Climate Emergency:** Focuses on biodiversity, decarbonization, and sustainable urban planning.
 - **Green Infrastructure** – Require developments to incorporate biodiversity and green spaces to combat climate change.
 - **Sustainable Building Standards** – Implement policies that enforce low-carbon construction and energy-efficient retrofitting.
- **Local Economy:** Encourages community wealth building, fair employment, and progressive procurement.
 - **High Street Regeneration** – Support local businesses by integrating community spaces into high streets.
 - **Affordable Workspaces** – Ensure planning policies provide low-cost workspaces for small businesses and entrepreneurs.

The plan calls for an urgent shift toward policies that empower local communities and address systemic inequalities.

The Just Space 2024 Manifesto⁷:

- **Introduction and context:** London's rapid development and growth has prioritised speculative housing over genuinely affordable homes, public services, and green spaces. Just Space calls for radical planning changes to address social, economic, and environmental inequalities. Instead we support land value taxation, progressive reforms, and greater investment in public housing.
- **Housing:** London's housing crisis where market rents and homeownership costs are unaffordable for most residents seriously impacts on people's ability to live decent lives and fulfil their potential. Just Space proposes a large-scale public housing program, tenancy reforms, and an end to estate redevelopment that displaces communities. In planning we also want to see affordability standards set that cannot be reduced through the viability assessment process and calls for greater community involvement in the SHLAA and SHMA processes.
- **Local Economy & Industry:** London's high streets, markets, and industrial spaces are threatened by development pressures. Instead policies should protect low-cost workspaces, no net loss of industrial space, and policies ensuring markets remain accessible to diverse communities, and reforming business rates to support smaller enterprises. Town centres should be centres of local production, services and care and policies must foster this.
- **Biodiversity, Parks, Carbon:** Intense urban development is worsening biodiversity loss and green space scarcity. Stronger environmental protections are needed including community-led biodiversity monitoring, on site rather than off site biodiversity, address the deficiency of London's open space needs and the prioritisation of retrofitting over demolition to curb carbon emissions.
- **Inclusion, Fairness, Justice:** Planning processes in London often exclude communities and prioritise corporate interests. Just Space demands meaningful public engagement, transparency, and reforms to ensure underrepresented groups have a voice in urban development decisions with co production as a core value.
- **A Healthy, Caring, Local City:** The manifesto stresses the importance of community-led care and health initiatives. Just Space propose food and care hubs on high streets and integrated local services to foster well-being and economic sustainability. Community wealth building through socially progressive use of land and models like the commons. The requirement for meaningful local consultation on the use of CIL and s106 funds.

⁷ [just-space-2024-manifesto-final.pdf](#)

- **Tall Buildings & Density:** High-rise developments have exacerbated housing affordability and environmental concerns. Just Space calls for a moratorium on new tall buildings as mid-rise housing is more efficient and sustainable while providing greater community amenities and the reintroduction of the density matrix.

These proposals aim to create a fair, inclusive, and supportive urban environment where housing and social infrastructure prioritise community wellbeing.

The Just Space network challenges the traditional approach to urban planning as a presumption in favour of market development; instead prioritising social justice, economic fairness, and environmental sustainability. It emphasises grassroots participation and seeks to reclaim planning as a tool for all Londoners, not just powerful developers.

The Fairville Project 2023-2026

Fairville is an international and collaborative research project funded by Horizon Europe (the EU's funding programme for research and innovation) for the period 2023-2026.

The Fairville project aims to address embedded urban inequalities and the challenges they pose to democracy in large cities and urban regions. It will achieve this by supporting co-production in communities and neighbourhoods that face increasing disconnection from the institutions and processes of representative democracy. Findings show that co-production processes give participants a say in their problems and solutions, increased voice, confidence and skills and greater engagement in society and more broadly improved democracy and social outcomes. However, rather than rely on those already disadvantaged to solve their own problems without any fresh resources they should be supported, paid, given advocacy and access to technical and professional input to enable their engagement in processes.

Co-production here is a bottom-up collaboration processes aimed at reinvigorating local democratic engagement among four main types of partners: civil society organisations, academics and researchers, third-party facilitators or advocacy organisations, and local authorities. The co-production dynamics observed in the project, most of which stem from local citizens' actions, aim to respond to urgent needs related to three main challenges: the environment, risks, and access to decent housing. Through these different themes, the project also addresses the issue of respect for citizens' fundamental rights in a context of declining democracy.

The project uses participatory action research and the co-production of knowledge as strategies of spatial justice to address urban inequalities affecting cities, mainly in

Europe but also in Africa. The research project is based on eight Fairville labs, all linked to citizen-led initiatives run by local groups partnering with the project, in eight European and African cities (Athens, Greece; Berlin, Germany; Brussels, Belgium; Calarasi, Romania; Marseille, France; Cairo, Egypt; Dakar, Senegal and London, UK).

The Fairville London Lab is working on supporting street markets in East London, particularly those under threat from gentrification such as Queens Market, Newham, Whitechapel Market, Tower Hamlets and Ridley Road Market in Hackney. On health we are part of the London Health Equity network and working with Equal Care Coop and Clapton Care Commons have piloted and evaluated a care recipient centred care project in Clapton, Hackney.

Co Produce It CIC, Development Planning Unit at UCL, Just Space and our partners make up the London Lab.

Other Institutions that propose and support this approach

The UCLG Global Observatory on Local Democracy and Decentralisation

This is a network of Mayors and Cities from across the world who meet, research and prepare regular papers on relevant approaches to urbanism. Published every three years, GOLD reports are an international reference point for information about local and regional governments, local democracy and decentralisation worldwide.

GOLD VI⁸

The GOLD VI report focused on inequalities in their multiple dimensions and the way governance can help tackle them at the local and regional level. The premise - allowing inequalities to continue to increase is unacceptable. There is much of value in this report but we focus on the concept of commoning which argues that collective practices can find, use, manage and govern resources in a way that resists commodification, exclusion and enclosure.

Chapter 4,⁹ **Commoning** explores the concept of urban and territorial equality through the lens of collective resource management. It argues that local and regional governments (LRGs) can play a crucial role in fostering equity by supporting **commoning practices**—where communities actively participate in governing shared resources rather than relying solely on state or market mechanisms.

1. Understanding Commoning:

⁸ [GOLD VI Report | GOLD](#)

⁹ [211222_uclg-gold-vi_en_report_for_web.pdf](#)

- Commoning refers to community-led efforts to manage land, housing, infrastructure, and services collectively.
 - It is presented as an alternative to privatisation and state control, emphasising shared governance and equitable access.
2. **Social and Political Implications:**
- The chapter highlights that commoning strengthens **social cohesion** and **democratic participation**.
 - It promotes **inclusive urban policies**, allowing marginalised communities to reclaim decision-making power over their environment.
3. **Examples of Commoning Initiatives:**
- Case studies illustrate successful implementation of commoning across different regions.
 - International examples include **community land trusts**, **cooperative housing models**, and **collectively governed urban spaces**.
 - London has seen positive outcomes from small scale pilots in areas such as **community-led housing initiatives** and **cooperative models** such as **Community Land Trusts (CLTs) and Cooperative Housing**: as alternatives to traditional market-driven housing, as well as **Policy Support** via The **London Community Housing Fund** which has been allocated to support community-led housing projects, including CLTs and cooperatives. The **London Community-Led Housing Hub** also provides assistance to groups developing new homes.
 - Despite the positive case studies these are small, localised and there remain considerable **financial and legal barriers** faced by CLTs and cooperative housing models in London, However there is potential for **scaling up** these initiatives with greater policy backing.
4. **Challenges and Policy Recommendations:**

While commoning has transformative potential, obstacles such as **legal barriers**, **financial limitations**, and **political resistance** can hinder its effectiveness. The chapter suggests ways LRGs can support commoning, including

- **Legal Recognition and Institutional Support for Commoning:** Governments should recognise and legally support community-led initiatives such as **community land trusts (CLTs)** and **cooperative housing models**.
- **Financial Mechanisms:** Establish funding programs to assist commoning projects, ensuring they have the resources to sustain and expand their efforts.
- **Policy Integration:** Embed commoning principles into urban planning and governance frameworks to promote **inclusive and participatory decision-making**.

- **Public-Community Partnerships:** Encourage collaboration between local authorities and civil society to co-manage public spaces, housing, and infrastructure Public-Community Partnerships as opposed to Public-Private Partnerships.
- **Scaling Up Successful Models:** Identify and replicate effective commoning practices across different urban contexts to enhance their impact.

These recommendations aim to **strengthen social cohesion, democratise urban governance, and provide alternatives to market-driven urban development**. The chapter argues that commoning is a powerful strategy to address urban inequalities, offering an alternative governance model where **solidarity, participation, and resource-sharing** shape more just and sustainable cities. By **institutionalising** commoning within local governance frameworks, local governments can drive long-term social and economic transformation.

GOLD VII

On its 7th iteration GOLD VII is presented as a multimedia journal¹⁰. A key section ‘Care as aspiration and inspiration’ presents what the concept of care means for the municipalism movement and why caring cities are more just, democratic and sustainable societies.¹¹ The documents explore the concept of care in urban and regional governance, emphasising how local and regional governments are promoting caring cities and territories. High level points include that:

- **Care as a Municipal Movement:** The *We Care* commitment highlights the role of municipalist movements in addressing global challenges and centering care in governance.
- **Defining Care:** Care encompasses relational and reciprocal acts that address inequalities, redistribute care work, and recognise historically marginalised groups.
- **Why We Need Caring Cities:** Caring cities promote justice and equality, democracy, and sustainability by focusing on public service provision, participatory governance, and environmental resilience.

Examples from Cities:

¹⁰ [Care as aspiration and inspiration - GOLD VII – Economies of Equality and Care - United Cities and Local Governments](#)

¹¹ [Conclusion-informe-1a-fase-V3.pdf](#)

- **Justice & Equality:** Initiatives like Bogotá’s *Care Blocks* and São Paulo’s *Tô Legal* program redistribute care work and economic opportunities.
- **Democracy:** Participatory budgeting and local decision-making processes, such as Spain’s *Terrassa’s Water Observatory*, empower communities.
- **Sustainability:** Cities like London and Freetown implement environmental policies, including ultra-low-emission zones and tree planting.

Recommendations for Advancing Care in Governance:

- Mainstream care across policies, budgeting, and planning.
- Support caregivers through benefits and care networks.
- Leverage data and technology to improve service delivery.
- Integrated urban systems for planning care and other services.¹²
- Ensure democratic participation in policymaking.

Caring for nature and the environment

While this is not the main focus of Co Produce It CIC’s work we support much of the very positive work taking place to show how a better approach to caring for nature in spatial terms can address many of the issues we are considering. There is scope for more radical approaches to nature planning in urban areas from

- developing urbanLIFECircles as in Tartu and Aarhus in Denmark¹³
- exploring personhood for our rivers¹⁴
- giving communities responsibility for urban nature¹⁵
- enable green infrastructure led new economies¹⁶

The London Assembly Scrutiny into Social Value

¹²Robalo, M. and Cipriano, P. (No date.). Caring Cities: Calling Local Leaders to the Forefront of Universal Health Coverage Progress. [Online] Available at: <https://uclq.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Caring-Cities-1.pdf>

¹³ [Rethinking urban greenery: A nature-based approach to biodiversity management](#)

¹⁴ [Rights and Rivers: Legislating Towards a Regenerative Culture](#)

¹⁵ [New partnership project will put local communities at the heart of efforts to protect and restore nature across the UK](#)

¹⁶ [How will the transition to net zero affect the UK economy? - Grantham Research Institute on climate change and the environment](#)

The London Assembly itself supports a broader approach to value which encompasses many of these approaches. A recent paper *Social Value in Planning and Regeneration*¹⁷, published by the London Assembly Planning and Regeneration Committee, examines the impact of redevelopment on communities in London. It highlights concerns that regeneration projects often prioritise financial gain over social value, leading to the displacement of long-standing businesses and community spaces.

- Calls for **community voices to be heard** in planning decisions and recommends that the next London Plan include policies to protect long-standing businesses and local markets that contribute to social and cultural well-being.
- **Protection of Markets:** The report recommends that the next **London Plan** should allow communities to designate street markets that contribute social value as protected assets. It argues that policies should prioritise their sustainability and ensure they remain accessible to diverse communities.
- **Support for Displaced Businesses:** It calls for a ‘**right to return**’ policy, ensuring that businesses displaced due to redevelopment—such as those in railway arches—can reclaim their workspace.
- **Toolkit for Local Authorities:** The **Greater London Authority (GLA)** is urged to develop a toolkit to help local councils safeguard and maximise social value in planning decisions and urban development.

ACADEMIC PAPERS PROMOTING THE CARING CITY APPROACH

- The Change_Caring Cities report acknowledges that delivering care is a primarily feminist practice which has been overlooked and underinvested in in many cities. Centering care in a range of policies including spatial policies can support better living, childhoods, aging and address inequality.¹⁸
- *Cities of care*¹⁹ takes as a point of departure a broad definition of care taken from feminist literature:

[care is] a species activity that includes everything that we do to maintain, continue, and repair our world so that we can live in it as well as possible. That world includes our bodies, our selves, and our

¹⁷ [Social value in planning and regeneration | London City Hall](#)

¹⁸ CHANGE (No date.). “Caring Cities, Learning from the Caregivers Sustaining our Communities.

[Online] Available at:

https://www.citieschange.org/content/uploads/2023/09/CHANGE_CaringCities_EnglishReport_Web.pdf

¹⁹ Geography Compass - 2019 - Power - Cities of care A platform for urban geographical care research.pdf

environment, all of which we seek to interweave in a complex, life-sustaining web (Fisher & Tronto, 1990, p. 40).

Whilst recognising the micro-spaces of care it calls for *research that attends to the ways that urban lives and care are practiced, navigated, and negotiated within the urban [that is across the city]*.

It challenges care thinking to go beyond a narrow focus on practices of interpersonal caring within households and sites of professional care; or how care operates through state welfare, social policy, and allied sectors; arguing that care has the potential to be present in all urban spaces and places and that care has transformative potential in these settings. New digital landscapes and buildings, for instance, can be designed with care in mind or perceived by urban inhabitants as caring or lacking in care.

Ultimately it asks, as we do: Why not the caring city? Is it possible that cities might be judged not on how economically competitive they are but on how they best facilitate care for people, planet, animals, and future generations? Drawing on a feminist ethic of care which is about everything we do to “maintain, continue and repair our worlds as well as possible”.

What this approach should mean for London Plan policy

Key proposals include:

Land and housing

- Not selling public land and enabling greater public ownership to land via land value taxation & using existing use value basis for CPO
- refurbishing (not demolishing) housing estates – caring for those existing residents
- bringing empty properties into public control – caring for the homeless
- promoting need centric models and challenging growth-centric models ie not permit more 1 and 2 bed stock of which there is now an oversupply but focus on affordable housing need – caring for those on housing waiting lists
- reconsider definitions of affordable housing – caring for the majority of people who have family incomes below what is needed for owner occupation

- Sites allocated for social and affordable housing development in areas where there is good transport and either existing services and infrastructure or plans for new services and infrastructure to support the new populations.
- Resources for affordable housing treated as an investment in society rather than a growing debt on the public purse in public financial terms.
- Reinvesting local authority temporary accommodation budgets for investment into permanent units that can be offered to households in need
- Increased control on AirBnB type schemes which create supply side shortages

Care infrastructure and services

- integrating care and care infrastructure into spatial planning with care hubs in every neighbourhood as new approaches to care must rely on access to land
- safeguarding community spaces to allow for reintroducing Sure Start type early years facilities, libraries, intergenerational community hubs, and co-produced facilities
- link transport routes to health centres and hospitals so those without cars can rely on public services when they most need

Economic policies

- protecting economic areas where we know workplaces support many jobs but which are not protected in plans in the same way as high streets or the CAZ
- safeguarding industrial areas within the urban centre for services such as car repair, small scale manufacture, reuse and repair centres and blue collar jobs
- protecting and investing in London's street markets and enabling them to thrive as places of affordable, fresh, healthy food and community networking and which serve many ethnic communities with jobs and specialist foods; enabling traders to co-produce management of their own markets
- protecting London's wholesale markets – key to upholding the restaurant economy

- addressing intersecting crises of aging demographics, disability support, and inequality.

Process

- Policies to require residents to co-produce development schemes, order to gain community knowledge and avoid errors which at their worst have led to disasters such as Grenfell
- Higher level of engagement and democracy in the preparation of the London Plan – also advocated by the Planning Inspectorate at the last review.
- An independently assessed Equality Assessment of the proposed London Plan
- New KPIS for assessing what makes a great city based on how well people are cared for, health, low unemployment, universal access to housing and opportunity.

Decarbonisation and a greater focus on sustainable infrastructure

- Investment in public transport and electric charging points
- Proposals to protect, clean and improve the tributaries of the Thames
- Infrastructure to support electric transport prioritised over cycle spaces in appropriate areas - recognising limited take up of cycling (despite infrastructure) especially in schemes in some outer boroughs and support shift to less polluting cars