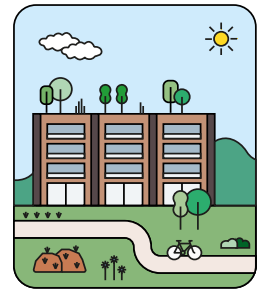


# NLA Expert Panel Whitepaper: Wellbeing



***We have defined wellbeing as follows: If health is the outcome, wellbeing is the means.***

As built environment professionals, we must look beyond treating health (or even preventing health problems) and focus on health creation. We therefore believe that a 'health creating city' should be the overarching vision for London, delivered through a scalable and measurable framework approach (versus detailed standards), and connecting directly to local context.

Our vision is that London should be a global exemplar of a Health-Creating City—a city where the built environment positively promotes and contributes to the health (physical, mental and social) and wellbeing of both people and planet, laying the foundations for a future wellbeing economy.

A plethora of frameworks, guidelines and standards already exists, and we have explored the currently available options through high-level comparative analysis. Despite the growing focus on wellbeing, we found several key issues are being ignored, particularly with respect to the unintended consequences associated with the decarbonisation of our existing building stock. Londoners spend up to 90 per cent of their time indoors; we must therefore prioritise our internal environments.

A holistic wellbeing framework is needed, to allow best practice design criteria to be established, and relevant case studies to be identified and showcased. We have explored the addition of a Built Environment overlay to the GLA's 'London Wellbeing and Sustainability Measure' (an interactive tool for policymakers and all Londoners), due to be launched in Spring 2023. We hope there may be an opportunity to further hone this toolkit (building in the best aspects other standards) to meet the specific needs of the built environment and to identify exemplars from London and beyond.

To translate into real benefit, wellbeing outcomes must be identified early in the design process. These must then be formalised in a charter with specific, meaningful KPIs identified and measured at each stage of a project. Vital aspects, often overlooked, include needs-based approaches, embedding accessibility and mobility, co-design, participatory stakeholder engagement and post-occupancy evaluation. Health inequality is one of the greatest challenges of our time, and any framework for London must address key health problems that Londoners experience, especially within minority and underrepresented groups.

Given the immense and often untapped potential benefits, it is crucial that an approach to placemaking is developed to support wellbeing, with long-term stewardship and ownership of place being key. But whose responsibility is this? The dimensions of health and wellbeing encompass a blend of physical, psychological, and socio-economic factors and within the context of London, at least eight pivotal elements are pertinent:

- ① Social licensing, community agency & community governance
- ② Environment (light / air / thermal / traffic / hygiene etc.)
- ③ Vibrancy
- ④ Active lifestyle and travel
- ⑤ Safety & security
- ⑥ Equality & diversity
- ⑦ Affordability
- ⑧ Access to support

### **Recommendations:**

- Develop a 'Health Creating Framework' for London that ensures the wellbeing of future generations comprising:
  - defined wellbeing pillars for health creation
  - a focus on the built environment
  - measurement through a wellbeing economy lens (criteria to be defined)
  - best practice scalable guidance for the sector.
- Clear ownership and accountability across the GLA, and the appointment of a GLA Built Environment Wellbeing Champion or Deputy Mayor for Health & Wellbeing (to include both buildings and the spaces/places between).
- Improvements to planning submission guidance in relation to Health Impact assessments to address how projects are meeting the 'London Wellbeing and Sustainability Measure', and NLA to introduce a legacy award which looks a project completed over a minimum 2 years ago and can demonstrate positive impacts to Wellbeing through Post Occupancy Evaluation.

## About the Wellbeing Expert Panel

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Understanding the impact of the places we live, work and spend free time on our physical and mental health is important. This Expert Panel shares thought-leadership on the relationship between the urban environment and mental health; physical wellbeing—improving air quality, physical activity and health outcomes for all Londoners; and social sustainability—understanding how the design of the physical environment links with infrastructure to support social and cultural life, social amenities and systems for citizen engagement.

**Chair:** Romy Rawlings, Vestre

Shaun Andrews, Nexus

Diaa Bahopia, Sweco UK

Carrie Behar, Useful Projects

Phil Coffey, Coffey Architects

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