



Executive Summary



ECONOMICS



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**A VISION
FOR OUR
CITIES**

KEY
CITY
UNLOCK
DOTTEN

This report presents a vision for our cities in 2050

The vision has been created to address the major challenges that cities are currently facing – and will continue to face – and, if left unaddressed, pose significant threats to human progress and wellbeing, and to the planet and natural world.

These interlinked challenges are:

I. Climate change

Cities are responsible for the majority of the world's carbon emissions, and are more likely to suffer from the consequences of climate change.

II. Economic and technological change

New industries and new jobs present opportunities, but some skills and sectors become increasingly redundant.

III. Inequity and social justice

Our urban environments are home to significant examples of poverty, deprivation and inequity

IV. Health

The direct causes and consequences of less healthy lives – such as air pollution, depression and loneliness – are more concentrated in cities.

Underpinning our vision to address these challenges is basing cities firmly around the wide needs of people so that we can bring about the changes that are needed. People would no longer be a secondary consideration to infrastructure, buildings or land use, with the conviction that the city's key role is, in a myriad of ways, to foster better health.

A vision for the city in 2050 – Healthy, Attractive, Accessible, Adaptable and For All

Cities are a major influence on the mental, physical and social health of people. To recognise this and the critical importance of health, cities should adopt the “Health First Principle”.

But the Health First Principle can only be supported by a new framework for city transformation – making the urban economy and built environment attractive, accessible, adaptive and resilient and for all.

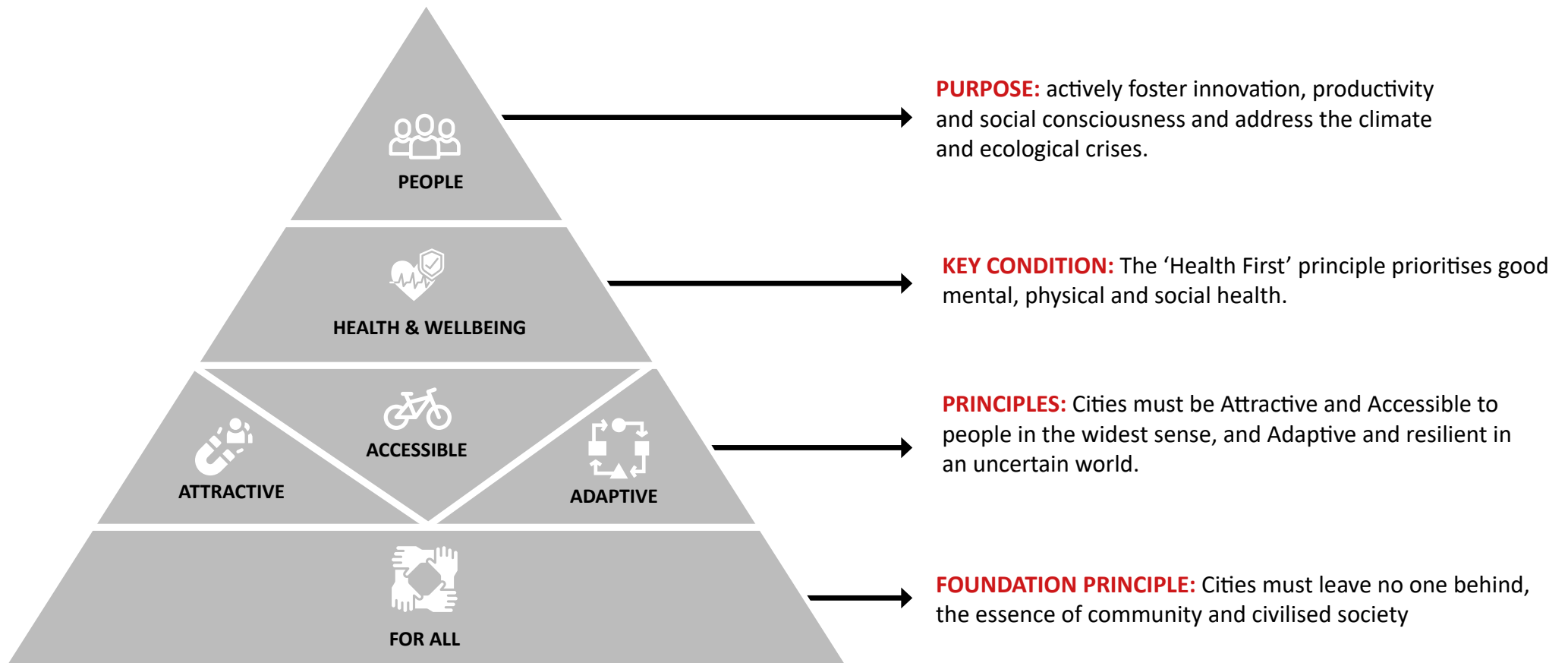
There is a logical sequence to this approach. Cities need to be **attractive** to people by offering economic opportunity alongside a unique cultural and entertainment experience. This necessitates cities to be **accessible**, where efficient travel and availability of services and opportunities can increase wellbeing and productivity. But cities

can never sit still and need to be resilient and **adaptive**, responding to constant economic, social and environmental change. Underpinning all of this is ensuring that cities are **for all**, meaning

that cities leave no one behind and that underrepresented and marginalised groups have as much of a stake in improving the urban economy and built environment as anybody else.

This framework – ultimately focusing on the health needs of all people – is represented in Figure One, below.

Figure One – A framework for the healthy city in 2050



Building the city of 2050 – turning vision into reality

Ideas are required at both local and national level to turn the vision for the city in 2050 into reality.

A list of relevant, but not exhaustive, ideas is set out in Table 1, below. Changes to legislation and / or increased resources may be required to implement some of them, but none seem impossible given what we know today about technological and socioeconomic trends and what works, or is best practice, in terms of city design and governance.



IDEAS TO BUILD THE HEALTHY CITY IN 2050



The city of 2050 should be healthy

A place that supports good mental, physical and social health.

- **Integration of “Health in All Policies”.**

Where policymakers consider the direct and indirect consequences to population health when designing any intervention.

- **A planning system rebuilt on the ‘Health First’ principle.** The creation of a new National Vision and Planning Strategy that requires city authorities to embed everything known about health, both generally and locally in its strategies.



- **Integration of the built environment with nature using urban greening and biophilic design by default.** City planning departments would drive and enable urban greening (i.e. street trees, roof gardens and wetlands) and biophilic design (better connecting people with nature in the built environment).
- **At least 9 sq. metres of green surface area per resident.** Meeting the recommended green surface area for urban residents set by the World Health Organisation would make cities greener and wilder, boosting our natural capital.
- **Zero pollution.** Adopting the latest approaches to clean water, land and air and implementing the “reduce, reuse and recycle” approach to waste.

- **Encouraged physical activity.** With the provision of walking and cycling infrastructure.
- **Zero loneliness.** For example, deploying underutilised public space and having a transport network that encourages social interaction.
- **Community support for resilience to shocks.** Greater social health and community support has proven to be effective to increase resilience to shocks arising from extreme weather events, but also to economic stresses.
- **Communities are free and enabled to implement their own nature-based solutions.** For example, allowing food to be grown in public spaces and space for community gardens.

The city of 2050 should be attractive

A place that people want to work, live and visit, and a place for good and inclusive growth to occur.

- **Every job meets the definition of “quality work”.** All forms of employment have a fair balance of rights and responsibilities, all workers have a baseline of protection and all workers are able to progress.
- **New style Place Frameworks to foster and focus urban industry.** Including attention given to ‘purpose’ at work – with people increasingly looking for employment that is fulfilling.
- **Formal cultural partnerships between influential local bodies.** Bringing together city authorities, business, education providers, cultural and community stakeholders, to co-design and deliver a locally-tailored vision for culture.
- **A diverse and unique leisure and retail offer.** Incorporating independent / experiential retail and leisure, where people can experience exciting new products, services, ideas and opportunities.
- **Localised approaches to target zero crime and zero violence.** Early intervention initiatives aimed at crime prevention, with the promotion of community policing.
- **Anchor institutions committed to local procurement and employment.** With relationships underpinned by fairness, such as paying suppliers on time and quickly.
- **Free lifelong learning provision available to every resident.** Embedding a culture of continuous development, tailored to the local economies of each place.
- **Financial freedoms to encourage investment.** The power to design local tax systems and implement new revenue sources that can be reinvested into local infrastructure.
- **Investment readiness.** To improve access to loans and investment opportunities, trust has to be built among donors, ratings agencies, investors and lenders.
- **Premises to support every business need.** Providing low-cost co-working space for entrepreneurs, as well as providing space suitable for the SME manufacturer.
- **Established innovation ecosystems.** Encouraging social innovation, technological innovation and public sector innovation.
- **Strong business support networks.** Providing advice on tech adoption, accessing international markets, the right finance options and investor options.



The city of 2050 should be accessible

A place where every person and community is sustainably connected, where mobility is fluid with zero regular congestion and where every person has the opportunity of a safe and healthy home.

- **Everywhere in the city region is accessible by everyone within 30-45 minutes, all major needs are accessible within a 15-20 minute neighbourhood area (the 'Proximity City')**. The 30-45 minute city better supports those accessing low paid jobs. The 15-20 minute neighbourhood ensures that all important services and facilities are locally available.
 - **Planned around a polycentric model, where appropriate**. A strong core centre with surrounding neighbourhoods and smaller complimentary centres. The core centre has a special purpose for major uses, gatherings and events, fostering community, belonging and identity.
 - **Built to be organised, compact and dense**. Dense environments facilitate new ideas and innovation, as well as having lower carbon footprints.
 - **Active travel is the prime mode of mobility in neighbourhoods**. For example, by making more provision for storing bikes. Private car use will be more heavily discouraged (whilst acknowledging that for some groups this is the only affordable or feasible form of transport until viable alternatives are in place).
 - **Low-traffic neighbourhoods**. This means traffic calming interventions and neighbourhood hubs to collect packages (rather than home delivery every time to every door).
 - **Encouraged micro-mobility and mobility on demand**. Hire bikes and scooters should be made available at low cost, using existing road infrastructure, facilitating agile journeys.
 - **Repurposed highways and reutilised existing hard infrastructure**. Roadways should be reimagined so as to provide routes for new public / shared movement options.
 - **Zero homelessness and rough sleeping**. Quality affordable housing, relief accommodation aimed at crisis homelessness, and the 'Housing First' model of addressing homelessness.
 - **Housing stock suitable across different generations**. For instance, specially designed housing which is efficient, affordable, and exciting for younger and older people alike.
 - **Good standards achieved across the whole housing stock**. In particular, these standards will have a focus on ensuring that homes are energy efficient and have adequate space.
 - **Local Authority led housing delivery**. Additional government funding and support for councils to deliver on its own land and in partnership with the private sector.
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The city of 2050 should be adaptive and resilient

A place that is highly adaptive and resilient to climate change, to economic and social change and where the public sector, private sector and civil society work together.

- **Rigorous City Resilience Plans.**

Detailing how existing critical infrastructure and vulnerable residents can be protected from extreme weather events.

- **First understand, then act to reduce local emissions.**

With Whole Life Carbon Assessments being key to a full understanding. And enact progressive decarbonisation plans, towards net zero.

- **Adoption of the “retrofit or repurpose before redevelopment” principle.**

This includes proactive plans and funding to bring vacant or underutilised buildings back into viable use, including residential.

- **An embedded circular economy culture.**

Requiring city authorities to apply circular economy criteria to procurement processes.

- **Digital transformation to encourage peer-to-peer / sharing economies.**

The shared product is often vehicles / bikes, houses, but also household items.

- **Digital and social innovation for a smarter city.**

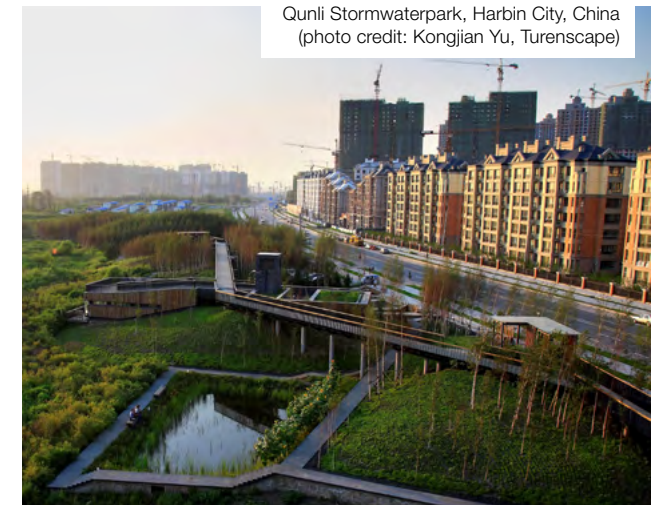
Academic research centres, private R&D and public decision-makers work together to create demand and supply for a smarter city.

- **Smart city policy evaluation methods for tailor-made solutions.**

For a city to be adaptive, a more holistic understanding of what works and what does not is necessary. Digital twinning and other virtual tools to be utilised.

- **Whole systems thinking.**

A working collaboration between public, private and civil societies builds an understanding of the interconnectedness of people and environment.



The city of 2050 should be for all

A place where every citizen is aware and empowered to be an active actor of change.

- **Citizens Assemblies are created and empowered.** Paid roles that mirror very closely a city's socio-demographic makeup.
- **Diversity becomes front and centre in the shaping of the city.** Bringing the full range of people's voices to the table through participatory engagement methods.
- **The creation of an equitable and diverse environment.** Cities need to encourage diversity by embracing all cultures and all walks of life.
- **Devolved powers and devolved budgets.** A city needs to be co-designed and locally – with input from a wide range of stakeholders.
- **Participatory budgeting and participatory design as a key part of city planning / governance.** Participatory Budgeting and Citizens Assemblies should be the normal, and not just a concept that needs explanation.
- **Embed the Marmot Review principles.** The Marmot Review aims to reduce inequality and improve health outcomes for all.
- **Rigorously assess plans and policies to ensure they do not lead to racial and other inequalities and are socially and environmentally just.** It is the outcomes that are central, so they should be monitored carefully and regularly.
- **Apply 'Regenerative' thinking.** From a 'Living Systems Perspective', *"In a social setting, poor 'health' of a neighbourhood... can have knock-on negative effects for the socio-economic and environmental flourishing of the broader region"*.



Key Cities are a united voice representing 25 cities and towns across England and Wales.

We represent the interests of 5.5m people who live in our cities, and the 171,000 businesses who provide jobs.

We have proven our ability to deliver innovative economic and social programmes, and stand ready to work with Government to deliver a strong future for our residents.

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