

Planning and Regeneration Committee – Wednesday 18 October 2023 Transcript of Agenda Item 5 – London and the 15-Minute City

Sakina Sheikh AM (Chair): A warm welcome to the new Deputy Chairman of the Committee, Peter Fortune. It is great to have a full house for the Committee. We have some brilliant guests and experts joining us for today's discussion. We are very grateful, in advance, for your time.

We have Catherine Gall, Executive Director from Chaire Entrepreneuriat Territoire Innovation (ETI), Jonathan Lloyd, Corporate Director of Strategy and Change for the London Borough of Waltham Forest, and Matthew McCartney, Senior Researcher for the Charter Cities Institute. They are joining us here in person. Online, we have Enrica Papa, Associate Professor at the University of Westminster Stephen Passmore as well, Head of Knowledge, Future of London and at 2.15pm, Nicholas Boys Smith, Director of Create Streets will also be joining us online.

I am sure guests are aware that obviously we have a wide-ranging list of questions, and we will be going around and asking you them. We will have a break halfway through.

I will be starting us off. I wanted to give a one or two-line introduction before I got into the meat of the questions, or the tofu of the questions, if you like, about what we were aspiring to do with this investigation, if the Committee will indulge me and allow me to speak on their behalf, although feel free to correct me at any point. We held an investigation in September 2022, and it was all about how people's experience of their neighbourhood and their areas, living in London, had changed during lockdown, and what that meant in terms of their expectations, post-pandemic, of their neighbourhood. How easy was it for them to build communal spaces with their neighbours? How easy was it for them to access local amenities when suddenly they were in lockdown? Did that change the expectations of what they wanted for their area?

It has been percolating in the Committee's minds for a little while, how we might think about the redesign of London post-pandemic. Rather than us being really excited or really cynical about the 15-minute concept, it is more that this is an established planning model, probably the most mainstream one, that seeks to address some of those questions post-pandemic, even though it existed before that. Let us look at it and think about: are there parts of it that work? Are there parts of it that do not work? What could be improved? What should be left behind?

That is the small context I wanted to offer, and I appreciate the Committee indulging me on that. To that end, I will start with a slightly broader question to our guests. Catherine, I will come to you first to answer it if that is all right, and then anyone else can indicate if they are interested. In your view, what type of urban planning policies would be required in order to improve the health and wellbeing of Londoners?

Catherine Gall (Executive Director, Chaire Entrepreneurship Territory Innovation): Thank you for having me and hello, everyone. I think it should start with involving people because it is not a degree to get or a certificate to achieve and it is not a binary discussion to be oriented around 15-minute or not. There are degrees of acceptance of how much and how far you can walk and cycle, because the whole point of this concept, which is a model we have been working on for a number of years -- I am coming in from Paris, we are a research team at La Sorbonne [University], and we have been looking at this, first from a neutral perspective, reviving some of the other concepts that have preceded this one. This one was called "15-minute" because it became viral as a name after the pandemic, because of the lockdown everywhere and people rediscovering or discovering what was around their home. Our lives are so polarised around leaving home in the morning to go

to a place where we work and coming back in the evening, and not being a full, contributing inhabitant of a neighbourhood.

The policy has to start with defining a roadmap and agreeing on what are the things that we really need to access and what are the functions, the services and the spaces that people need. When we say “people” we also have to study which types of people, because there is not a generic approach. It is what I need when I am a mum and I have two young children that I need to transport with a stroller, a cargo bicycle or in my car. It is a different approach when you are older, when you are a senior person, when you are someone with vulnerability in terms of mobility and so on. There is all of this to be mapped out, to be understood.

Certainly, welcoming the idea of looking at walking, cycling and self-mobility as a primary mode of transportation would be great, but when you say that you open the box to, “How do we achieve that? How do you redistribute and recreate nodes of services and also the schools, the jobs and so on?” In terms of policy-making, we have seen that in the city of Paris or other cities we are studying there is certainly not a copy and paste approach. Studying deeply the context and the specific attributes, and enabling people to have a voice, to express the things they need and how it can support their life with diversity and so on, would be one.

Sakina Sheikh AM (Chair): That is fantastic, Catherine. Thank you. Did any of the other panellists want to answer that question specifically, online or in person? Enrica, I see your hand has gone up.

Enrica Papa (Associate Professor, University of Westminster): I just wanted to echo what was said. I would like to go maybe beyond the models, just looking at what people need, basically. Of course, having a planning model might help but it is really what is behind. Again, the social question and community interaction is probably what is beyond the main idea, whatever we want to call it, the “15-minute city” or something different. Just a small comment, not to focus on what it --

Sakina Sheikh AM (Chair): No, I appreciate comments, but obviously we would be grateful if it was a little bit more specifically responding to the question. We are intrigued. If we wanted to improve the health and wellbeing of Londoners, what urban planning policy would be required to do so? If you feel like the 15-minute city does that and we should go further, what aspects of that do you think meet the needs of improving people’s wellbeing and health? Feel free to come in now or later.

Enrica Papa (Associate Professor, University of Westminster): The 15-minute city, there is evidence that it might have an impact on health and wellbeing in terms of improved equality and promotion of active lifestyles and wellbeing. Definitely, the 15-minute city as a general idea that means having accessibility as a goal and mobility as a means proximity as a means, would definitely improve the three things mentioned in the question: health, wellbeing and prosperity.

Sakina Sheikh AM (Chair): Thank you. Matthew?

Matthew McCartney (Senior Researcher, Charter Cities Institute): I very much agree with the urban planner Alain Bertaud on this. I am coming at this from, let us say, a fairly narrow economics angle - that is my background - so forgive me if I dwell less upon health and wellbeing, or define “wellbeing” in fairly narrow terms.

I agree with Alain Bertaud on this, that a good city - London - functions on the basis of two things: affordability and mobility. Mobility can, yes, be about 15 minutes’ walking and cycling. I think there are certain services that are best done within 14 minutes of the home, like a supermarket, a pharmacy, primary

schools and parks, perhaps. More generally, Alain Bertaud thinks of mobility in terms of a commute of up to an hour that constitutes no more than about 15 percent of a household's budget. Now, a survey from 2013, a little bit old, showed that within a 45-minute commute by public transport Londoners can access 54 percent of the city's jobs, which means that mobility is functioning fairly successfully in London. In Nairobi, by contrast, in 45 minutes by public transport inhabitants could access six percent of the city's jobs. There are very big differences in mobility.

Alain Bertaud talked about cities in terms of them being a labour market. Firms need to be able to access a diverse range of employees, consumers need to be able to access retail, and firms need to be able to access their customers and suppliers. There needs to be interaction and learning.

The second of those is affordability. Residents need to be able to live in houses that are close to something of value, to schools or work and firms need to be able to open near customers or suppliers.

A good city works in terms of access and mobility, and sometimes that is about 15 minutes.

Sakina Sheikh AM (Chair): Thank you. I would love to unpack the relationship between health and wellbeing and economic productivity, to be honest, which I am sure we will do. Just to return to the question specifically for any of the other panellists who wanted to contribute, it is: what type of urban planning policies would be required to improve the health and wellbeing of Londoners? Obviously, we will begin to unpack other layers of what is required.

Maybe I will move us on to the second part of this. Catherine, I might bring you back in for this one. Obviously, you spoke about Paris. Have such policies been implemented significantly in any other city and if so, how successful have they been?

Catherine Gall (Executive Director, Chaire Entrepreneurship Territory Innovation): We are seeing a number of other cities. In Paris this is an aspiration, something that has been embraced by the city of Paris for now two mandates. We are in the midst of the second mandate. It has been a journey and it is a journey, it is not something that you create like that, because you need alignment from many stakeholders. You need alignment from the city at city level, mayors and sub-mayors.

Today in Paris the urban planning document [Plan Local d'Urbanisme (PLU)] is labelling the urban proximities. We are not speaking so much about 15 minutes because of the confusion around it being 15 and not 12 or 42. The umbrella is called "urban proximities" and the PLU in Paris has two components: bioclimatic construction and urban proximities.

In terms of examples of policy in Paris - but I can take others - one of the most scalable actions has been to take back the streets leading to schools and to create pedestrianised streets, bringing back nature, certainly slowing down traffic and actually blocking traffic, which means that you allow children to have a different relationship to the city environment. They can walk to school, which is something that happened a long time ago but for many reasons, with density in cities, with the scale of cities, was not so much the case. Not many families take kids on the metro and so on.

School Streets are one of the concepts. I do not have the exact number right now, but it is one of the measures that are being deployed, allowing children to go by themselves and encouraging families not to take a car to drop the children, which means the second segment will probably not be done by car either. There is simply no place to park so you have to organise yourself to walk your kids to school. I was around the school

district yesterday afternoon and with the weather we have right now, people were playing out, all generations, the ones who had been picking up the children, and children were staying because it is nice outdoors.

Air quality is better. To come back to the health question, in terms of physical health of course it is encouraging active mobility: walking, cycling, doing something with your body and not using an electric vehicle or another form of transportation. However, it is also the quality of air; we survey that a lot and if you decrease the amount of cars in any form of transportation, obviously the quality of air is better.

In terms of health policy, mental health and emotional health, which means you know the people around your corner, has been the big discovery after the pandemic. People were basically crossing each other in front of their apartment but never engaging in doing anything. Now you see those communities. It is also part of community development that can take place, so all of those things can be encouraged. School Streets are one of the biggest things.

The second major change in Paris, if you have been there lately, is the number of bicycles and the bicycle paths. I do not think anyone would have imagined taking a bicycle in Paris a few years ago. After Covid, there are several hundred kilometres of bicycle lanes. Taking the train this morning around Gare du Nord I was blown away, at 7am, how many people were cycling in this big boulevard that is super busy, but it is a separated lane. You have to create the infrastructure and people start taking shared bicycles, their own bicycles, whatever.

Those are two of the main, important dimensions of that project in Paris. We see them being replicated in other cities. This name, the School Streets, is now becoming something that has been socialised, and people talk about it as one element that people recognise. Who would not want the next generation to be able to be a walker in the city and not a passenger of a vehicle of any type or sort?

Sakina Sheikh AM (Chair): Thank you, Catherine. Unless anyone wanted to offer specific examples of other cities or areas where this has happened, I might move us on to another question to wrap it in. Jonathan?

Jonathan Lloyd (Corporate Director of Strategy and Change, London Borough of Waltham Forest): From a Waltham Forest perspective, we see it as a way of seeing and a way of working. The starting point of that is ensuring that the concept of 15-minute neighbourhoods is rooted in what residents want and experience. To do that, we worked with the Young Foundation and carried out a deep participatory process with 100 people identifying what they want and need. Effectively, we did not want to just guess or even look at research evidence in predicting what that would lead to. That starting point of legitimacy is really important because we see 15-minute neighbourhoods as a way of seeing and as a way of working. What that leads to will be relevant policy interventions that people need and want.

For example, residents were really clear on telling us, "There are certain things that we do want and need in the neighbourhood but the way I experience my neighbourhood is as important as what I have, so you need to understand if I'm not feeling safe then I'm not accessing the things that are provided. If I don't have a high level of trust or belonging with neighbours, or I'm not confident that this neighbourhood is going to be for me in ten or 20 years' time, then it falls down in terms of the assets that you provide". We developed a framework based on both experience and also the stuff that people need, and that enabled us to see inequalities within the borough and act accordingly. If trust is low or there are certain gaps, then we need to change our approach. The way of working is as important as the interventions for us, and obviously it is rooted in that sense of what is actually happening for people in their neighbourhoods.

Sakina Sheikh AM (Chair): Thank you, Jonathan. I will take a moment to welcome Nicholas Boys Smith, Director of Create Streets who has just joined us online. Nicholas, welcome, thank you for being here.

I am going to move us on to the next question, which is: how has the pandemic changed our understanding of what is needed to improve the health and wellbeing of Londoners through public realm design? That question is to anyone. Maybe I will start with you, Jonathan, because obviously Waltham Forest has had a plan of implementation and as I understand it, the phraseology used to describe the organising of neighbourhoods has changed as well. Has that been in line with post-pandemic changes or has it been with, as you said, that collaboration with local people and seeing a change in how people are responding to the introduction of neighbourhood infrastructure?

Jonathan Lloyd (Corporate Director of Strategy and Change, London Borough of Waltham Forest): The research that we carried out highlighted a few things, some of them post-pandemic, some of them other types of signs of the time. Clearly people are more likely to work at home. Our daytime population has changed. Waltham Forest is a borough with a high percentage of people who commute to central London, and that has reduced significantly. People are more active in their neighbourhoods, they are more keen to pursue active travel measures, and they have always valued green space, but it has become ever more critical to their wellbeing. That is what they are telling us.

In terms of how people engage with their neighbourhoods, we have seen a change. People are shopping locally more. That is great for 15-minute neighbourhoods, but I would argue that when we did the research and when we spent time particularly with people on lower incomes or just struggling a little bit more financially, access to childcare and access to primary health is critical to their wellbeing and health within 15-minute neighbourhoods. We perhaps did not anticipate that before the research, which is great.

The sort of interventions we need to do we need to implement the Fuller [Stocktake] Report [*Next steps for integrating primary care, 2023*] with our health colleagues on a much more neighbourhood/local level and embed how people are experiencing access to primary healthcare. We also need to think about what we can do to support people to create more affordable childcare, whether it is co-operatively or leveraging external suppliers, for example. Those are more surprising things that we would not have anticipated a few years ago, beyond the pandemic.

Sakina Sheikh AM (Chair): Thank you. I do not know if anyone wanted to add anything to that. Stephen, online?

Stephen Passmore (Head of Knowledge, Future of London): Thank you. For those who do not know, Future of London is an independent network of 5,000 people from London who work in the built environment and regeneration, including a large proportion of local government. I wanted to mention that because we did a piece of research throughout the pandemic with those members and those partners that was called Our People, Place & Community [Belonging in Uncertain Times, 2021]. I am very happy to share that with the Committee. That explored the role of neighbourhood design in fostering social ties. We talked about health and wellbeing earlier and one of the definitions that I keep coming back to is the World Health Organization (WHO) definition, which looks at both physical and mental health but also at social health as of real importance. That is something that came through in bucketloads during the pandemic as people began to look out for their neighbours, began to support local businesses more and all of those sorts of things.

Part of our research found that the influences of the quality of our place-based connections can be looked at in three different ways. One of them is the physical design of built environment, the other one is digital connectivity, and finally it is neighbourhood ecosystems. Those neighbourhood ecosystems which we found

can be termed as the interconnected network of services, organisations, businesses and individuals who are active in the community, both formally and informally. That is a really useful definition of how you can create those social ties, tackle things like isolation and loneliness, and support social health, as I would put it.

Sakina Sheikh AM (Chair): Thank you, Stephen. Nicholas, before I bring you in I just wanted to respond slightly to that. That is exactly, for me, the key sense that I have been getting from a lot of Londoners post-pandemic. That certainly came out in the September [2022] investigation that we did. Loneliness, especially in London, is something that I think a lot of people experience, which is odd given how busy the city is and how surrounded we are by people. I am so intrigued as to how the physical infrastructural design of our city and our neighbourhoods either furthers that or lessens it. Certainly, post-pandemic, things like al fresco dining, for instance, even just being able to sit outside and eat, had a huge impact on people's mental health, improving it and giving people spaces to connect. That is really the aspiration of this conversation: does the social health of a community or an individual in London improve if we change the way that we design our neighbourhoods? Nicholas, I will bring you in on this.

Nicholas Boys Smith (Director, Create Streets): Thank you. Your last point there was even wider and more interesting than the first one, but I will come back to your first question and resist the temptation to answer your second. We also did a piece of research. We did a survey of, from memory, about 500 people during lockdown, and I will send that through to officials after the call.

What we found was that yes, we came together during lockdown, that access to greenery was strongly associated with greater neighbourliness, and that what we call in Create Streets 'gentle density', ie, where you get some of the advantages of propinquity but also some of the advantages of personal space and control of your environment, was the most strongly associated with more interaction with neighbours. Over-reliance on cars, or at any rate primary reliance on cars, was associated with less neighbourliness - this is during the lockdown - and there was not a straight line that denser environments were always guaranteeing tighter communities. Actually, people in rural areas had greater levels of social interaction during lockdown, very much to the point you just made.

Those were some of the themes we saw, and I would say what we learnt from that and from observing society more broadly was that it was not that we changed direction during lockdown, but that we learnt more sharply what we had already known: that good fences make for good neighbours, that how you move around matters, and that we both need control of our environment but also the ability to interact easily with our fellow men and women.

Sakina Sheikh AM (Chair): Yes, that would be fascinating. Please feel free to draw on the findings of that survey because I find that fascinating. I think you are right, we did sharpen our learning, especially as the increasing move to working from home means that we spend more time where we live. That comes back to the point that you were making, Matthew, and I did find it fascinating that within 45 minutes you can reach up to 54 percent of the job market, which is fantastic. Similarly, is that as relevant as it was before the pandemic given the move towards working from home, and is the move towards working from home a good one? Should we be adapting to that? Catherine, it sounded like you wanted to respond to that, and then I will move on and pass over to other Committee Members.

Catherine Gall (Executive Director, Chaire Entrepreneurship Territory Innovation): Well, you are lucky if you can work from home because that means you have enough space, you have the technology and all of that. Hybrid work is everywhere for sure. For us, being a culture that did not like it so much before the pandemic because management culture was all about being at work - presenteeism; you had to show up - unlike in other cultures like yours and many others, French culture finally caught up. However, do you know

the size of apartments in Paris? Very much like the ones you have in central London. I am sure you have all kinds of stories and you guys have done it on the research side: some families went mad during lockdown because there were four people in 60 square metres, with everyone online because of school, work and so on.

If there is one that we have to reconsider, it is how you get more space. There is a huge housing crisis everywhere, inside the cities but also in the suburbs and so on. Then people have to have shared space someplace else and be able to have some sort of comfort, but not everyone can be comfortably at home for work or for online learning and so on. We need to reclaim spaces in the streets, and I think we will get there in the second.

Enjoying the outdoors is something that is very difficult in cities, or even opening your windows. I do not know how you do it here, but it is something that people discovered during the lockdown, that you could open a window. You could be sleeping at night in a busy street because there were no cars. That totally changed the game, although we also had a number of citizens leaving the city centres and going to the countryside for social health, mental health, for better quality of air, nature and so on. There are the parklets, the fact that restaurants can have terraces on the streets, the fact that you can walk on sideways) in the street and not be in the traffic and so on, as well as meeting people, because if you leave your home you can enjoy doing other things with other people. Then developing community work, placemaking. I think it is what we have been talking about: to feel a sense of belonging someplace, a member of a neighbourhood and a community.

Sakina Sheikh AM (Chair): Thank you. I think it is absolutely right to draw attention to the fact that perhaps some of the principles of working from home, which underpin the idea that we might orientate towards being more focused on our neighbourhood, are not inclusive of the wider socioeconomic spectrum in terms of affordability and the space that you have in your home, but also the work that you do in terms of industries, and the types of workforce that are not able to work from home based on the kind of work that they do. This is basically what we want to begin to unpack.

I am going to move us on to my final question before I hand over to Assembly Member Baker. Now that we have the lay of the land this is a little bit more broad, about post-pandemic learning and how we redesign our areas and neighbourhoods if we were to move specifically to the 15-minute city as a model to learn from or to move away from. Catherine and Enrica might be best placed to do this, but I would welcome and open it to everyone. Can you tell us how the 15-minute city concept developed and what its core principles are?

Catherine Gall (Executive Director, Chaire Entrepreneurship Territory Innovation): It has been there. It has always been there. It is a very old concept. It is simply in the air, because in our group Carlos Moreno [Associate Professor, La Sorbonne and Co-Founder of Chaire Entrepreneurship Territory Innovation] has been looking at this topic for a long time. It has been an inspiration for him, being an expert in cities and also wellbeing and the notion of liveability in cities. The truth is - you referenced one researcher, and Jane Jacobs [urbanist and writer] certainly talked many years ago about that - that many other experts and urban designers in different countries, in different places, at different points in time, talked about "to live well and to enjoy a city", Jan Gehl [architect and urban designer], for example. We met him this summer and it is what he has done in Copenhagen.

The reason it is back in the forefront, maybe, and it is better considered, is because now there is also climate change, the energy crisis, pollution and the place of the car in cities. However, at heart it is simply about not growing cities by expanding further away the services and the jobs and so on, and developing more of a network - it has been mentioned - and an ecosystem. It is about polycentrism. When you ask people they tell you, "I need to have access and it would be nice if I could access some key element", which in our group we structure into six families of services and equipment: your home and everything related to housing, where you

work and your workplace needs, education, health, consumption, and culture and enjoyment. Basically, you can structure everything we do in a day or in a week and the equipment that we use around those six families.

That is the ontology, to map out at a neighbourhood level or at the city-scale level where the services are, again going back to the different personae, the different social profiles. Who needs what to make sure that you get inclusion? The idea is not to create a university campus and so on, where you only have the students and possibly their teachers away from the rest. This concept should open up to inclusion, diversity and a social mix, and also a mix of functions, a mix of uses. A building should be a place where you can have work areas and coworking spaces but also apartments, shopping activities and everything else. It is how we look at it.

We have been working with many cities. Paris has been the first one, which is why we have been able to test a lot of things with our colleagues from the city of Paris, but today it is Munich, Barcelona, Madrid, Bucharest, Milan, London maybe, and Buenos Aires. Cities are looking at it because it speaks to citizens as well. They get it. In fact, we receive every week so many requests from students and from teachers to help, because they want to do their Master's thesis or their Doctor of Philosophy thesis on "walkability in my city".

Carlos [Moreno] was in Poland last week and he gave a lecture, and at the end of the lecture they all wanted to focus on making the city a better place to live because people can be walking, cycling, being outdoors and enjoying being part of a dynamic.

Sakina Sheikh AM (Chair): Thank you for that, Catherine. Nicholas, you have your hand up. Is that to indicate you wanted to come in?

Nicholas Boys Smith (Director, Create Streets): I agree with everything which was said, very powerfully and eloquently. I would just add two quick points almost on the history here; I am a historian by background. Until about 120 years ago we all had to live in 15-minute cities or 15-minute towns because it was the only option available. Then, for understandable reasons, about 100 years ago, we invented these things called motor cars and we - by which I do not mean just the British but the French, the Americans, the Dutch, everyone - sort of got confused and assumed that because cars are brilliant at giving individual liberty to move around the countryside, the suburbs and out around the whole country, that therefore it was necessary and right to also make it very easy to move around in cars very quickly in the middle of our city centres.

What we now know unimpeachably - and I will come to the evidence in a moment - is that the externalities of cars in denser places are very damaging not just to air quality but to social connections, to safety, to moving about, and to value and prosperity. You can see that very clearly in the data. It is very clear, interestingly, that I think all of the five least prosperous neighbourhoods in the UK are ones that have fast dual carriageways running through them or alongside them. The brilliant 15-minute city concept is a repackaging of a historic idea, and that is no discredit to it because it is a brilliant repackaging. Something we have always known but forgot for 100 years I think we are now rediscovering, across left and right, north and south, east and west, which is that the downsides of cars and very fast movement in town centres are greater than their upside in other places.

Just a final quick point. You sometimes get into an argument about, "Good design is subjective". That is just not true. There are very discoverable relationships between how we move about, density, urban form, patterns of building, and value, equity, prosperity, health and physical wellbeing. I think what the 15-minute city brilliantly does is encapsulate those in a concept that people can rapidly get their heads around. It is a brilliant packaging of an age-old concept.

Sakina Sheikh AM (Chair): Thank you, Nicholas. We have Enrica and then I am going to bring Assembly Member Best in for a supplementary. Enrica, you finish on the point.

Enrica Papa (Associate Professor, University of Westminster): Thank you. I agree, this is an old concept that goes back to the garden city and then the neighbourhood unit, polycentric city, town geography, even transit-oriented development. I think what has changed, basically, is the necessity of looking back at those ideas with a new lens. As was said before, there is the environmental crisis and, again, the social crisis.

The post-pandemic city that we want should be based on the idea of communities. The model that we want to put in place, which is different from these ideas in the past, is - as was said before - this social component. From self-contained individualism and social isolation during the pandemic, into a community. What urban planners can do, of course, is to look at the localisation, bringing services and activities close to citizens, but together with this is the essential other form to create communities, which is inclusion, socialisation and really focusing on these social aspects of taking care of the common space and the neighbourhood.

Sakina Sheikh AM (Chair): Thank you, Enrica. I am going to bring in Assembly Member Best and then I am going to hand over to Assembly Member Baker for the next set of questions.

Emma Best AM: Thank you. The words I am hearing are busy streets where you cannot open your window because of noise and pollution, cities like Paris and Buenos Aires, density. What does a 15-minute city look like in a more rural setting?

Catherine Gall (Executive Director, Chaire Entrepreneurship Territory Innovation): There is a sister concept, the 30-minute territory. We are also working with rural areas or with less dense areas. It is the same, with the exception of the availability or not of public transportation. We do exactly the same thing: we map out the infrastructure and the equipment, we talk to the people, we have developed workshop resources for them to share with us their daily and weekly experience, and then this helps substantiate the need to rethink public infrastructure so there is some sort of a transport bit, small vans on demand, because you are identifying a community that needs to go someplace and you are strengthening the community. That concept of acceptable, reasonable access to the main activities you need within a reasonable amount of distance is applicable as well, simply the distance will be different and there is a strong reliance on public transportation.

Emma Best AM: Thank you. Do you recognise that the sister 30-minute concept applies in London?

Catherine Gall (Executive Director, Chaire Entrepreneurship Territory Innovation): London is not a rural area, obviously.

Emma Best AM: Really? There are a few places we could go visiting.

Catherine Gall (Executive Director, Chaire Entrepreneurship Territory Innovation): OK.

Emma Best AM: Just to bring on that concept, I actually live in Jonathan's [Lloyd] area in Waltham Forest. You cannot exit Waltham Forest via public transport. You can barely exit Waltham Forest using a pavement.

Catherine Gall (Executive Director, Chaire Entrepreneurship Territory Innovation): Sure.

Emma Best AM: You will see a lot of sheep. That is the vibe we are talking about, and that is London.

Catherine Gall (Executive Director, Chaire Entrepreneurship Territory Innovation): Sure, but then the question is: why do you need to exit it? Where? What do you need to do to limit that, restrict that, or change the patterns or commute?

Emma Best AM: Jobs, the economy, school, shops, local produce.

Catherine Gall (Executive Director, Chaire Entrepreneurship Territory Innovation): That is the heart of the model. The model is an integrated model --

Emma Best AM: Friends, family. The reason that people want to get out of London. That is why they live on the edge of London.

Catherine Gall (Executive Director, Chaire Entrepreneurship Territory Innovation): There is a difference between the routine and that we like to leave on weekends and stuff like that. On an everyday basis, the idea would be that you create enough of a strong ecosystem that you can navigate with it, or you do not have to be on a long commute at the same time everybody else is because maybe you can have flexible hours. It is one framework.

Emma Best AM: If I start off in the middle of London, my 15-minute neighbourhood is really big, and it is really good. Then we get condensed and condensed to the edges of London, if we are not understanding that there is a difference.

Catherine Gall (Executive Director, Chaire Entrepreneurship Territory Innovation): We would need to look at a map. Do not be focused on the 15-minute side. It is really: what are the needs you have? What are the three or four things you really need to do? Let us look at where the amenities are, and then let us look at what else we can change or redistribute.

Emma Best AM: That is why I was really interested in the 30-minute concept, because I did not want to focus on 15. Thank you.

Sakina Sheikh AM (Chair): Thank you, Assembly Member Best. I am going to hand over to Assembly Member Baker but was that an indication I saw, Assembly Member Fortune?

Peter Fortune AM (Deputy Chairman): No. I will show you a map of Bromley afterwards.

Sakina Sheikh AM (Chair): We are going to have a long break time.

Peter Fortune AM (Deputy Chairman): One of our wards is bigger than Islington.

Sakina Sheikh AM (Chair): Assembly Member Baker.

Elly Baker AM: Thanks, Chair. I would really like to pick up on some of that in a moment, about what "15-minute city" means to London in different areas, but I have a bit of a follow-up question on some of these areas to Enrica about these principles and what it means. Have you conducted any research into the effectiveness of the 15-minute city concept in improving environmental sustainability and quality of life?

Enrica Papa (Associate Professor, University of Westminster): We are currently doing a project mapping a 15-minute city and it is all about collecting examples, predominantly in Europe, of cities that put in practice measures or a combination of measures to achieve some specific goals that are similar to those of the

15-minute city mentioned before. We are collecting that evidence in different areas of how this has had an impact, for example, as was mentioned, Paris and, I think, Copenhagen before.

We have - and I am happy to share this with the Committee - a collection of cases in which, for example, there is an increase of cycling mode share, an increase in sense of community, or a decrease in housing-related financial barriers, an increase in mixing, or a decrease in respiratory health issues. There are a set of indicators that we are looking at and they are related to some of the policies put in practice. It is usually, again, looking at the practicalities of that. It is usually a combination of policies, like air quality initiatives plus health equity, and then of course they are measured in a set of indicators.

Elly Baker AM: I think we would be really interested in seeing that information. Just briefly, because I think we will go on to ask this more specifically about some of the European comparisons, you keep referring to measures that are being taken and policies that are being impacted. Could you briefly tell us what sort of things those are? I have heard about School Streets, which we are very familiar with here. I have heard about some cycling, cycle lanes and stuff like that. What other measures are you talking about in terms of embedding 15-minute cities?

Enrica Papa (Associate Professor, University of Westminster): Basically, in our work we organise them into four main areas. Some of them are strictly related to sustainable urban mobility, basically prioritise, active mobility and recognise public spaces, or providing access to sustainable mobility options including public transport in some cases - depending on the size of the city, of course - and integrating new technology. Another big set of policies regards planning urban spaces. It is about mixed-use zoning, walkable neighbourhoods and inclusive development, more from the urban planning side.

Elly Baker AM: Can I ask you just to be even less academic about what you are talking about? Really briefly, tell me what these things are that are being done.

Enrica Papa (Associate Professor, University of Westminster): For example, in the case of sustainable urban mobility, closing streets to traffic to create a shared space or integrating biking with public transport tickets. It is providing options and different access to sustainable mobility modes. I do not know if it is enough --

Elly Baker AM: No, that is fine, I just wanted to try and work out whether I am missing something. Apologies for pushing you to speak as basically as possible to me.

Enrica Papa (Associate Professor, University of Westminster): I am sorry about that. In regard to the urban spaces, again it is a focus on the quality of public spaces, the way in which they are designed and the process in which they are designed, including people in the decision of how they want it. A lot of the time it is also experimenting, what they call Streets Experiments, which are like trials, a temporary change of street use with the help of communities.

Other examples are related to logistics, optimising logistics and reducing the emissions of the supply chain, such as creation of a distribution centre in some central areas or at the boundary of the areas where traffic is limited. Then the fourth aspect is all about urban governance and stakeholder collaboration, including a consultancy process and community involvement in the decision-making process.

We define a 15-minute city as what all these four together cover, in a way. From our study, we believe that to have a 15-minute city you have to have the four of them together. It is important to combine planning and

mobility, but also governance and logistics. It is the combination of the four, in a way. Then we are trying to measure the combined effect as well.

Elly Baker AM: Thanks very much. This question is to the whole panel, and it is picking up on the specifics. Some of what I hear I think is perfectly understandable to an ordinary Londoner because of course you want your shops and services within a reasonable distance. That is not something that anyone would disagree with, surely. Some of that is a bit more difficult, however. However, a lot of that we already have, so to what extent is London already a 15-minute city in terms of shops and services? Are there any specific communities where the majority of residents already live within 15 minutes of appropriate amenities and services?

Jonathan Lloyd (Corporate Director of Strategy and Change, London Borough of Waltham Forest):

We have an insight tool that maps the qualities and inequality of the 15-minute neighbourhood within Waltham Forest, and there are obviously large areas where the things that people have said they need are relatively strong. It is the experience that is where the greatest inequality is, and around affordability. Those are the two fractures through what makes a great 15-minute neighbourhood. People are not confident that their neighbourhood is for them in the future, or if they are feeling unsafe for whatever reason then it effectively hamstring completely the assets that are available.

Elly Baker AM: Sorry, you are going to have to explain this basically to me again. What services and why can people not get to them?

Jonathan Lloyd (Corporate Director of Strategy and Change, London Borough of Waltham Forest):

You can map your assets and say that people are within 15-minute neighbourhoods, and that is important, and we stay on top of that, but people will tell us that they are less likely to access some of those services, for example shops in the evening, because sometimes they do not feel as safe as they could do. Understanding how people are feeling in their neighbourhood is as important as the stuff that is available.

Elly Baker AM: That adds a whole different layer on too; it is not actually whether they are 15 minutes away. It feels like this is a vast majority of local government, to be perfectly honest, that you are lumping into 15-minute cities at different times depending on what you want to talk about.

Jonathan Lloyd (Corporate Director of Strategy and Change, London Borough of Waltham Forest):

It is so we can understand the inequality of experience and act accordingly. More recently, the affordability of food and access to food has been more relevant in recent 15-minute neighbourhoods, including our own.

Elly Baker AM: Thanks.

Matthew McCartney (Senior Researcher, Charter Cities Institute): I think there is a danger in thinking that the 15-minute city is just a policy choice or a consequence of policy. One reason why this is a live debate in Europe is that European cities were largely constructed before the car, so you have a town centre and you have dense housing, and in London you have a collection of small towns or villages with high streets that have coalesced into a single city. In some senses the 15-minute city, as maybe you suggested, is an inheritance from urban planning in the past, and we could compare that with the low-density sprawled cities like San Diego, Houston and so on, which function in their way quite successfully but are never really going to be amenable to 15-minute concepts.

I slightly take issue with the assumption that a car is necessarily bad. Silicon Valley is probably the most dynamic urban area, winging it a bit here, in the last hundred years, but it was based around a car economy. In

rural England, when we talk about 15 minutes, perhaps for many people that should be 15 minutes by car. Those are the practicalities of a 15-minute life in a rural area.

There is also an element of culture here, that some cultures - I am thinking of the United States (US) are very attached to the car as a symbol of personal freedom, anti-petrol taxes, and the more collectivist mentality people, high-income people who do not mind sitting on a bus in the morning, for whom it is a more normal activity, are more amenable to the 15-minute concept. This is not just about policy and planning; it is also the historical legacy of planning we have. Maybe this a European difference from America.

Elly Baker AM: Yes. There is a lot there. I am finding it difficult to know which way to go with all this questioning because it is like nailing jelly to the wall, understanding what is part of this and what is not part of this. Everyone seems to have a slightly different interpretation of it.

The question out to the rest of the panel: to what extent is London already a 15-minute city, and are there communities where the majority of residents live within 15 minutes of the appropriate amenities and services?

Stephen Passmore (Head of Knowledge, Future of London): We have a report [Is London already a 15-minute city, 2022] that came out about a year ago where Monika Jain [Transport for London (TfL)] and Shivani Bhatnagar [TfL] explored the implications and limitations of the 15-minute city concept in London, using the London Travel Demand Survey. Their conclusions were looking at the data - this is pre-pandemic so obviously things have changed a little bit, working patterns and so on - and they concluded that pre-pandemic London was already, by and large, a 15-minute city for many purposes, except for work and, to a certain extent, leisure activities.

They looked at why people need to travel in their day-to-day lives, things like going to take children to school, going to open space, going to the pharmacy or your local GP and, as has already been mentioned, going to get food, going to get groceries or to shops, cafes, restaurants and so on. All of those categories, they found, were by and large within 15 minutes of the majority of Londoners. I am happy, again, to share this with the Committee.

Elly Baker AM: That would be really helpful, thank you. Nicholas, did you want to come in?

Nicholas Boys Smith (Director, Create Streets): Yes, just very quickly. I sense your frustration. I was going to half say what Stephen Passmore has just said, which is that most will be, and it will be less so as you get further out, but you probably already knew that.

If the concept is unhelpful to you, what I would suggest is almost to change the question. What is the way in which we can manage our streets and public spaces in our planning policy to maximise prosperity and wellbeing? The wider evidence suggests not what was just said, that cars are always bad. It does not say that. But what it says is that as you get into denser areas - lots of London historically is that, and quite a lot of the villages around which London grew; less so some of the suburbs between them - with more people living in them, if you can create or steward places to be easier places to get around multimodally - sorry, that is jargon; walking if it is most helpful, cycling or jumping in a car if that is most helpful - then that is associated with more jobs, more prosperity, knowing more of your neighbours and leading more purposeful lives.

If a 15-minute city does not help you think about what London should do to itself, change the question into that. Then you get slightly different answers in, say, Waltham Forest, Westminster, Ealing or Epping. It can be broadly a function of how good the public transport is and how dense the housing is. I hope that is a little bit helpful.

Elly Baker AM: Thanks. I deliberately did not speak about work earlier on but work, as I understand it, is part of the things that you should be able to access within 15 minutes, which seems - well, it is inappropriate in all sorts of places, but we are here to talk about London - particularly inappropriate for large swathes of people in London who have no choice about where their work is, working in transport, infrastructure, construction and all sorts of things like that. Talking about some of this rising to prominence after the pandemic, where the inequalities between those who could stay at home to work and those who could not were so stark, how is this so not acknowledged by what we are talking about, that so many people are not going to be?

Also - and this is a slightly different question - London's communities are not always about who you live next to; they are about a whole swathe of things, and some of that involves things that are further away than 15 minutes. There are reasons that a lot of people live in London. Why are these things, in the specificities in the economic and the social aspects, just not acknowledged in any of this discussion? Sorry, I do not know why I looked at --

Sakina Sheikh AM (Chair): I am just wondering who is brave enough to answer that.

Enrica Papa (Associate Professor, University of Westminster): I think it is a bit related. About, "Is London as a 15-minute city?" I see it, as other panellists said, as really a collection of small 15-minute neighbourhoods. If you look at Google Maps, the old villages, the yellow ones on Google Maps, can be defined from a functional point of view as a 15-minute city. All the rest, all of the grey area in Google Maps and especially the outer boroughs, are really hard to define or even to try to form as what we have in mind as a 15-minute city. It is crucial to look at the inequalities that are faced and also how these types of measures should be different according to the special geographical dimension.

Elly Baker AM: Thanks.

Catherine Gall (Executive Director, Chaire Entrepreneurship Territory Innovation): I think I mentioned earlier on that not everyone can be entirely working from home. That included the people as well who cannot work away from their workplace at all. However, again, the question is not, "How do you make everybody fit within this framework?" The question is really, "How do you create an environment?" That requires that people need to change their behaviours and sometimes even their jobs, but they do not have to comply with the model. The model is not something to achieve or to live within, like you are in or out. It is an approach; it is a philosophical approach. There are elements to it, there are things you can do, but you cannot over-impose this and certainly no one is saying to someone to change homes, change jobs and so on.

You cannot look at this and call it the 15-minute concept. I have almost never mentioned that when I spoke. It is the notion of proximities more than any time, dimension and duration of transportation, and it is really starting from the model of looking at, "Am I happy if I commute two hours?" which many of us do as well in other cities in the world. "Is this the life I want? If I could do something different, would this be possible?" This is the bigger question. Planning policies and planning regulations are not going to help that. It is really a question that goes back to: how do we create those aspirations and those visions for life?

Elly Baker AM: Well, I suppose the question is: is this a helpful concept then, if it excludes so many people's experiences? Is this why this is difficult? Maybe this is why I am struggling with what feels like a very abstract and academic concept, whereas the basics of, "Yes, we should have nice high streets, yes, walking routes should be good, yes, people should be able to cycle if they wish and take public transport" -- how is it translating it into an all-encompassing concept? I know you are saying it is not but that is not what I am hearing.

Catherine Gall (Executive Director, Chaire Entrepreneurship Territory Innovation): No, I understand your point.

Elly Baker AM: Is it not actually completely unhelpful and we should just concentrate on the constituent parts that people would back?

Catherine Gall (Executive Director, Chaire Entrepreneurship Territory Innovation): It is part of it. It is a different vision for living in cities. I do not know, my English is probably not helping but you are not going to convert London because we are not converting Paris either, or we are not converting Munich in anything. I am very humble, I have no clue which parts of London it would be so I am really sorry for my ignorance in that matter, but I can speak for the other cities I know best. Right now, except for Copenhagen and a few others have been on that path for 20 years and the first streets in Copenhagen were closed to cars because of what was said before. The municipality, the size of the city and the philosophy of the Danes allowed this to happen and that means people grew up with this vision that they have local jobs they can do, and they do not have to commute far out. However, it is the size of Copenhagen, which is not exactly the size of London.

For me, the question is not whether London should be a 15-minute city, whether it has to be or whether you should not ever consider it. The London question is: what kind of city and future city do you want? You have experts on the panel. This is one approach, and it is an integrative approach. It is not an academic approach; it is quite a practical approach. To implement it and to develop it in London would require a roadmap and it would require that we do not start with the places that are the most difficult and where people do not have choices. When you are in that cycle and because it is an integrated approach, you need to deconstruct a lot of things. You cannot deconstruct buildings, roads and so on, but you can certainly start offering some services and start moving things away, so people choose to live differently. It is really down to that.

It is not something to consider or not to consider. It is a framework for urban design, but it does not need to apply everywhere and there are many other approaches that have different sets of priorities. The priority may be around safety and security where you have to be able to go out and enjoy the streets. It may be about local jobs, so people do not need to own a car. It may be about breaking the symbol that you have made it in life when you have a car, or maybe to have made it in life means something else. All of those are very complicated questions that require many alignments among many stakeholders.

Elly Baker AM: Thank you, Catherine. I did not mean to try to get you to answer detailed questions on London, and can I assure you that your English is fantastic and approximately a million times better than my French? Back to you, Chair.

Sakina Sheikh AM (Chair): Thank you, Assembly Member Baker. Assembly Member Best.

Emma Best AM: Thank you. Catherine, as Assembly Member Baker has asked the question, maybe you can help as well with what I struggle with about the concept. For example, if we look at central London - someone might have to correct me - already 70 percent of households do not own a car and I do not think that whole thing about having a car to make it exists. Then you go to inner London, and it is something closer to 50 percent and then in outer London I think it is somewhere like 70 percent. To me, it naturally follows good availability of public transport. I know there are other things thrown in the mix around better air quality, better jobs and better public services, but that is just going to follow urban density and urban density is naturally going to bring with it better public transport, right?

Catherine Gall (Executive Director, Chaire Entrepreneurship Territory Innovation): Yes.

Emma Best AM: I genuinely try to follow what that natural concept is of urban intensification, which differs from a 15-minute neighbourhood, because in order to have all those things we know how you have those things naturally. It is through intensification of development and then those things come with it. Does the 15-minute neighbourhood say we will have those things without urban intensification and, if so, how is that possible without urban intensification?

Catherine Gall (Executive Director, Chaire Entrepreneurship Territory Innovation): Again, if I can leave you with one idea here today it is to forget the 15 minutes, really, and think about whether it is desirable to be living in those neighbourhoods you are talking about. Are people happy? Do they want to stay? At some point in time, do they have a change in their lifecycle and children or grandchildren, and do they need more? That is the key question. It is really not the measurement of 15-minute two blocks, four blocks, five blocks, really. Again, the better question is: how do you make London a desirable set of villages, neighbourhoods, districts, boroughs, you name it, where people can enjoy doing what they do? Visiting public spaces, there is only one cathedral, St Paul's, so people will be closer or very far away from it, the same way I am far from Le Louvre in Paris.

As a vision/as an aspiration, I would love to be able to say, "I can do most things I need to do, without being dependent on a car, even without being dependent on public transportation", and that is what most people would like to do as well. This is not the way we have created our neighbourhoods because there were other priorities, which were totally understandable, centralisation and so on. Now we are trying to undo a bit of that because we see the rising cost of other things - energy and transportation - air quality, air pollution and also exclusion, simply exclusion. This is what is packed into that concept, so do not look at where things are and how far away from them they are located. That is really less important than the rest.

Emma Best AM: I could not help think when you said that thing about "Are people happy?" the thing I hear over and over again in areas like mine is when you hear things like "15-minute neighbourhoods" the reaction is, "Just leave us alone". I do not know if that is something you get as well, but people do not like the changes.

Anyway, on that note I will move to Jonathan. What policies or initiatives have been implemented in Waltham Forest to promote the 15-minute city concept and what have been the initial results or challenges?

Jonathan Lloyd (Corporate Director of Strategy and Change, London Borough of Waltham Forest): Most historically, it would be the Mini-Holland and Enjoy Waltham Forest policies. That is, if I remember, 22 kilometres of accessible cycle lanes and improvements to pavements and public spaces as well to promote active travel. A 2018 study saw life expectancy improvements for the next generation of children, 51,000 residents experiencing significant improvements in clear air and 25 percent improvements in clean air overall through the borough. Those active travel measures were the vanguard of us thinking about 15-minute neighbourhoods more broadly. The framework itself is a way of looking at success, but we are in the early stages of that effectively.

Emma Best AM: Thanks. There has been some opposition to things like Mini-Hollands and low-traffic neighbourhoods (LTNs). When I look at the reaction in the south of the borough compared to places like Tower Hamlets and Islington, there has been a really negative and large reaction in those boroughs, which has not occurred in the south of Waltham Forest. What do you think is the difference in implementation? Like I say, there is some opposition, but largely those measures have been received positively compared to other boroughs, which are very similar demographics and close to 15-minute neighbourhoods, but they have seen a very different reaction.

Jonathan Lloyd (Corporate Director of Strategy and Change, London Borough of Waltham Forest):

It is incredibly diverse with different perceptions and different reactions of, let us call them, active travel-type changes or actions. Some of it is levels of trust, some of it is the already existing level of car ownership and some of it is the scale of change. It is honestly hard to say. I would say in Waltham Forest - and you may disagree with this - that the resistance, for want of a better word, to these types of measures associated with Mini-Holland and Enjoy Waltham Forest has reduced because of positive examples of their implementation. That might not be the case for other areas of London post-pandemic.

Emma Best AM: I do not think I did disagree. I agreed when I said that.

Jonathan Lloyd (Corporate Director of Strategy and Change, London Borough of Waltham Forest):

I am sorry. I misunderstood.

Emma Best AM: You could tell that it was warmly received. The issue is in other boroughs, which are quite widely similar in terms of road connections and public transport and have not had that same experience. One of the big complications though with things like, as we talked about earlier, School Streets is that is one of the key pins of that. The fact that you cannot have a School Street without a controlled parking zone (CPZ) is stopping areas which are not so densely populated from exploring the option. How do we go forward with that?

Jonathan Lloyd (Corporate Director of Strategy and Change, London Borough of Waltham Forest):

It is the technology that sits behind it and the cost of the administration of that. It would be a trade-off between whether or not it could be implemented without the existing technology and process with a CPZ or not. It is a financial decision rather than an administrative one.

Emma Best AM: When we are talking about the difference in London and difference in areas, perhaps some of these policies have to move and if they want to fit other areas of London, there is going to have to be a shift in how they are delivered. I do not know if that is a point you would agree on.

Jonathan Lloyd (Corporate Director of Strategy and Change, London Borough of Waltham Forest):

Yes, it is a point I very much agree on. There are a few things around 15-minute neighbourhoods and the work point is really relevant. Residents in Waltham Forest told us they do not expect to work locally, and, in fact, they just want access to great public transport. That is how we have built the model and that is the way London works.

There is also a hard rule of drawing borders around people's neighbourhoods, which is problematic to people. Practically, people live near those borders and it not a 15-minute neighbourhood, but also that is not how people view their neighbourhood. It is much more dynamic, and it is a way of having conversations with them. Let us pick north of Waltham Forest, for example. People's priorities and experience will fundamentally be different to other people in the borough and there are some things that people have told us that are absolutely important. Active travel is important and access to key services is important, but we use that as a starting point for conversations around prioritising and improving key aspects of 15-minute neighbourhoods that are most relevant to them.

Nicholas Boys Smith (Director, Create Streets): I cannot speak for Waltham Forest and Jonathan will be delighted to know I am not going to. Just quickly if it is helpful, the advice that we, Create Streets, tend to give to councils or to people working in neighbourhoods in trying to make their places better and probably in a direction that goes with some of this conversation is, first of all - and I am sure no one on the panel does this -

do not demonise people who drive cars. That is (a) dumb, (b) stupid and impolite. People who are demonised are going to resist change and quite rightly so. People in much of the country and much of London need to use cars as things are currently constituted. That is point one. Sometimes, that is forgotten, and it needs saying.

Secondly and perhaps more profoundly, find gradualist win-win processes for improving places with the consent and, wherever possible, with the active leadership of local neighbourhoods, making it easier to walk or cycle and move around, rather than making it harder to drive. Start with the win-wins. That might be planting street trees. It might be creating what are called Copenhagen crossings, which is a way of having continuous pavements alongside roads, so the pavement is more prevalent than the side road. Pedestrianise or part-pedestrianise high streets or town centres or village centres on a Sunday or on a Bank Holiday. Make it an experiment and allow the shopkeepers to see how it goes. Maybe things will be worse; maybe they will be better. Very often, their takings will rise. Find ways to bring people with you on that journey and, if they do not want to go, then they are not going to go there, and you probably cannot force them.

Ultimately, though some streets may be pedestrianised, often the best place to end up is to turn humans back into the primary species. Cars are very much welcome on streets, but they are the guests rather than the other way round. It is very interesting. If you look at photos from the 1920s or before, you see far more people, including children, walking on the carriageway because it was just a much safer thing to do. In fact, there is academic research on this, and I touched on it in one of my books. Children used to roam far more freely, far more liberally around the town and the cities than they do now. They are far more constrained, and they are far less free. Find those ways to liberate people and free people up is the advice we typically give to how to avoid that type of pushback and typically that then is linked to more prosperity and more interactions. I hope that is helpful.

Emma Best AM: Thanks. Jonathan, you did cover this in some previous answers, not only to me but earlier in the questions. To what extent are communities consulted over policy decisions necessary for delivering urban planning models such as the 15-minute neighbourhood?

Jonathan Lloyd (Corporate Director of Strategy and Change, London Borough of Waltham Forest): I will try to answer with an example. We have something called Area Frameworks. For areas that are going to experience fairly significant change, development and regeneration, we would build on the insights and the understanding of 15-minute neighbourhoods. However, we would have conversations, using the tools and methods that we used in development the framework, to understand what people's priorities are within their area under the framework of 15-minute neighbourhoods. We really test the model and invite people to look at it and identify their priorities and the things that they want within the change and effectively they are designing their 15-minute neighbourhoods through that process.

Emma Best AM: Thanks. I was speaking to the Committee before we started this about the fact that in Waltham Forest there is now a new concept of "equal neighbourhoods". What does that mean in relation to 15-minute neighbourhoods?

Jonathan Lloyd (Corporate Director of Strategy and Change, London Borough of Waltham Forest): Sorry, I am not aware of the term.

Emma Best AM: It comes from your brief. It is part of the new Housing Management Strategy and the Growth Strategy.

Jonathan Lloyd (Corporate Director of Strategy and Change, London Borough of Waltham Forest):

Sorry, I do not understand the concept.

Emma Best AM: OK.

Siân Berry AM: Silos.

Jonathan Lloyd (Corporate Director of Strategy and Change, London Borough of Waltham Forest):

Yes.

Emma Best AM: Yes, OK, thanks.

Sakina Sheikh AM (Chair): Assembly Member Best, that is yours finished so I will pass over to Assembly Member Berry.

Siân Berry AM: Thank you very much, Chair. I will try not to go over the points again, but there are some really interesting things that have come up in the discussion so far and I wanted to start with Jonathan. More broadly than simply engagement over the plans that you have locally, I would love to talk a bit more about embedding the concept in people's minds when they are doing all kinds of other things within the community. Specifically, how might we influence the next London Plan? If you look at the last London Plan, it is pre-pandemic and it focuses a lot on access to services and things like that but mainly as a question of whether to allow more density in an area. It is the other way around, if you see what I mean. They say, "Shall we allow more development in this area?" Well, only if there is access to services.

The kinds of policies that you are talking about as a local council are looking for where you have gaps to fill. You talked earlier about how the work that you have done has exposed inequalities. I am assuming that means that you have found areas with significant density or lots of population who have no access to a particular kind of thing or have access to it, but it is across a dual carriageway and therefore there is not a sensible way to get there. What are you doing to try to get people to ask for changes in your area as engagement and how are you going to try to change policy within the next London Plan or the next [Mayor's] Transport Strategy? They are both related at the Greater London Authority (GLA) end of things.

Jonathan Lloyd (Corporate Director of Strategy and Change, London Borough of Waltham Forest):

There are a few practical things involved in that. We use the 15-minute neighbourhood framework to support decision-making and understanding where those inequalities are. We are also inviting people to identify small improvements they can make within their neighbourhood, somewhat inspired by Paris's participatory budgeting process. It is initial scale with a set of funds that have derived from the proceeds of development and what you want to do with it in your local neighbourhood. But --

Siân Berry AM: Is that local Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), which the borough levies on development? Is that the funding?

Jonathan Lloyd (Corporate Director of Strategy and Change, London Borough of Waltham Forest):

It is partly that and a range of other pots from different areas. I will not bore you with them but --

Siân Berry AM: You are putting that in local ward-level control?

Jonathan Lloyd (Corporate Director of Strategy and Change, London Borough of Waltham Forest):

Yes, exactly that and then people keep putting ideas through and they are under the principles of improving

their local neighbourhood. That has closed very, very recently and we are looking at those, looking at the kind of actions that will be implemented. It brings it to life and invites people to share what is working as well in terms of the improvements they want to make. Then in terms of influencing policy more broadly, we are looking to share our experience and understanding of putting this into practice, which we are still learning as we go on that.

Siân Berry AM: I was wondering if Stephen wanted to come in on that issue as well. Your job title is Head of Knowledge at Future of London and clearly we are thinking ahead. We are trying to measure things in a different way. I am making a massive assumption that you are the person on the panel most likely to want to talk in detail about the Web-based Connectivity Assessment Toolkit (WebCAT) tool that TfL provides. That literally will give you a map of what is a 15-minute cycle from a spot and then tell you what is within that 15-minute radius. You can look up central Bexley and it will tell you that there are no GP surgeries. That is just to back up what Assembly Member Fortune was saying. That tool exists, but are new tools like that needed? Are new metrics needed? Are new goals needed for the next London Plan that could be fixed by development policies?

Stephen Passmore (Head of Knowledge, Future of London): I have been involved in the consultation, working on how to build more social value into the London Plan and to the policies there, but I have to say I am six weeks into the role, so I am sorry to disappoint. I like the sound of the tool and I do agree generally with the premise of your question in terms of more tools, more data and more analytics. You will all be aware of the recent launch of the London Output Area Classification jointly between Liverpool University, University College London (UCL) which provides really fine-grained data on socioeconomic households across the whole of London. I would refer to those sorts of data as input into the policies, but I am very sorry. At this juncture, I cannot answer in terms of the level of specificity that you are asking, sorry.

Siân Berry AM: No problem at all. We have Enrica.

Enrica Papa (Associate Professor, University of Westminster): Yes, maybe just a quick add on the tools. I will be happy to share something that we developed within European projects. This is an accessibility tool that measures how much a spatial point is accessible from different services and we also implemented it for London. This is a free access tool so you can play with it a bit and it is something that we tested with some practitioners and also TfL. This might be interesting for you to know. I will send you the links and everything, and how to access it.

Siân Berry AM: Great. I have a feeling that might be the basis of the tool that I am looking at, which I am calling WebCAT. That time mapping sounds exactly like --

Enrica Papa (Associate Professor, University of Westminster): Yes, WebCAT can give you access to the transport spot. What our tool says is accessibility analysis for different transport modes for different services. Again, I will send you the link so you can look at it.

Siân Berry AM: That is what I am looking at, those exact four things. Yes, OK, great. I am wondering if anyone else on the panel has any views on this. Potentially, Nicholas, you have views on the interaction between density and good planning, and the extent to which the current public transport accessibility levels and the measure, access to opportunities and services, are used to control density within planning. Is there a different way round that we can go, where you set ideal levels of density and then also add requests for more things that would contribute towards services being within reach?

Nicholas Boys Smith (Director, Create Streets): Thank you. I am very pleased you turned the question from specifically on the tools as currently used to more widely, otherwise I would have struggled to answer. I cannot comment on the tools being rolled out; I do not know. More widely, we would argue, based on our research, that it got a little bit better in the creation but that there is a risk in some of the public debate and some of the plan-making over the last generation that density has been seen as a one-way street, if you will forgive the pun, ie, that more density is always better. That is not correct. There are huge advantages to density. It allows you to live more sustainably and I would not decry that for a moment. Obviously, the more density that you have, the more you can support public transport, the more you can support other amenities, and the more resilient shops and buildings can be because they have more access to people and to activity to keep surviving through different lifecycles of building use.

There are disadvantages as well in humans' sense of control of their environment, in immediate access to green space, and thus in personal wellbeing. I touched earlier on the research we did during lockdown, but it echoes lots of other research before and subsequently. Most of us, particularly with children, want to have immediate access to greenery and that is harder to do once you get beyond a certain density. The data on this is a little less robust, but most of us tend to use local shops and services less when we are above about the fifth or sixth floor. Jan Gehl [architect] has done some work on that, on things that get harder to have as density goes up too far. Very modest front gardens, as in a metre or so deep, are ideal for knowing your neighbours and for interaction with them. They are not so big that you are hidden behind the rosebush but there is enough space there so that you might be out there fiddling with your roses and your neighbour goes past, you say, "Hello" and you have an interaction.

We would always make the case - this varies - that somewhere between 50 and about 200 homes per hectare optimises those advantages of personal control and space and access to your own green space - or at any rate communal - to a finite number of people, versus lower land use and the greater sustainability of development patterns. I do not have a magic wand and I cannot rewrite the London Plan but were I doing so I would tilt it - and, indeed, other Local Plans I was influencing - to be trying to get that optimised so you will feel like you are not getting the public pushback. You are helping public health and mental wellbeing, but you are also getting some of the resilient and sustainable advantages of good place-making. I hope that is a helpful answer. It is not on the detail of current measurements in London.

Siân Berry AM: Great, thank you. Yes, I am trying to ask about metrics that might resonate with people. I do agree with mostly all the Members that have weighed in, and the panel members, that essentially saying "a 15-minute city is what you should want" is not the best way to engage with people and ask people what they want, and maybe trying to deconceptualise it a bit is a good idea.

Nicholas Boys Smith (Director, Create Streets): Head of Knowledge, Future of London): If I may quickly, I probably did not use the phrase then. I try to talk about beautiful, walkable, gentle density where you know your neighbours and it is easy to get about. I find that resonates more powerfully with the public because it is less conceptual.

Siân Berry AM: Exactly that. However, then at a planning level you do need to have some kind of metric or measure and so possibly those of us who get involved in planning get excited about a concept like that in a way the public will not. Passing back to you, Chair, for the rest of the questions.

Sakina Sheikh AM (Chair): Thank you. That was quite a helpful summary of this section so far. I am going to give everyone a break for about ten minutes, a deep-breather. I hope the panellists have enjoyed the robustness of the conversation. We are politicians, we are very opinionated, but we are very grateful for the time and the expertise that you bring. Even if there has been robust dialogue, it comes from a place of

hopefully representing the views of Londoners that we are here, politically mandated, to represent. It is also to try to get to the heart of this evolving conversation around how we redesign our city. I will bring us back at 3.42pm .Thank you.

(Adjournment)

Sakina Sheikh AM (Chair): For the next section, I will be passing over to the Deputy Chairman, Assembly Member Fortune.

Peter Fortune AM (Deputy Chairman): Hurray. Thank you very much. I reckon, looking around, I know probably the least amount about this from everyone in the room. I am pretty confident about that. I came at this meeting quite cold; I have learnt a bunch of stuff and I have been scribbling things down so I have my thoughts. They are not necessarily structured, but I want to consolidate things in my head.

What have I learnt? Fifteen-minute cities are not really about cities. It is interesting. There has been a mix of people talking about “cities” and “neighbourhoods”. When you are talking about neighbourhoods, you are talking about access to local facilities, school, that sort of thing. Then from what Matthew was saying earlier and from what you were saying as well, Catherine, if you are going to visit one of the cathedrals in London - interestingly enough; I do know that - then that is going to be a different kind of journey. It is going to be outside of the concept of the 15-minute neighbourhood. Then we have learnt, “Do not worry about the 15-minutes” either. It is about proximity, and it is having access to things and how you access things.

When you start thinking about this raw, and perhaps this is some of the tension you see, people will think about the places that they live and work and play in. I grew up in Lambeth near Brixton, which meant I was probably never more than five minutes from a pineapple, right up until I moved out to Bromley. If you think about Bexley, Bromley, Croydon and Sutton in that outer London loop, which is about three o’clock to about seven o’clock, there is not a Tube station. When people start thinking about 15-minute cities, if you go and talk to people out there, they go, “Hang on, this does not make any sense at all”.

You are not talking about that, because you are not talking about retrospectively refitting huge parts of London. It is really a philosophy about how you go forward, how you might tinker with things as you have done in Waltham Forest, to make sure that you have access to those local facilities when you are developing planning, that there is green space, and that you can walk and cycle where appropriate, which makes sense. Then we have also talked about the fact that we do that anyway, I would have thought, in the planning process.

Nicholas was saying about 100 years ago and looking back at how we did things there. A hundred years ago we did not have Sainsbury’s, we did not have sprawling secondary schools as we have now, and we did not have specialist medical clinics which people will need access to. Again, you cannot think about that closed concept of 15 minutes and you cannot think about that closed concept of cities.

Coming at it cold and just listening to what you have said, I see what you are getting at and that makes sense. What do you think some of the pushback is? There is really visceral pushback when I went to do a little bit of research online, especially on social media. What do you think is causing that? Maybe, Catherine, you can go with your excellent English.

Catherine Gall (Executive Director, Chaire Entrepreneurship Territory Innovation): Thank you. There are different types of pushbacks, but as you very nicely summarised, it is the framing approach. The pushbacks are against one dimension that basically deconstructs the whole thing. Some of the pushbacks are around the

fact that you are limiting people or you are creating a vision/a framework where people cannot choose where they go and so on, which is not the case. We are just simply creating some conditions so the majority of people, based on everything that was said before, have access to reasonable time and distance to the things they need to do.

The main pushbacks come from the need for alignment. There needs to be some alignment. We talked about work. We could have spent some time talking also about consumption because in the end we speak about the essential things you need to buy every day, your groceries, your dairy products and so on. As Nicholas said before, because of the car, because of the access to broader distance, and because of the past couple of years, we also have different shopping habits. We order online - it has been touched on - and we can calculate the impact of that, the delivery and so on. I do not know what it is like for you, but Sainsbury's, Tesco's and so on are not in the city, they are a bit outside, so people need to go there because that is where they have affordable prices. If they buy locally, then prices are higher. You have to do something about that, and it means interfering somehow in the private sector by saying local shops, local goods, local employment and so on, to create this environment where you want to buy from your building main floor and your local grocery shopper and so on.

Peter Fortune AM (Deputy Chairman): Those are some of the changes that are going to be needed. We were talking about School Streets earlier as well and you talk about it as a single journey. Oftentimes, it is not a single journey. Often, that is part of a journey that continues on to perhaps a different school, perhaps a place of work or perhaps a place of travel. That means that when you are developing all of this, it is going to look at things like school start times, childcare facilities, what time people are working and train timetables, for example. If you have condensed and you are pushing people or compressing people into certain timeslots to hit an arbitrary nine o'clock start in London, there are going to be pressures there.

I am straying from my sheep. We were moving on now to look at the exemplars of where it has worked and some of the challenges that we have seen abroad. Catherine, you touched on Paris earlier. Could you remind us? What were the key successes and challenges with some of the implementation of the concept being rolled out?

Catherine Gall (Executive Director, Chaire Entrepreneurship Territory Innovation): The main successes are the quality of air, the reduction in car-related accidents and the fact that people are able to enjoy the streets and be outside, stay in their neighbourhood and also engage themselves more in citizen-led initiatives. The participatory budget that Jonathan mentioned is one of the big things in Paris. You can take a vote or propose to create a temporary experiment in a street, decide to reclaim some space and build a vegetable garden with your school and so on. Those are the main success factors. There are several measures around environmental air quality and reduction in the nitrogen oxide (NOx) emissions and carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions. Those are really the more quantitative elements. Then on the qualitative side, if you survey people on the streets they will tell you that they are able to enjoy somehow more their neighbourhood, to interact and get chance encounters with people that they would never meet before because of the lifestyle they had and because of the rhythm of life as well.

Peter Fortune AM (Deputy Chairman): A lot of those gains that you talked about, that is because of the removal of vehicles?

Catherine Gall (Executive Director, Chaire Entrepreneurship Territory Innovation): Yes.

Peter Fortune AM (Deputy Chairman): What were the main challenges that you would say were faced?

Catherine Gall (Executive Director, Chaire Entrepreneurship Territory Innovation): Residents wanting to keep the parking spaces they had and all the people within Paris that were against -- I do not if you realise that a couple of streets, major access, are now not available any more, so increase in traffic jams, increase in frustration, increase in all kinds of dimensions related to that.

Peter Fortune AM (Deputy Chairman): Yes, we had similar discussions around low traffic neighbourhoods [LTNs] when they were rolled out in London.

Catherine Gall (Executive Director, Chaire Entrepreneurship Territory Innovation): As you know maybe, some of you, our public infrastructure in terms of transportation is what it is. It is functioning quite well because people are moving several hundreds and millions of people every day from east, to west to north to south, but it is crowded. The quality of your journey on Line A is terrible and that has not changed.

Peter Fortune AM (Deputy Chairman): I have not been for a while; I will go back. If I can open it up maybe to other panel members. Are there examples of successful rollouts of schemes - let us call it the 15-minute schemes - across the UK that you could cite? I know we have had some examples from Waltham Forest, but are there any other examples that perhaps anyone here or on the screen could point me to? No is fine as well.

Nicholas Boys Smith (Director, Create Streets): The most successful scheme in the UK is London over the last 30 years. It was not bad as a 15-minute city. I do not have the figures in front of me as I speak, but the shift - above all in central London but in a bunch of neighbourhoods outside central London, Waltham Forest prominent among them - not to getting rid of cars but to just making cars not the only option. That is the key way I find helpful in thinking about it, which is the car is still there as an option. It is just not the only option. You are adding in other options. That has clearly been associated with the renaissance of large bits of London over my lifetime, since the 1970s.

Central Manchester has probably been the closest to that in any UK city. York has been another one, which has seen a complete transformation of the town centre over the last 40 or 50 years, largely about constraining but not preventing the car. I am sure there should be other examples jumping into my head. Edinburgh has been a bit more problematic, but I am not on all the detail. Outside the UK, there is Paris, Toulouse, Ponteverde, many Italian towns. There is a whole gamut you could point out. I hope that is helpful.

Peter Fortune AM (Deputy Chairman): That is useful, I will hand back to the Chair.

Sakina Sheikh AM (Chair): Thank you, Assembly Member Fortune. Assembly Member Baker, you wanted to come in briefly on this?

Elly Baker AM: I did, yes. I just wanted to come in after Assembly Member Fortune's question about case studies and experiences, and ask whether there are any examples of case studies or pilots that are focused on the provisions of services and not around how people are getting about, so provisions of local services?

Stephen Passmore (Head of Knowledge, Future of London): Yes, perhaps I can answer. We had a speaker from C40 Cities at one of our events very recently and I know the Mayor [of London] is the Chair of that network at the moment. It has a global network of cities. Melbourne has a 20-minute neighbourhoods programme and in there they list about 20 features of a 20-minute neighbourhood, which includes things like housing diversity, sport and recreation, affordable housing, ability to age in one place, which is quite

interesting, safe streets and spaces, local playgrounds and parks, green streets and space, lifelong learning opportunities, schools, health facilities, local employment opportunities and so on. They are looking at the sort of services available within that kind of timeframe. There are a number of other quite interesting international examples as well.

Elly Baker AM: Can I clarify though?

Stephen Passmore (Head of Knowledge, Future of London): Yes.

Elly Baker AM: That, again, sounds like the list that is given for 15-minute cities. It could be that Melbourne has done this and has changed the provision of local services and, say, prioritised more local GPs if that is necessary or something like that, but are there actually examples? Apologies if you do not know, maybe we should go and look at Melbourne, but that is what I am looking at. Has anyone concentrated on the local services provision rather than just how people are getting around?

Sakina Sheikh AM (Chair): Nicholas and Jonathan have indicated.

Sakina Sheikh AM (Chair): Can we minute the request for scrutiny to fund our trip to Melbourne as well?

Elly Baker AM: Absolutely. I have not been for a while.

Sakina Sheikh AM (Chair): Yes, thank you.

Elly Baker AM: Although I think we were going to Paris first.

Sakina Sheikh AM (Chair): Or Paris. Both.

Elly Baker AM: Yes.

Sakina Sheikh AM (Chair): Why choose? Is it Nicholas or Jonathan?

Nicholas Boys Smith (Director, Create Streets): Jonathan should go first. I am happy to join in afterwards.

Jonathan Lloyd (Corporate Director of Strategy and Change, London Borough of Waltham Forest): There are some very practical examples. For example, the way that we are trying to work with people who really want to access and have a more visible police presence within their neighbourhoods, as part of sharing their own understanding of 15-minute neighbourhoods. Very practically, pop-up police stations within libraries, using assets that we already have, and we are piloting something called the Safer Streets Programme, which is a much more participatory, problem-solving approach to improving people's sense of safety and also improving provision, broken windows and things like that that really drive -- we are responding to that and it is very local examples. The way also that we have designed our Family Hubs pilot, an extension of Children's Centres, making them a much more holistic provision and lots of housing advice and domestic violence support within there, getting much more local to people that need them, particularly the places that need them most.

Elly Baker AM: Is that partly a reaction to the fact that we have had some local services removed like police stations though?

Jonathan Lloyd (Corporate Director of Strategy and Change, London Borough of Waltham Forest):

Very much so, yes.

Elly Baker AM: Thanks. Nicholas?

Nicholas Boys Smith (Director, Create Streets): Yes, just a very quick answer. It is almost at a different level of detail to Jonathan, hopefully helpfully. Again, there has been a huge change over the last 50 years in the way we approach planning and use classes, both in new places and, indeed, in the management of existing ones. Go back 50/60 years, and the whole direction of planning policy was to segregate uses: residential over there, retail over there, work over there.

During the course of the last generation, that has completely changed. It is probably fair to say that the assumption that every planner in every town and neighbourhood across the UK, certainly in London, will start with is that we should be pushing for mixed uses. That is not complete. Clearly, you are not going to have an iron smelting works in the middle of a residential district but within the bounds of normality, normal commercial, we are pushing in that direction. Fundamentally, the more activity you get into a neighbourhood, the more you are then supporting services organically to adapt because if you have got people working, shopping and eating all within whatever timeframe you want, that will support more services. Strategically, we have shifted back in that direction in many places, not perfectly but in many places over the last generation.

Elly Baker AM: Are we not losing a huge amount of light industrial and workspace in London though to residential?

Nicholas Boys Smith (Director, Create Streets): I should probably refer that to someone with the London data.

Elly Baker AM: Apologies.

Nicholas Boys Smith (Director, Create Streets): No, there are definitely people on the panel better able to answer that than me.

Elly Baker AM: Maybe we will leave that hanging. Enrica?

Enrica Papa (Associate Professor, University of Westminster): On examples that focus on distribution, localisation of services, we can add, for example, Milan. Together with policies for increasing accessibility for walking and cycling, they at the same time introduced policies to facilitate local business, small-scale enterprise, neighbourhood cafés, also because of the closure of many shops. This is a central aspect, the quality of the high streets and how this is changing, and it is so much related to what we are talking about today.

Looking at also different policies that really focus on the role of shops and the liveability and vitality of high streets is central, especially if we think of how the small 15-minute neighbourhoods in London are organised. The role of the high street is crucial.

Elly Baker AM: Thanks very much. Back to you, Chair.

Catherine Gall (Executive Director, Chaire Entrepreneurship Territory Innovation): If I can add something, there is a website. It is currently hosted by C40 because we work with them; we are their scientific

advisory team. There is a website on C40. It is called Sustainable Proximities. There are around 200 projects that have been identified.

On your specific question, you should look into Paris and I would be happy to provide you with more information because the Mayor of Paris has created a new company that is based on public and private representatives, and she is looking at reclaiming also some empty shop spaces to allow those local services, activities. They just had a meeting a week ago and we now have the new map where those empty places are. Again, the citizen can say, "OK, here we need a bookshop. Here, we need something else", and so there is that dynamic going on.

In Italy, we know the Milan project and it is centred. The city of Milan is trying to embrace this by converting parking spaces into something else. There is a drive from reclaiming that space but bringing in new services and some of them being public services. Rome is doing the same and has adopted this idea of Rome within your proximity. Those are really good examples.

Elly Baker AM: Thanks very much. That is really helpful, Catherine.

Sakina Sheikh AM (Chair): That was really helpful. Assembly Member Berry,

Siân Berry AM: Catherine, you have been talking about proximities. Obviously, 15 minutes is a time and that is a distance. Is there a good reason for talking about time versus distance or is distance just what we should go back to talking about? In cities, you have real severance because you have got railway lines going through the middle of cities, so something as the crow flies is not useful. Can you explain how we got there and whether we should just go back to distance and we should measure it in terms of accessible distance or something like that?

Catherine Gall (Executive Director, Chaire Entrepreneurship Territory Innovation): That is a really good question. We think in isochrones so we really think in terms of "How much time do I need to get to a point?" knowing that sometimes there is a place to walk, sometimes not. You were discussing Nairobi. We were there in June [2023] and you have people everywhere walking very long distances. It is both dimensions because it depends on: is it hilly territory, is it flat, is it hot, is it cold, is it snowing, is it raining? What are the environmental conditions?

With the 15 minutes, it resonated everywhere; we did not invent the concept. Twenty years ago, Melbourne talked about 20 minutes. Portland in the US, the Swedes and Danes have talked about five minutes for a long time. It is just a symbol. It now has become something that people talk about, but the reality is that you walk - sorry, I am going to speak in kilometres - between four and five kilometres an hour. You divide by four and you get the 15, the quarter of an hour. People can say, "OK, it will take me 15 minutes, I will just do it", but there is no scientific truth behind that. Sometimes, that distance does not convert with the amount of energy, effort and so on you need to put into the doing of walking a mile, two miles, three miles, depending on the context.

Siân Berry AM: Sure, thank you very much.

Catherine Gall (Executive Director, Chaire Entrepreneurship Territory Innovation): However, in the study we do, I wanted to mention, we have developed a digital tool which is a cartographic tool, so we can map those assets we were discussing earlier and we can decide to map out the 15-minute isochrone by walking, by car, by public transportation, by bicycle. We have been studying how much further you go if you use an electric bike. It is an interesting thing to think about because, again, I do not know how difficult it is to cycle

in London, but in Paris there are hills and so on. We see more bike down and less bike up and so on. With more people moving towards the electrical bike, they increase the distance, and some people when we do surveys say, "OK, yes. No, I can do the bicycle 20 kilometres each way because I have the electric support and this is enriching my reach".

Siân Berry AM: Great, thank you. Chair, you can take over.

Sakina Sheikh AM (Chair): Thank you, Assembly Member Berry. It was just to return to that thread that we began opening. I think, Nicholas, yourself and Catherine were talking to it. It was about the use and the change of use in terms of whether our high streets should be mixed use. Nicholas, I was really enjoying being walked through the change in perspective from planners in the last 50 years, pushing more recently for this idea of mixed use. I wanted to unpack whether that is a positive thing or a negative thing for our high streets.

What has underpinned this conversation, whether we do focus it specifically on the 15-minute city or just more broadly those slightly more open-ended questions that have come from the panellists, that I have enjoyed, around how you design an area that best suits the needs of Londoners. For me, no matter what the landscape of that area, central to any person's local needs is having a thriving high street, a place where you can go and you can have a laundrette or a grocery store, maybe a café that you can sit in. I am probably going to leave really obvious things out, maybe even a hairdresser, etc, etc.

What worries me is the increased use of Permitted development rights (PDR). I do not often like jargon, especially in planning, even though there is lots of it. You cannot really dress up PDR any other way. There is the particular, more recent change in PDR that covers Class E, enabling what was previously retail in our high streets to be converted to residential. You might have a row of shops - again, the hairdresser, the laundrette, the grocery store - and then right in the middle of it a block of flats because of PDR, which not only allow the retail to residential conversion but also allow you to bypass local democratic decision-making of the Local Planning Authority (LPA) because they can be implemented without planning permission.

I will be honest with you. I am really wearing my Labour [Party] stripes in this particular perspective, but I find PDR could potentially compromise the fabric of our high streets. If you reduce the offer of what a high street has for an area, you reduce the cohesion of a neighbourhood, which is again at the essence of this actual investigation. I wanted to ask the panel what they thought about PDR, the particular change in the last few years to see class use E from retail to residential. There are current proposals at the moment that the Government is consulting on about going further with PDR. I was hoping someone on the panel might want to speak to their opinions on PDR, and Nicholas has started off by indicating.

Nicholas Boys Smith (Director, Create Streets): If that is helpful, I am happy to come in. Again, just 30 seconds to say a quick addition to what Catherine was helpfully saying and then I promise I will answer your question. It is certainly correct, as Catherine was saying, that it is time, not distance. If I may, I would also add - and it does link into PDR and high streets - it is also the quality of the time as well as the time. There are quite a range of studies now in various places showing that if the walk is pleasant, if there are nice things to look at, it feels safe or tree-lined, it is not too hot and not too cold, we are more likely to do it. This comes back to planning and placemaking, but the quality of the street, the breadth of the pavement, you are not just walking down some huge, glass canyon, has a provable effect on what that 15 minutes means and how people are likely to make use of it or otherwise. I hope that is helpful.

Then to come back to the very important question about high streets and permitted development, the evidence is really clear that high streets need to evolve and that clearly there has been quite a lot of hits over the last few years, above all is online shopping and the changing patterns. The consequence of that - and this

is from memory so I would not swear to these numbers, but I think the latest number I saw across the UK - I do not have the London data in my head - is that 17.5 percent of shops were vacant. That is less the case in places like London. Certainly, when you come outside the prosperous and southeast and a few other spots, it is particularly problematic and the flats above high streets even more so.

The best way to think about it is bring the democracy forward. It is clearly not good for the high streets and for housing for shops to be sitting there empty. We can all agree on that, but high streets need to be active and if you cannot have shops in there - and as a statement of fact, some of those are not going to fill up with shops - can we get offices in there? In fact, the Create Streets office is a former shop that we converted into an office. Or indeed homes.

So what are the mechanisms? PDR could be one of them. A better one is Local Development Orders (LDO) which exist since the 2011 Localism Act, for putting a really clear, quality ask, both in terms of what is inside and how it faces the street and how the services are met, but within that clear carapace to then allow change of use to be reasonably organic, certainly in the extended bits of high streets. You may want to protect the absolute core of it, but it is very hard to see a situation in which high streets are going to go back to having as many shops as historically they did. Maybe that is a bad thing; maybe it is inevitable; probably it is both. We need to find the mechanisms to allow it to happen organically, without trying to micromanage every change but within a carapace of place quality. Clearly, some - many perhaps - of the PDR that have happened in terms of their impact on the high street have been malign and that needs to be constrained, whilst allowing change to happen because if we do not allow it to happen, things will just sit empty. I hope that is a helpful and non-partisan answer; it is meant to be. Thank you.

Sakina Sheikh AM (Chair): I do not know if I would agree that it is non-partisan, Nicholas. I do not understand how bypassing local democratic decision-making of a planning authority brings democracy forward.

Nicholas Boys Smith (Director, Create Streets): May I respond to that?

Sakina Sheikh AM (Chair): Please.

Nicholas Boys Smith (Director, Create Streets): I do not want to take too much airtime. No, I am saying precisely the opposite. I am trying to bring the democracy into the Local Plan so the local council, through the Local Plan or a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), is setting a really clear Local Development Order. If you like, I am talking about bringing democracy forward to be more strategic, rather than abandoning it. PDR take you in the situation where you are losing control. I am making a case for re-establishing that control but doing it strategically, rather than trying to do it all case-by-case.

Sakina Sheikh AM (Chair): So maybe not through PDR but the idea of having mixed use of high streets is something that should be more embraced by Local Plans. Is that what you are saying?

Nicholas Boys Smith (Director, Create Streets): Yes, and accepting that the change will happen and that the alternative of not letting the change happen is places sitting empty, which cannot be good, I think we would all agree.

Sakina Sheikh AM (Chair): No, I would agree with that, and to that end I would love to get that information from you, Catherine about what is happening in Paris in terms of being strategic with the empty spaces. Nicholas, I agree with you. If there are empty spaces in the high streets, we should do everything we can to encourage the use of them, because generally in London when you see empty homes and you have homeless

people, it seems absurd. Similarly, when you are in an economic crisis, to see shops not filled also seems absurd.

I would argue that if there were empty spaces, perhaps we need to look at the conditions in which we are stopping local businesses thriving and filling up those spaces. If you saw homes being put into places in high streets that were previously shops, I would argue that you would see more of those shops shut down because it does change the fabric of the high street in terms of noise, in terms of footfall. The feel of a high street that would previously have been communal, shared space, suddenly becomes people's homes. Some of that more interesting dimension that you started off telling us about, that people need communal space but they also need private space. I would say that if you began mixed use of our high streets, you would probably blur those lines to a point where neither would be achieved. That is just my perspective on it. Catherine, did you want to come in on this? I do not know if you were indicating or not.

Catherine Gall (Executive Director, Chaire Entrepreneurship Territory Innovation): No, this is the most complex aspect of this framework because it is much easier when you can have the zoning of where the corporate business district is, where all the housing is and so on. By mixing, that is where you have to have the stakeholder alignment but also a long-term vision, and align on the key benefits and outcomes of changing that, which is really difficult.

Sakina Sheikh AM (Chair): Thank you. Matthew?

Matthew McCartney (Senior Researcher, Charter Cities Institute): Taking up this point about empty spaces, having no empty spaces is not a good thing. It can be a sign of a dynamic high street, which keeps regenerating itself and changing technology and fashions and what people want to do with a high street. It is difficult to imagine what is going to happen to the high street in the future. During COVID, there was clearly a bit of a renaissance of corner shops and people shopping locally, but since COVID, partly boosted by COVID, partly technological change, some things we just automatically include in our list of 15-minute city, things like supermarkets, cafés, doctors and banks, are disappearing from a lot of high streets because they are going online because of technological change. Also, it is about technology and how people want to interact with doctors. I do not think this is a good thing and I still want to go and see a doctor in person, but it is increasingly difficult to get in-person appointments. Perhaps that is changing and these things are going to disappear from the high street.

Home working is going to have a big effect, but it is not clear which direction this is going to have on the high street. A few people have said this: the impact of home working is exaggerated. Even the company Zoom has told its workers to come back to the office. However, whether in the long run this is going to lead to, say, people working at home but in their local community, taking their laptop to a coffee shop, or whether banks are going to turn into co-working spaces that people can take their laptops to and do a day's work a 10-minute walk from home, is an open question; or whether this is going to lead to greater privatisation, and houses are going to be redesigned so two adults can sit there and work for the whole day in private little booths at home. It is difficult to say whether this is going to be public and local or whether this is going to be more private. Empty spaces, big question mark about how that is going to evolve, and the impact of COVID and the impact of the 15-minute city on that process.

Sakina Sheikh AM (Chair): Yes, those are some helpful prompting questions for the Committee to take away and maybe unpack in another space for us. You are right that a lot of the key anchored institutions like banks and supermarkets that previously were so fundamental to people's lives are beginning to disappear from our high streets. I partly wonder again at the many layers of an environment in a society - economically, politically and socially - that a Government creates that sees the disappearing of vital services. One of the

other things that we saw from the pandemic was digital poverty, and if a lot of these very core services are being moved online, who is excluded from accessing them? Who does society begin to serve, or who does it not serve, and what is the role of Government in parity of that? Thank you for those prompting questions, there is a lot to go away and unpack.

I will move over to Assembly Member Berry.

Siân Berry AM: This is an important question, and it goes back to the metrics that we use in the way that we assess how well we are doing. Are any of the people in the panel aware of, or can tell us about, urban planning modelling that takes into account people's accessibility needs or mobility needs and difficulties? That seems to me very fundamental. It is part of equalities legislation that we have to take it into account. Are we measuring the accessibility of these services to people who have mobility needs of different kinds, and is that a hurdle that needs crossing by cities? Who would like to answer? I do not know who has the answer to this, but I strongly imagine Matthew might have thoughts, and Catherine?

Matthew McCartney (Senior Researcher, Charter Cities Institute): Not particularly the practical aspect of planning. That was my point: Alain Bertaud [urbanist] defined cities in terms of affordability and accessibility. He talked about an hour's commute as being about the most anybody wants to do, and a commute that does not cost more than about 15 percent of a household budget. He was thinking about cities, he talks about cities as labour markets, and that is how he thinks about good planning. Accessibility for people who are more challenged in terms of accessibility could still be using those metrics but it would be a harder experience for them.

Siân Berry AM: That is right. Catherine. Maybe Jonathan, you have had some feedback as part of your work from disabled people's groups. Sorry, I was going to go to Catherine first, I was just giving you warning.

Catherine Gall, Executive Director (Chaire Entrepreneurship Territory Innovation): It is definitely a metric that is included and is looked at. In France, it is mandatory to provide access to people with disability into public spaces, public buildings. It is also becoming something that is a must-do in the private sectors and so on. I do not think it is connected to any sort of planning approach, it is something that has to be done.

Siân Berry AM: Do you have any feedback with any of the changes in Paris, or in any other cities that you are aware, that it has made life harder or worse for certain groups, particularly disabled people, to bring in these measures?

Catherine Gall, Executive Director (Chaire Entrepreneurship Territory Innovation): We have not documented that structurally, we do not have any data points that are specific to that, but there is a European research project right now going on to study that specifically. It is the University of Munich who is driving it. It is called Accessibility Study for People with Disabilities. I can look into it.

Siân Berry AM: That would be very interesting for us to see. Jonathan.

Jonathan Lloyd (Corporate Director of Strategy and Change; London Borough of Waltham Forest): Thank you. I will be quick. The metrics that we embed within the framework are accessibility-level metrics which are not ideal, but you can get fairly decent understanding. When we did some deeper focus groups with people with disabilities, there was quite a strong emphasis on quality of pavement and street furniture. Quality of pavement metrics are captured in the 15-minute neighbourhoods. More specifically, we do a resident insight survey twice a year, 700 residents, fully representative including social demographics and protected characteristics. We get an understanding of how that neighbourhood feels for specific people. Obviously, a

sample builds over time and we start to get a better understanding of inequality of experience and that helps decision making.

Siân Berry AM: Thank you, that is useful. Enrica.

Enrica Papa (Associate Professor, University of Westminster): I can contribute by mentioning the tool that we have put in place. I do not know if it is the same one that Catherine was referring to. This is again from a European project where the Technical University of Munich is also involved. We developed this tool called IAPI, that is Inclusive Accessibility by Proximity Index, and really look at these specific groups. The problem with this tool is that the more you go into the details, the more they are expensive in terms of time and data to collect. There is a method that we put in place and I am happy to share the results with you and the application we did in Bologna.

Siân Berry AM: That sounds fascinating. Yes, please, can we have that? Thank you very much.

Sakina Sheikh AM (Chair): Thank you, Assembly Member Berry. I will pass over to Assembly Member Best.

Emma Best AM: Thank you, Chair. I have to say, I think you are going to be really concerned when you hear some of the things your Labour leader is saying. You said you are wearing your Labour stripes earlier. Also, I am pleased to hear you care about --

Sakina Sheikh AM (Chair): Do not worry about my concerns, Assembly Member Best, you focus on your own.

Emma Best AM: I am pleased that you are also concerned about the digital gap, so I am sure you will be taking on Lewisham Council with their things like cashless parking.

Sakina Sheikh AM (Chair): Do not worry about Lewisham Council, you worry about Waltham Forest, Assembly Member Best.

Emma Best AM: I am. On that note, I want to pick up on the accessibility point. Jonathan, when I sat on the Children and Families Committee, we picked out from a consultation a Special Education Needs (SEN) child could not use the family hub because of the fact that the parking had been so reduced in the area and they said, "We cannot access this". We said, as a recommendation, "Can we look into this?" and the chair of that Committee's response was, "We cannot, because that does not fit in with the 15-minute neighbourhood".

Jonathan Lloyd (Corporate Director of Strategy and Change; London Borough of Waltham Forest): I was not there for that specific item, but my understanding is the 15-minute framework does not prescribe hard rules on those sort of decisions.

Emma Best AM: How can we make sure things like that do not happen again? I am sure you understand that was wrong.

Jonathan Lloyd (Corporate Director of Strategy and Change, London Borough of Waltham Forest): I do not know enough detail from that --

Emma Best AM: I am sure you would presume it would be wrong to discount the concerns of a disabled child not being able to use a service because of a 15-minute neighbourhood.

Jonathan Lloyd (Corporate Director of Strategy and Change, London Borough of Waltham Forest):

From the human point of view, yes, but I imagine there is a whole range of trade-offs and complexity around that decision that I am not aware of.

Emma Best AM: I do not think there are any trade-offs in making sure the most vulnerable people can access services. OK, I was going to ask as well --

Nicholas Boys Smith (Director, Create Streets): May I make an additional point on that very quickly?

Emma Best AM: Yes.

Nicholas Boys Smith (Director, Create Streets): Not on Waltham Forest specifically but more broadly, the case for giving people more choice about how they move around towns, neighbourhoods, cities so that those who can, wish to and choose to use public transport or walk or cycle, whatever it might be, certainly as I see it, is exactly that. I am not commenting on the individual case, I cannot do that, but for those who need to use a car for whatever reason that might be, it is actually easier for them to do so and there is likely to be less congestion, precisely because those who perhaps for reasons of joy or utility or cost, whatever it is, choose to use the modes they are able to. Certainly, as I can see, the 15-minute city done well makes it easier for people who are reliant purely on cars to use them seamlessly. That would be my hope and aspiration.

Emma Best AM: Thank you. I was going to open up to anyone on this one. Are there any social or cultural factors that influence the adoption and success of a 15-minute city model, and how can these factors be addressed in London?

Nicholas Boys Smith (Director, Create Streets): In a way, your question almost begs the answer. In the bits of London where people are not car-dependent already because of changes over the last 40 or 50 years, this is quite a natural and easy route to go. Where you are working in areas where, as a statement of fact today, people are car-dependent or largely car-dependent, clearly, if you go through a process where you are criticising them for being so or you are removing their choice before you make other choices available - I am not saying that has happened, but where that has happened - that is clearly going to rub against people's desire not to have things done at them and their sense of control of their own daily lives. Where people are relying on a certain mode to get around, you have to be respectful of that, understanding of that and find those win-wins. I would be always very nervous of doing anything other than that. I will stop there.

Emma Best AM: Thanks. Matthew?

Matthew McCartney (Senior Researcher, Charter Cities Institute): I mentioned earlier that 15-minute cities probably work better where there is more of a collectivist mentality and people are happy to use public transport, Europe versus the US where there is more of a cultural attachment to car use. Fifteen-minute cities or 15-minute neighbourhoods work less well when people are resident there because of the accidental coincidence of affordable housing and access to work, rather than they are in the neighbourhood because of some other reason like there is a hub like a church, synagogue or mosque that a lot of people attend the mosque, or ethnicity, a particular language group, people from a particular region have settled there. There is an extra dimension to them being in a particular area. I would think the idea of 15-minute cities would be more amenable to that kind of situation, a ready-formed community, as it were.

Catherine Gall, Executive Director (Chaire Entrepreneurship Territory Innovation): I would agree with that. I was going to say that one of the underlying dimensions of proximities is sharing for the common interest, for shared common assets that you cannot multiply. As we work towards developing those projects and transforming the neighbourhood, we engage a lot with all the communities to say, OK, it is one swimming pool, we have to share, so we are working through looking at access times, specific times for retired, for the schools and so on. There is a dimension of moving away from ownership to use, and, therefore, looking at sharing what we have all in common.

Emma Best AM: Do 15-minute neighbourhoods always have to be about restricting car use, telling people how to get around, or is that an unfair criticism of 15-minute neighbourhoods, that that is all they are about?

Catherine Gall, Executive Director (Chaire Entrepreneurship Territory Innovation): I think it is going to be my last response because I do need to go. It is a consequence, not an entry point. It is the consequence of saying we want more space, we want to reprioritise for people to be safe in the streets versus the cars to dominate the streets. This is a consequence but it is not the entry point. It is likely that there will be some form of a change in the number of cars, the speed of the cars, the time they can be on the streets. It is an important dimension but it is not the entry point, and certainly not the only one.

Emma Best AM: But it is integral.

Catherine Gall, Executive Director (Chaire Entrepreneurship Territory Innovation): Yes.

Stephen Passmore (Head of Knowledge, Future of London): If I can come here briefly, very quickly, I think it is also the consequence of the increased number of vehicles and size of vehicles that are present on our streets. It has been clearly documented over the last 30 to 40 years that those levels have increased and the size of vehicles have increased. I do not have it on the top of my head, but there are statistics of the amount of time that each vehicle is parked and not actually in use providing utility for people to travel around the town. It is quite significant, it is north of 80 percent, if we think about the space provision for those vehicles to be parked and left there, not necessarily providing utility. I agree with the previous speaker completely, it is not the objective but it is a consequence of the evolution over the last 30 to 40 years.

Emma Best AM: Thanks. I think Assembly Member Baker wants to come in, but I want to then ask, if it is integral to the very concept of 15-minute city, is it then a fact that we can say -- for example, we talk a lot about Waltham Forest, and people will not know this but the south of the borough is a completely different place to the north. Is it right then to say that if making people not be able to drive where there is no other infrastructure to do anything else, it is not a system that is going to work for everywhere in London?

Catherine Gall, Executive Director (Chaire Entrepreneurship Territory Innovation): But again, that is not the question. The question is: how do we share the space between human beings and cars, and how do we take into consideration what human beings need to do, the inhabitants, the visitors, the people who are delivering the goods and so on? How do we not prioritise anymore the fact that people will use cars that need to be parked that only drive four miles a day and are not used for the rest of the time, and that only have one person in the car?

Emma Best AM: But if the fabric of the community needs cars?

Catherine Gall, Executive Director (Chaire Entrepreneurship Territory Innovation): OK, the fabric of the community may need cars, but do we talk about personally-owned cars? Are we talking about shared cars? Are we talking about cars that are used more than what is used today? It is not the entry point; the entry

point is what kind of life we want in that community, and the car is one aspect like any other mode of transportation.

Nicholas Boys Smith (Director, Create Streets): Also, if I may, when much of suburban London was built there were far fewer cars, similar to Stephen's point, than there are now. Metroland 1930s, 1950s, there were far fewer cars and far smaller cars, people walked or cycled more and there was more public transport in many ways then. It is giving people those choices again naturally, and then going with the flow of where they want to be in terms of how they want to get about. I agree with the thrust of the question, if you start by restricting choices --

Sakina Sheikh AM (Chair): Sorry, just a big thank you to Catherine as she exits because she has been a really fantastic guest. She did not hear the goodbye but I am sure it is a sentiment that she felt on her way out. Sorry, Nicholas, back over to you.

Nicholas Boys Smith (Director, Create Streets): No, I think I have probably finished. Sorry, I did not mean to stop you thanking Catherine, whose English certainly put my French to shame.

Elly Baker AM: Thanks. Can I come in, Chair? Yes, thanks so much, Assembly Member Best, for letting me come in, because I wanted to pick up on two things that you are talking about there that are really crystallising in my head. These two different versions here about what the stated aim of 15-minute cities is, which is about people being able to access and live their lives, if they should so wish, within a relatively local neighbourhood, and the actual outcome which, in reality, tends to be almost entirely focused on exactly what modes of transport they are using. It seems unhelpful to me, to be honest, because, of course, provision of local services is not really to do with whether you are in car for them or not.

It seems to me also that we have touched upon various points, the fact that there are a variety of national and regional policies which effectively make it more difficult to fulfil the aims of a 15-minute city's local neighbourhoods and things like that. For instance, we were talking about less provision of banks. Of course, lots of people do their banking online, but generally people do want to be able to access a bank every now and again. We talked about police stations and we talked about PDR limiting all this.

I have mentioned, although we did not talk about it a lot, the removal of industry and things like that. This is massively loaded question so I apologise, you are all going to look at me again and not answer it, but is actually what happening is that we are trying to deliver something that people want, but a whole bunch of bits of where society is going or where Government policy is going is pushing against it? That means that local authorities are trying to affect what they can affect, which is just bits of transport policy. Is this actually what is happening? I apologise because Catherine is now gone, but while reduction in car use is a very laudable aim, I do not see that less parking spaces means that people have the services, doctors, schools and things that they want on their doorsteps. Is that a contradiction that anyone else can recognise? Enrica, please, thanks.

Enrica Papa (Associate Professor, University of Westminster): You asked to de-conceptualise the 15-minute city, but it is important to stress some things. Why I like all this attention for the 15-minute city is because there is finally the attention to access, and access is the main aim, as you said. We have three means, which are mobility, proximity and digital connectivity. If we frame everything under this concept, we can use mobility, but, again, the aim should always be access. We can reframe proximity by having small shops and activities, or we can work at improving digital connectivity or reduce digital connectivity, depending on the services, depending on what we want. The thing that we should mention as the end is the access.

Going back to your question, yes, I agree that in the end there is this type of confusion by mixing the aim with the means, and we end up just talking about mobility. It is a tool that we have to achieve something bigger. I hope I have given you some answer to your question.

Elly Baker AM: That is helpful, thank you, Enrica. Does anyone else have anything? Matthew.

Matthew McCartney (Senior Researcher, Charter Cities Institute): It is such a simple and crude metric to think of listing the local services that are available in 15 minutes. We have already said 15 minutes can mean a huge difference, even if we are just walking, compared to single person, person with a small child, or a person in a wheelchair. Physically, I am 10 minutes' walk from my doctors but I long ago gave up trying to get appointments with the doctor in person. I have a friend who is a doctor, I send her WhatsApp messages if I am feeling a bit under the weather.

I am ten minutes' walk from the school, I am lucky it quite a nice state primary school, but schools varies enormously in quality. There is one in my area but if it was not good then physically I would have to think about moving to a different area, so the school might be 15 minutes but it misses that dynamic of people having to shift location, that being capitalised into house prices and that becoming an exclusionary mechanism, where on paper it is a state school but it actually means expensive house prices in that catchment area.

Technological change. Is it still important to have banks locally? I love not having to queue up in banks and I do it online, it is fantastic, but my mother still posts people cheques. Somebody with a busy job does not ever have time to go and deposit a £10 cheque into the bank account. People work long hours out of their neighbourhoods. London is a labour market, people travel an hour, they do their shopping at a supermarket near their work. What is their neighbourhood?

It is important but it is only a starting point, and there is so much more nuance and complexity behind it. There is a danger that once you set a target like, "There must be this within 15 minutes", it introduces lots of other distortions. It is a helpful planning idea, but the idea of labelling a city as a 15-minute city is a bit dangerous and a bit of a crude effort, although I think there is lots of good in the concept.

Elly Baker AM: Thanks, Matthew.

Sakina Sheikh AM (Chair): Thanks, back to Assembly Member Best. Thank you for letting Assembly Member Baker come in between.

Emma Best AM: No worries. Matthew, you said it then, but I thought over this discussion, and Catherine said a few times, "Do not think of it or do not call it 15-minute city". Should we stop using that term now, 15-minute city?

Sakina Sheikh AM (Chair): Before anyone answers, we are losing you, Nicholas, at 4.40pm, are we not? I wanted to make sure we did say thank you for your time.

Nicholas Boys Smith (Director, Create Streets): Thank you, yes, I have a train to catch as well and if I do not go in the next couple of minutes I will not, so I will go, yes.

Sakina Sheikh AM (Chair): Yes, exactly, so if you disappear before we get to answer, yes, thank you very much for your time and your expertise.

Nicholas Boys Smith (Director, Create Streets): Thank you. Pleasure.

Sakina Sheikh AM (Chair): Who is going to answer Assembly Member Best's question?

Matthew McCartney (Senior Researcher, Charter Cities Institute): Yes, why not forget it? In a sense, it is just the latest incarnation of a very long list of alternative descriptions of exactly the same thing. Clarence Perry [urban planner and sociologist] in 1920s New York talked about neighbourhood units, Jane Jacobs had her mixed-used, 24-hour walkable neighbourhoods. New urbanism was the buzz thing in the 1980s, compact cities, and now it is 15-minute cities. Forget it. Why not just talk about accessibility and affordability?

My mother will be thrilled to know she has been discussed so much in City Hall. My mother lives in a tiny village in Suffolk, and for her, 15 minutes is by car and it is only ever going to be car. There is no practical alternative to that. For accessibility and affordability, car is appropriate for my mother. I live in Tooting, I can walk everywhere with ease, I do not need a car. I would if I lived in Suffolk, but there is no need for me to have a car. There is no restrictions on me having a car but I just do not need one. Accessibility and affordability are very different things for me in Tooting from my mother in Suffolk. I say forget the city and let us talk about accessibility and affordability. That illuminates more than it obscures, and I think the idea of 15-minute obscures. It can be a nice thing and it can mean important things to people, but I think accessibility and affordability are the better concepts.

Emma Best AM: Thank you. I am sure the Chair can send a thank you letter to your mum as well for the contribution.

Sakina Sheikh AM (Chair): We would be very happy to do that.

Nicholas Boys Smith (Director, Create Streets): May I put in a final, very quick thought before I disappear?

Sakina Sheikh AM (Chair): Please.

Nicholas Boys Smith (Director, Create Streets): I totally agree, this is an age-old concept. If, as a consequence of some of the debates earlier this year and some of the currents in this conversation, the concept of 15-minute cities has come to mean to too many people constraints on their liberty to move about, then it is not doing its job. This is about creating places, yes, people can afford to live in, that they can get to, in which they can lead happy and connected lives, where they can get around to do their daily needs without being completely dependent on things that are expensive or difficult to do. That is an age-old concept. Whatever we call it, that, I hope, will remain as an aim of planning and of public policy and of good placemaking, and it is something I would hope that nearly everyone across the political spectrum can agree on, ultimately. Thank you.

Sakina Sheikh AM (Chair): Thank you, Nicholas. Assembly Member Best.

Emma Best AM: Thanks, it is to Jonathan. Have you faced resistance from concerned stakeholders or businesses that may be affected by changes in the urban planning policies?

Jonathan Lloyd (Corporate Director of Strategy and Change, London Borough of Waltham Forest): Around 15-minute neighbourhoods particularly? I do not think so. There are probably --

Emma Best AM: There definitely has been. [Mayor of London] Sadiq Khan got chased out of Walthamstow by an angry shopkeeper who said that the LTNs were closing his business.

Jonathan Lloyd (Corporate Director of Strategy and Change, London Borough of Waltham Forest): Sorry, I was speaking on the last nine months on the 15-minute neighbourhood framework. The resistance around active travel measures was visceral at times, I think that is fair to say. Talking about the 15-minute neighbourhoods is a helpful definition. We have mitigated a bit of that in a sense that there is not the drawing of boundaries, that it was a participatory process, but of course there is some ideology loaded with it, for whatever reason, in terms of the stories over the last 12 months. That does require some careful explaining in community meetings, for example. However, yes, decreasing resistance and conflict over active travel measures over time. I would not say we have had too many challenges on 15-minute neighbourhoods, mainly because it is a way of having conversations rather than a way of prescribing how people should live their lives.

Emma Best AM: Thanks. I do not want to take up time because we are running close, but if there are any ways in which you have addressed those concerns, if you could send those to the Committee we would be most pleased.

Sakina Sheikh AM (Chair): Yes, thank you, Assembly Member Best. The conversation has been so fruitful and it has left the Committee probably with a lot more questions which we would like to go in and unpack. Also, perhaps even a reframing of what it means to ask how you design a local neighbourhood to meet the needs of Londoners and whether 15 minutes as a concept is adequate.

I will rephrase this final question, which is for us to go away and take on next steps in terms of our lobbying to the Mayor of London, but also to the Government. What is it that you think the Government and the London Mayor should do to create the kind of political, economic and social environment for some of the concepts to thrive? Let us build on the language we have ended up using: accessibility, affordability and wellbeing of Londoners in their neighbourhoods, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, those from low socioeconomic backgrounds. What policies help neighbourhoods thrive and allow people to live flourishing lives, and what can we do as a Committee in terms of lobbying the Mayor of London but also the Government to create that environment? Who would like to answer that question so the Committee is left with some next steps?

Stephen Passmore (Head of Knowledge, Future of London): Yes, perhaps I can start quickly. We have heard about quite a few of the measures and the policies throughout the discussion, it has been a really rich discussion. One of the areas that I see in the current debate is that where people have a clear understanding of what the concept is, as in, "Imagine your life and the services that you want to access are more convenient", and some of the words that have just been described by the panel. The 15-minute city concept has become so popular because people see it as an imagination. How can I imagine my place to be more accessible, more fun? I disagree that London is purely and just a labour market. Clearly, that is a major part of what it is, but we are also cultural capital of the world, which creates delight for all of our residents here, so it is more than just calculations of getting from A to B. I understand the calculations of affordability and of labour and those things.

Sorry, I am longer than I intended to be. To be able to lobby city and national Government on talking about the aspiration and the imagination of what it is intended to be, and not using the language that has come up of what it is not intended to be, which is restrictive.

Sakina Sheikh AM (Chair): Thank you, Stephen. What I normally do is offer guests the opportunity to offer any closing remarks, so if it does not speak to specifically the question, do feel free to add anything before you

leave that you might have wanted to leave the Committee with, that you might not have had a chance to so far. Thank you for that, Stephen. Enrica, Jonathan and Matthew, I do not know if you wanted to add anything before we close. That is a no from Jonathan and a yes from Matthew.

Matthew McCartney (Senior Researcher, Charter Cities Institute): There is always a danger in focusing on what is wrong, what needs to change. We have an amazing starting point here as one of the greatest cities in the world that is a magnet for people to visit and come and live, poor people, rich people, so we have a very successful starting point. What is great about Tooting, a lot of the concepts of the 15-minute cities are why I like living in Tooting, that there is the supermarket, the pharmacy, pubs, cafes, restaurants all within a 15-minute walking distance from my house. I recognise that I am speaking from a particular position and the disappearance of the bank has much less impact on me than it does for other people, and I do not need to have a car, but having this collection, this wonderfully London idea of collection of 15-minute neighbourhoods is one of the reasons why London is such a liveable city, and it makes a difference. Southeast London lacks Tube, so there is another question there.

But it is not what makes London a great city, what makes London a great city is that so much of London is accessible within about an hour. In Tooting, I can go for a night out to and go to 40 different theatres, I can go to 100 different Chinese restaurants in Chinatown, Indian food in Brick Lane. This meeting here illustrates another reason why London is a great city and not just a collection of 15-minute cities is that Memuna [Hussain, Senior Policy Adviser, GLA] was able to source this great mix of people to come and listen from a world-class university and experts from all over the place. I presume most of us are within an hour. Paris is only a couple of hours away and we have this expertise. London as a labour market or as this collection of expertise, we can have this discussion in London in a way we cannot in a lot of other parts of the world. I think 15-minute neighbourhoods make London a very lovely city to live in, a very convivial city, but it is not what makes London a great city.

Sakina Sheikh AM (Chair): Thank you, Matthew. That might bring us to a close unless, Enrica, you wanted to add any closing remarks from your end?

Enrica Papa (Associate Professor, University of Westminster): One last thing, just to stress again the sort of component of the 15-minute city, so how much is fundamental to taking into consideration of the functional aspect of it, so again, which services, which type, which cultural activities, and really the role of community, the role of sharing and creating, and the way of living post-pandemic. This aspect I would like brought into attention, but maybe use this final minute to thank you for inviting me. It was nice to spend the afternoon with you, thank you.

Sakina Sheikh AM (Chair): Thank you, Enrica, and thank you to all the panellists. This is the point where I say we have now reached the end of our session, and a big and warm thank you. That was a full three hours, I appreciate on a rainy Wednesday afternoon for everyone to have stayed engaged and offering very thought provoking ideas and questions to leave the Committee with has been much appreciated. Thank you to the guests for your contributions and time this afternoon.