Inclusion
by design
Equality, diversity and
the built environment

CABE

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Inclusion by design

The quality of buildings and spaces has a strong influence on the quality of people's lives. Decisions about the design, planning and management of places can enhance or restrict a sense of belonging. They can increase or reduce feelings of security, stretch or limit boundaries, promote or reduce mobility, and improve or damage health. They can remove real and imagined barriers between communities and foster understanding and generosity of spirit.

Even though accessibility has improved over the last decade, and planning policy has shifted, with investment providing new facilities to once-excluded communities, the fact remains that poor and disadvantaged people are far more likely to live in poor quality environments. Social, cultural and economic inequalities are still being literally built into new places, and planners and designers need to examine more closely the impact of their decisions.

From access to inclusion

The built environment can contribute to a more equal, inclusive and cohesive society if the places where we live, the facilities we use and our neighbourhoods and meeting places are designed to be accessible and inclusive.

In this briefing we look at a broad meaning of inclusion – not just access – starting with what an inhospitable built environment looks and feels like, and the unintended social, cultural and economic inequalities that follow.

> ❝ Being able to live well in my home environment is essential to my mental and physical well-being. Yet those of us most at risk of a breakdown in our mental health and well-being are much more likely to live in squalid housing amid constant noise, and in an environment where we are subjected to harassment and abuse. Quiet, books, natural beauty, green, open space – these are all essential for me. It's not just about the environments we build but also about how we inhabit them – with kindness, good manners and a real respect for each other. ❞
>
> **Debby Klein**
> Mental health service user and consultant

For me or not for me? Why people experience the same place differently

People experience the built environment differently according to who they are – their social, cultural and economic background. The full diversity of this experience needs to be considered if all users are to be comfortable and feel that a particular space or place belongs to them.

In this briefing, we feature comments from four different perspectives – the Women's Design Service, GALOP, the Stephen Lawrence Charitable Trust and from a mental health consultant – that vividly illustrate what this means.

> ❝ So long as women earn on average half of what men do, form the majority of carers for elderly relations and still do most of the housework and shopping, there is a whole range of issues related to planning, transport, urban design, and housing provision which will impact differently on the sexes. So long as women continue to be victims of sexual harassment, domestic violence and rape they will have a radically different experience of what constitutes safety in homes, towns and public spaces. Women live longer than men, which has consequences for poverty in older age, disability and frailty, loneliness and isolation. This, in turn, has implications for the design of lifetime homes and neighbourhoods. ❞
>
> **Wendy Davis**
> Women's Design Service
> **www.wds.org**

Vauxhall Cross interchange: a central bus station with pedestrian movement brought into a single, simplified area at one of London's busiest junctions. Wide footpaths and surface finishes help visually impaired people and wheelchair users. Better lighting and CCTV have improved security

Getting around

Getting around is about much more than accessible buses and trains. It is as important to have well-designed and well-managed streets that don't act as a barrier to movement.

Inclusive design means designing for transport that is dignified, accessible, affordable, safe and easy to use.
It means:

- a chill-proof shelter
- a shelter with secure seating
- a shelter with a talking countdown system
- a shelter with an emergency phone
- a safe and comfortable place to wait
- a bus with a ramp
- a bus that is safe from crime at night
- a neighbourhood that works for people regardless of their age.

Inclusive transport design creates an way for everyone to get around.

1
The location and design of a place

The location and design of places have a profound effect on how people benefit from them. The issues here are about about technical, geographical and physical access, and usability.

The location and design of a place, its facilities, and equipment inside may fail to take into account minority cultural or religious requirements such as space for prayer and washing facilities or numbers of rooms. The impact of bad design is more likely to be felt by disabled people and older people, people from minority cultures and faiths, carers with young children, and therefore has a disproportionate effect on women. There is a considerable amount of research and good practice advice about designing environments that are inclusive.[1]

Location often results from investment decisions made at a local, regional or even national scale. The decentralisation of healthcare services, for instance, is very welcome but the quality of public transport links to the new helath centres can still have an impact on how easy they are to use for people without a car.

The physical and technical access to a place and its usability do remain vital design issues. Despite advances in anti-discrimination legislation, policy and best practice guidance, many buildings are, beyond their entrances, still difficult for disabled people to use with dignity and ease.

2
The management and use of a place

The management and use of places have a significant effect on whether we find them friendly and welcoming, and whether they generate a sense of belonging.

This idea is more subjective and less well researched, but not without plenty of anecdotal evidence.

The ambiance of a place – a combination of its design, management, and use – is more likely to have an impact on groups that experience exclusion in other walks of life, such as lesbians and gay men, women, disabled people, people from minority religions and cultures and from deprived social backgrounds. It may be about the design of the space, about the attitude of staff, the furnishings, facilities, the type of events held in the place – the programming – or quite simply: are there other people like me here?

This is where involvement of groups not usually included in the design and planning process can really make a difference.

1 For instance, see recent work by Dr Gemma Burgess (2008) *Planning, Regeneration and the Gender Equality Duty – why does gender matter?* It illustrates how 'trip chains', the multiple journeys such as those between work, childcare and the shops affect women disproportionately and are not catered for by traditional planning policy. Advice on inclusive design includes CABE's *The principles of inclusive design* (available from www.cabe.org.uk).

The links between economic inequality and the built environment

It is well documented that the poorest people in the UK tend to live in the least healthy environments, with the greatest likelihood of environmental hazards such as flooding and pollution. They are, consequently, less safe and less healthy.[2]

In the UK, there are still 13 million people living in poverty.[3] The poor are more likely to be in households led by women, in black and minority ethnic communities, and to be disabled or elderly people. In the three months to June 2008, 1.8 million children – one in seven children – were living in households where no-one works.[4]

These economic and social inequalities are the backdrop to people's experience of their daily lives, their homes and neighbourhoods.

The reality of exclusion is inaccessible facilities, hostile urban wastelands or rural isolation, threatening and poorly managed parks, dilapidated estates and housing that is cramped, badly insulated, unhealthy and depressing.[5]

People living in disadvantaged areas are more likely to suffer the impacts from high traffic volume, with its associated noise, disturbance and poor air quality, and a greater likelihood of being killed or injured on the road.

Deprived neighbourhoods have fewer local amenities and the public and open space they do have is more likely to be poorly managed and maintained.[6,7] In turn, neglected public spaces contribute to the onset of vandalism, anti-social behaviour, graffiti and littering.[8]

These are issues of both economic and environmental inequality. People living in poverty are always more likely to get a disproportionate share of environmental hazards and so have more to gain from interventions to promote environmental equity.

Adapting to a changing climate will be particularly challenging to older people and those who live in poor quality housing who are less able to make their homes resilient to extreme weather events and are more vulnerable to the impacts of flooding[9,10] and heatwaves.[11]

Much of the focus of government investment in regeneration over the past decade – the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund and New Deal for Communities in particular – focused on these deprived neighbourhoods, in an effort to reduce economic inequality overall. Investment programmes continue to address inequality.

The ongoing challenge is to find ways in which the design and management of the built environment alleviates and does not exacerbate income inequality. The national programme of Sure Start centres, with their quality family-based services, and the Building Schools for the Future programme, both started in deprived areas. These are good examples of favouring areas most in need, and CABE encourages local authorities to use their planning powers in this way as well.

2   *Environmental problems and service provision in deprived and more affluent neighbourhoods*, Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2005), establishes the link between poverty and a poor environment

3   Data from 2006. *Monitoring poverty and social exclusion*, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, (2007)

4   *Work and Worklessness among Households - a Labour Force Survey* Office of National Statistics (2008)

5   *Home Sweet Home?* Marsh, Gordon, Panatazis and Heslop (1999)

6   *Environmental problems and service provision in deprived and more affluent neighbourhoods*, Joseph Rowntree Foundation report (2005)

7   *Cleaning up neighbourhoods: Environmental problems and service provision in deprived areas* Hastings, A et al (2005)

8   *Decent Parks? Decent Behaviour? The link between the quality of parks and user behaviour* CABE Space (2005)

9   According to the Environment Agency, the most deprived people are 62 per cent more likely to be living in areas at high risk of tidal flooding and will suffer the greatest losses and health effects. *Better Places Resource Pack*, Environment Agency (2008)

10   *The Pitt Review: Lessons learned from the 2007 floods*, Cabinet Office (2008)

11   *Heatwave plan for England*, Department of Health (2008)

Barking Learning Centre: a library, café and art gallery lie at the heart of this town-centre development. The library features informal reading areas, circular shelving and brightly coloured rubber furniture. This accessible and inviting approach to a library is clearly working: the number of users has risen by around 50 per cent

Library
One Stop Shop
Learning
Gallery
Conference
Café

BARKING LEARNING CENTRE

A place for learning

Centres for learning are important particularly for people who need a space in which to study in comfort. Inclusive design means a library that is accessible, helpful, stimulating and reflects the diversity of its community. It means:

- a building to be proud of
- a library where you can't hear a pin drop
- a library where you can linger and be warm
- a library where people far from home can connect up to their families
- a library where students are welcome – even on Sunday morning when many need to study
- affordable facilities
- accessible shelves
- a diverse staff team that reflects the make-up of the community.

Well-designed libraries encourage enjoyment in life-long learning for people of all ages and backgrounds.

Building communities that work

Sustainable and socially cohesive communities are built on the bonds that unite rather than the differences that separate.

The factors that make communities cohesive are complex. They include a mixture of social, cultural and economic relationships between communities of faith, class and race, between affluence and poverty and between generations. Good design and place management can contribute to a more widespread sense of belonging and can foster good relations between, and within, communities. Our sense of being at ease and belonging are strengthened by positive contact with neighbours and by being involved together in decisions about the spaces and places we share.

Cohesion can be particularly fragile within and across economically deprived communities where resources are scarce and where myths and stereotypes are promoted about in-comers and which fuel a sense of mistrust.[12]

Cohesion can easily break down if those deprived communities that are divided by prejudices and by a sense that the 'undeserving' are getting more than their fair share, or where it is felt that the providers of services are not concerned with fairness and equality. This can be particularly relevant in areas of regeneration or renewal.

The careful planning, design and management of living spaces and the public realm can encourage successfully integrated and cohesive communities – or lead to disintegration.

For instance:

- an upmarket shopping mall on the prosperous side of town can draw the economic life out of a local high street that includes cheaper shops, resulting in segregation of the places where the affluent shop and those where the poor shop

- a regeneration scheme that draws its investment boundaries along the same lines that divide one ethnic community from another could encourage a sense of 'them' and 'us'.

Many of these decisions are in the hands of local authorities, developers, and regeneration teams, and the consultants who work with them, using the masterplanning processes to guide and shape change.

This is why CABE will work to increase awareness of the implications that these decisions can have on communities.

> " Lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender people are adroit at decoding public spaces. We modify our behaviour to avoid harassment and violence, being vigilant about public spaces and transport, avoiding buses and streets at school going home times, toning down signs of public affection, talking and dressing differently. Without this behaviour it is almost certain the rate of homophobic attacks would be much higher. But where areas feel more welcoming, we are able to express ourselves comfortably. So how the environment is managed makes all the difference – signs of inclusion such as the rainbow flag, posters, or adverts for services. The design and management of public spaces and facilities provides practical solutions, and consultation would be a good starting point. "
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> **Deborah Gold**
> chief executive, GALOP

12 Anne Power and John Houghton *Jigsaw Cities: Big places, small spaces* (2007)

Problem to solution: inclusive design

Inclusive design is a process of designing, building, managing and populating places and spaces[13] that ensures that they work for as many people as possible, not just some groups. It encompasses where people live and the public buildings they use, such as health centres, education facilities and libraries; and how they get around – neighbourhoods, streets, parks and green spaces and transport.

Inclusive design is about:

- **access with dignity** – getting to, and into places, and using them. It is about physical access to places and services, including access to appropriate technology

- **treatment with respect** – how people are dealt with, talked to and looked after; whether their needs are considered and whether they are respected and welcomed

- **relevant services** – do places meet people's particular needs? Are they designed with users in mind? Do they give people a sense that they have a right to be there?

Good examples include a health centre that can cater for the specific needs of patients seeking asylum after torture; a school with learning spaces suitable for children with hearing impairment, and a park with facilities for the frail elderly.

Inclusive environments will:

- be **responsive** to people's needs

- be **flexible** in use

- offer choice **when a single design solution** cannot meet all users' needs

- be **convenient** so they can be used without undue effort or 'special separation'

- be **welcoming** to a wide variety of people, making them feel they belong

- **accommodate** without fuss or exception those who have specific requirements.[14]

Inclusive design takes into account people with specific mobility, dexterity, sensory, and communication impairments; learning disabilities; continence needs; and people whose mental well-being should be supported by a thoughtfully crafted and managed environment.

Consultation is key to inclusive design. Right from the outset of any project, particular attention should be paid to those likely to be overlooked or whose views are less likely to be accommodated. This includes women and transgender people, elderly and younger people and children, religious minorities, poorer and socially excluded communities, lesbians and gay men, black and minority ethnic people. This does not happen enough; for instance, people who are victims of racist and homophobic hate crime are unlikely to be consulted about the design of public spaces.

13 *Inclusive Design Strategy*, **Olympic Delivery Authority (2008)**

14 *The principles of inclusive design.(They include you.),* **CABE (2006) Available from www.cabe.org.uk/ publications**

Good space design creates an inclusive space to relax and play – a place designed with everyone in mind

The Hub, Regent's Park: a place to meet, watch and play sport. Built for the Royal Parks, the Hub includes changing facilities for people with disabilities. Its development involved the London Sports Forum for Disabled People, which promotes an 'inclusive and active' initiative with Sport England and the Greater London Authority

A space to enjoy

Well-maintained parks and green spaces help us to unwind and relax and are good for our health, well-being and for sociability across communities. Inclusive design means an open space that is safe, accessible, practical and a pleasure to use. It means:

- a park with vigilant and sensitive staff
- a park with clean and safe facilities
- a place with good lighting and clear signs
- a place with children and adults in mind
- a park with smooth flat paths for getting around and humps and bumps to play and lounge on
- a park where people can exercise and be healthy
- a warm place to linger and talk
- a place that encourages mixing between different groups.

Good space design creates an inclusive space to relax and play; a place designed with everyone in mind.

Housing, streets, neighbourhoods, public spaces and local amenities can be designed and managed to accommodate the different ways in which people experience the built environment. Examples of inclusion in design include:

- homes that are designed with wide hallways can accommodate baby buggies, teenagers' bikes, crutches, hikers' equipment, children's toys and a Zimmer frame, ensuring they are practical for all stages of life

- housing that is designed so that windows overlook well-connected streets helps to create public spaces where vulnerable people feel safer

- estates that have safe places for young people to hang out, designed with their participation, can help reduce intergenerational conflict

- neighbourhoods that are designed to be distinctive and easy to navigate help people with dementia find their way around

- uncluttered and clearly signposted pavements will benefit people with sight or mobility impairments

- parks and tracks that have pruned-back bushes and clear sight-lines will feel safer for women and teenagers

- hospitals with good transport links and cheap parking will benefit less well-off families

- schools that design out isolated corners and remote toilet blocks minimise opportunities for bullying

- town squares that have shady, secure seating will benefit older people

- a well-lit and clearly signed bus/train interchange with warm waiting rooms and clean toilets will benefit older people.

" The desire to balance demands for diversity with public values of social integration and community cohesion is a challenge for the built environment professions. The aesthetics of place need to break free from historic preconceptions that assume universal principles and homogeneous societies. The way in which race and space manifests itself in the built environment has to be understood through the subtle, sensual and inconspicuous experiences of black and minority ethnic people in all their diversity, as well as their reading of public and green spaces, travel and safety and work and leisure. **"**

Karin Woodley
Chief executive
Stephen Lawrence CharitableTrust
www.stephenlawrence.org

The benefits of inclusive design

There is a strong link between the design and management of the buildings, spaces and places and the development of a more equal and inclusive society. Places that are inclusive should:

- be welcoming and for everyone

- be accessible and easy to use, with dignity and without undue effort or anxiety

- enhance our mental and physical health and well-being

- reflect the diversity of today's society while building on the history of local areas

- encourage mutual and harmonious relations between social groups and ensure that economic resources are evenly and fairly shared.

These principles are embedded in a range of national standards and best practice guidance including Building for Life,[15] Code for Sustainable Homes,[16] Lifetime Homes standards,[17] Manual for Streets,[18] *The principles of inclusive design*,[19] Planning policy statements 1, 3, 6 and 12 and planning policy guidance note 17.[20]

Exclusive design

Places and spaces are sometimes deliberately designed and managed to exclude people, and the implications of this need careful thought.

Benches that people cannot lie down on 'design out' street homeless people; bubbled slopes prevent skateboarders.[21] Deliberate exclusion is also about straight exclusivity: gated communities or privatised river frontages can create a sense of 'them and us', leaving people feeling quite literally excluded.

Places in the centres of towns and cities which appear to be public realm but are in fact privately managed may seek to exclude certain groups, often young people, to address fears about anti-social behaviour. A company developing a shopping centre could argue that some people would put off the consumers who buy the goods that ultimately pay for the shopping centre. This may be a decision made in the perceived interests of the wider community, but once again it can create a sense of them and us.

Assertive teenagers, street drinkers, the very poor, shabby or disorientated do have the right to use public spaces – within the bounds of socially acceptable behaviour.

These can be very difficult issues, not least because the behaviour of vulnerable groups can impact most strongly on other vulnerable groups. But it is not justifiable to create environments that exclude certain groups because of a generalised and perceived threat to others.

15 Further details at www.buildingforlife.org

16 Communities and Local Government (2008) *The Code for Sustainable Homes: Setting the standard in sustainability for new homes*

17 Lifetime Homes Standards have been developed by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and are increasingly being adopted. For more details see www.jrf.org.uk/housingandcare/lifetimehomes

18 Department for Transport *Manual for Streets* (2007)

19 *The principles of inclusive design. (They include you.)*, CABE (2006)

20 Planning policy statements are available from the CLG website, www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding

21 *What kind of world are we building? The privatisation of public space*, Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (2006)

Royal Festival Hall, London: the restoration of the Grade I-listed public building has created an open and accessible foyer space, excellent acoustic standards in the main auditorium and a new glass scenic lift offering access to all parts of the building. Programming takes cultural learning into the community

A centre for culture

Inclusive design means a cultural space that is accessible, inviting and exciting to use. It means:

- a place that is affordable
- a place that isn't stuffy
- a place that you can use with dignity and free from anxiety
- a place where you aren't talked down to
- a place where you can linger if you want to
- a place you can get home from safely
- a programme that stimulates your interest
- management that knows that comfort is important
- management that uses up-to-date technology to maximise participation.

Good cultural design creates an inclusive place of enjoyment – a true people's palace – and a place with a sense of belonging.

Diversity in the built environment professions

The built environment is created and managed by a wide range of professions, including architects, planners, landscape architects, engineers, quantity surveyors, and park managers. Professions that mirror the diversity of the society they serve have a much greater chance of creating a built environment that suits that society.

CABE has published three pieces of research into the composition of the relevant professions. Two of them, published in 2005, were primarily concerned with building. These studies, *Minority ethnic representation in the built environment professions* and *Architecture and race: a study of minority ethnic students in the profession*,[22] confirmed that the precise information about representation in the built environment professions was unknown, largely because institutions had failed to monitor their members or employees. However, we do know from the studies that only 2 per cent of registered architects are black and minority ethnic compared to 8 per cent of the population being from a minority ethnic group.[23] Sunand Prasad, the president of the RIBA, notes that the construction industry professions are disproportionately white men. 'CABE's research established that black architecture students are less likely than white students to complete their progress through architectural education and have one quarter of the odds of getting a first class degree as compared to a white student.'

In 2004, CABE Space's research into local authority park workforces, *Parks need people*, also noted a workforce that does not represent the society it serves. 'Staff composition is unrepresentative of the community of park users and the working population as a whole, comprising predominantly white men aged over 40,' it said. 'There is virtually no ethnic diversity and the proportion of women working in the sector is only around 10 per cent. The workforce is an ageing one, with 68 per cent over 40 and 92 per cent over 30 years old.'

22 Both available from
www.cabe.org.uk/publications

23 Office of National Statistics,
tinyurl.com/4635u

Priorities for action

Five high priorities for CABE

There are both ethical and pragmatic arguments for acting on equality and inclusion in the built environment. A more equal, inclusive and sustainable environment contributes to a fairer, more democratic and tolerant society.

A more inclusive built environment taps into neglected talent, uses human resources more intelligently and is therefore more economically resilient and socially vibrant.

Getting it right on the built environment promotes our health, well-being and sense of inclusion. Action on these issues is about the economic, social and cultural wellbeing of our society, in which we all have a role to play.

Users take centre stage at CABE

CABE has set up a new inclusion by design group to advise on all aspects of inclusive design and equality. The 20 members bring to the discussion both professional expertise and specific user perspectives. The new group will help CABE turn principles into practice.

1 Work with other professional institutions to increase the diversity of those joining and rising in the built environment professions – identifying practical strategies for change within the professions, supporting imaginative positive action programmes, setting targets, and rewarding successful diversity initiatives.

2 Use our influence with the built environment professions to promote inclusive and equitable design, through our design review panels, enabling schemes, awards and the promotion of best practice. Ensure that inclusive design remains a corporate priority.

3 Promote with increased rigour the principles and practice of inclusive design, and the involvement of access specialists and disabled people in the development of all major schemes that come to CABE.

4 Research further the connections between sustainability and equality, and promote an integrated agenda of environmental equity through good practice.

5 Lead by example on equality and inclusion, building a diverse workforce and CABE 'family' – the commissioners, enablers, design review panellists and other professionals who advise us. Ensure that 100 per cent of CABE's family understand their role in promoting this agenda, with every CABE activity and publication containing appropriate coverage of equality and inclusive design.

The CABE equality scheme contains our detailed action plan on equality and inclusion.

Adelaide Wharf, Hackney: high-density, high-quality affordable homes, including apartments for key workers. The scheme aims to be socially diverse and tenure blind, providing 73 private flats and 33 for affordable rent

A place to live

Inclusive design means a place to live that is adaptable, practical, secure and somewhere you want to settle. It means:

- a place that is affordable
- a place that has enough room
- a place that is easy to adapt
- a place where wheelchairs and pushchairs have been thought about
- a place that is designed for day-to-day use
- a place built to last and not to waste resources
- a place that generates a sense of community
- a place where privacy is balanced with community vigilance
- a place with facilities close to hand.

Good housing design creates places that everyone could call home.

Five high priorities for the professions

1 Collect data on the composition of the professions, and use this evidence to broaden the diversity of representation.

2 Work collaboratively across professional teams to maximise expertise and understanding of inclusion and equality.

3 Take care to consult and involve the people most likely to be affected by any changes.

4 Do more than you need to. Work with clients to exceed the regulatory and good practice guidance on inclusive design, and comply with guidance on the provision of lifetime and wheelchair accessible homes. Exceed the public duties on race, gender and disability equality.

5 Use access specialists throughout a project – from concept to post-occupancy stages.

Five high priorities for local authorities

1 Do more than you need to. Continue to act on the legal responsibility under the public duties on race, gender and disability to promote equality, involvement and consultation – and exceed it where you can.

2 Creating successful places means consulting people, so always involve local people in discussions about future developments. Build a track record of involvement and listening. Use imaginative methods of involvement.

3 Communicate proposals effectively, using accessible, plain language. Offer training in design and planning for access groups and people from communities and encourage people to act as ambassadors for their communities in design processes.

4 Set up an access group for major schemes and get an access consultant on board.

5 Ensure that local investment and planning promote environmental equality and cohesive, sustainable communities.

What do you think of this briefing? Let us know by emailing equalities@cabe.org.uk

Places for all

Across the country there are outstanding examples of where good design has delivered places that work for all people. Here we highlight three projects that in their own way take forward inclusive design provision

Aspire, Stanmore: integrated training and fitness

The national training centre for the spinal injuries charity Aspire is the first fitness and training centre in Europe designed for both disabled and non-disabled people. The centre is open to everyone. About a third of the members are disabled and the centre offers them subsidised membership. Its features include:

- a 25-metre swimming pool with ramped access for wheelchair users. Its water temperature of 32° makes it suitable for people of all ages
- a gymnasium with fitness equipment designed for workouts by both non-disabled and disabled users (seats swing aside to allow wheelchairs to move in when needed)
- a sports hall for badminton, five-a-side football, wheelchair rugby and basketball
- a dance studio that is both the national home to the internationally acclaimed integrated dance company Candoco, featuring disabled and non-disabled dancers, and a space where arts activities can happen.

Aspire's ethos is about making few distinctions between disabled and non-disabled people – and the all-embracing philosophy is supported by the centre's inclusive design. Rather than male, female and disabled toilets it has unisex toilets that are accessible to everyone. And fire exits from the centre have ramps leading down from the first floor, avoiding the need for refuge spaces.

The building's design, alongside the centre's facilities, equipment and trained staff, is endorsed by the charity-led national inclusive fitness initiative (see www.inclusivefitness.org.uk for more information).

www.aspire.org.uk

Changing Places: making towns and cities accessible

Many places have 'accessible' toilets that are designed for disabled people. But very often they don't meet the needs of all disabled people. The UK has approximately 40,000 people with profound and multiple learning difficulties who often need more help changing or using the toilet than is possible in usual disabled facilities.

Changing Places, a national consortium of charities and public bodies, campaigns for toilets with enough space for disabled people and their carers to change with ease and with dignity. It has provided more than 50 special toilets across the country, including in the London's Tate Modern and at Gateshead's Sage centre. Changing Places toilets are different to standard disabled toilets. They provide:

Equipment
- a height-adjustable changing bench
- a tracking hoist system, or mobile hoist if this is not possible.

Space
- adequate space in the changing area for the disabled person and up to two carers
- a centrally placed toilet with room either side for the carers
- a screen or curtain to allow the disabled person and carer some privacy.

Safe and clean environment
- wide tear-off paper roll to cover the bench.

www.changing-places.org

Spa Fields, Islington: community consultation and engagement

The redevelopment of the public space at Spa Fields shows how involving the community in the design and construction of spaces can be hugely beneficial. Spa Fields was created over 200 years ago, but it had become dilapidated and residents avoided it and felt unsafe there. Close consultation and engagement with the community has helped produce a friendly, inclusive space.

A path running through the eastern end of the park shows how consultation can improve design. Previously it ran through the centre of a small depression near to bushes. After a workshop with local women, run by the Women's Design Service, it was raised and placed on one side. As well as better visibility it felt safer and encouraged more people to walk along it. It is fully inclusive – this route goes through the younger people's play area, encouraging its use as a space for everybody.

The space was opened up to allow greater access and visibility. A new entrance passage encourages greater movement through the space. A stainless steel gate acts as a mirror, showing visitors whether the gates are open and the park is busy before they walk up the alley. Private spaces are cordoned off from many angles, but remain accessible and with clear sightlines.

Engagement with young people of the area has meant the park remains well used with very little vandalism. During construction, 13 local young people were given work experience on the site. Three went on to get permanent jobs with the construction company, aiding the sense of local ownership.

www.wds.org.uk

Until recently, discussion about equality and the built environment focussed on physical access – or the lack of it. As physical access has improved, the discussion has widened to address cultural and economic access, recognising that design plays a vital role in including, and often excluding, communities. *Inclusion by design* sets out CABE's position on equality, diversity and the built environment. It offers everyday examples from urban living demonstrating how good design can help create places that work for everyone. *Inclusion by design* will interest design professionals and people working in government, as well as everyone working with CABE.

Barking Town Square: a major new public space for east London. The scheme design, by muf architecture/art and Allford Hall Monaghan Morris and shown here in its finishing stages with new chandeliers under wraps, followed detailed discussion with access consultants. The Barking scheme involved diverse local groups in its detailed design, including students, African-Caribbean elders and apprentice bricklayers. It features public art recreating an imaginary lost past of Barking.