



Gender mainstreaming in urban planning:

What can the UK learn from Vienna with regards to adopting a gender mainstreaming approach to shape built outcomes?

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About Me



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I also co-lead the London Chapter of Urbanistas a collaborative women-led network for built environment professionals and women interested in cities, amplifying women's voices and ideas to make cities better for everyone.

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**It's not about
feminism. It's about
doing things better.**

-Maria Vassilakou

Former Deputy Mayor responsible for Urban Planning, Traffic and
Transport, Climate Protection, Energy and Citizen Participation

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INTRODUCTION

Half of our population is made up of women. Yet historically cities have been planned by men. Our towns and cities have inadvertently been designed without considering how half of the people living in them go about their daily lives. This was where my research started.

This research investigates 'gender mainstreaming' in urban planning policy in Vienna and its tangible impacts on planning practice and built outcomes. This report summarises the findings from a four week study period in Vienna undertaken during Autumn 2019.

'Gender mainstreaming' is the integration of the gender perspective into every stage of policy processes – design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation – with a view to promoting equality between women and men.

The current wave of feminism is gaining significant momentum. Therefore the time is ripe to forefront the issue within the planning agenda. Although much academic research exists on the importance of gender mainstreaming, it has not yet become the norm in planning policy-making practice, with limited examples in England. However, Vienna, which this study focuses on, started adopting the approach in the early 1990s. It has led the way so is at the forefront of practice. The city government has a whole Municipal Department dedicated to Women's Affairs (responsible for promoting the empowerment of women in the city). Vienna has adopted gender mainstreaming in a number of areas of city administration, but it has had the greatest impact within urban planning.

This study gathers insights from planners and politicians in Vienna to understand the context it has arisen in, the impacts of the policy on planning practice, and the impact of these on built outcomes. Through a series of interviews combined with visits to gender-sensitive projects that had been implemented, the research brings together insights of how gender mainstreaming practice has been used in Vienna. The study aims to provide a set of lessons that could be transferred and practically applied in the UK.

THE VIENNESE CONTEXT

In 2009, Austria became one of three countries worldwide which have made Gender budgeting part of their constitution.

Gender Mainstreaming and Gender Budgeting in Vienna

Austria is not renowned for progressive thinking towards gender equity. However, in 2000 the Austrian Federal government committed to implementing a gender mainstreaming strategy and set up a ministerial working group tasked with creating the strategy. In 2009, it became one of three countries worldwide which have made Gender budgeting part of their constitution. There is no explicit requirement for gender to be taken into account within planning policy, but it is within this context that it has arisen.

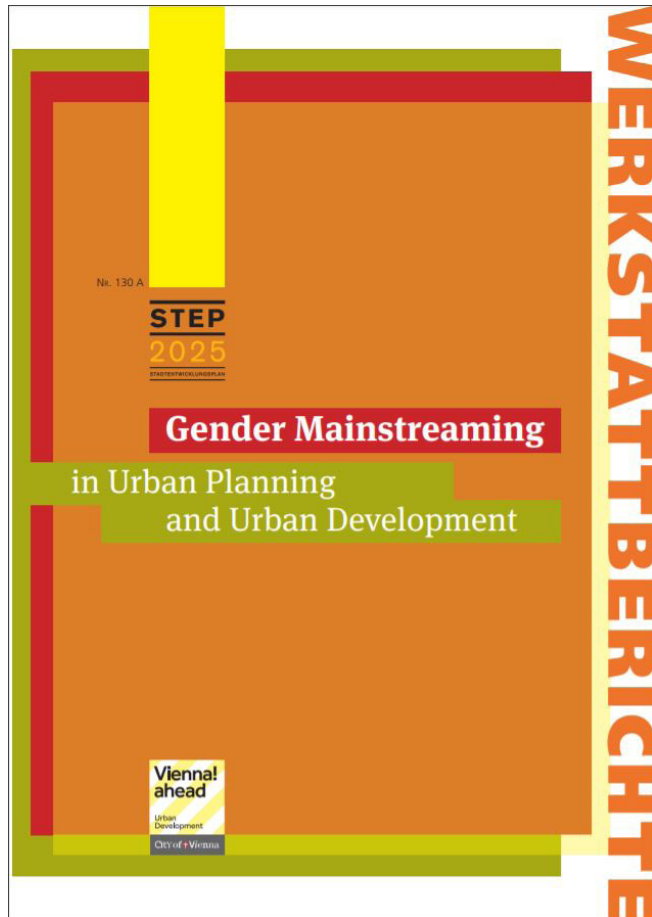
The Austrian Planning System

Austria's land use planning system is tiered, from national to federal and municipal. The regulation of building

and development activities i.e. land use designation, protection zones, and nature conservation etc. are the responsibility of the federal and municipal authorities.

Vienna's Urban Development Plan: STEP 2025

In Vienna, the Urban Development Plan, STEP 2025 sets out a high level strategy to shape the city's future development. It sets out a strategy for key fields of action of the city, such as housing, green and open spaces, economy, and infrastructure. Alongside this, the city's building code is far more prescriptive, setting out building lines at the front and back of plots, as well as heights and land use, meaning Vienna essentially has a zoned system.



Vienna's Gender Mainstreaming Manual

Vienna's Gender Mainstreaming Manual

Vienna's municipality has produced a whole document dedicated to gender mainstreaming in urban planning and development entitled "Manual for Gender Mainstreaming in Urban Planning and Urban Development". It is intended to be a tool for quality assurance by planners. The guidance contains prompts and objectives, as well as practical case study examples to illustrate how gender mainstreaming has practically been achieved on 50 pilot projects. This manual sits alongside the city's development plan.



STEP 2025: Vienna's Urban Development Framework

METHODOLOGY & RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The research aims to generate an in-depth case study of gender mainstreaming in Vienna focusing on three specific research questions.

Research Questions

1: What were the **historical** and **political** contexts that enabled gender mainstreaming to be forefronted in planning policy in Vienna?

2: How did city planning officials **navigate the political context** to incorporate gender mainstreaming into standard practice?

3: What **planning issues** were adapted as a result of gender mainstreaming and how actively were these ideas **implemented**?

The methodology relies solely on qualitative methods, which are most appropriate for revealing fine-grained nuanced insights. A number of qualitative methods were combined to create a rich body of evidence, focusing on 'people', 'policy' and 'projects'.

observe the projects first hand how the measures implemented influence the use of these spaces.

The overall report brings together the various strands of research into a single coherent body of research.

- **People:** Primary evidence was collected from officers through a series of oral histories and semi-structured interviews. Eva Kail, who is the city's 'Gender Expert' and was pivotal in initiating a gender sensitive approach was the first point of contact. Other former officers and key political figures who also played a key role were interviewed.
- **Policy:** A comprehensive review of the Gender Mainstreaming Manual was undertaken to assess which planning issues are considered through a gender lens in the planning process.
- **Projects:** A number of specific pilot projects, described in the manual, were visited to

RESEARCH QUESTION 1:

What was the **historical and political context** that enabled gender mainstreaming to be forefronted in planning policy in Vienna?

When we started Gender Planning and the Women's Co-ordination office 30 years ago, it was really very much the spirit of the times.

Eva Kail on Gender Sensitive Planning

Political Context

The political context was undoubtedly an important factor that enabled a gender mainstreaming approach to urban planning to emerge. Just prior to the topic gaining momentum, there was a social democrat majority and a good proportion of green councillors. Councillors from both these parties were most supportive of promoting women's advancement. They worked together on issues including recruitment and representation as well as structural and policy issues.

Interestingly, some interviewed suggested that women's issues were not exclusively promoted by female councillors, but also by male councillors, though this was thought to be a political tactic to boost their female vote. Two female politicians who were instrumental in the matter in different ways were Renate Brauner and Renate Kaufman. Renate Brauner served in a number of roles including Council member, deputy governor and vice Mayor of Vienna between 1990-2018. She was a proponent of quotas to ensure that women entered into key decision making positions within the municipality. Her advocacy helped a number of women into key positions in the administration which put in place a generation of female officers at a high level who had the power to propel change. Renate Kauffman was

She was really pushing the measures for this project

Elisabeth Irschik on Renate Kauffman



Renate Kaufmann, leader of Vienna's Gender Mainstreaming 'pilot district' (Image Credit: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/3/39/GuentherZ_2012-06-05_0044_Wien06_Johanna-Dohnal-Platz_Renate_Kaufmann.jpg)

the leader of the 6th district of Vienna, which was the first pilot district across which gender mainstreaming planning principles were trialed. Without her political support the initial pilot projects which were instrumental in gaining wider buy in would not have been possible.

Establishment of the Women's Office

The political backdrop was only one factor that helped Vienna. The sustained efforts of city officers were also essential. The political focus on women's issues created an enabling context that allowed individual events to build with enough momentum to grow into a bigger movement that could be sustained.

In 1991 the municipality set up an exhibition entitled "Who does public space belong to? - women's everyday life in the city" which illustrated how women use cities and public spaces. This exhibition is often attributed as the start of the process. Around four thousand people visited the exhibition in the two months it was open - an impressive number for an exhibition about planning. The exhibition gained significant media attention and played a part in bringing about the department for Women's Affairs in Vienna's city government shortly after. The department's responsibility is to bring about women's empowerment within Vienna. Then in 1998 a specialist planning unit was created called the 'Coordination Office for Planning and Construction Geared to the requirements of Daily Life and the Specific Needs of Women'. They had responsibility for assessing gender related quality in planning and development projects

around the city on an ongoing basis, and were placed at the highest level of the City Administration - acting as a signal of the political weight given to the issue. What was special about the position of planners in this unit is that they worked across different departments, in a way that would not usually be done, with a specific focus on bringing a gender lens to development projects.

The creation of the new office with dedicated staff was undoubtedly crucial, but a number of other factors also influenced its success. Eva Kail, who was appointed as head of the new office, had previously been the head of the city's overall department for Women's Affairs. Because of this she already had a good rapport with many influential politicians across the City Council, as well as having a good standing with other officers in the municipality. The role of the office was cross-cutting and required work across different departments, bringing different interests together and aligning them with a gender focused lens. Eva's former colleagues cite her ability to build upon her existing relationships as pivotal to her efficacy in this role. One colleague also noted that the timing of the launch of this office was especially lucky. Around the time it was decided to create the coordination office Eva was due to be returning from maternity leave. Eva was also a qualified planner making her the perfect candidate to head up the new team. This can also be attributed to why gender mainstreaming has always had a very strong aspect of considering urban planning in Vienna.

Timeline of Events: Building Momentum

- **1991:** Exhibition - "Who does public space belong to- Women's everyday life in the city"
- **1992:** Department of Women's Affairs established in city government
- **1997:** First housing project by and for women completed
- **1998:** Coordination office geared to the requirement of daily life and the specific needs of women
- **1999:** First gender sensitive park design pilot project completed
- **2000:** Gender sensitive park design incorporated into City's Strategy Plan
- **2002:** Vienna's 6th district 'Mariahilf' nominated as gender mainstreaming pilot district requiring all new interventions in public space to consider gender sensitive design
- **2004:** Second female-focused housing project completed

The (Former) Women's Coordination Office for Planning and Construction Geared to the Requirements of Daily Life and the Specific Needs of Women (1998-2009)

City of Vienna Officers



Eva Kail

Eva Kail has been working for the City of Vienna since 1986. She is the Gender Planning Expert in an Executive Group. She was the first Head of the Women's Office (1991-1998) and built up and run the "Co-Ordination Office."



Elisabeth Irschik

She joined the team in 2004 and is a Planner by background. She studied at the University of Vienna. She now works at Municipal Department for Architecture and Urban Design (MA18).



Claudia Prinz-Brandenberg

Holds a degree in landscape planning. Her main fields of work were gender aspects in subsidised housing projects, public space including urban open space and parks as well as open space for schools and kindergartens.

In Vienna Gender Sensitive Planning came first. Creating public spaces that are equitable for everybody- that are people centred not car centred- came after. In a way, gender-sensitive planning was kind of an eyeopener.

Maria Vassilakou

RESEARCH QUESTION 2:

How did city planning officials **navigate the political context** to incorporate gender mainstreaming into standard practice?

Especially when you have mainstreamed it, you can actually start transforming the city without anybody realising.

Maria Vassilakou on tactics to employ Gender Mainstreaming

The Power of Pilot Projects

The conversations about the success of Vienna's Gender Mainstreaming approach, all lead back to one point - the pilot projects. Implementation of Vienna's gender sensitive planning began with a series of pilot projects which took place around the city. They ranged from improving streetscapes and public parks to a small number of housing projects that were designed by women with women in mind. Using pilot projects was beneficial for a number of reasons:

1. Providing tangible outcomes:

Starting with this approach translated the concept of gender sensitive planning into a tangible outcome, rather than promoting it as an abstract idealistic concept, helping to build political support for the issue. It also allowed for a quick feedback loop to learn from experience and make successive interventions more effective.

2. Delivering quick results:

Delivering quick and visible results was also beneficial as it allowed politicians to demonstrate to voters what they had done to improve women's lives and gain wider political support to enable gender mainstreaming to benefit from a sustained focus.

3. Highly visible projects:

The visibility of pilot projects meant that once work had started politicians were obligated to complete them, regardless of any political changes. Halting

highly visible projects could not be done without attracting significant public attention, unlike comparable gender sensitive social programmes, where funding could be reduced or withdrawn more surreptitiously.

4. Tactical project selection:

The use of pilot projects also allowed officers to tactically pick the projects with the greatest chance of success. Ensuring the first pilot projects were successful was crucial to ensuring continued support for a gender sensitive approach.

5. Small yet impactful measures:

Implementing a series of discrete small projects and measures was also a useful strategy, as this meant that each measure itself was not costly, thus limiting the spending commitment. This helped to ensure they could gain political support, but at once were highly impactful on a local level delivering tangible benefits to residents lives.

After the planners in Vienna implemented the initial pilot projects, they created more strategic level guidance, which drew lessons learnt from applied practice. Doing it this way around was essential, as it not only enabled actions to be realised quickly, but also emboldened politicians to support gender sensitive planning at a more strategic level. Interventions which were readily visible to residents acted as a fast litmus test, giving politicians a clearer idea of the level of public support their continued efforts in this realm would gain.

To work on specific measures is very important, not to work on an abstract level, but just to do it.

Elisabeth Irschik on why Pilot Projects were effective



The central pedestrianised route in Frauen-Werk-Stadt 1: The first gender sensitive housing development. In recognition of the majority of women being pedestrians.



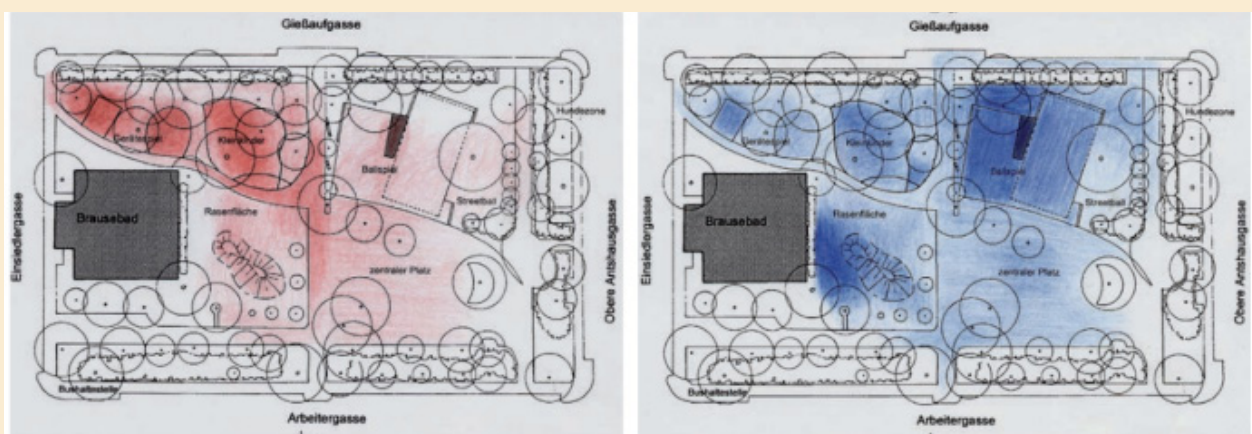
New neighbourhood park in Nordbahnhof without barriers around the children's play areas.

Pilot Project Example: Gender Sensitive Adaptations to Einsiedler Park

Einsiedler Park is a good example of a pilot project where gender sensitive planning was applied. The city's planners analysed an existing park focussing specifically on the play areas, to understand how boys and girls were using the space differently. Here they found that boys were dominating the ball courts, meaning that girls between ages 9-12 were not using the park at all.

The city's planners undertook detailed 'social space analysis' - closely examining behaviour of people moving through the space - to understand what it was about the spaces that was deterring young girls from using them. They found that small things influenced how the spaces were being used. Girls were put off from entering the spaces altogether when groups of boys congregated around the entrances. They also found that when girls entered the space they preferred to watch for a while before getting involved in games. And they also found that when girls were using the space they

would use it in a variety of ways, which were not always for the intended purposes of football or basketball. The planners worked with their parks maintenance department and a design team to introduce very small scale, cheap, interventions that had large impact on how the space was used. In this park there were 2 existing ball courts adjacent to one another. On the second ball court they created multiple entrances around the periphery to reduce young girls from fearing entering, as there were multiple ways out. They also created a platform between the two courts, that acted as seating and a social space, that encouraged girls to observe games and build confidence to join in. And finally, they removed the ball court markings from the floor of one of the courts. This simple step had great effects, with girls starting to use the space in a variety of different ways - including an impromptu dance performance space using the seating platform as a stage.



Unterschiedliche Nutzungs- und Aufenthaltsräume von Mädchen (links) und Buben (rechts)

Extract of Gender focused Social Space Analysis of Einsiedler Park



*_Left
The central 'stage' in
Einsiedler Park, including
additional entrance/exit
from ball court.*

*_Below
The wide opening at the
edge of one side of the
ball court to discourage
children congregating
around the entrance
and intimidating less
confident children from
entering.*





_Left

*Maria Vassilakou,
Former Deputy Mayor
responsible for Urban
Planning, Traffic and
Transport, Climate Protection,
Energy and Citizen
Participation.*

*(Image Credit: [https://
www.flickr.com/photos/
usembvienna/17545278112](https://www.flickr.com/photos/usembvienna/17545278112))*

What made it so successful over the years is that the results were so beautiful and that people love the spaces. And everybody can experience how much better it is. In many cases people do not realise that this is gender specific planning but they enjoy the results.

On why Gender Mainstreaming worked in Vienna

Navigating Resistance from Co-workers

The strategy of using pilot projects was a strong starting point. However, not all city officers and politicians were persuaded of the benefits of adopting a gender mainstreaming approach.

Establishing an entirely new team dedicated to the issue, and situating this within the chief executive's office - the highest level of the administration - was a clear signal to others working across the city government of the political importance of the issue. Similar arrangements were used at different levels. For projects located within the gender mainstreaming pilot district a 'gender quality board,' made up of a panel of experts was created with the express aim of assessing the gender aspects of emerging design proposals. The board acted as a reminder that design teams needed to consider gender issues throughout the design process, and also had a performative role by putting in place a body to whom they had to remain accountable to. Alongside the formal review process, city officers also used informal discussions over lunches directly after the formal reviews to have more open and critical debates. They would then set up workshops on issues raised, and work with the design team to improve design proposals if they were lacking. This shows how both formal and informal

structures played an important role in influencing and improving gender sensitive outcomes.

Officers used a range of tactics if they faced resistance to get the desired outcomes. In some cases this meant simply putting measures into action without seeking consensus, if this was possible. In other cases this involved presenting ideas without the explicit mention of 'gender mainstreaming' to avoid resistance from those who were opposed to the principle. The language used to frame ideas also had to be carefully considered to appeal to the interests of others. Even the 'branding' of the team responsible for gender sensitive planning evolved over time. The office was initially named 'Coordination Office for Planning and Construction Geared to the requirements of Daily Life and the Specific Needs of Women,' then officials were termed 'Gender Experts,' and more recently the term 'Fair Shared City' has been used removing the emphasis on gender altogether, though gender still remains very much a focus.

Another strategy the planners in Vienna used to persuade others, was through use of data and evidence to support their case; this occurred in two ways. A 'social space analysis' methodology was developed, that could

be applied to analyse how existing spaces were used by people. Results from this were broken down into specific demographic groups to uncover differences in how different groups used the space. This evidence could then be used to proactively inform the brief for the design or renewal of new spaces. The second way was more retroactive. When specific issues in neighbourhoods had already been identified by local residents and politicians, they then gathered data to prove the issues existed to support the case for change. When they were still met with resistance, temporary trials were installed to test and demonstrate how proposals would work in practice. This was innovative in its time, and led to the permanent installation of a new crossing along a well used route to a local school in the gender sensitive pilot district.



Extract from Gender Mainstreaming Manual illustrating the city's GIS database mapping areas requiring widening of footpath to meet 'best practice' standards

[Effective documentation is important] so you can see examples. You can go with it to the district politicians. And they say 'Ahhhh... This is in the 15th district' Then they want to do it as well - 'Why can't we do this in my district?'

Elisabeth Irschik on creating effective documentation

Creating Effective Documentation

Officers also emphasised the importance of having effective documentation that complemented the pilot projects. Creating a collection of precedents of physical interventions that had already been completed was the first step. By collating what had been done in a single place, politicians and other officers could see what had already worked well elsewhere around the city and easily understand how these outcomes might be applied elsewhere. Officers also worked hard to come up with a planning document that was not overly dry or technocratic, but used narratives to explain how even small interventions could create a big impact



Vienna focuses on including practical examples of projects which meet defined aims such as gender sensitive planning to make them more tangible and more accessible

Working with District Politicians

As with any planning initiative, it was important for

officers to work closely with relevant district politicians. The pilot projects that officers chose came very much from a 'bottom up' local level and ideas often came from local politicians. Close collaboration between city officers and district politicians was also particularly important as district politicians held decision making powers relating to financing improvements in public spaces such as streets and squares. Although many of the gender sensitive measures were small and not too costly, gaining local level support made financing initiatives easier as local funds could be used.

Shifting the Culture

The planners' aim of gender mainstreaming in Vienna was to create an organisation where it was an automatic reflex for officers and elected representatives across all departments to consider and actively incorporate these ideas into their work. Creating this kind of institutional transformation occurred over a long period of time as knowledge was developed by individuals from practical experience. Resources were also invested in internal awareness raising programmes. However, as these have not been sustained and as the generation of planners who benefitted leave the city government the institutional knowledge and awareness that was built up are starting to be depleted, as younger workers have less awareness of the topic. Nevertheless, Eva Kail suggested that perhaps one indicator of success is that, rather than officers having gender sensitive planning ideas imposed upon them, Heads of Departments sometimes now seek out advice from her directly as they recognise the added value this brings.

RESEARCH QUESTION 3:

What **planning issues** were adapted as a result of gender mainstreaming and how actively were these ideas **implemented**?

This is the gender relevant level- where conflicts of targets are decided.

Eva Kail on the importance of policy implementation.

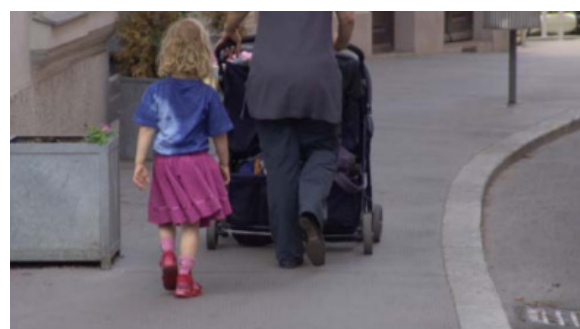
Vienna's planners' applied gender mainstreaming principles to a full range of planning issues, from land use to parks and public spaces. The area it had the greatest impact on was parks and public spaces, as pilot projects made it easier to make change on a project by project basis. Mobility has also been a key focus of gender sensitive planning, however the challenge is that impactful change here requires transformation of a whole system.

Mobility

Data gathered by Vienna's planners following the exhibition in 1991, illustrated a stark contrast in the proportion of pedestrian and car users by gender. Women made up a far higher proportion of the former, and men the latter. As a result, a large number of gender sensitive projects focussed on improving the quality of public space to improve the pedestrian environment. This included widening pavements, introducing new pedestrian crossings, installing a public lift, and redesigning two public squares.

How pavements can be used dependent on the width is illustrated in the Gender Mainstreaming manual. This is used as the basis for a city wide database which spatially maps pavement widths. The GIS map identifies where

there are pavement width deficiencies. In some areas the planners also mapped desire lines, relating this to the location of public buildings. They used this information to identify where crossings could be introduced to align with desire lines, and where pavement widening could help (e.g. in front of schools or other institutions.) Pavement enhancements were systematically made across the pilot district over time, aligned with the city's maintenance programme.



*Above: Pedestrian improvements in the pilot district.
Image source: <https://urbesforall.files.wordpress.com/2013/01/gender-implementation-in-viena-eva-kail.pdf>*

Land Use

Planners in Vienna recognised that the distribution of both space and time are important factors to consider in a gender sensitive approach to planning, acknowledging that often women, or those providing caring responsibilities, have more complex travel needs and patterns. Although they understood that land use plays a large role in creating more gender equitable cities, this has not led to a radical shift in the approach to land use planning. Vienna, like any other city is subject to the neoliberal forces of market capitalism, by which land use is primarily dictated. However, where specific non-residential uses are proposed at the ground floor of residential buildings both the internal and external dimensions of proposed spaces are assessed to ensure that the spaces created will be suitable for the desired uses. For example

where kindergartens are proposed, building layouts must be created that provide enough outdoor space of an appropriate quality. This assures that where land uses are proposed this can genuinely be secured by ensuring it meets the needs of the intended occupiers, to positively benefit those with caring responsibilities.

Parks and Public Spaces

Whilst a gender sensitive planning approach was applied to some public buildings and public housing projects, it has been most prolific in parks and public spaces. This includes redesigns of both streetscapes and public spaces and parks. The prominence of public space within the focus of gender sensitive planning is perhaps due to a combination of factors. Firstly, because the exhibition which originally acted as the catalyst for establishing the Coordination office focused



In December 2007 the new Graetzelplatz was opened

—Above: Example of public space improvements. Image source: <https://urbesforall.files.wordpress.com/2013/01/gender-implementation-in-vienna-eva-kail.pdf>

on women's use of public space. Secondly, the city has the most control over public spaces, as it owns and funds improvements in these. Thirdly, because the impetus for Gender Sensitive Planning came from politicians and led to a need to make visible change was easiest by making changes to public spaces that already existed to enable them to function better for citizens. The design of public realm has been intrinsically linked to pedestrian mobility, discussed above. Park design and redesign has been based on in depth analysis of how different genders use existing spaces, and taking this into consideration in the design of these spaces. Einsiedler park is a good exemplar of where an existing park was re-designed on this basis (see case study on pages 22-23).

Housing

The impact of gender sensitive planning on housing projects has been comparatively limited, as the city's planners were only able to enforce this on selected projects. Nevertheless, Vienna has built three housing developments which specifically take into consideration the needs of women in their design. In 1993/94 the city's Women's office commissioned eight women-architects to cooperate in a team to outline a scheme for the city's first gender sensitive housing pilot project - Frauenwerkstadt 1.

The project had two main objectives:

- To further female architects and increase their recognition in the planning profession; and

- To show how the theoretical aims of gender sensitive design could be translated into practice.

After the first competition it became mandatory for at least one female architect to be invited to publicly procured housing projects, thus achieving the first aim. The project demonstrated the value that female architectural teams could bring to the process.

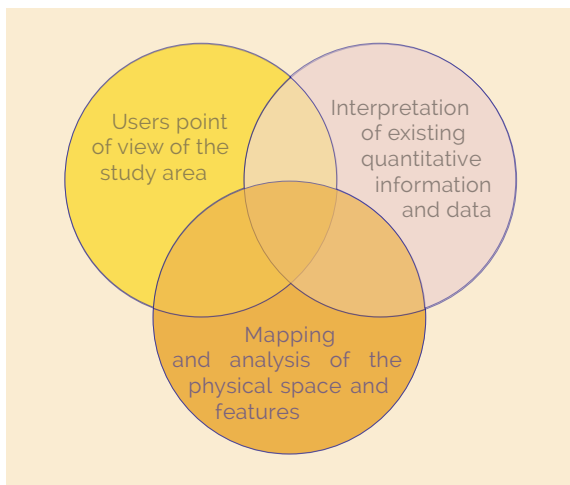
The second aim was illustrated through the site selection and design of the scheme itself. Prioritising pedestrian needs was a fundamental part of gender sensitive planning, that fed into the gender sensitive planning approach at a strategic level. The city could choose between four different pieces of land, the other sites were in more desirable surroundings, but the final site they chose had excellent proximity to public transport lines, and everyday amenities. The scale of the development on its own did not warrant a large mix of uses. Despite this there are a nursery and doctors surgery integrated within the development itself, as well as a number of convenience stores close by. This meant trips commonly taken by women were short and could be done by foot. At the more detailed level, huge care was taken over the design of secondary rooms. For example, the laundry rooms were located adjacent to the roof terrace, so children could play whilst parents did laundry in the adjacent room. But it was also a light-filled space making it a far more pleasant space to linger in and be social.

We always tried to develop things together with those who had to apply it. So it was not a case of 'we have designed it and here is the result and now apply it'. But instead, so that colleagues could learn and see it is useful and adopt it in other different ways, rather than just giving it to other departments as a 'to-do'.

Claudia Prinz Brandenburg

Planning Processes

As well as a focus on specific planning considerations, the planners in Vienna also adopted different approaches to understanding planning problems. The most noteworthy approach is a methodology they developed called 'social space analysis.' This was a key part of planning in Vienna, which combines a mix of both quantitative and qualitative methods to understand how existing spaces are used and might be enhanced. It involves combining statistical data which has been visualised spatially on who is living around the area, in terms of age, gender and migration background, but also observation of how the space is being used over time, alongside in depth interviews with 'local experts' such as local youth group workers, or local police officers etc. The planners also created detailed guidance on this methodology - which has



*_Above: **Social Space Analysis:** Analysis of public space from different perspectives using a combination of qualitative and quantitative survey results.*

been extensively applied on numerous projects- though they recognised that the approach is resource intensive. For considering the creation of new places, the planners apply a similar approach - creating fictitious daily narratives of different types of users, to understand the 'trip chain' and therefore the space-time implications of masterplanning decisions on different future user groups.

_Below: Example of anticipated future trip chain analysis applied to Aspern Seestadt



SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

So how is it that Vienna - in a country that is not necessarily internationally renowned for gender equality or placemaking - came to be an exemplar for gender sensitive planning?

A REFLECTION OF THE TIMES, STRONG POLITICAL SUPPORT AND PEOPLE IN THE ADMINISTRATION

A series of unique circumstances in Vienna enabled the gender mainstreaming process to be successful in the early 90s. The prioritisation of women and urban space was very much in the spirit of the times in the early 1990s. At the time gender sensitive planning was most prominent in Vienna, feminism and gender equality was a key political issue, which undoubtedly helped the promotion of Gender Mainstreaming in Vienna.

Whilst differing accounts were recounted of the level of support offered by male or female politicians, what is clearly visible, is that a number of women were placed in key decision making roles across the municipality. This included officers within built environment disciplines, most notably the Gender Planning Expert Eva Kail, who was a critical figure to mainstreaming gender in planning in Vienna. This enabled Eva and others to support initiatives from positions of power.

Who these officers were was also important for their

influence to be effective. Prior to the creation of the 'Coordination Office', Eva Kail was head of the Women's Department, and so had a good rapport with key politicians. This also meant she had a good standing within the municipality more broadly, which was pivotal to her effectiveness and success.

WHAT HAPPENED: A SERIES OF INCREASINGLY VISIBLE EVENTS AND INITIATIVES

The series of events started with an exhibition entitled 'Who does public space belong to? - women's everyday life in the city' in 1991. This really highlighted the issues that women faced in the city and initiated a conversation. This then led to the establishment of a Women's Office in 1992 and ultimately led to the creation of the "Coordination Office for Planning and Construction Geared to the Requirements of Daily Life and the Specific Needs of Women" (Coordination Office) in 1998, which was responsible for assessing gender related quality in planning and development projects.

This then led to the establishment of a Women's Office

Implementing a gender sensitive approach began with a series of pilot projects around the city. These ranged from changing streetscapes and public parks to a small number of housing projects that were designed by women for women. Beginning with physical projects was a beneficial strategy that contributed to sustaining and building on the approach to make it a success. It allowed politicians to demonstrate what they had done to their electorate, whilst also increasing the visibility of the issue. Pilot projects also allowed officers to pick the easiest projects to start from, to assure their success and thus continued political support for a gender sensitive approach.

Applying a gender sensitive approach has had the greatest influence on public space design. This has most notably been on streets and public parks - where the city has greatest control of development and financing, though there have been a number of buildings where this has also specifically been considered.

Consideration of gender has had the greatest focus and influence on public spaces, most notably streets and public parks - where the city had greatest control

of development and financing. However, there have also been a number of built projects where this has specifically been considered.

From the initial pilot projects, a 'Gender Mainstreaming Manual' was created. The strategic guidance the planners created then drew on lessons learnt from applied practice. Doing it this way around was essential, as it not only enabled actions to be realised quickly, but also emboldened politicians to support gender sensitive planning at a more strategic level. Sustained use of this together with awareness raising methods within the administration, slowly filtered into people's way of thinking, with the aim of officers becoming less reliant on the Women's Coordination Office to implement gender sensitive planning.

LESSONS FOR THE UK

The tides have shifted and now, even in Vienna, the focus on Gender Mainstreaming is taking more of a backseat, as other issues - such as climate change - rise up the agenda. Despite this, there are still lessons that can be learnt and applied to the UK now. The same pilot projects themselves might not be directly transferable, as they are inextricably linked to the context they were created for, in terms of the spatial, social and cultural context. However, the effectiveness of an approach of starting from small concrete projects, using briefs developed from detailed observations of how people use space (using their social space analysis methodology), and spreading awareness of the issue across an organisation

is certainly a lesson that can be applied.

Many of the physical interventions installed prioritised pedestrian needs, which is nowadays considered 'best practice' in most places. What is more salient is that Gender Mainstreaming in Vienna signified the use of a more **'user-centred' approach** than had previously been used, tackling planning challenges from the bottom up. Vienna is now rapidly growing, which brings with it challenges of an increasingly diverse and ageing population. This is leading to a need to shift the focus on better understanding the needs of other underrepresented groups, such as elderly people, children, migrant communities, LGBTQ+, and others.

Gathering and applying detailed and nuanced local 'expert knowledge' to inform design proposals using **'social space analysis'** could equally be applied to other groups - not just girls and women- to gain a deeper understanding of different users' needs. The challenge for the UK is that the mixture of qualitative methods this involves requires substantial resourcing, which in turn requires the political will to fund it.

In Vienna, propelling a gender sensitive approach to planning relied on use of **quantifiable data** to build arguments to support the need for change. This was coupled with skilfully navigating pre-existing relationships to source data and influence others. And in some cases temporarily trialing physical interventions to persuade others of their need. This approach is still highly

relevant today - particularly in the domain of planning where there is often an assumption that change must be costly and permanent. Now, there is also a potential opportunity for new methods of data collection, as part of a Smart Cities approach, to enable easier and cheaper collection of key gender segregated data.

Last but not least, *visibility* of gender was of critical importance to Vienna's success - and so a key theme to replicate. In Vienna, this was not in terms of the visibility of physical interventions such as the Pilot Projects, and improvements across the pilot district. But also raising the profile of gender mainstreaming within the administration through providing it with substantial resourcing, as well as creating bodies to whom design teams were directly accountable.

So, ultimately an enabling political context together with a range of tactics used by the planners and politicians, ultimately led to the unlikely city of Vienna becoming a successful example of applying a gender sensitive approach to planning. Vienna led the way, forging a path which hopefully many other cities can replicate, to ensure that the cities we are creating today do not inadvertently neglect the needs of half their population, but consider the needs of all segments of society living within them.

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FURTHER READING

Through the course of my research I gathered a list of resources that provide further detail on gender mainstreaming in urban planning. Whilst not directly referenced in the report, they are included as a useful resource for other researchers.

Books and Reports

- Beebeejaun, Y (2017) Gender, urban space, and the right to everyday life in Journal of Urban affairs,
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- Whitzman, C (2013) Building Inclusive Cities: Women's Safety and the Right to the City, Earthscan

Web Resources

- "Men and Women Use Cities Very Differently; Planners Must Act on It." Apolitical, Published 29 August 2017, Available at: https://apolitical.co/solution_article/men-women-use-cities-differently-planners-must-act/ [Accessed: 2 March 2020]
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- "A place for everyone? Gender Equality and Urban Planning" RTPi and Oxfam 2007 Available at: [https://www.rtpi.org.uk/media/2237096/A%20Place%20for%20Everyone-%20Gender%20Equality%20and%20Urban%20Planning%20\(Oxfam\)%202007.pdf](https://www.rtpi.org.uk/media/2237096/A%20Place%20for%20Everyone-%20Gender%20Equality%20and%20Urban%20Planning%20(Oxfam)%202007.pdf) [Accessed 2 March 2020]

