

ACPA – Adapting European Cities to Population Ageing: Policy challenges and best practices

Targeted Analysis
**Case Study Report:
Hengelo**



Gemeente
Hengelo

Right care in the right place

Case Study Report: Hengelo

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Abbreviations

AVEM	Arbeidsparticipatie Vrouwen Ethische Minderheden (Participation Females of Ethnic Minorities)
EC	European Commission
ESPON	European Territorial Observatory Network
ESPON EGTC	ESPON European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation
EU	European Union
WHO	World Health Organization

Foreword

Hengelo has a rich history and tradition in the field of ageing policy. We want to be a liveable city, with vital, resilient, cohesive and involved older people, who can age in a pleasant and dignified way in our city. We are also a city where people stand up for each other and care for each other. For example, for our inhabitants with dementia and their partners. As dementia-friendly municipality, Hengelo ensures that they can age in place and are able to continue their lives. Within the municipality of Hengelo the public administration, health and welfare organisations, entrepreneurs and motivated civilians cooperate to achieve this goal collectively.

Just as many other cities in Europe, Hengelo finds itself on the eve of significant population ageing. In the light of the trend of ageing in place and extending living at home independently, this leads to many changes in various fields. It is an enormous challenge to find good solutions for the complex issues we are facing. Fortunately, we are not alone in this difficult situation. In this beautiful region, the 14 municipalities that form the Region of Twente together, work together on the topic of population ageing. The network of Age-Friendly European cities, the Urban Ageing working group and the ACPA study do help us as well. By means of this collaboration, we are able to learn from others and collect helpful knowledge. This saves us from having to reinvent the wheel over and over again.

As can be read in this report, Hengelo is aiming to join the Age-Friendly City network in due course. To that end, we are going to work on the recommendations provided in ACPA.

Bas van Wakeren, Alderman, city of Hengelo

Yvonne van Wijk and Annemieke Knol, policy advisors, city of Hengelo

1 Introduction

Many countries in Europe are facing a demographic transition which also entails an increasing number of older people. This trend is usually most apparent in rural areas. However, in urban areas this phenomenon is starting to become visible as well. The cities of Amsterdam, Barcelona, Gothenburg, Hengelo, Greater Manchester, Nantes, Oslo and Zaragoza belong to a group of cities that are either already facing relatively high percentages of older people in their populations, or expect such high percentages in the near future. During the last years, these cities have undertaken action to improve quality of life for older people. Still, they have a knowledge need related to the following questions:

- How do older people experience the daily life in the cities?
- What do older people view as benefits and constraints associated with urban living?
- How are the eight stakeholder cities responding to population ageing?
- Which policies have been the most effective in developing age-friendly cities and how have they been implemented and which are the success factors?

ESPON ACPA has resulted in good practices and policy recommendations based on case study research in the eight stakeholder cities. These insights have been combined in the ACPA synthesis report, main report and policy handbook. While those reports offer valuable information in aggregated form, it is also valuable to look at the situation in each of the eight stakeholder cities in more detail.

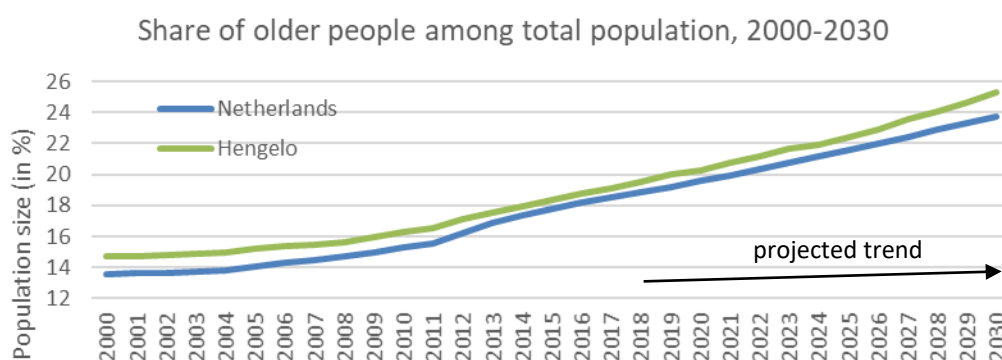
Therefore, eight city reports are available that provide a closer look at each stakeholder city. The present report focuses on Hengelo and portrays the state of affairs in Hengelo in terms of:

- Demographic trends and developments related to population ageing within the city;
- The strategy and policies that the urban authorities, professionals and other stakeholders in Hengelo pursue to cope with population ageing;
- A selection of inspiring examples of how the ageing policy has been implemented;
- Challenges and opportunities from the perspective of older people, interest groups and policy makers;
- Policy recommendations for the city of Hengelo based on the insights that have emerged from ACPA.

2 Demographic profile

Hengelo is a city with around 80.000 inhabitants, located in the east of the Netherlands close to the border with Germany. As illustrated in the graph below, approximately 20% of the inhabitants in Hengelo are aged 65 years or more and this share is expected to grow in the coming years to around 25% in 2030. This is slightly higher than the expectations for the Netherlands as a whole.

Figure 2.1: Share of older people among total population, 2000-2030

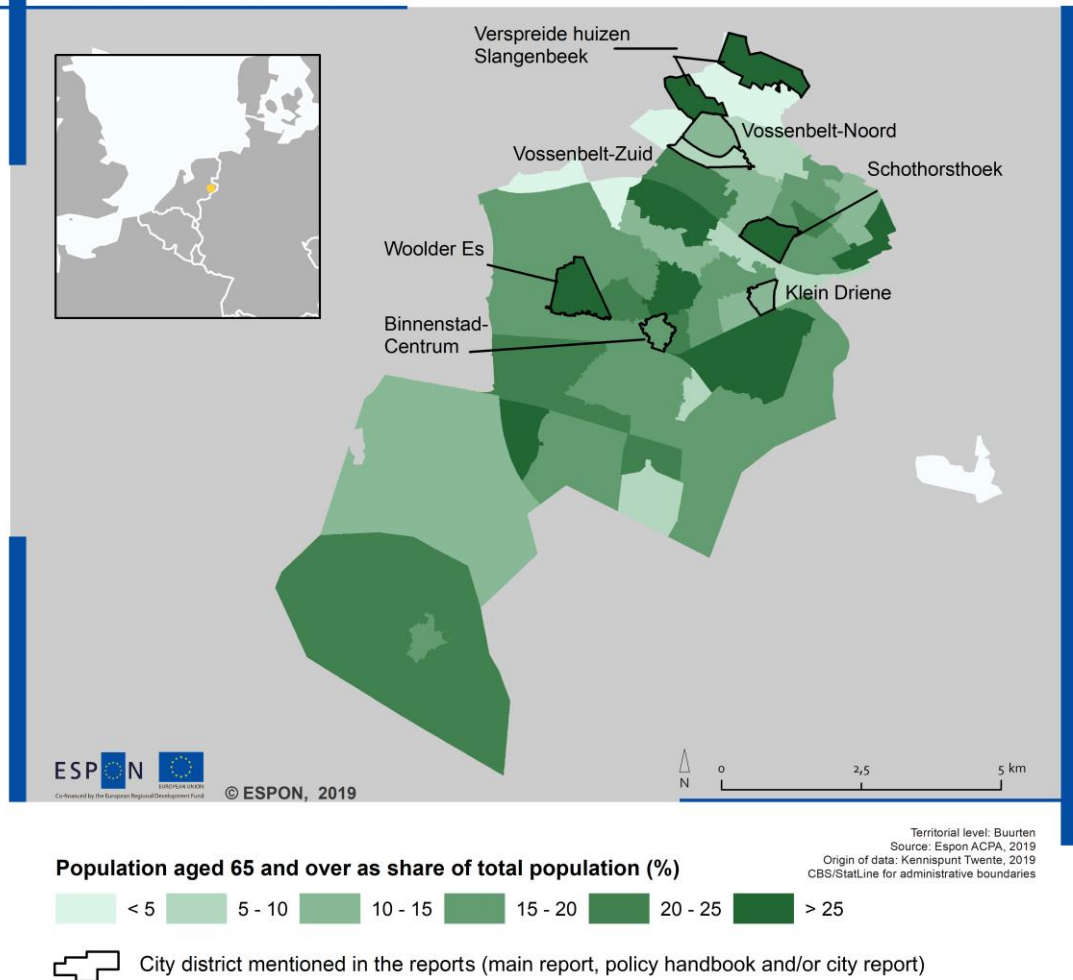


2.1 Distribution of older people in Hengelo

There are large differences in the share of older people in different parts of the city. Map 2.1 shows that in neighbourhoods like Groot Driene and Tichelwerk there are high shares of older people. The highest shares of older people are found in Schothorsthoek (38%) and Woolder Es (35%). This share is lower in neighbourhoods such as Vossenbelt (10%) and Klein Driene (11%).

Map 2.1: Hengelo: Share of older people 2017

Hengelo: Share of older people 2017

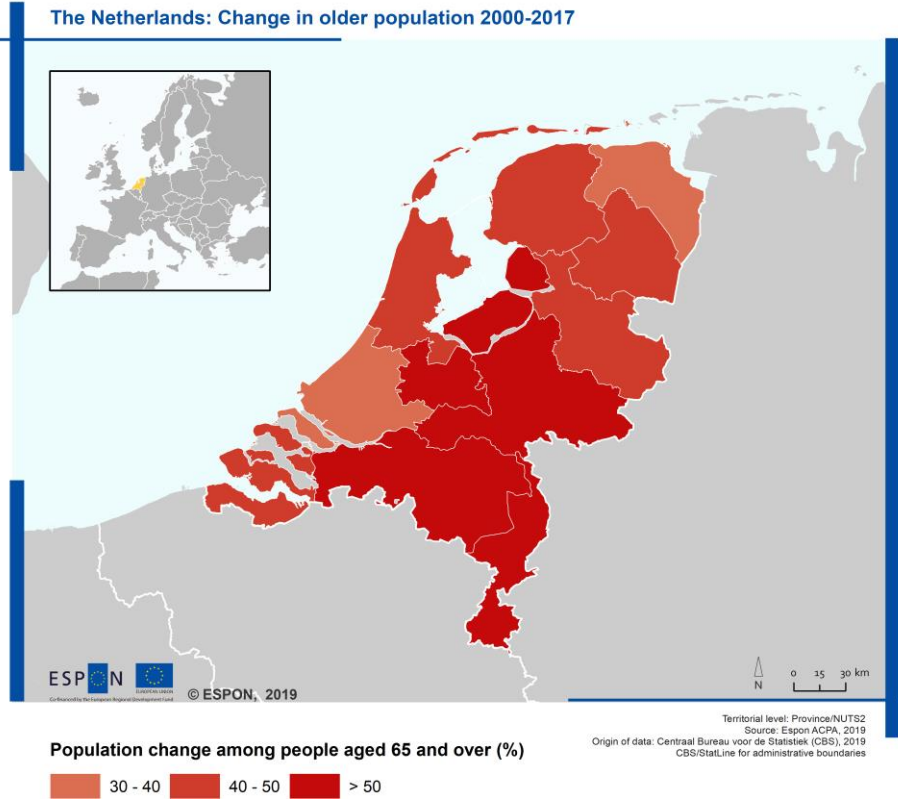


Note: the map also indicates the names of particular interesting neighbourhoods or neighbourhoods that are mentioned within ESPON ACPA.

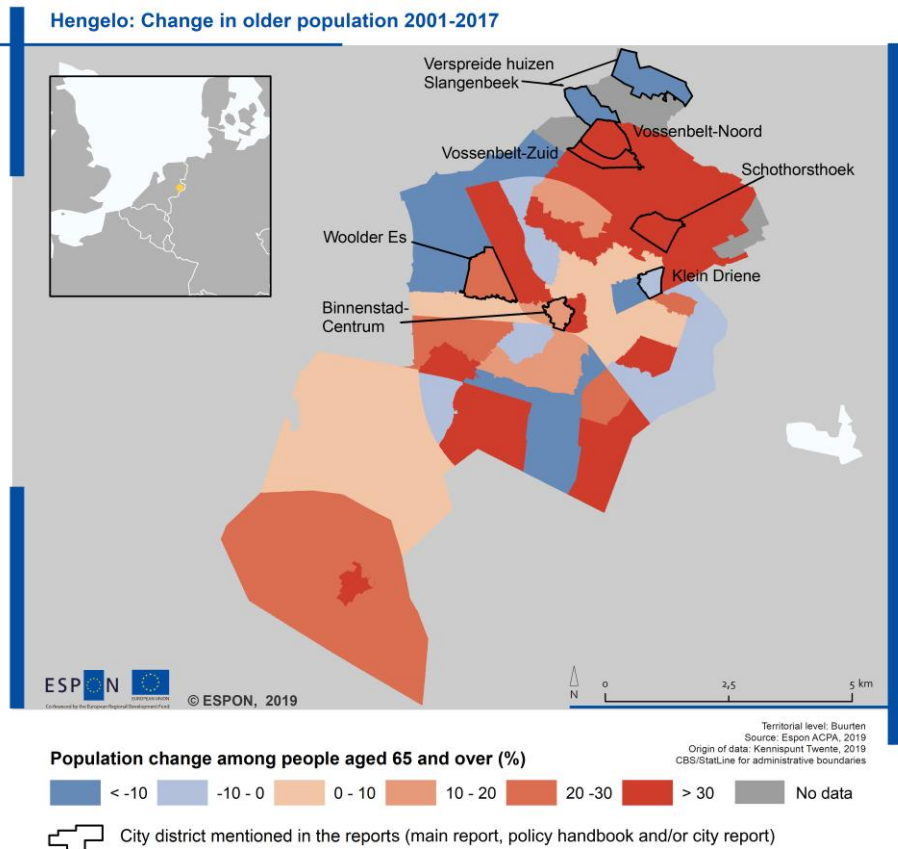
2.2 Changes in population structure

Within the neighbourhoods in Hengelo, the population structure has changed quite significantly over the last two decades. Between 2001 and 2017, the number of people aged 65 years and older doubled in some neighbourhoods. As illustrated in the figure on the next page, in particular the district Hasseler Es, which includes the neighbourhood Schothorsthoek, has aged quite significantly. This is likely the result of normal ageing processes. The neighbourhood was built in the 1970s, and the inhabitants that moved in at that time, have now started to reach an advanced age. Unlike the situation on the Dutch provincial level (map 2.2), in Hengelo there are also areas where the number of older people has decreased (map 2.3). The majority of these areas are sparsely populated industrial sites. Overall, the maps show that Hengelo has aged significantly in the last 16 years.

Map 2.2: The Netherlands: Change in older population 2000-2017



Map 2.3: Hengelo: Change in older population 2001-2017



Note: the map also indicates the names of particular interesting neighbourhoods or neighbourhoods that are mentioned within ESPON ACPA.

3 Policy overview

3.1 Motivation and goals

In the past, the city of Hengelo has avoided the definition of target groups in its policies. The idea behind this is that the city should be a pleasant place to live for all of its inhabitants, regardless of age or socio-economic status. Hence there are no policy documents directly aimed at ageing, the seniors, or developing an age-friendly city. Over the last years however, target groups have received more attention in the policy debate. There is a growing range of policies in different policy fields that include measures to become more age-friendly.

The municipality recognises demographic change and ageing as challenges for the future. Additionally, with the decentralisation of a share of social policy domains in 2015, the municipality is responsible for the provision of care to those inhabitants in need. Hengelo aims to support older people by enabling them to stay at home for a longer period of time. Informal care, where neighbours and family members assist with basic tasks, is a central focus in this approach. The motto is 'Right care in the right place'.

The city does not specify any hard targets in her policies regarding the older people, but there are many initiatives which are seen as a success. A main source of pride is the broad range of support measures for people that suffer from forms of dementia. Another prized initiative is that of the AVEM-groups for immigrant older people. These initiatives are linked with a broad network of voluntary workers, who actively support different initiatives for older people in the city and broader region. In general, an active network of care providers and good healthcare infrastructure are in place. This is apparent in cooperation at regional level between insurance companies, care providers, doctors and municipalities. In addition, a broad range of data is gathered on the quality of life of seniors by different organisations.

From interviews with policy makers, a set of main challenges are identified in the city of Hengelo. The policy making process is considered a top-down process in Hengelo. The different groups of seniors are not actively involved in policy making, but the municipality recognises potential here. In some fields, it is challenging to stimulate people to consider the effects of ageing in their work. As such, Hengelo does not consider itself a leading actor in ageing policies, but is eager to learn and apply new methods.

3.2 Priorities

The relevant policies for the older people in Hengelo can be roughly divided into three main domains: the built environment and mobility, social support and healthcare. Within these domains, a range of policies and initiatives are implemented. The table below demonstrates the prioritisation of the different WHO policy domains in Hengelo. The domains that score the highest are social participation and community and health services. The domains with a lower score are outdoor spaces and built environment, and communication and information. In the paragraphs below, the prioritisation of domains and the different policy instruments that are in place are discussed in further detail.

Table 3.1: Priority table

Priority areas according to city representatives of Hengelo <i>(scores range from 1 to 5, where 1 indicates a very low priority and 5 a very high priority)</i>	
1. Outdoor spaces and built environment	2
2. Transport and mobility	3
3. Housing	4
4. Social participation	5
5. Respect and social inclusion	3
6. Civic participation and employment	4
7. Communication and information	2
8. Community and health services	5

The built environment and mobility

The interviewees feel that the built environment and mobility are two domains which receive little attention in the current policy debate. While Hengelo was a leading player in this field some ten years ago, in recent years, the focus on this topic has lessened and Hengelo is slowly starting to lag behind. There are still certain policies aimed at improving accessibility and improving living conditions in the city, but they are not actively implemented at the moment.

The policy document 'Verleiden, Verplichten en Voorthelpen' (nudge, oblige and help) aims to improve the accessibility of housing, public buildings and public space in order to facilitate participation in society and lifelong access to services. A system of accessibility standards for different types of buildings and public spaces is put in place. Some types of buildings have a legal obligation to be accessible for all levels of mobility, like governmental buildings or public space. In these buildings, wheelchair-friendly design and different types of support are implemented. For non-public buildings, voluntary agreements regarding accessibility are made. Real estate portfolios of housing associations are held to strict norms regarding accessibility. Where necessary, the municipality provides technical support.

Social support

Social forms of support are extensive in Hengelo. They are part of most of the policy documents that concern ageing. There is a clear overlap with the provision of healthcare due to the decentralisation of tasks from central to local government and the consequential increase in informal care. Social support is seen as one of the priority fields of the local government by the interviewees.

The key policy document in Hengelo with regard to social support is the policy brief 'Met respect...' (Respectfully). As overarching ideal, this document aims for all inhabitants of the city to be assisted and treated in a dignified manner. The document is a starting point for a range of different initiatives that have implications for age-friendly policies:

- The initiative 'Thuis in de buurt' (At home in the neighbourhood) extends the age-friendly approach to the scale of neighbourhoods. The initiative is aimed at providing access to services at a local scale, so older people can stay active in their own environment for a longer period of time. Effectively this concerns the clustering of services regarding welfare, housing and healthcare in specific areas to create an integrated system where seniors can still function. In addition, age-friendly housing projects and initiatives for emergency stays in local health care facilities are stimulated.
- The pillar 'Maatwerk Zorg' (Custom care) is geared towards the facilitation of individual and collective care. This concerns practical support with the household and provision of tools like wheel chairs, but also more extensive forms of care such as the provision of guidance or daytime activities for those in need.
- The 'Meerjarenplan Gezondheid 2019 – 2023' (Multi-annual health plan 2019-2023) places emphasis on an integrated approach towards health in the municipality of Hengelo. In this integrated approach not only is healthcare taken into account, but also the physical and social environment, prevention and care, and external developments. In order to influence health issues an integrated approach is pushed forward, aimed not only at individuals, but at the surrounding area as a whole.
- The 'Preventievisie' (Vision on prevention), aims at preventing health and social problems in an integrated manner. In this policy document, particular attention is placed on older people with dementia and older people with an immigrant background, but also informal care providers and lonely residents.

Healthcare

Healthcare is seen as a priority in Hengelo. Most of the initiatives aimed at supporting older people are related to healthcare in one way or another. There is a strong integrated approach towards healthcare in Hengelo, where social support is seen as a main healthcare prevention method. This constitutes the red thread in the municipalities health care policies. Two main policy documents are relevant for healthcare related to older people.

The 'Meerjarenplan Wonen en Zorg' (Multi-annual plan Living and Care) is aimed at supporting vulnerable older people that need extra attention with regards to housing and healthcare. The policy document defines ten challenges in three themes: Housing, support and care at home, and innovation. The proposed activities are very much aimed at prevention

and improving quality of living space, but also at improving the provision of care once it is necessary.

Informal care (Mantelzorg) is an essential part of the healthcare policy in the Netherlands. Older people are asked to make use of informal care whenever possible, and professional care only when necessary. The 'Actieplan Mantelzorg mogelijk maken' (Action plan enabling informal care) focuses on developing opportunities for informal care, which strengthens the social cohesion and participation within Hengelo. The goal is to build a solid foundation in which quality, proactive attitudes and safety are important cornerstones.

3.3 Approach

The municipality is formally only responsible for a small number of domains that are related to age-friendly cities. Still, in most fields, Hengelo seeks to cooperate with the responsible organisations to create conditions that are beneficial for the inhabitants of the city. The municipality has outsourced many of its responsibilities in the field of social- and healthcare to different organisations. Here, the municipality takes a leading role in deciding the rules and policies, but leaves the implementation of these policies to external parties. In the figure below, an indication is given of the different types of organisations that are involved with ageing processes in Hengelo.

Wijkkracht

The organisation Wijkkracht performs most of the social support (for all kinds of target groups) and is closely associated with the municipality of Hengelo. Fields of support range from providing information, to meal services, household help, administrative support and initiatives to meet other people. There are many different groups where older people can meet. Hengelo takes particular pride in its support for people that suffer from forms of dementia. There are regular meetings under the name 'Alzheimer café', where both caregivers and –receivers meet and discuss their experiences.

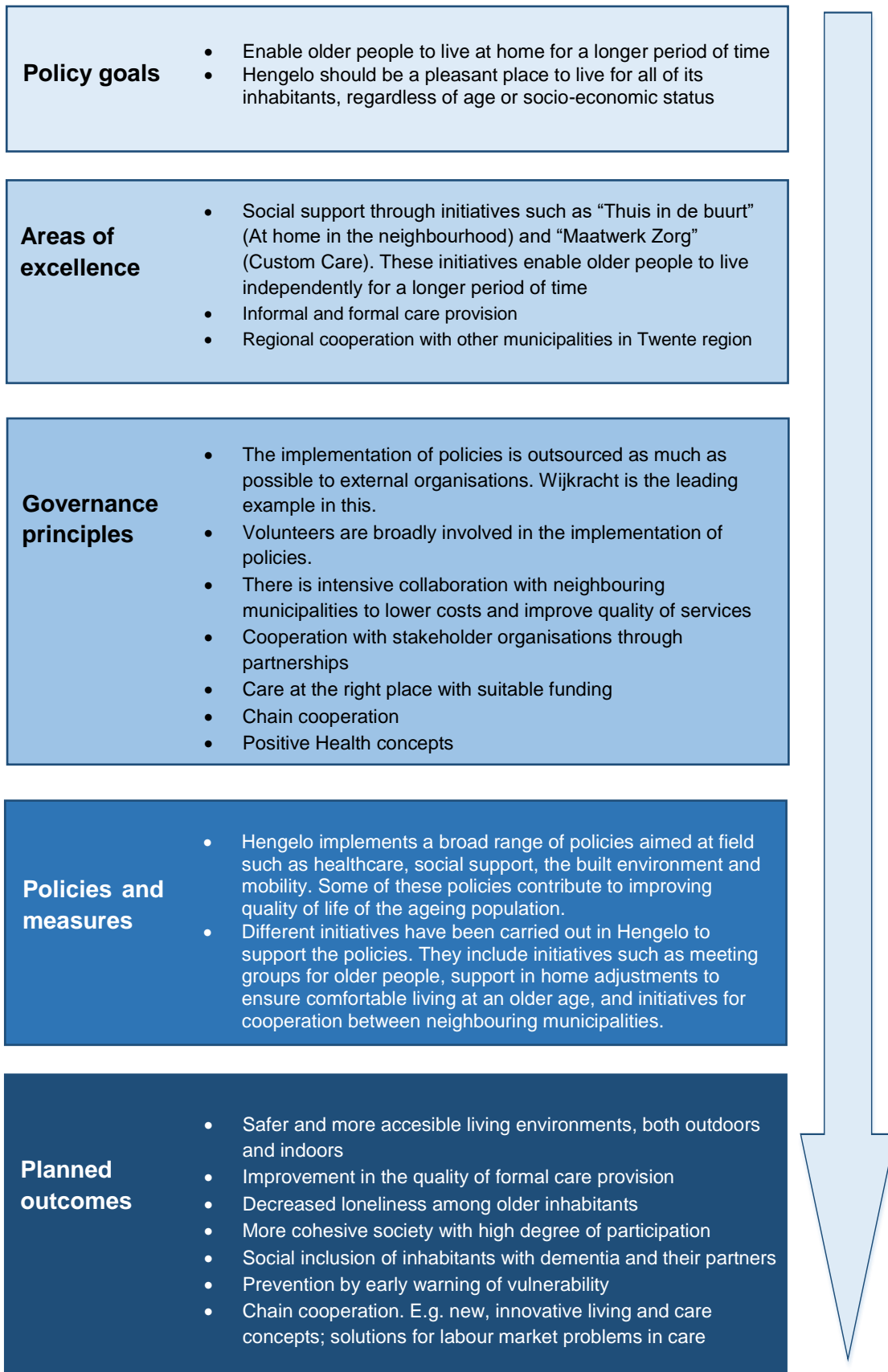
Regio Twente

Regio Twente is a partnership of fourteen municipalities in the region of Twente, an area with approximately 628.000 inhabitants. Together with the inhabitants, Regio Twente works on issues related to five themes: Public health, Youth- and social care, strengthening of socioeconomic structures, leisure and recreation, along with representation of interests in other governance structures. Through the different bodies of Regio Twente, a broad range of measures is taken to support older people in their ageing process. Under Regio Twente extensive data is gathered to support policy making in the region.

Zorgloket

In order to support the mobility of older people, various initiatives are being implemented in Hengelo. They range from the provision of wheelchairs or mobility scooters, to means of support for the use of public transport. For example, volunteer groups provide support for seniors to use public transport, by organising workshops and guiding small excursions. This support is provided through a section of the municipal organisation called 'Zorgloket' (Care counter). The Zorgloket also provides information to older people.

Figure 3.1: Policy Overview Hengelo



4 Perspectives on policy initiatives

A selection of inspiring policy initiatives and organisational structures in the municipality of Hengelo is presented below. These initiatives were selected based on intensive consultation with policy makers, stakeholders and older people in Hengelo. They outline innovative methods that have produced tangible effects. The promising practices that are mentioned have only started recently and do not show measurable results as of yet but are still considered initiatives with high potential. For the complete methodology, please consult the scientific annex provided in the main report of the ESPON ACPA study.

Promising practice – Cooperation Menzis, GGD Twente and OJZT/Samen14

Within the Regio Twente partnership, OZJT/Samen 14 and GGD Twente cooperate with insurance company Menzis on the design and provision of long-term care. There is cooperation on a set of different themes, one of which is integrated care for older people.

Within this theme, the organisations work together on client support, and different types of cross-sectoral types of cooperation. The goal is to cooperate when this is beneficial for all parties, and form a coalition of the willing for different objectives.

Additionally, this cooperation ensures consistency in the full care chain and prevents any incoherence or confusion between the different parties. Since the new cooperation agenda started in 2019, there are no results known at this stage. The cooperation is considered a promising practice however.

Content and organisation

- Joint purchase, contract management and monitoring of childcare and social support for 14 municipalities in the Twente region.
- Responsible for 210 million euro's worth of contracts with care providers.
- Goal is to ensure an affordable and sustainable care system for all the region's inhabitants.
- Implementation of barrier model to prevent fraud and ensure a high quality of care.
- Fourteen municipalities in the region have voluntarily joined forces. There is a small core team, and thematic themes with professionals from the different municipalities.

Effectiveness

- The barrier model is in place since 2019, so no true impacts have been confirmed at this stage.
- Some potentially fraudulent providers have been identified at this stage and await further examination
- As a result of the initiative, some providers have taken extra measures to improve the quality of services.
- The new way of working has strengthened ties between different parties that are involved.

Innovativeness

- The manner in which municipal employees are working together in dedicated teams across different municipalities is innovative and strengthens regional bonds.
- The barrier model introduces a novel way of testing and examining the quality and validity of care providers.

Transferability

- The initiative is very new and has not been replicated in other regions within the country at this stage.
- The approach takes a big investment prior to implementation and returns will only occur after a few years. Continuity of the model and political will are thus essential conditions for the transferability.

AVEM-Groepen

Content and organisation

- AVEM is an abbreviation of Arbeidsparticipatie Vrouwen Ethische Minderheden (Participation Females of Ethnic Minorities).
- Older people that immigrated to Hengelo often face similar challenges: they have a less favourable socio-economic position, suffer health problems at a younger age and are less self-reliable than other older people.
- AVEM-groups function as meeting places for older people that speak Turkish, Suryoyo or Arabic.
- The AVEM-groups have an important underlying objective: prevention of unnecessary use of the formal healthcare system.
- The target group of the initiative is non-western immigrants aged 55 years or older.
- Next to a project leader, there is involvement of two professionals for a total of 28 working hours and there is a group of 22 volunteers. On a weekly basis, 11 AVEM-meetings take place throughout the city.

Effectiveness

- According to the 2018 evaluation of the AVEM groups, the initiative prevented the use of government help in 164 cases.
- Through this programme, unnecessary care is prevented, which amounts to significant savings as calculated in the AVEM business case (around € 170.000,00 per year).

Innovativeness

- The organisation of the AVEM-groups is key to their success. There is direct contact between the professionals of the municipality, the volunteers and the formal care providers.

Transferability

- An important factor for the success of the initiative is the availability of volunteers that are able to speak in the native language and understand native culture.
- The groups should be organised on a regular (weekly) basis to ensure consistency and encourage change and learning.

Lang zult u wonen

Content and organisation

- 'Lang zult u wonen' (You shall live long) is an awareness campaign aimed at improving comfort and safety in peoples' homes.
- The goal of the initiative is to stimulate people to make improvements in their homes **before** these improvements are necessary.
- The initiatives provides tips and a small financial contribution for small adjustments that can be made in the house.
- House scan with volunteers to identify points of improvement within the house.
- Inhabitants of all ages, but subsidy only available for those aged 65 years or older.

Effectiveness

- Between 2013 and 2018, 626 subsidies were provided to house owners.
- Due to the results of the house scan, around a quarter of the people that apply for the subsidy make more changes in their house than initially intended.
- Investment of around € 226.000 worth of subsidies, with savings of around € 500.000 on residential facilities.
- In the longer term, the improved safety of houses can help older people to live at home for a longer period of time and prevent accidents. This leads to savings in health care costs in the long run.

Innovativeness

- The main innovative factor is the pro-active rather than reactive approach.
- By implementing measures in homes at an early stage, accidents are prevented and costs are kept lower.

Transferability

- The initiative is replicated in other municipalities in the Netherlands (23 out of 25 municipalities in the Province of Overijssel).
- The basic conditions for the initiative are also easy to replicate and do not depend on local contexts.

5 Challenges and opportunities

Although the previous section has shown successful examples of initiatives for older people, interviews with various groups of stakeholders in Hengelo have resulted in the insight that in certain policy domains, there are still improvements possible. The following overview indicates this from the viewpoint of older people in Hengelo, the interest groups representing them and policymakers in the city. The challenges and opportunities have been organised according to themes that are deemed important according to the different stakeholder groups.

Table 5.1: Challenges and Opportunities | Older people

	Challenges	Opportunities
Older people	<p>Transport and mobility</p> <p>Mobility is essential for a good quality of life and to prevent issues such as loneliness at an older age. Within the city, older people feel that sometimes it is hard to reach public places. Especially when people are not able to drive, ride a bike, or walk for a distance of more than 100 metres. There are public transport facilities, but the bus stops are often too far away for people to be able to reach them in a comfortable manner.</p> <p>Social integration</p> <p>Older people indicate that many of their peers are unaware of the activities and services that are organised.</p> <p>Loneliness is spread broadly among older people in Hengelo. The participants in the focus group expect the municipality to do more to help prevent loneliness.</p> <p>Information and communication</p> <p>Lastly, the consulted older people are worried about the increasing digitalisation of society. They have limited computer skills and express no wish to learn how to use computers.</p>	<p>Transport and mobility</p> <p>It is fairly expensive to have full coverage of public transport for older people. There are cheaper ways to help older people stay mobile. For example, with the extension of the 'buddy' system, volunteers could be mobilised to help older people get to the places they want to go. It could also be helpful to look at the transport related good practices in the other stakeholder cities.</p> <p>Social integration</p> <p>With a large group of older people being unaware of the activities that have been organised, there seems to be room for awareness raising. Hengelo organises a lot of social activities. It would make sense to further research why older people are not reached with the current information channels and how they can be better reached in the future. The issue of loneliness is challenging to tackle, but mobility, an intergenerational approach and awareness of events are a significant part of the solution.</p> <p>Information and communication</p> <p>Developing new methods to prevent digital exclusion among older people.</p>

Table 5.2: Challenges and Opportunities | Interest group

	Opportunities	Challenges
Interest groups	<p>Built environment</p> <p>Accessibility of public spaces has been a hot topic for years. Over the last years however, political interest for this topic has decreased. It is very much dependent on the individuals working at the municipality whether items like this remain a priority.</p>	<p>Built environment</p> <p>Reprioritise the efforts of the municipality with regards to the needs of seniors and people that are less mobile. There are solid policy documents in place but there is room for improvement in the implementation of these policies.</p> <p>Find a way to involve older people in a more adequate manner. This can be done, for example, through the involvement of older people in participatory practices such as those organised in Oslo.</p> <p>Make room within the municipal organisation for a professional that is responsible for ensuring accessibility of public spaces.</p>

Table 5.3: Challenges and Opportunities | Policymakers

	Opportunities	Challenges
Policymakers	<p>Transport</p> <p>The organisation of public transport for older people is very costly.</p> <p>For many older people, it is challenging to make use of public transport not just because they cannot reach public transport, but also because it is complicated.</p> <p>It is more and more important to feel safe in traffic, but this perceived safety is hard to measure and quantify, so it is hard for the municipality to learn where traffic situations feel unsafe.</p> <p>Accessibility in the built environment</p> <p>Accessibility measures are anchored in many policy documents but there is no formal legal requirement to enforce these measures. Enforcement does not take place.</p> <p>There is a formal commission that tests accessibility for new initiatives in public spaces, but this is not included in the development cycle all the time.</p> <p>Policymakers in the field of the built environment are not trained to deal with these accessibility issues for older people.</p> <p>Social integration</p> <p>It is challenging to find proper financing for the initiatives that are developed. As a result, initiatives do not last and motivation for the organisation of these initiatives decreases.</p>	<p>Transport</p> <p>Stimulate private use of transport solutions, such as E-bikes and scoot mobiles.</p> <p>Increase the number of courses for the use of public transport</p> <p>Make use of different qualitative data gathering methods, such as asking older people to identify specific places where they feel traffic is unsafe.</p> <p>Accessibility in the built environment</p> <p>The reprioritisation of accessibility for people that are less mobile can be done either through awareness raising, or enforcement.</p> <p>Inclusion of a commission on accessibility in all new developments can prevent mistakes in the building process.</p> <p>Training for policymakers regarding accessibility, with the involvement of volunteers or people with mobility issues.</p> <p>Ensure integrated approaches towards ageing are included in the newly developed Omgevingswet (National Environment and Planning Act).</p> <p>Social integration</p> <p>With stronger support for initiatives from the target group, a stronger case for financing can be made. This could be reached by dialogues with the target group to gather insights on experiences.</p> <p>Such as with the AVEM-groups, the development of a business case for social initiatives can help to justify the costs for the initiative.</p>

6 Policy recommendations

The city of Hengelo is actively working towards becoming a more age friendly city. Ageing is recognised by the municipality as an upcoming challenge, and while there is a policy in place where no priority is given to specific target groups, there are ample policy initiatives that support older people. Hengelo focuses in particular on the social and health care related aspects of ageing. Emphasis is also placed on housing situations and living comfortably at home at an older age. Hengelo excels in these fields, however it struggles with some other domains such as accessibility of public spaces and transport. The outcomes of this case study lead to a set of recommendations. Strategic recommendations that reflect overall needs for the city and thematic recommendations that emphasise needs for particular domains.

6.1 Strategic recommendations

Join the WHO Global Network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities

Hengelo is the only stakeholder city in this study which is not a member of the WHO network for Age-friendly Cities and Communities. All other cities are very enthusiastic about their participation in this network. Participation in this network can help to develop a more structured approach towards becoming more age-friendly. Moreover, the network provides support and shares knowledge from other cities. In this way, Hengelo does not have to reinvent the wheel, and can profit from the experience that is already existing in other cities across the world.

Place more emphasis on the needs of older people in policy documents

With an expected 25% of the population being aged 65 years or older in Hengelo in 2030, care should be taken to include the needs of older people in the implementation of policy. Not mentioning specific groups (like older people) results in a lack of awareness of specific issues among practitioners. By clearly delineating the needs of older people in policies, awareness can be raised among practitioners.

Incorporate age-friendly practices in the Omgevingsvisie¹

The effects of population ageing are evident in all policy domains. An integrated approach towards becoming an age-friendly city is therefore the most effective way of achieving results. With the implementation of the Environment and Planning Act and the development of an Omgevingsvisie, the municipality can take steps towards an integrated approach that includes age-friendly practices.

Extend and intensify cooperation within Regio Twente

Cooperation with neighbouring municipalities in the field of healthcare and transportation through Regio Twente is extensive, and could be capitalised on more. Cooperation can lead to economies of scale, where the total costs for the municipalities will be lower. Now that the proper organisational structures are in place, it is possible to broaden cooperation from care related topics to other topics such as accessibility. One can imagine a central 'accessibility board' in the region, that is consulted for the development of different plans. This can lead to professionalisation of the accessibility board and a stronger prioritisation of accessibility in both Hengelo and the other participating municipalities.

6.2 Thematic recommendations

Reprioritise accessibility in the built environment

Solid policy documents are in place that outline the need for accessibility of public space for all people. These policy documents need to be followed up with proper implementation. In order to do this, additional involvement of older people through participatory practices could help in raising awareness. Other ideas to raise awareness are the provision of training for practitioners and the appointment of a specific practitioner with regards to accessibility.

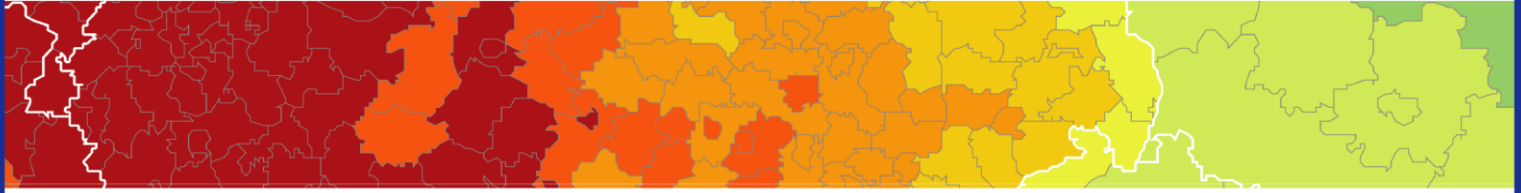
Explore cost-effective transport solutions

It is unlikely that sufficient financing is available for full public transport coverage for older people. With the use of cheaper initiatives, such as a buddy system where older people are supported by volunteers, mobility can still be supported. In this respect, cooperation under Regio Twente could assist with finding solutions.

¹ Through the Environment and Planning Act (Omgevingswet) the Dutch government wants to combine and simplify the regulations for spatial projects. The aim is to make it easier to start up projects. In the Omgevingsvisie, municipalities have to outline their strategy to merge the different domains.

Raise awareness and secure financing for social activities

In order to increase the effectiveness of all the social initiatives that are organised, it is essential to raise awareness of the existence of these initiatives among older people. This helps to combat loneliness and has benefits in terms of prevention of costly social care at a later stage. With positive business cases, the need for financing can be supported with evidence of financial returns for the municipality.



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ESPON 2020 – More information

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