



Living Streets: a manifesto

Creating safe, attractive and enjoyable
streets, where people want to walk

LIVING STREETS
PUTTING PEOPLE FIRST



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A manifesto for Living Streets

When Living Streets, as the Pedestrians Association, was formed in 1929, our streets were very different places to today but we have been the national voice for pedestrians throughout our 80 year history. In the early years, our campaigning led to the introduction of the driving test, pedestrian crossings and 30mph speed limits. Since then our ambition has grown. Today we influence decision makers and work with local people and professionals so that everyone is able to use and enjoy their streets. We work wherever we can make a positive impact and where there is need in order to create streets for people.

The case for safe, attractive, enjoyable streets has never been greater. Streets are key to creating a walkable environment and improving quality of life for every community. Their role in reducing carbon emissions, improving health, reducing congestion, reconnecting people to their local communities, quality of life and supporting sustainable local economies is indisputable.

Over the decades the social function of streets has declined – with over a quarter of people now knowing fewer than two of their neighbours and a huge reduction in the number of children playing out on their streets.

At Living Streets, we believe we need to bring our streets to life by providing greater priority for people. We want to see all communities able to enjoy their streets, and the best possible conditions created to make walking the natural choice.

A transformation of our towns and cities to ensure that people are prioritised over motor traffic

Central Government must:

- Set a clear vision and direction that emphasises the importance of promoting and upholding people friendly towns, cities and villages
- Support and challenge local authorities to deliver ambitious plans to transform our towns, cities and villages
- Make the public case, through regulation, guidance, research and best practice for rebalancing our towns, cities and villages towards streets and public spaces that prioritise people
- Set a simpler national framework of planning guidance that is navigable and easy to use which consistently incorporates Manual for Streets principles. The principles in Manual for Streets should refer to all streets and walkability (housing within walking distance of a pint of milk) should be the primary test for all new developments and retrofit initiatives. This framework should allow local decision makers to accept appropriate levels of risk in order to make improvements for pedestrians
- Set the direction of planning policy away from the segregation of recent decades towards integrated, well connected streets and neighbourhoods, designed around people flow rather than traffic flow
- 'health check' every transport and land use decision, to prioritise active travel and invest at a realistic level by committing 10% of transport budgets to walking and cycling

Local Authorities must:

- Set ambitious plans to transform their streets and public spaces, ensuring pedestrian priority underpins their strategies and activities
- Actively promote walking and public enjoyment through a programme of events and activities – such as car free days and incentive schemes

- Deliver practical projects to reallocate space to pedestrians and public enjoyment- including pedestrianisation projects, and pedestrian priority networks and spaces
- Use naked streets principles in their asset management, public space and maintenance programmes- removing clutter and using space more effectively
- Actively promote and support car sharing initiatives and car clubs, and support car free residential developments

We all must:

- Demand more and better quality public spaces for our communities
- Challenge politicians who haven't prioritised pedestrians in their decisions and stick to redundant principles of car dominated policy which benefit nobody- including motorists
- Play a part in improving our communities by leaving the car keys at home for short journeys as part of a national movement to stop unnecessary car journeys and reclaim our streets

Over the course of 2009, Living Streets' 80th year of campaigning, we asked people around the UK "what would transform a street you use every day into a safe, attractive and enjoyable place for us all?" These answers are typical of the hundreds of responses we had:

"A lowering of the speed limit would be a real improvement for my area. I live about half a mile up a winding country road where, even with a 30 MPH speed limit, it can be quite daunting walking up or down...I would like to see a blanket 20 MPH speed limit on all these narrow country lanes."

"More trees, fewer cars, priority for pedestrians, less signage, more frequent cleaning, benches to sit on."

"no cars on the pavements which restricts walking with prams, and restricts me getting out my gate"

"It's really hard to cross... because the traffic is heavy and fast. If the speed was 20 mph, or if there were more zebra crossings (or both of those things), this would really help".

A dramatic increase in number of walking trips under 2km. Our priority is that every child who can walk to school does so.

Central Government must:

- Adequately invest in effective walk to school promotion schemes, recognising that walking is the easiest way of getting children active
- Continue to support local authorities to spread best practice and support sustainable school travel work once funding for School Travel Advisers ends
- Create a framework to ensure that every school journey is walkable, through a national default 20mph speed limit; and guidance and minimum standards for conditions for a walkable school journey
- A duty should be placed on local authorities to ensure that every school should have an active travel plan which contains annual targets to increase walking journeys to and from school

Local Authorities and schools must:

- Adequately invest in and promote active school travel and effective walk to school promotion schemes
- Adopt the Living Streets vision that every child who can walk (or cycles) to and from school, and Local Area Agreements and Single Outcome Agreement targets are set which will achieve this
- Work with parents, Parent Teacher Associations and community groups to audit the walkability of every school and set out a timetable to make improvements to reach the minimum standards, including providing grants to support community led activity
- Champion the adoption of 20 mph speed limits
- Areas with high childhood obesity levels should integrate walking to school as a central part of their health improvement strategies, linking to initiatives such as the National Child Measurement Programme and Child Health Systems Programme
- Incentivise sustainability and discourage non sustainable modes by removing car parking from schools, creating drop off exclusion zones around schools, and encouraging park and stride points at least 10 minutes' walk from the school gate

We all must:

- Recognise the benefits of walking to school and pledge to support our children to walk to school
- Support each other to get our children more active, by taking part in walk to school events, helping our friends out if they can't walk with their children, and pledging to drive less on the school run
- Commit time to teaching our children good street sense through real world exposure to traffic and navigating our streets
- Get involved with others to demand improvements in our local area that make it safer for everyone

The Walk to School Campaign

Walk to School is a campaign that is run by national charity Living Streets. Its aim is simple – to encourage all parents and children to make walking to school part of their daily routine. It now reaches over 1.6 million children each year. Walking to school is a great and easy way to help children, as part of a healthy lifestyle, reach their recommended 60 minutes of activity or 10,000 steps a day.

“We enjoy the walk to school as it gives us the opportunity to talk, play games and it is educational for her as she learns about the environment around her” Mother of a primary school pupil

Walk Once a Week (WoW) encourages parents and primary school pupils to walk to school at least once a week throughout the school year. An independent evaluation of WoW found that at schools who promote and participate in WoW 19% of children had started to walk because of the scheme.

“WoW is good because it works, it is basic, simple, easy to understand and use” School Travel Advisor



CASE STUDY: SUNDERLAND

Getting communities active by auditing their own neighbourhoods is a great way to identify how to encourage increased walking. Grange Park Primary school in Sunderland took part in Living Street's Fitter for Walking project, to help pupils learn more about how their local environment is linked to physical activity and health. Following a themed assembly the Year 5 pupils walked around local routes to school, and highlighted what mattered to them - issues such as litter, dog fouling and a muddy path to the local swimming pool that they walked once a week.

The pupils submitted a report on their findings to Sunderland City Council. As a result of this report the Council increased the presence of Neighbourhood Wardens to combat littering and dog fouling, a faulty button on a pedestrian crossing was replaced and the muddy path was replaced by a new tarmac footpath. The pupils were very excited that their observations and recommendations had resulted in real changes to their local area, that will benefit everyone. The school also hosted one of the Walk to School Month launch events, where 170 pupils walked to school. The Fitter for Walking project is funded in England by the Big Lottery Fund.

Walkable streets that are enjoyable for everyone

Central Government must:

- Set a framework that requires meaningful engagement with local communities on decisions affecting their streets and neighbourhoods, including greater devolution of powers to neighbourhood and street level
- Introduce new legislation to prevent pavement parking across the UK; and set an expectation that enforcement should be the responsibility of the local authority rather than the police where possible, and prioritised locally
- Prioritise pedestrian safety in policies, with a national default 20 mph speed limit; a review of the guidance on minimum standards for pedestrian crossings, a review of the drink driving limits, improved driver training and awareness campaigns, a review of penalties for bad driving and cycling, and better enforced traffic laws
- Invest in a national education campaign around anti social pavement behaviour, such as pavement parking and pavement cycling
- Set a challenging vision for a 20% increase in the amount of time people spend in urban public spaces, and establish an index of the quality of public space and walkability of every local authority

Local Authorities must:

- Ensure that Local Development Frameworks and sustainable community plans prioritise walkability and good quality streets
- Set the direction of planning policy away from the practice of recent decades' segregation towards integrated, well connected streets and neighbourhoods, designed around people flow rather than motor traffic flow
- Ensure that streets are well maintained, clean, green spaces where people are encouraged to spend time
- Actively involve and support local residents in decisions affecting their streets and public spaces on an ongoing basis.

- Take over enforcement of pavement parking from the police where this is possible and ensure that enforcement is properly prioritised
- Enforcement of anti-social behaviour on pavements, including regular targeting of pavement cycling, parking and driving.
- Realise a 20% increase in the amount of time people spend in public spaces and assess their quality and walkability
- Prioritise pedestrian safety, championing the adoption of 20 mph speed limits, and ensuring that crossings are sufficient, fit for purpose, promote pedestrian priority and at the very least that they meet minimum accessibility standards and are located on pedestrian desire lines

We all must:

- Show mutual respect for all users on our street, take care and pay attention to others
- Make use of all opportunities to have our say on issues affecting our streets and neighbourhoods
- Make use and take care of our streets and neighbourhoods as social spaces
- Play an active part in keeping our streets clean and green, and encourage others to do the same

We believe that we need to bring our streets to life by providing greater priority for people. This will allow all communities to enjoy their streets, and create the best possible conditions to make walking the natural choice.

Following our suggestions will help to reduce carbon emissions, improve health, reduce congestion, reconnect people to their local communities, and support sustainable local economies.

This vision is achievable; all it takes is political will and leadership. It's about practical changes led by strong champions. Join us and pledge to make our streets safe, attractive and enjoyable.

Go to www.livingstreets.org.uk



CASE STUDY: WALWORTH ROAD, SOUTHWARK, LONDON

Simple changes can make a big difference to how we use our streets.

On a scheme to transform Walworth Road, a major throughfare, the council widened pavements, made crossings safer, removed guard railing and improved lighting. Through the process they consulted widely with local residents and groups, including the local Living Streets group, who were deeply involved in the plans.

above - the road before works below - the finished Walworth Road



Living Streets is the national charity that stands up for pedestrians.

With our supporters we work to create safe, attractive and enjoyable streets, where people want to walk. We work with professionals and politicians to make sure every community can enjoy vibrant streets and public spaces

Join our Community for Change

To find out more about Living Streets local groups near you, or to become a supporter and help our work continue, see www.livingstreets.org.uk or telephone 020 7377 4900.

Want to find out more?

Contact us on 020 7377 4900, or email info@livingstreets.org.uk
www.livingstreets.org.uk