

Space Allocation

Policy Briefing 4

Our streets and public spaces are precious places, which we use for many things. We allocate space to those different uses: for a street market perhaps, for cycle stands or parking spaces, and especially space for movement - footways for pedestrians and carriageways for traffic.

Over many decades one use alone has dominated space allocation in our streets - traffic. Roads and side turnings have been widened to ease traffic movement, signs and barriers make life easier for motorists and tougher for people on foot, and huge areas of public space are taken up by stationary, slow-moving and parked cars. Living streets are about more than car travel. They are about shopping and stopping, talking and playing, and meeting with friends, neighbours and strangers, too.

Some recent progress has been made to redress this imbalance, and we need to ensure this continues where it is already happening and extends to places where it is not.

Allocating space more fairly can make our streets safer, cleaner, less noisy and much more sociable for pedestrians, residents, visitors and shoppers.

Our policy

Pavements are a key requirement for people on foot. Where no pavement exists, Living Streets wants pavements provided to allow for journeys on foot. Where footways are narrow, we want more space provided, to allow for easier movement, space to linger and meet, window-shop or just to sit and stare. We want HomeZones and Quiet Lanes, to show how much better spaces and places can be.

Living Streets wants streets re-classified to take into account ALL the uses we make of them. Once this is done, we

want highways agencies and local councils to redesign streets to reflect their different functions.

Properly addressing the needs of people on foot has already started in some places, particularly in some town centres. We want to see good practice extended to the full range of urban and rural environments.

Government policy

The Government is committed to encouraging walking, and recognizes the importance of reallocating space to people on


foot to achieve this.

In Planning Policy Guidance Note 13: Transport, the Government advises planners to allocate more space to pedestrians:


"Local authorities, as part of their local walking strategy, should also promote walking through measures such as provision of wider pavements, including the reallocation of road space to pedestrians..."


PPG13 gives pedestrians top priority: "Within town centres and other areas with a mixture of land uses, priority should be given to people over traffic...and local authorities should actively consider traffic calming and the reallocation of road space to promote safe walking..."

What you can do

 If you have a problem using a local street or public space, is it caused by an unfair allocation of space?

Assess the numbers using the footways and those using the carriageways - in busy streets pedestrians often hugely outnumber motorists, and yet only get a tiny fraction of the available space.

 Once you have identified a space allocation issue, find out if other local people feel the same about it as you do. Contact your councillor and explain that reallocating space to people on foot is fairer, because everyone walks, and that it is in line with Government policy.

 Ask your council to commission a Community Street Audit from Living Streets, to assess the pedes-

trian environment from the end-users perspective.



Become a member of Living Streets, and contact your local Living Streets branch.

Fact Stats

"Highway space between buildings is given primarily to motorised modes of traffic. Vast acres of surfacing have been laid to ensure that the largest vehicles can negotiate each bend and junction, while pedestrians must make do with what is left". Edward Chorlton, Chairman of the Designing Streets for People Working Party (*The Surveyor* 20 July 2000)

"A new housing development in Kent is using radical methods to minimise the impact of the car on the local environment. The main spine road in the Ingress Park development in Greenhithe ranges from only 5-6 metres at its narrowest point, 1.25m below the design guide minimum. The spine road snakes around the groups of houses in either sharp or sweeping curves, while pedestrians and cyclists are given the direct straight-line routes across the site. The design encourages both safer driving and pedestrian use of space." (Fraser Stewart, *The Surveyor*, 20 July 2000)



Empty roadspace, over-crowded pavements!

For further information

Contact Living Streets information and advice hotline (020 7820 1010)

Three useful publications:

- Planning Policy Guidance Note 13: Transport (DTLR, March 2001)
- Providing for Journeys on Foot (Institution Highways & Transportation, 2000)
- Encouraging Walking (DETR, March 2000)

Website: www.livingstreets.org.uk