

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.

Living Streets's response to a consultation to collect views about whether a Public Health Bill is needed in Wales

Introduction

We are 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 communities, professionals and politicians to make sure every community can enjoy vibrant streets and public spaces.

We started life in 1929 as the Pedestrians Association and have been the national voice for pedestrians throughout our history. In the early years, our campaigning led to the introduction of the driving test, pedestrian crossings and 30 mph speed limits. Since then our ambition has grown. Today we influence decision makers nationally and locally, run successful projects to encourage people to walk and provide specialist consultancy services to help reduce congestion and carbon emissions, improve public health, and make sure every community can enjoy the benefits of walking.

Response to the consultation questions:

CQ 12 Please let us have any further comments you wish to make about the issues raised in this Green Paper.

Living Streets supports the key points of the submission made by the National Heart Forum

Key points

- Any legislation the Government proposes should begin with a **clear and simple preamble which sets out the goals and principles of the law.**
- The Government needs to consider all areas and options available under UK and EU law.
- **Mandating Health Impact Assessment used by all policy makers can ensure that HIA is measured and reported in a consistent way.**
- The measures under new legislation would provide the social conditions and impetus for shifts in culture and environment needed **to support health and reduce inequalities.**
- Legislation can renew **focus on prevention and wellbeing.**

We believe a focus on prevention and wellbeing can deliver significant benefits for the population of Wales. Interventions based on promoting walking and high quality walking environments can help alleviate the significant economic and societal costs related to poor health such as cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, obesity and mental health. The costs of which to the UK economy were: £29 billion from Cardiovascular disease in care costs and lost productivity¹; £5 billion from obesity² and £106 billion in 2009/2010 in care costs, lost productivity and reductions in quality of life resulting from mental health problems³. The importance of walking to the local economy and public health is highlighted in the NTS 2010 which revealed a large majority of

¹ Luengo-Fernández, R., Leal, J., Gray, A., Petersen, S., Rayner, M. 2006. Cost of cardiovascular diseases in the United Kingdom. *Heart* 2006;92:1384–1389.

² NHS website accessed 11 October 2012 <http://www.dh.gov.uk/health/2012/04/obesityfacts/>

³ Centre for Mental Health. 2010. The economic and social cost of mental health problems in 2009/10. The Centre for Mental Health, available at http://www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk/pdfs/Economic_and_social_costs_2010.pdf.

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households were able to travel within 15 minutes by foot or by public transport to the following key services: a shop selling groceries (92%), a chemist (85%), a post office (85%) and a doctor's surgery/GP (81%). Furthermore, walking projects can give benefit to cost ratios of 9:1⁴, compared to road and rail schemes' typical 3:1 ratio⁵ whilst a review of evaluations of high quality walking environments showed positive cost-benefit ratios, of up to 37.6⁶.

Recent guidance on walking and cycling issues by National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence states that walking has many health benefits, including:

- Reduce the risk of coronary heart disease, stroke, cancer, obesity and type 2 diabetes
- Keeping the musculoskeletal system healthy
- Promoting mental wellbeing

There is significant opportunity for such a Bill to support the developing Active Travel Bill in order to enable more people to walk and travel by more active means by making walking the most natural and normal way of getting about.

The National Travel Survey (NTS) 2010 reveals that 20% of all journeys were less than a mile. 77% of all trips under one mile were made on foot, with 20% made by car⁷. 30% of journeys between one and under two miles are also undertaken on foot against a corresponding increase in the number of journeys by car/van. With this evidence in mind there is a compelling case to utilise a range of economic, legislative and policy based tools to encourage people who undertake shorter journeys, of between zero and up to two miles, to shift their travel mode from car/van to walking. Walking comprises 22% of all journeys against 2% for bicycles and 42% for car/vans which means that there is a strong walking foundation to build on which will help achieve any percentage increase in the number of people walking and the number of people choosing active travel for journeys up to two miles.

However, despite the huge opportunity presented by walking to reduce congestion and reduce car usage for distances below two miles the NTS 2010 has revealed a dramatic fall in walking trips by 8% compared to the previous year. This is part of a more rapid longer term decline in walking trips since the mid 1990s compared to other private travel modes which has seen walking journeys decrease by 28% compared to 1995/7. We believe a Public Health Bill in conjunction with the developing Active Travel Bill will provide a legislative and policy context to tackle this long term decline.

For more details please contact:

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⁴ Living Streets - Walking Works, Pledges follow up survey results, May 2010, Sustrans.

⁵ <http://www.sustrans.org.uk/assets/files/general/Economic%20appraisal%20of%20local%20walking%20and%20cycling%20routes%20-%20summary.pdf>

⁶ <http://www.livingstreets.org.uk/professionals/making-the-case-for-investment-in-the-walking-environment>

⁷ <http://assets.dft.gov.uk/statistics/releases/national-travel-survey-2010/nts2010-03.pdf>