

Response to Department for Transport Peer Review of Policy Proposals of the Traffic Signs Policy Paper

Response on behalf of Living Streets, July 2013

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 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 vibrant streets and public spaces.

We are interested in this consultation because the review covers pertinent issues within our agenda. We have recently launched a pedestrian crossings campaign which aims to make sure that pedestrians are able to cross the street safely, directly and without undue delay. We take an interest in reducing street clutter, including street signs, to make sure that pedestrians' journeys on foot are as comfortable as possible.

Our response is limited to questions on traffic sign clutter, cyclists and pedestrian crossings.

Traffic sign clutter

6.15 What further action can the Department undertake to encourage local authorities to remove unnecessary traffic signs?

The Department should encourage local authorities to paint 20mph signage on the carriageway rather than putting up a traffic sign. This policy could be implemented in areas with new 20 mph speed limits and applied retrospectively to existing areas which have 20 mph signage during the course of routine maintenance.

Local authorities should be encouraged to select a street champion from amongst the elected members. They should have the power and the responsibility to listen to the concerns of people and make positive change happen.

Living Streets believes that local authorities should adopt a street standard similar to that which Westminster Council has in place and learn from the measures TfL have put in place. Westminster's standard includes the street being free of unnecessary clutter and that street signs and furniture should be clear and in good condition. TfL have committed to ensuring that "by December 2014, 100 per cent of the TLRN is classified as 'tidy, de-cluttered or relocated or merged', and where all opportunity is taken to combine street furniture in accordance with our Better Streets Strategic Evaluation Framework."

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We think that local authorities should be encouraged to take opportunities to implement other improvements when maintenance is already scheduled, for example to remove unnecessary street clutter. This can prove to be efficient and save money.

We believe that alongside the review of TSRGD that the following Local Transport Notes should also be reviewed and updated to help reduce traffic sign clutter.

Guard railing

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/3806/ltn-2-09.pdf

Shared Use

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/9179/shared-use-routes-for-pedestrians-and-cyclists.pdf

Traffic management and streetscape

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/3810/ltn-1-08.pdf

Traffic calming

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/70662/ltn-1-07.pdf

Design and use of directional signs - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/local-transport-notes>

Cyclists

10.17 Do you have any other signing suggestions to help improve cycle safety?

We are appalled at the trial and potential implementation of cyclists being able to use zebra crossings whilst mounted as this could cause conflict between pedestrians and cyclists. Not only does this increase the potential for there to be collisions but also it is important to note that the presence of cyclists on pavements and toucan crossings can cause intimidation felt by pedestrians. We therefore have similar concerns about trialling cyclists use of zebra crossings. We feel that the implementation of this trial would seriously undermine the protection and priority of pedestrians that zebra crossings currently provide.

We would like to stress that any trialling of the use of cycle filter signals must be designed to ensure it does not have any negative effect on pedestrians. Therefore we would like to see a full assessment and review of their impact on pedestrians before, during and after the trials.

Pedestrian crossings

11.12 Do you have any comments on the proposal to prescribe a 'cut down' version of the pedestrian push button?

Living Streets believes that push buttons should provide clear information to all pedestrians. We feel that any changes made to the push button would have an equalities assessment to ensure that this does not disadvantage vulnerable road users such as older or disabled people.

We would like to see green and red man signals provided on the far side of all signalised pedestrian crossings rather than at the nearside which Puffin crossings currently provide.

Research has shown that pedestrians like far side signalling as this provides confidence when they are crossing the road.¹

11.13 Are there issues not covered that you would like to make us aware of?

We would like the new guidance to review the current assumed walking speed used to calculate how much time pedestrians have to cross the road. University College London published evidence in June 2012, which found that most older people are unable to cross the road in time. Over the age of 65, 76% of men and 85% of women have a walking speed slower than that needed to use a pedestrian crossing. The UCL research suggested that the current assumed walking speed should be reduced from 1.2 m/s to 0.8m/s. We therefore believe that the Department for Transport should reduce the current assumed walking speed to 0.8m/s.

Guidance on designing and installing traffic signals and pedestrian crossings is provided within Local Transport Notes, Traffic Advisory Leaflets and other documents. We welcome a review of the guidance but would like to see the Department for Transport include the following pieces of guidance, alongside wider related guidance, in this review:

TAL 5/05 Pedestrian Facilities at Signal – Controlled Junctions:

http://assets.dft.gov.uk/publications/tal-5-05/5-05_1.pdf

Puffin Crossings – Good Practice guide – release 1:

<http://assets.dft.gov.uk/publications/puffin-good-practice/puffin-good-practice-guide.pdf>

TAL 3/11 Signal- Controlled pedestrian facilities at portable traffic signals:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/4392/3-11.pdf

Guidance on the use of tactile paving surfaces:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-the-use-of-tactile-paving-surfaces>

LTN 2/95 - Design of pedestrian crossings:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/3814/ltn-2-95.pdf

LTN 1/95 - Assessment of pedestrian crossings:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/3815/ltn-1-95.pdf

Integration of Pedestrian Traffic Signal Control within SCOOT-UTC Systems:

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20120606202850/http://assets.dft.gov.uk/publications/tal-2-09/tal-2-09.pdf>

Inclusive mobility:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/3695/inclusive-mobility.pdf

The review of guidance should bear the road user hierarchy in mind in order to simplify, increase the quality and clarify the guidance to allow local highways authorities to improve crossing provision for pedestrians.

¹ A Maxwell, C Smyth (Halcrow), R Hutchins and M R Crabtree, Trial of far side pedestrian signals at a Puffin crossing, October 2011

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