

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 response to DfT consultation - Gearing up for efficient highway delivery and funding consultation**

### **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:**

#### **Box 1 - Highway Asset Management**

- **Do you think local highway authorities who can clearly demonstrate that they have a robust asset management strategy in place (and is in use) should be rewarded through funding allocations?**
- **What proportion of funding do you think should be linked to asset management?**
- **How else can the take up of industry good practice such as highway asset management and highway asset valuation be encouraged?**

We are supportive of the focus on the principles of asset management and the Highway Infrastructure Asset Management guidance<sup>1</sup> (HIAMG). We believe that local authorities that have a strong asset management strategy should be rewarded through funding allocations. Furthermore, we believe local authorities should ensure their asset management strategy demonstrates how maintenance decisions are linked with delivering wider local authority outcomes around policies such as economic growth (through improved public realm), public health (by increasing the number of walking trips through better pedestrian environments) and reduced air pollution and carbon emissions (through decreased journeys by motor vehicles).

This is illustrated in recommendation 3 of the Highway Infrastructure Asset Management guidance (HIAMG) which recommends that “*An asset management policy and a strategy should*

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.ukroadsliaisongroup.org/en/utilities/document-summary.cfm?docid=5C49F48E-1CE0-477F-933ACBFA169AF8CB>

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.

*be developed and published. These should align with the corporate vision and demonstrate the contribution asset management makes towards achieving this vision.”*

The approach of local authorities linking asset management policy and strategy with their broader corporate vision is further supported by recommendation 2 of the Highway Infrastructure Asset Management guidance (HIAMG) which recommends that “*Relevant information associated with asset management should be actively communicated through engagement with relevant stakeholders in setting requirements, making decisions and reporting performance*”. This highlights the importance of ensuring a range of stakeholders including local communities are involved in the decision making process regarding infrastructure maintenance.

## **Box 2 - Encouraging Efficiency Principles**

- **Do you think that those local authorities that can clearly demonstrate that they are adopting and delivering efficiency principles should be rewarded in their funding allocation?**
- **What proportion of funding do you think should be linked to the adoption and delivery of efficiency principles?**
- **Are there other steps you suggest could be taken to encourage the take up of efficiency principles?**

We are supportive of local authorities adopting and delivering efficiency principles and that they should be rewarded in their funding allocation. For example, we would support the concept of local authorities ensuring that footways and pedestrian facilities are designed with long term maintenance in mind through consultation with local communities using mechanisms such as Community Street Audits.

## **Box 4 – Cycle and footway maintenance**

- **Do you think that the maintenance and improvement of cycleways and footways should be eligible for funding from the proposed Challenge Fund?**
- **Would you prefer a specific discrete Fund for cycleways and footways maintenance, to be top sliced from the £976 million funding provided for local highways maintenance funding per annum?**

We are strongly supportive of the discrete fund for cycleways and footways maintenance to be top sliced from the £976 million funding provided for local highways maintenance funding per annum. However, investment in footways has historically been low compared to roads and whilst these proposals are welcome it still only represents just over 5% of the total funding available for local highways maintenance funding.

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.

The public are increasingly concerned about the quality of the footway. Research undertaken by YouGov on behalf of Living Streets in 2012 revealed that 81 per cent of people aged over 55 believe that their council should maintain pavements on an equal footing with roads and 72 per cent of British adults felt that their council should pay at least as much attention to keeping the pavements safely maintained as they do to the maintenance of the roads. This is a striking result, particularly given the controversy of road potholes over the last two winters, and underlines the point that almost everyone is a pedestrian at some point. Research by the Guide Dogs in 2011 asked councils how much they spent on compensation claims to pedestrians who had injured themselves by tripping and falling on badly maintained streets between 2006 and 2010. The total was £106million and the true cost when all councils and ongoing cases are factored in is likely to be nearer £300 million.

We believe the fund is essential in delivering in delivering high quality footways which has implications on the ability of Government to deliver a range of policies such as the Department's Door to Door Strategy and Department of Health's objective around public health. For example Living Streets have operated the national Walk to School (WtS) campaign since 1995 and aims to encourage all parents and young people to make walking to school part of their daily routine. In the last five years, our Walk to School message has reached over two million children across the UK and this year Living Streets will be working with over 650,000 children across more than 2,000 schools. However, our work with schools across the country through School Route Audits consistently highlights poor quality pavements and surfaces as a concern for parents, carers and children alike.

The cross-government impact of investment in pavements were highlighted during a Westminster Hall Debate<sup>2</sup> on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> February 2014. During which Stephen Williams MP – the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government commented that *'Walkable neighbourhoods are typically characterised by having a range of facilities available to all residents that can be accessed comfortably on foot. Making the local environment convenient and attractive to walk in can help enhance the vibrancy of a community and reduce reliance on motor transport. So it is important that local highway authorities, which are responsible for footways, recognise the importance of keeping them in good order'.....People-friendly streets, including good cycling and walking networks, benefit everyone and provide benefits for our health, as well as boosting local economic growth. My hon. Friend mentioned the Olympics and Paralympics, and all of us still have different memories of those occasions that inspired us. One of the legacies that the Government definitely want to see from those events in London is that more children and adults should get active and become more healthy as a result. That is a cross-Government aspiration. Last August, the Department of Health announced a £5 million initiative to encourage children and families to exercise more. As part of that funding, £1 million is being provided simply for walking initiatives, to help people get more active.'*

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmhansrd/cm140204/halltext/140204h0002.htm#1402048500001>

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.

High quality public realm such as footpaths also impacts on local economies. A review of the literature<sup>3</sup> regarding the business case for better streets and places undertaken by Just Economics and commissioned by Living Streets demonstrates that investment for walking can deliver a commercial return and provide a much needed boost for high streets and town centres. The review revealed that research suggests that making places better for walking can boost footfall and trading by up to 40 per cent<sup>4</sup>. For instance, a range of improvements to Coventry city centre, such as new pedestrian areas, a new civic square, clearer signage and better placement of street furniture, were credited with a 25 per cent rise in footfall in the town centre on Saturdays<sup>5</sup>. Many shopping trips are short and potentially walkable<sup>6</sup>. 92 per cent of British households are 15 minutes or less (on foot or by public transport) from a local shop<sup>7</sup>. Walking is part of most people's shopping experience and the obvious way to get around places. People also like to get together, socialise and be a part of a community. The importance of quality public places is widely recognised – see, for example, the Grimsey Review<sup>8</sup>. This is why improvements to the public realm matter – and they can deliver a much needed commercial return for our high streets and town centres too. Furthermore, international and UK studies have shown that pedestrians spend more than people arriving by car. Comparisons of spending by transport mode in Canada, New Zealand and Australia revealed that pedestrians spent 2-6 times more than people arriving by car<sup>9</sup>. In London town centres in 2011, walkers spent £147 more per month than those travelling by car.

Finally, we are concerned about the potential unintended policy consequences of creating a joint cycling and footway maintenance fund. We would like to see safeguards built into the fund to ensure that funding is balanced across the infrastructure types. The Department must also ensure safeguards are put into place to ensure that the fund is not the only source of funding used by local authorities to improve footways. Rather every local authority, should as standard, ensure highway maintenance scheme should consider how the footway can be improved at the same time. This would also ensure maximum efficiency is achieved as outlined in our response to box 1 - Highway Asset Management.

**For more details please contact:**

Dr Kevin Golding-Williams - Public Affairs and Policy Manager

[kevin.golding-williams@livingstreets.org.uk](mailto:kevin.golding-williams@livingstreets.org.uk)

Tel: 020 7377 4907

Mobile: 07720 680603

---

<sup>3</sup> [Pedestrian pound 2013](#)

<sup>4</sup> Burden, Dan, and Todd Litman. 2011. "America Needs Complete Streets." *ITE Journal* 81 (4): 36–43.; Litman. 2002. "Transportation Cost and Benefit Analysis." *Techniques, Estimates and Implications, Victoria Transport Policy Institute*; Whitehead, Tim, David Simmonds, and John Preston. 2006. "The Effect of Urban Quality Improvements on Economic Activity." *Journal of Environmental Management* 80 (1) (July): 1–12.

<sup>5</sup> NWDA/RENEW Northwest. 2007. "Economic Value of Urban Design Final Report." [http://www.placesmatter.co.uk/webfm\\_send/23](http://www.placesmatter.co.uk/webfm_send/23).

<sup>6</sup> Department for Transport. (2011). Statistical Release - *National Travel Survey 2011*

<sup>7</sup> Department for Transport (2013). "Table NTS0803: Shortest journey time to local facilities on foot or by public transport: Great Britain, 2005 to 2012". [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/9976/nts0803.xls](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/9976/nts0803.xls)  
<sup>8</sup> <http://www.vanishinghighstreet.com/the-grimsey-review/>

<sup>9</sup> Wooller, L. (2010). *What are the economic and travel implications of pedestrianising a roadway in Takapuna's shopping precinct?*. AUT University