

Scotland Walking Summit, session 1
29 July

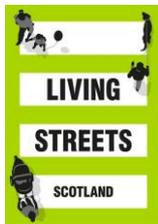
Transcript

Dani: Hello, everyone, and welcome to the first session of the Living Streets Scotland Walking Summit. Thank you very much for joining us. My name is Dani and I'm the Communications Coordinator at Living Streets. I'm going to be shortly handing over to my colleagues who will be leading the session today on inclusive streets. But I just wanted to quickly run through some housekeeping points before we get started, so we all know how we can engage with the session.

So today's session is going to last for an hour. We're scheduled in until three, and it's going to be a discussion between some of my colleagues from Living Streets, followed by some time at the end to address any questions that you have. And we really encourage people to submit questions, so that we can have a discussion with everybody who's in the room. The way to do this is to use the Q&A box, which is at the bottom of your screen. I'm going to disappear into the background but I'll be keeping an eye on those questions, and then I will come back later on to ask some of your questions to the panel. If you have more general comments or reflections on the discussion, you can share these using the chat function, which is also at the bottom of your screen, and I'll be keeping an eye on that too. So if you have any problems with the audio or any, any sort of technical issues, feel free to let me know in the chat, and I'll do my best to try and resolve any of those problems.

We're also recording today's session, so there will be an opportunity to watch it again. Afterwards, we'll be able to share that video. We'll also after the session has ended, we'll ask for some feedback on how it went. So please do send any feedback that you have so we can use that to improve the future webinars that we'll be running over the next few weeks and months. So I'm going to hand over now to Stuart who will be chairing today's session he can introduce himself and the other people in the call. Thank you.

Stuart: Good afternoon, everybody. Thanks for joining us. This is a much delayed event, it was supposed to happen in March, peak pandemic. So I think I'm glad that we're having it now. I'm not so glad that is actually done in this format. So I hope everybody stayed well over that time. And it's really great that you've been able to join us. We've kept the theme the same. So we're talking about inclusive streets, in its broadest sense. We're going to do that for about 30 minutes. And the reason it's just us today, is this is a bit of a test run for us. This is the pilot. Nobody remembers the pilot, but hopefully it's all going to go well today. And then we're going to get some other people involved and another series of seminars, but today, I've got Penny, who runs our community programmes and does a lot of work with older people, and also a number of disability groups. She's been with Living Streets for, I think six or seven years now. So, and lots of experience there. And I've also got Robert Weetman, who joined the team last year, he has a lot of experience on the technical side of things. And he's done a lot of review work last year. So they're going to tell us a little bit about the projects they've been working on, what we've learned from that. Do respond, in terms of questions. This is kind of 'Living Streets live', so this is the kind of discussions we actually do have when we formulate policy, and on the back of this, we're developing a

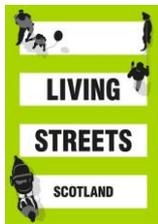


paper. So this is all live and in real time. It's designed to give you an insight into how we think about these things. And also an opportunity to influence how we think about these things, as well. So it's not as inclusive, this edition, because as I say, it's just us and it's our experiences, but we will bring another people's experiences hopefully when we know we've got the format and the technology correct. When I'm speaking, I'm going to talk about walking a lot, obviously, I may use the word pedestrians, and may use the words 'walking and wheeling'. We try and be as inclusive as possible, and when we're talking about walking, we're obviously including people with mobility aids as well. As I say it's to hold the dialogue with you. The next session - I'll just flag this up - is on the 12th of August and we're already going to be joined by somebody from Mobility Access Committee Scotland, and I'm going to throw open straight off with a quick question to Penny. Penny, can you give us an overview of your work with older people through the Walking Connects project, and some of the challenges that you've discovered and how that's shaped your thinking on inclusive streets.

Penny: Our success is that I have remembered to unmute my mic. Happily I will, answer that question.

So, as you've mentioned, I've been with Living Streets now for about six years and over the course of that time I've been managing and delivering communities programs for Living Streets in Scotland. So I've worked on Walking Connects, which is a three year large scale lottery funded program, working with older people in partnership to co produce interventions to help to enable and to encourage people to walk more in later life for everyday journeys. But we've also done lots of work across the years through some of our other community programmes, working with members of access panels in different parts of the world, and people with lived experience of disabilities who are just also trying to do that to try and get out and about in their local communities and use their streets and public spaces and have the same quality of life as everybody else and expectation of quality of life in those spaces as everyone else.

I think if we start with start with the Walking Connects project, and particularly thinking about the experiences or some of the older project participants that we've worked with over the last few years. First of all, the thing I would say is that older people are not a homogenous group with one set of needs and requirements. But obviously, you could have somebody and I know a few 95-year-olds who are very spry and could outpace me. And there are also people who are younger, who have lived experience of disabilities who find our walking environments, and our streets and spaces quite challenging to get around. But it is a fact that people in the bracket of age 65 plus do tend to have higher levels of ill health or developing health conditions or live with more disabilities as a part of our population. So it's a useful age groups to look at if you want to understand the impact of the quality of our, our environments in terms of impacts of walking and not being able to walk or access those spaces. And we know that for people who live with health conditions, people with disabilities for people who are in the later years of their life, remaining active, remaining socially connected, being able to be independent. All of these things contribute to wellbeing and good health. And we know that our environments and our streets and spaces are the factor that enables or disables people from being able to be active, stay connected, in a lot



of respects. But despite this, for many of our project participants through the Walking Connects project, they identify their public spaces as being a real barrier to being able to get out and to being able to walk. And this is very often the result of either poorly designed, poorly considered or just poorly maintained and the poor quality of the public realm.

There are lots of, you can get into the detail of what some of those challenges might be. But I think it's really maybe important to recognise that there are a couple of headline things that are particularly challenging for people who might be a little older or might be living with disabilities in terms of our experience of working with them. Principally, the amount of space and the quality of the space and the way that space is maintained, the way that the space has navigated, but also, just not feeling safe in that space and having a fear of falls or having a fear of other people's behaviour towards you in that space as well. So that's, you know, that's my experience of working with people across that number of years and some of the barriers that they identify.

Stuart: So, is there any particular aspects of this, that you'd like to mention that maybe maybe an address through the project, I have a particular interest in benches, which is something I hadn't realised the importance of until last year when I really needed a bench after having a very minor op, but it waylaid me. And I think that that was an interesting point of view, that your life circumstances sort of do change? And, and that, you know, that piece of infrastructure was something I needed at that particular time, but it's something I wouldn't normally think about, you know, when I'm fit and well, so I don't know if there's other examples from that, that project that you'd like to sort of cover.

Penny: So as I mentioned, the quality of the space and the level of maintenance of space is a huge issue for a lot of people, particularly people who are older. Falls or a fear of falls is a very significant factor in disabling people from being able to stay socially connected, to remain active, and to be independent. And our perception of the safety of a space for walking is a very significant issue for a lot of older people and other people in our communities. Alongside of that, there's a lack of enablers. So you've pointed out that when you were unwell and you were recovering from your operation you needed to be able to sit down and take a break when you were recovering, when you were walking when you're on your walking journey. That's true for many people, benches, places to rest or shelter, knowing that you can sit down safely out of the way, handrails, well maintained streets in winter, that kind of thing is very important, actually pertinent right now is the lack of accessible, suitable public toilets because for an awful lot of people, that's a big deciding factor and whether or not you can get out and walk in your local neighbourhood and participate in your local and your local streets and spaces. And on top of the lack of enablers, I think there's there's some times that we all understand that there's sometimes a bit of an imbalance in priorities in the way that streets and street space is allocated. And the priority is given over to drivers. So vehicle speeds are concerned, the volume of traffic is concerned for people. If you don't feel very confident or you're not very fast on your feet, getting across a road can be another deciding factor about whether you choose to walk a journey or not. And unfortunately, we also know from our work with some of our project



partners that there are numerous social barriers that prevent people from feeling safe and comfortable being out in the streets and spaces, including sometimes behaviour of the people around them, or feeling unwelcome or feeling that you know, your perspective or your needs are not understood, that people might not be very patient with you. Perhaps information that's provided about that space or a way of finding information isn't provided in a way that's accepting as well. So there, there can be numerous areas where improvements could be provided that would provide more enabling spaces and more equitable spaces.

Stuart: I'm going to bring Robert in there because he's the man that we sent out to look at sites and he looked at a lot of sites in a relatively short time that he's been with Living Streets. I think I've got down that he's been at least 29 housing sites, and nine business parks, although the nine business parks we had to do remotely because of, of the pandemic situation. So, yeah, Robert, just following on from Penny's comments, from your experience, what do you think about what makes these spaces inclusive or not inclusive?

Robert: Well, I think it would be very tempting to point to particular design features. But actually, I think rather than doing that, it would be much more accurate to say that we're currently a million miles from an inclusive environment for pedestrians. We're not talking about, you know, a small number of people not being able to get along a particular street, what we're talking about actually moves into a large number of people not even being able to get to the end of their own local streets or, you know, even outside of their, their gate to whatever they're trying to get to, so we're a million miles from where we need to be. And in terms of barriers, I think, you know, we could, we could smooth every surface that we've got out there, you know, we could we could mend every every paving slab, we could add dropped kerbs to, you know all the places where people are currently thinking of having dropped kerbs. And that might take us another couple of hundred years at the rate we're currently working, you know, we're not getting through that as a thing. We don't have a systemic approach to that, which means that we aren't going to even manage to get anywhere near that in you know, 100 years, 200 years.

We could do that, smooth all those surfaces, put in all of those dropped kerbs, and still have an incredibly un-inclusive environment out there. What we're looking at needing to change is a much bigger and much more complicated thing than that. And partly that's because over, you know, 80 years or so 50, 80 years, the decisions about what we want our streets to look like effectively end up getting handed over to the technicians. It's really seemed to be that we've, you know, the people who actually end up taking decisions about how streets should look like and, and you know, not actually often politicians or decision makers, the technicians on the ground, choosing real fine details like whether or not there should be a dropped kerb or what a corner should be built like, or what the arrangement of streets even should look like. And we've been doing that for 80 years, 50 years, 80 years. That means that what we now have is a system which is fundamentally built around the set of assumptions and the main assumption there is that we're working towards a point where everybody will be driving everywhere by car. The problem is that we're never going to get there. Because, you know, we're nowhere near everybody driving by car at the moment and



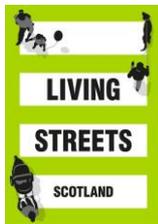
the result of those decisions already have created us environment which is incredibly un-inclusive. Some people that works for but very, very many people that really doesn't work for.

So yes, a very big problem.

Stuart: I think I was taken by some of the work that you've done both on the Housing Association sites, which we delivered a project in partnership with a Cycling Scotland and those Federation housing associations, which was really interesting to look at how these sites were actually quite well located in one level, and that they were edge of city centre, on another level, they were they were quite isolated in terms of there was a lot of barriers, there was severance, there were difficult crossings. And they were just places you just wouldn't really want to walk to things. And I think that you know, it just wasn't a pleasant environment and said there was lots of minor fixes, but there was a bigger problem there.

I'm going to come back to Penny on that because, Robert, you mentioned the kind of people that are designing streets and managing streets. So Penny, you obviously work with these these people, they're partners for Living Streets. And we know actually how incredibly hard they work, contrary to some belief and some of the chatter on Twitter, they actually are people that care. I'm just wondering, do you think there is a gap in terms of the lived experience of the people that have the most control over the fine detail of our streets?

Penny: Yes, I mean, I think it's, I think that if we're talking about street managers or whether we're talking about people who are working in, you know, if we're talking at a sort of operational level, and within local authorities, we're talking about people as you pointed out human beings who care and have a human response when they're dealing with other human beings, but they're working and sometimes very, very challenging positions, trying to balance a whole lot of competing priorities. As Robert's pointed out these are systemic issues, this is a systemic series of issues and and all that people are maybe dying a little inside when I see that phrase and it makes people want to weep, but it's true right from the very top, from decisions around national policy and what national policy should be, down a sort of process of decision making to community planning, community planning partners putting their locality outcomes, improvement plans together, down to local managers who are trying to address local issues down to contractors who go out to dig up streets and put up signs on the road to direct traffic or to move people out of the way of road works. If that system is just a system made up of people and the majority of people make decisions every day, not based on a desire to make life difficult for somebody else, however, the majority the number of people who are in the position to make the decisions and have the responsibility who live with a disability or who are a member of an ethnic minority who live with a disability or a member of a marginalised group. It's not as many as there are people in the population. And the sort of inherent bias, and I include myself in this as well, that we might bring to a decision making doesn't always naturally take account of the needs of people whose experience we don't share. I think there is a really, it's very, very key that, you know, we're all able to recognise all the way through this process and all of the different players, that it's essential for us to be having conversations with people who understand



their own needs, and we very often have access to really helpful answers in addressing those needs. So our work with Walking Connects with our older participants and we're talking about a majority of the time people over the age of 75 with a variety of different potentially different disabilities or health conditions come up with some really straightforward and simple requests, often very low expense and fairly straightforward to deliver. But having a really hard time gaining traction to have those requests addressed, because first of all, they lacked a bit of confidence. So "I'm a bit older, so my needs aren't that important, so I'm just causing someone a bother, so I'm not going to ask". And even when they do ask feeling a little bit dismissed or unheard because the people they're talking to are dealing with all these competing priorities, and actually, this request gets kind of sidelined or passed to the side. We can't really afford to sideline these decisions, and to have more inclusive seats as a 'nice to have' after the needs of the majority of people in the decision making. Because actually, 'the majority of people' is a bit of a myth. It doesn't really exist. The majority of people are people who are older or people who live with a disability or people who live with a health condition or people who are excluded from public space for another reason. And so if we can bring people in to decision making about their spaces and places, then maybe we can find a way to prioritise those needs. And in that case, we can maybe find a way to deliver more inclusive streets and spaces. I see that very glibly, knowing that it's a very difficult thing to do. But I think you know, that's the key that's the answer.

Stuart: I think you've hit the nail on the head there. I think there's there's an issue around what a lot of people are doing at a local level and local authorities, which is actually rationing resource. And trying the best with imited resources, and that actually is quite an inefficient process, when you've got a very small pot of money to spread around when the problem is so big. I think the interesting thing is that when you do through the work you've done, get people out on site with the groups that most benefit, the enthusiasm that's out there to do something for those groups is fantastic. And we've seen projects in Perth and Kinross in particular, which have really moved things forward. And a lot of fairly small measures were packaged up and delivered there in a number of towns, and also in Edinburgh. Actually, when people got on site, and worked with residents from sheltered housing complex, they were able to actually fix the street pretty quick. Just because they weren't aware that you know, you've got all these fancy tools and GIS these days bit actually it's kind of about going out and speaking to people on the flip side of that, and I think that a lot for Living Streets work is actually people don't actually who to ask or how to ask for this type of stuff. And because they don't speak the same language as as primarily roads engineers who are looking for technical solutions and in terms of things.

I'm going to move on to, I think some of the tensions in all this. And that there is an inherent tension in street design and developing inclusive streets. Parking actually probably comes to mind. And we're seeing quite a lot of this in amongst the very welcome schemes that are responding to the COVID emergency, however, these had been done, done very rapidly, and they are challenging the status quo. And then there's pushback from a number of different interests and including some organisations representing people with disabilities.



So I just wonder, kind of views on that that tension and how we manage the tension that's out there. As we change streets, from a fairly standard way of doing things, planning around cars, moving to a way that puts more space for people. I'll start off with Robert on that one but Penny, do chip in.

Robert: Yeah, I would say this is inherently incredibly difficult, you know, these kinds of problems get called wicked problems and that that that phrase is used for a reason. I talked earlier on about the level of change which we need to be thinking about. But the problem with that level of change is that it's a very difficult thing to, to convince people of, to, to talk to people about.

If I'm currently somebody who, I can get to one shop using my car, you know, practically speaking, it's something it's my lifeline, and that shop is in a retail park, four miles away, and that's the closest supermarket to get my basic food supply. And then somebody comes along and says that they're going to change my neighbourhood and stop you driving through bits of it. That's going to make my life harder. Now that person or that you know the project may be all about regenerating that residential area so that you no longer need to drive however far it was, I said to the local supermarket, because actually, that local area will regain local shops. Because at the moment, you know, the point is, everybody jumps in their cars and drives up four kilometers, or miles, whatever. And, you know, a portion of the people that live in that residential area can't can't get there to that local shop because they don't have cars. It's very well meaning to say, look, we'll change that residential area, we will bring back local shops. But for the people who currently drive and can drive to that, that supermarket four kilometres away, that's a very big thing to sell to them. It's difficult, if not impossible, it's the kind of thing which can only be you know, it's almost something you have to put in place and then people have to realise, oh, actually, it did work and I don't need to drive now four kilometres to that supermarket. Isn't it nice? Nice because now my neighbours also can get to the local shop because the local shop isn't that far away anymore. That's just inherently incredibly difficult thing to do.

Stuart: I was going to bring Penny in there, just to get her take on this types of issues.

Penny: I guess, just thinking about the transition from lockdown, COVID, for example, I think kind of starting with, particularly our direct experience of our project participants and our older persons work. So we're talking about a group of people who are really at a sort of pressure point and apex of unfortunate occurrences right now. So people over the age of 65 and people living with health conditions are much more vulnerable to COVID and the impact of the health impacts of COVID, but then on the other side we're talking about people who are equally, if not more vulnerable to the health impacts of not being able to be active and not being able to stay socially connected and not being able to be independent and not being able to walk outside of their front door. And when we look at some of the sort of COVID responses, there's a great, there's a lot of very good stuff happening, I have to say that first and foremost, there's a little bit of kind of, rationalising and compromising going on and there's, there's a little bit again of that focusing on the needs of that mythical majority who don't quite really exist. So where there's a focus for example on moving commuters



through a space we're not necessarily providing benches, or places for people to rest safely with adequate space, and so, facilitating older people and people who live with health conditions to be able to get out and get a bit of fresh air

As Robert says these are really challenging issues, and again we kind of have to bring ourselves back to the point where we understand that the transport hierarchy is the transport hierarchy, that pedestrians are at the top of that hierarchy and within that the people who have the biggest needs of their environment want to provide equity in this decision making process, their needs need to come first. And in order to address those needs first we kind of need to speak to people who have those needs and understand what they are. We struggle I think at the moment to do consultation processes and engagement processes to bring in the voices of the least heard. And, of course, that's a difficult thing to do, but it's an essential thing to do. And if we're going to speak to people who are not just excluded from our public spaces but also excluded from these processes we need to invest time and resource in being able to bring people into those conversations, understand that it takes time and resources to do it, and value those conversations, and I think, whilst, again, this isn't just come back to local authorities, local authorities are trying at the moment to do an awful lot under for example community empowerment responsibilities under community empowerment, to engage communities, but they don't have a lot of resource to be able to do this. There is no magic one solution, but if we want to do it, we need to take that seriously, to sort of properly support it means bringing in the voices of those who are less often heard, so they have an equal footing in these conversations.

Stuart: I'm just going to respond to some of the chat I can see coming up, it's quite an interesting point about whether it's inclusive to encourage people to shop locally if it's more expensive. I think that's an interesting point, it reminds me of a time I went out on site with Robert in Kilmarnock, the Shortlees estate, where we were doing a street audit, and I remember going out there and we walked the route and it wasn't particularly great, though Kilmarnock actually has a fantastic pedestrianised town centre, but actually, when you come outside of that, and you get to the estate and the estate is actually okay, it's a 20 mile an hour, but there's limited facilities, and we decided to take the bus back. And I was shocked at how much the bus cost, and when we were speaking to the community reps on the project, one of the things he said is that people would walk out of the estate to pick up their shopping, and then they would bring it back they would go on the bus because they couldn't afford to go both ways. And I think there's some lessons there about that, again, it's about that potential to be inclusive and remembering these groups when you're planning things.

We learned that because we were out on site, and we were speaking to people. So it's important I think that for walking, local facilities are key, and I think we've lost a lot of those. And it's not just about the infrastructure and different things, and that there's a limit to how far people can walk and just looking at cycle infrastructure, that is a great thing but that will not meet the needs of certain, certain groups and I think that there's a gap there at the moment in terms of what we're trying to do with policy, and just another aside I think one of the things I've noticed the COVID response is trying to boost local businesses through tables and chairs, which is important in allowing outdoor dining and things and I think



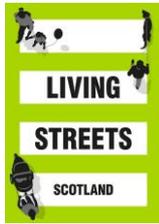
there's going to have to be some lessons learned on that. I saw some good practice from Edinburgh where, although the parts of payment being lost, actually the quid pro quo was actually some of the road had to be lost in terms of parking space to create basically a 3 metre corridor for pedestrians and people with accessibility issues. That has to be managed carefully as well in terms of your ramp that get people off the carriageway on the pavement and things like that. And I think the challenge really, when we're doing things rapidly is, how do you engage with groups, quickly, and do you know who they are and have we have the relationships been built up over the years, so you actually know what people want quite quickly and I think that's particularly challenging at the moment when we're doing everything remotely when there's certain groups that can't work on this.

I'll throw it back over to Robert just in case you've got any final thoughts on this topic before we move on to some of the questions from people.

Robert: I do have one thought which relates right back to some of the things I was saying at the beginning. And it is that we do not currently have a system which is working for a large percentage of the population. Our current system, the current way we do things, works a bit for a proportion of our population. This is not a small number of people who are excluded or a small number of people who have problems. When we were looking at their estate in Kilmarnock, that's a huge number of people who have real problems just getting basic supplies to live. Even with the bus, even if the bus was cheap. The fact that those people have to travel so far, just to the closest decent shop for food is ridiculous, we should not have a system which relies on that. And that's what I saw in the work I've been doing around looking at sites that housing associations and registered social landlords manage. This is not, you know, that estate in Kilmarnock is not an isolated situation. That's pretty standard. And there are huge, huge portions of Scotland, where actually, you know, we're asking people to walk and we're asking people to cycle, and it's not currently realistic for them to do that because the infrastructure is not there to allow people to do it and the places that you might want to work or to cycle to, are things like a supermarket or whatever, and they're a very long way away. And what we've done is we've built a system up which means that that caters for those people who have the money to buy a car, who live in an environment where actually there's plenty of space and we can drive to that supermarket but for huge portions of Scotland, it really really doesn't work, doesn't work well at all. So, you know, yeah, we have a system which is not working, which has to change if it's going to be fair for huge portions of the population, this is just, it's not about inclusion in one sense it's not an inclusion or disability, it's around inclusion in terms of, you know, whole, vast, a vast proportion of our Scottish society.

You're muted again, Stuart.

Stuart: This is fine, this is a pilot. We're getting the hang of the technology, and it's terribly impolite to mute yourself and not unmute yourself so apologies for that. We're going to move on to see if Dani has any questions we should be covering at this stage.

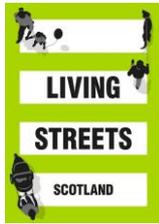


Dani: Yes, we've had quite a few questions, so thanks everyone who's commenting in the questions and also in the chat.

We've had a couple of quite similar questions so I'm going to try and kind of paraphrase that into one question if that's okay. A couple of people are asking about how to balance the needs of people cycling and people using the pavements particularly disabled people and older people who might find even small increases in the number of people cycling, through things like infrastructure changes to allow more people to cycle, how do we balance those needs and ensure that cycling doesn't exclude people who are walking, who may or may feel a little bit less safe around that?

Stuart: I'm going to jump right in here and just say that people shouldn't be cycling on pavements, that's a Living Streets policy, and it's also in the Highway Code. We understand why they do, and there are certain groups you can have more sympathy with than others but that's the starting point. And so that message has to sort of be clear out there and I think there is a perception about roads that certain people could actually just be on the road, and do that safely. For others, it is a real barrier because they really don't feel it's safe to go out there, and we need to put the infrastructure in place. And that's one of the good things that's coming out in the COVID crisis, but I think this is a specialist topic for Robert so I'm going to bring him in here.

Robert: I think one of the things again which was really apparent, the work that we did around business parks and around housing associations, I was looking not just at walking and pedestrian space but also cycling. And for most of the housing association properties and for most of the business parks I looked at, it wasn't realistic for people to cycle as things stand, as the way that our streets are designed. And so, what we have is, effectively, is people trying their best, and people may well be badly behaved, of course. But the idea that we have an environment out there where people could stick to the rules and cycle on the back streets and just down the back streets and, actually, I couldn't find anywhere in Scotland where you could get anywhere, of any distance on the back streets, every journey I could look at meant people having to deal with very large roads and not just crossing very large roads, but having to travel along those very large roads. So the idea that we have an environment that people can currently cycle in in a safe and quiet way... that doesn't obviously mean it is okay for people to break the rules. However, I think what it points to is very much that what we have is as simple as you can see it's a divide and rule, kind of environment at the moment, where people trying to walk trying to cycle, people trying to use wheelchairs and mobility aids, they're all squeezed into a minimum space, and the focus of our design for 50 years has been, you know, to put the needs of people driving above that, always, everywhere, every corner, every residential street, every junction. You know, how many junctions could we point to where actually genuinely it's faster to cross on foot than it is to drive through? How many residential environments could we point to where actually you don't have to cross large roads somewhere on your journey, without any traffic signals? We're not lacking a small number of traffic signals in a small number of places. We



have vast areas of residential street, which actually are verging on being main roads, and which a lot of people can't cross. So, you know, what that then means is that we end up fighting for space and the only solution to that is to actually change at a systemic level change the way that the streets work. And there are other countries which have done this, this is why I get so passionate about this, there are other countries where 40 years ago, they took the decisions to make systemic changes to the whole way their street systems worked, and did really really radical things which have been really really successful in making it possible to cycle and to walk, and making streets, much better for more people, but we haven't even begun to take those decisions yet in any level in our system. Until we do that, we're not going to get anywhere really too significant and we will end up fighting for space.

Stuart: Okay, I'm going to bring in Penny here, I'm going to compliment, I'm going to give a backhanded compliment to our colleagues from the cycling side of things, particularly the campaigners: they're very good asking for things and knowing what they want. And actually they're still not getting it but they're getting more of it now with COVID-19 so that's there's been a little bit of a breakthrough in terms of re-allocation of space. I don't think as a movement that people on foot of all abilities are as good at asking for what we need, as a group, which may or may not be the same as what road cyclists need but I'm going to bring Penny in in that.

Penny: Okay, so first of all I say I really know nothing about cycling. Whilst I think it's a great thing for people to do, it's not something that I do much of and I don't really know much about it, so I'm not going to be able to address anything specifically there. But I think you're quite right. I think if you are, a bike is a type of a vehicle and if you are using that particular vehicle then that vehicle has particular needs and your particular needs, it's quite a consolidated ask, if you like. Different people on a bike will need pretty similar things to be able to get from A to B. So it's perhaps easier to agree what we need, and to be able to ask for that. If you're talking about a majority of people living in communities, we're all very different and we all have very different needs of our environment, in order to be able to get from A to B on foot or wheeling, or using an aid to navigation because they have a sensory impairment or because they're older, any of these things, that's a much wider range of different requirements of that space, so it's much more challenging in the first place to kind of have a consolidated ask.

The second challenge is of course that we don't listen to perhaps the needs of the people who have more need of their environment. We don't ask them, what do you need and address those needs. We talked to, or we think about the average Joe, who is of this kind of, as I've described it, mythical majority that doesn't really exist, who's able bodied and fit and healthy and can get from A to B and be quite nimble and then that lowest common denominator, that lowest need, is the need that we address. And that's what are sort of standards based approach to the height of an upstand and a dropped kerb, or the amount of time that we need to cross at a crossing, it serves that kind of lowest standard of need. And it doesn't, in that case, provide an environment that works for people who are walking or wheeling or using some kind of an aid to navigation in the space. And so I kind of come looping back around again, if we want to kind of get the balance right, if we want to address



some of these challenges, we need to prioritise the people who have higher needs of their space, we need to be aiming for equity in place and providing enablers, we need to listen to the people who have the need, and understand what the common factors might be and you know, provide them, and it's a much harder thing to do, it's a much harder thing to do. It will take a lot more time, it will take a lot more resource. Just because it's a hard thing to do, really doesn't mean that we shouldn't be doing it. And I think, actually really what we're trying to do today in the first of these sessions, when we're putting our equality paper out is bring on board as many of the potential allies and as many of the different voices that we can with us and Living Streets Scotland so we can have these conversations so we can start to try and identify what some of the common ground is and start to feel our way around some of these asks might be. And I don't think we'll ever get a nice two-page summary of 'these are the things that we absolutely need', but we need to have those conversations because as Robert's pointed out earlier, we're now in the sort of situation of almost divide and rule where we're squabbling over scraps and there's an awful lot of attention and road space given over to moving vehicles around. And if that's the status quo, if that remains as it is right now, we will never be able to resolve these issues.

Stuart: Thank you Penny, I'm gonna see if we can squeeze in a few more questions from Dani there.

Dani: Yes, there's lots of very interesting questions coming in I'll try to get to. There's one question here, and I'll just read it: a common perception of marginalised communities, is that they are disaffected or unaware of the injustices in their local area or in street design, and in your work talking with these communities, particularly in housing estates, how often do you feel they're aware of what the issues are and b) how to fix those issues? And do you have any examples you can share from that work?

Stuart: I'm going to jump in again and get Robert to expand on this and again, the work we did in Kilmarnock was interesting because we, what we did was we looked at the site and what we thought were the problems and then we asked the community have we got this right? And actually, we did see sort of problems with bits of design, I have a particular thing about dead frontage, about just, it makes the feel of the street. This is stuff I've learned with urban design, I hate seeing boarded up windows and shuttered windows, but none of that stuff seemed to have been identified by the community. Although I would say, it probably does affect them. And I think that was quite interesting. But Robert has probably got more reflections on that piece of work.

Robert: I think what always strikes me, and this goes back to work I've done much, you know, over many, many years prior to joining Living Streets, is that what makes a really big difference is what question you're being asked, what question we are asking people. If what's asked of people is, you know, what do you need, what can you change about your current street, people will tell you, well you know the paving slabs need to get mended and there needs to be a dropped kerb there, and we need to get rid of the rubbish and those kind of fairly easy things. And those are the kind of things people will ask you, even if you ask bigger questions those the kind of answers you'll get in a short conversation with somebody. If what we actually want to do is to get people to start to dream again, if you



like, and dream is quite a scary word, but I mean it, and to dream of something which is substantially different from what they currently have, where people will actually say, well hang on, why is there a dual carriageway here? This shouldn't be a dual carriageway. People who are currently on that dual carriageway should be on the main road over there, and that dual carriageway, actually it's got houses along it, people shouldn't be driving along it like a dual carriageway, that should be a 20 mile an hour street, with trees, and I'd probably put it back to that because that's how it was built back in the 60s.

For people to start to dream of that, that's a much longer conversation. And that requires not just standing on the street with somebody and saying, what do you want, what do you like about the street? That requires planning and talking over a much longer period and building trust with people. So yeah, you know, what the question is [that] we're asking people but also how long we've got to talk to people. I absolutely believe and I think Living Streets as a whole believes very much in people's expertise about their own local areas and that they really really are the experts in those areas.

Stuart: I'm going to bring Penny in again, I think one of the challenges we have, as this process does take time and we work on an annualised basis like all organisations, is basically the way, local government works at the moment and this is a much longer change and I have to compliment Transport Scotland for the work they support. We are now working over a three-year period, the first year is really just getting to know the communities and actually working out what they want, coming up with an action plan and the second year, and third year really getting to work with partners on what the solutions would be and one of the unfortunate consequences of COVID is two of the projects which were kind of reaching a mature stage, in Falkirk, where we did a lot of market research to find out exactly what made what made those communities tick, and work with a number of schools in Glasgow has been on hold, so we hope to reactivate that later in the year and also to regroup.

But I'll bring in Penny there about how we can do this, but I think it's also, this isn't just really about Living Streets, we are there to assist local authorities in this approach is there, we've got sympathetic funders that have helped us take this forward. I'll bring in Penny here.

Penny: So, I mean, kind of going back to the original question, do people who would be considered to be in marginalised groups always understand their disadvantage, and I would say, particularly from our work with older people through Walking Connects: absolutely not. I think that people generally speaking, whether we're talking about our work at a community level, whether we're talking about our work working with older people, the majority of the time, we're talking about people who are reliant on some degree of support to them, it might be at sheltered housing, it might be they're recipients of a particular service. These are people that consistently have low expectations of both their environment, and their rights, and it is an initiative that we're working with our project participants. One of the first things that we need to do is to make sure that they understand that they have low expectations, and that they should ask for something, and that it's okay to ask for an issue that they encounter on the day to day to be resolved. Certainly one of the sort of motivators for me to continue to do the work that I do is seeing not just when somebody feels entitled



to ask for a better environment, Robert's pointed out some of the smaller things people ask for, actually, I think even getting people to get to a point where they dream big about a better quality street is a huge piece of work, potentially.

One of the most fantastic things that we're concluding on the Walking Connects project has been working with some of our older participants, and I have to say, particularly some of our older female participants who may not necessarily have felt themselves entitled to sit down with a roads engineer or a member of their local authority transport team and ask for things, who have done exactly that, or sat down with your councillor and politely and persistently asked for the things that they need, and have been given them. And given them with grace, because the people they're talking to you really want to help them. And now understand their problem. And there's, there's just something very very rewarding for myself doing this work, for the coordinators working on this project and I hope for the participants as well in being listened to, and having an issue that you've raised addressed, and realising that actually, you should expect a bit more, there's no reason why anybody living in any of our streets, who is not a driver, or even who is a driver but needs to get to the bus stop or get to the end of the street, shouldn't be able to get to the end of their street. So it's okay if there's a problem to raise that and ask for something to be to be resolved. But then there are many many challenges in just taking that simple step. It's most of the time, a lot of people don't know how to start to ask that question and who to ask that question of, they're not really sure once they've asked the question, what the results will be because the processes, the decision making processes behind closed doors at local authority they take their time and they're not very clear to people. And, and again I'm not pushing this back on to stalwart local authority officers, you've got an awful lot to deal with particularly at the moment. They're trying their best to resolve some of these issues and maybe don't, sometimes get to a position where you can come back with an answer for a number of months.

Stuart: I'm gonna see if we can get another question in there. I think Dani said there was a few...

Dani: There are, we're not going to be able to get to all of these questions but I think we'll have to come back, circle back to try and answer them differently, because there's lots of very interesting questions coming in.

Maybe for the next one, the question is what does the panel think are the top campaign and advocacy priorities for bringing about the kind of systemic change that we've been talking about? And there's some examples: the planning system, design guidance, legislation, enforcing existing regulations, and the current review of the Highway Code, just some examples?

Stuart: Okay, I would kick off, I think we need to get the pavement parking legislation done. I think that's dragged on too long and that is a very legitimate excuse, in terms of COVID. But I think that is something pavements are for people not for parking cars on, that principle has been agreed, there is a mechanism there to effectively enforce that. We need to get that



done and we need to get that done by the end of next year, unfortunately, I would love to say it's this year but we need to get that done. So that would be my top one. I'll pass on to Penny and Robert for something similar.

Penny: I'm going to kind of think a little bit more about a bit less about the policy asks and maybe a little bit more about the practical because I think that's where I tend to do most of my work. So I think, and one of the things that we can do as Living Streets and Living Streets Scotland is to think through our product delivery a little bit more about how we ensure that we're focusing when we're doing work at community level that we're enabling some of these conversations and we are consistently supporting people who are not very heard at local decision making to have access to these processes. I think there's a real gap at the local authority level right now and across community planning because just, there's a real, squeeze on budgets and providing any kind of level of service so the additional ask of engaging with communities to help in decision making to such a sort of fine degree is a big ask. So wherever we can help to kind of bridge that gap when we can provide some kind of support to bring communities and particularly to bring those less heard voices into those conversations, I think that's really where we have to be focusing a lot of our project delivery and acting as kind of community connectors and representatives in those conversations.

Stuart: I'm going to put an advert out there, we will be making the case for doing more of this work. We need partners to do that. We are just facilitators. So if there's organisations out there that you represent or are aware of, we are looking for willing local authorities or organisations working with local authorities that want to do more of this type of work. Please get in touch. Please read the paper as well that we've circulated, that gives you an idea of how we would be approaching this type of thing but I think there's some principles that go across every organisation that's interested in this area. I'm going to move over to Robert.

Robert: I think that our biggest and in some ways our most difficult priority is to create and communicate a vision of how our streets could be different, how different they could be, and why you know why that would be so much better for everybody, and why there would be more inclusive. I think at the moment, generally what people would feel that we are all asking for is just lots more money, and just that, lots more money, and just for all the surfaces to be smooth and just for drop kerbs in millions of places which people who hold the money will feel that to be unrealistic because they can only afford 10 drop kerbs a year, as the money currently says. So I think for us to, to, to establish and communicate a really convincing very realistic feeling but very different vision of how our streets could be working that convinces people that actually I'd like to live like that I would like my street to be like that, that's probably our priority. And in with that, that that needs to include a whole, you know, very, very different perspectives from very many different people with different angles on what they need for their local environments. And as part of that what happens is really to, at the moment if we find ourselves in a divide and rule situation where people are arguing over the things that don't agree about and don't get anywhere, actually what we need to do is to sit down and work it all the things first that we do agree about which actually having done this in the past with Suzanne Forup and Sally Hinchcliff from Walk Cycle Vote, I was involved in a piece of work that they led, which was to do just that thing, which was to get people together to talk about what everybody agreed about. And that was really successful,



we came up with a long list of very big own things that everybody actually agreed about. That's then where we need to start. So those two things together: what we all agree about and that being a vision of something different, something radically different.

Stuart: I'm going to add something on top of that and I think we do need to actually focus on specific areas, specific places with a number of partners to actually go out and do this because it's getting done in small, small quantities. And I think actually doing it on a larger scale, and I think not in the town centre particularly I'm actually thinking of neighbourhoods, because that's where people have experienced during COVID, you can find people stayed away from town centres because there's no reason to go there, because the shops were closed, but they got really intimate with their neighbourhood surroundings, in terms of seeing them every day, and I think there's something that could be done to harness that in terms of the type of wide ranging projects, community scale projects that should be delivered in Scotland.

I'm going to pass back to Dani, I think we may just be about running out of time. So we'll just see.

Dani: Yes, we have one minute left. So,

Stuart: What happens after one minute?

Dani: We will not be kicked out of the room but,

Stuart: I think, okay, so we'll start winding up

Dani: For the sake of a kind of fairness to people who can't stay longer than an hour we should start to wrap it up, but I would propose that we in the follow up email that I'll send out people who registered that we try and address some of the questions that we haven't got to. And that some of these would carry over into the next session so to flag that session.

Stuart: Yeah and I noticed that Keith from MACS was very busy on the chat, so you'll actually hear from him in the next session so that's great. So we can come back to some of those questions.

Well I hope, first of all, you've got an understanding of our views on inclusive streets and what our general thinking is and hopefully, we are not far away but we want to know if we're miles out, if we're missing stuff that's about inclusion, we will miss people today that because of the format, because of the timing and things like that. Do let us know about that if here's other people out there, we need to be speaking to, just get in touch. That's the whole point of this exercise. Some principles that were covered in amongst all this chat: equity in place, and I think that's about everyone having the same right to the same level of experience on streets and hopefully it should be a positive experience. And to do that we need spaces that enable people to get around with ease and in comfort. And that's a design aim. And when looking at this, everybody really matters. Everyone has particular needs, and it's not just good enough to go for this majority, and if a few people fall through the cracks. and that is quite some big cracks on those streets, and that's not good enough. We need to



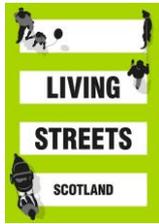
improve that. And in terms of how we evaluate how these projects work and I think this is quite a positive suggestion, we should be measuring who is using new infrastructure our streets that have been improved and a measure of success is there is a diverse number of people with all different characteristics actually using the streets. I mean that'd be fantastic and I think we need to start looking at how we do that from, from where we start.

To do this I think we need we do need to start thinking more about people not about cars, cars have had a good run for the last 40-50 years. There was a bit of a setback for them when the lockdown happened so we've got a kind of opportunity there to actually see what streets are like when they're not dominated by cars, maybe we can bring in the few good things from the pandemic was actually you could get around feeling safe and you could actually hear nature. And that's all positive in terms of your experience of walking.

So, there's a few things we want to do as we work through this, working with you. We want to try and avoid conflict, but it's inevitable. There's a finite amount of space out there, people have different needs, but actually getting around the table we probably all agree on more than we disagree on. And it's how we deal with the sort of wicked issues, if we can do that we can probably sort out some of kind of the unsatisfactory outcomes, there's a lot of anger around about this area because people feel they're not being listened to, or they're not engaged in the process because they feel they won't be listened to, and I think these, these issues can be addressed by working slightly differently. And that probably means working beyond the usual suspects, there's some really good advocacy groups out there that do a good job right across the active travel spectrum, disability, but there's other people that are not getting a look in here, and we all need to work out how we bring more people into this conversation which makes it more complicated, which makes it more interesting, and it will slow things down when you're trying to speed things up. But I think actually we will move faster in the long run, when we get to that point. And if we can do that maybe some get some equity in the space.

I think by getting together we can make the case for more space for people in our streets, and also raising the aspirations of everybody in terms of what they should expect from the streets, I think Robert made that point quite strongly, we really need to ask for more for walking than we have done in the past. We have a role in that, but that this is just to kick it off, we won't be able to do this alone. We really will be facilitating it with other organisations and partners, so thanks for joining us, for hearing about that today.

You will get a link to this paper we produced. There's a short survey, if you want respond to that, or you can come back to us with other comments. It's not finalised, it's a working draft. that is, hopefully there to be a shared living document that we will use to inform our work. But plagiarism is the highest form of flattery so if anybody wants to nick parts of it in terms of their policy please go ahead and do that. So that's about it I'm going to thank my fellow panellists for putting up with my questions, and my lack of microphone control at times, and also for Dani for facilitating, and finally to you for waiting. It was great. We had about 80 people lined up in March, that we were looking to welcome to the city chambers, we weren't sure how many people would turn up online today, I think a lot of people did and a few other faces as well. So thanks very much for joining us. We will continue this dialogue. Next



up 12th of August, a slightly different format. And then the big finale, which we will reveal on the 12th of August when you join us then. So thank you very much, and I'll close it there. Thank you.