



ACTION PLAN: WALKING PLACES PROJECT REPORT

Galashiels Action Plan Report

Living Streets

April 2024

Introduction

This report describes the findings of the Walking Places project in Galashiels, which has been delivered by Living Streets.

The Walking Places project aims to support walking and wheeling in Galashiels with Langlee and Tweedbank Primary Schools as two centres of a 20-minute neighbourhood.

Living Streets is the UK charity for everyday walking. We want a nation where walking is the natural choice for everyday local journeys. Our mission is to achieve a better walking environment and inspire people to walk more.

The Walking Places project is funded by Paths for All through the Active Nation Fund.

Walking Places brings together Living Streets' expertise across our school programme and community work. It incorporates the following elements:

- **WOW – the walk to school challenge from Living Streets:** WOW sees pupils record how they travel to school. If they travel actively, they are rewarded with a badge at the end of the month. This has been launched with Langlee and Tweedbank primary schools to support walking to school.
- **Living Streets' Out & About approach:** This initiative helps people to remain or become more physically active in their community, to stay socially connected, and to be active in improving the walking environment for everyone.
- **Living Streets' community and school street reviews:** Street reviews evaluate the walking quality of local streets and help build a case for improvement to the walking environment. Langlee and Tweedbank primary schools and members of their respective communities have participated in a community and/or school street review.
- **20-minute neighbourhoods:** This approach focuses on walkable neighbourhoods, where people can get most of their daily needs within walking distance. In this case, Langlee and Tweedbank primary schools are the focus for the 20-minute neighbourhood in Galashiels.

The following infographic shows which features should be found in an ideal 20-minute neighbourhood.





Fig 1.1 - an infographic showing the features of a 20-minute neighbourhood

Living Streets talked to lots of people in the local community about their views and experiences. They asked what issues stopped residents from walking more in Langlee, Tweedbank and Galashiels. This took place through street reviews, surveys, and meetings with different groups.

Local context and changes

There are currently two redevelopment projects across Tweedbank and Langlee which may influence levels of walking across these two neighbourhoods.

The Tweedbank Project

A large greenfield site at Tweedbank is undergoing a regeneration project with a focus on sustainability, community development and economic growth. The development will include:

- Delivery of 300-400 new homes through collaboration with the private sector
- Creating a vibrant community hub with improved amenities like leisure facilities and an older people and dementia care village
- Enhancing the existing active travel network connecting Melrose and Galashiels, aligning with the Destination Tweed project.



Upper Langlee Regeneration Project

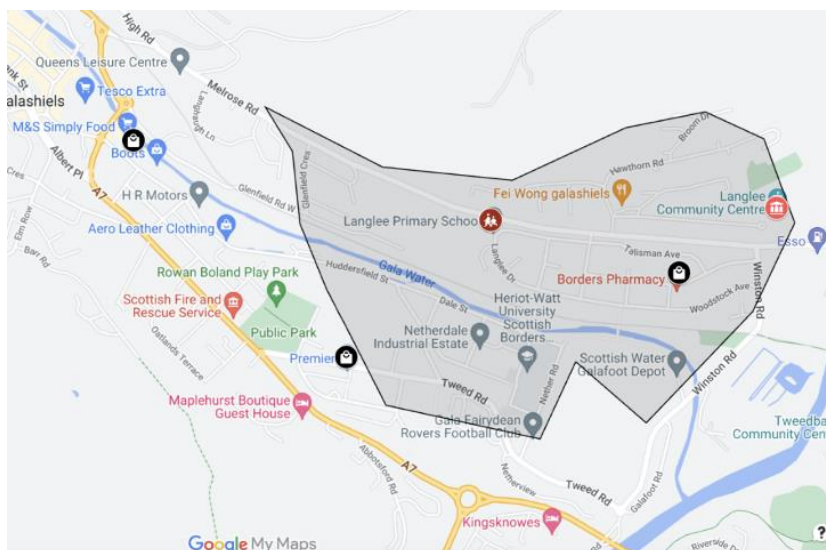
New housing in Upper Langlee (just north of Langlee Primary School) is planned, with a focus on providing modern and energy-efficient housing.

Initially, 25 new homes will be constructed. This will be followed by an additional 84 homes in a later phase. These will be replacement homes for houses that have been demolished.



Fig 1.2 - A map showing the planned new development to the north of Tweedbank (area north of the railway)

The following maps show the 20-minute Langlee and Tweedbank neighbourhoods which form the focus for the Walking Places project in Galashiels.



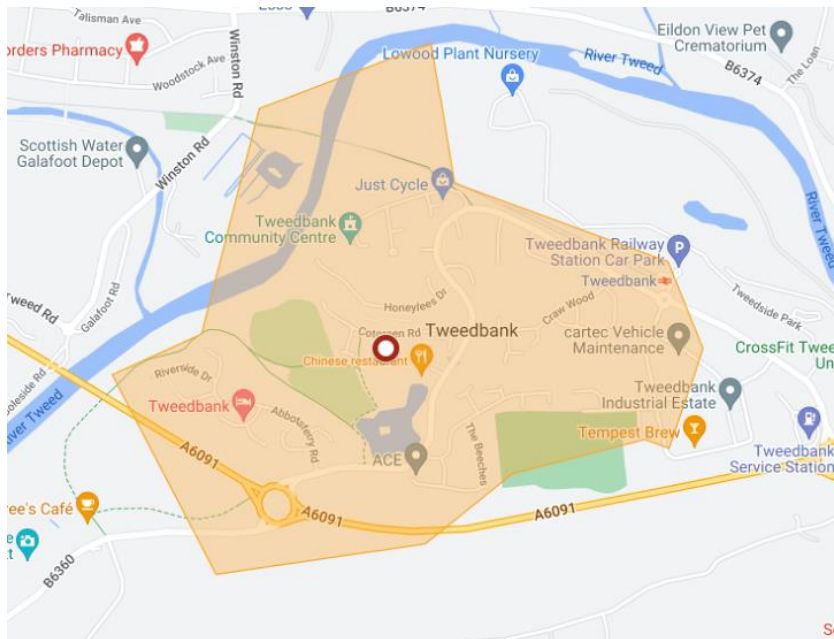


Fig 1.3 - Maps showing the 20-minute neighbourhood focused on Langlee Primary School (top - grey) and Tweedbank Primary School (bottom - orange).

Community and school consultation

The following community and school consultation took place in Langlee and Tweedbank:

- WOW – the walk to school challenge launched in Langlee and Tweedbank Primary Schools in September 2023.
- Online surveys were completed by Langlee and Tweedbank residents between October 2023 and March 2024.
- In-person surveys were completed by attendees at Langlee and Tweedbank events between October 2023 and March 2024.
- Discussion and survey at Older People Active Lives, Cyrenians, Scottish Borders, between December 2023 and March 2024.
- School street reviews at Langlee and Tweedbank primary schools in March 2024.
- Playground sessions as part of WOW at Langlee and Tweedbank primary schools between January 2024 and February 2024.



Data analysis

The following section shows a summary of key findings from the survey conducted in Galashiels between Sept 2023 and March 2024.

Walking habits

- Galashiels residents walk more than residents in other areas surveyed. 88% walk to get around.
- Walking is the preferred mode of transport for short trips under one kilometre. 58% of residents walk, while 26% drive.
- Residents walk frequently for everyday errands. 68% walk to the shops, 73% for leisure or exercise, 45% walk for dog walking, and 61% walk to access local green spaces.
- Public transport use is a moderate - 43% compared to car use, with 61% of residents driving regularly.
- Interestingly, despite high walking rates, only 10% of residents expressed a desire to walk more, suggesting high existing walking levels have met their needs.

Attitudes towards walking

- Health (78%), environment (81%), and cost (72%) are strong motivators for residents to walk.
- Safety (84%) and convenience (68%) are also very important factors.
- 53% of residents find the social environment, like walking with friends, to be an important factor.

Challenges to walking

- Weather is the biggest barrier to walking more often, at 75%.

Many people found Galashiels to be a safe and friendly place for walking. Some comments highlighted concerns about the condition of paths in the area. Another issue raised was the absence of dropped kerbs, which can impact accessibility.

Safety and friendliness

- Residents overwhelmingly perceive Galashiels as a safe and friendly place to walk, with comments such as "safe community", "people all chat," and "nice area, everyone is friendly".
- This sense of community safety contributes to a positive walking experience for many.



Infrastructure concerns

- Uneven pavements, potholes, and a lack of dropped kerbs are safety hazards, especially for older adults and wheelchair users. Residents made comments such as "not wheelchair friendly," and "caused older people...to fall".
- Narrow roads and congestion at bus stops can make walking unpleasant in some areas. Residents made comments such as "narrow roads," and "Tesco bus stop holds everything up".

Weather impact

- Poor weather conditions discourage walking for some residents, who commented "too cold and wet and my legs are bad," and "weather not great".

Walking habits

- Comments suggest a range of walking habits. Some residents walk frequently for errands and leisure, while others walk less due to health reasons, long commutes, or preference.

Overall impression

- Despite infrastructure issues and weather limitations, Galashiels appears to be a walkable community with a strong sense of safety and community. Improvements to footpaths could encourage more walking, especially for those currently limited by safety concerns.

Consultation findings

The following key themes were identified through consultation with Langlee and Tweedbank community members:

Pavements and Pathways

- Pavement parking is a problem, especially when walking to and from school with buggies and young children.
- Wheelie bins obstructing pavements was widely reported as a concern.
- Some pavements and pathways were discontinued or poorly maintained. Reported issues include raised flag stones, no dropped kerbs and uneven surfaces.

Local amenities

- Participants felt Galashiels had good amenities.
- Participants from Tweedbank travelled to Galashiels for most of their local needs but felt that public transport links were good.



- Disabled participants felt there were not enough blue badge parking spaces.

Public transport

- Participants felt the bus service was cut back during the Covid pandemic and that the service had not yet returned to pre-covid levels.
- A participant with a visual impairment and balance problems remarked that the tiles in the bus station floor can be disorientating and can look uneven.
- Community members felt Galashiels and Tweedbank generally had good public transport (bus and train services), but this could be improved by a more frequent service.

Street cleaning

- Chewing gum on pavements was raised as a concern.
- Dog mess was widely reported as a problem throughout the local area, as well as very few bins for owners to dispose of waste.
- Concerns over litter and overgrown weeds and bushes were also raised.

School engagement with pupils

Pupils shared their views during the Walking Places workshop. Key issues were:

Street cleaning

- Pupils discussed the amount of dog mess on the pavements.

Pavement parking

- Pupils discussed having to walk past cars parked on the pavements on their way to and from school.

Attitude to walking

- Pupils said they enjoyed walking as it was good for their physical and mental health.
- Pupils were concerned about pollution and the effect cars have on climate change.

The cars don't stop for you. Sometimes I walk along the grass. but if it's raining your feet get wet.

Langlee PS pupil

I need to have someone with me to go out, I won't go out on my own.

Survey respondent.



Recommendations

Improving pedestrian infrastructure

- Repairing uneven pavements, potholes and cracked kerbs.
- Increasing the number of dropped kerbs to improve accessibility.
- Facilitate safer crossing points for primary aged children walking to school.
- Ensure continued investment in well-maintained pavements, proper lighting and addressing safety concerns associated with the school run.

Promoting good behaviours around streets and local area

- Highlight the convenience of walking for errands and local trips through campaigns or community initiatives.
- Liaise with Scottish Borders Council and local police to enforce pavement parking restrictions.
- Liaise with community/town council and Scottish Borders Council about wheelie bin etiquette and if there is a way to reduce the impact on bin collection day.

Improving cleanliness of the street environment

- Liaise with Scottish Border Council to tackle issues around dog mess, chewing gum and litter on streets in Langlee and Tweedbank.
- Liaise with Scottish Border Council to tackle overgrown bushes and hedges imposing on paving.

Improving frequency of public transport

- Liaise with bus operating companies to determine if higher frequency of buses can serve Langlee and Tweedbank.

Next Steps for Walking Places

The Walking Places project's main focuses are based on the findings from the consultation. These focuses are outlined in the table below, known as the Walking Places Action Plan.

For schools



- Continue participation in the WOW programme to encourage active travel to school.
- Expand Living Streets schools programme with other schools located in Galashiels.
- Facilitate workshops with pupils and their families/carers to raise awareness and develop understanding of active travel.
- Collaborate with Scottish Borders Council on initiatives to improve safety around the school during pick-up and drop-off times, as well as support installation of traffic measures/engineering to support walking to school.

For the local community

- Work with Energise Galashiels and Scottish Borders Council to contribute to town regeneration plans, highlighting improvements to the walking infrastructure across Galashiels and walk to school routes.
- Advocate for improved public transport services, including more frequent and reliable bus routes.
- Raise awareness of the impact of leaving bins on pavements on older people and those with visual impairments and mobility concerns.
- Determine which stakeholders should be part of a working group to tackle issues and take forward work once Living Streets Walking Places delivery comes to an end.

For the local authority

- Refresh school crossing points at both Tweedbank and Langlee Primary Schools.
- Consider safety concerns of Tweedbank primary children living in residential areas (Hareshaw Bank and Blakehope Court) who walk to school via Cotgreen Road and must cross Tweedbank Drive on their way to and from school.
- Consider installing signage to alert drivers to the presence of Langlee school children on Langlee Drive.
- Consider creating a coloured raise bed to emphasise to drivers the need to give way and allow safe crossing on Langlee drive.
- Consider effective measures to address dog mess, chewing gum, litter, overgrown hedges next to footways, and to combat pavement parking (in liaison with local police).
- Make improvements to footways through appropriate positioning of dropped kerbs, smooth walking surface instead of cracked paving, and tackling potholes on walking desire lines and close to the footway on carriageway.



Galashiels Action Plan Table

Action	How	Who is involved?	Who is responsible?	Timeline
Hold a workshop with parents and families to raise awareness of the benefits and importance of maintaining an active travel routine.	<p>WOW Travel Tracker</p> <p>Development of resources /information for parents/guardians and carers</p> <p>Facilitate pupil workshop sessions</p> <p>Information and awareness sessions with parents, guardians and carers (after school or evening)</p>	Living Streets Langlee PS & Tweedbank PS Head Teachers and class teachers.	Living Streets Headteachers at Langlee and Tweedbank PS	By December 2024
Investigate the potential for the Early Years setting to participate in the Little Feet programme.	<p>Living Streets Little Feet resource package</p> <p>Dependent on Living Streets funding</p>	Living Streets Early Years Teachers at nurseries associated with local primary schools.	Living Streets Early Years Centres in primary schools	By December 2024
Increase access to WOW programme across other primary schools located in and around Galashiels.	<p>WOW Travel Tracker</p> <p>Dependent on Living Streets funding</p>	Living Streets Balmoral, Glendinning Terrace, St Peter's Primary School Head Teachers and class teachers.	Living Streets	By December 2024



Action	How	Who is involved?	Who is responsible?	Timeline
Increase access to WOW programme across other primary schools located in and around Galashiels.	WOW Travel Tracker (Dependent on Living Streets funding)	Living Streets Balmoral, Glendinning Terrace, St Peter's Primary School Head Teachers and class teachers.	Living Streets Galashiels Primary Schools	By December 2024
Feed information back to relevant local partners about issues raised during School Street Reviews.	<p>Arrange delivery of action plan to key partners.</p> <p>Plan a face-to-face discussion Galashiels Regeneration Project.</p> <p>Distribute Galashiels action plan to key partners.</p> <p>Make partners aware of key issues so that they can be tackled: dog mess, chewing gum, litter, overgrown hedges next to footways, and to combat pavement parking (in liaison with local police).</p> <p>Hand over responsibility to key partners to action</p>	<p>Energise Galashiels Scottish Borders Council Living Streets Head Teachers</p> <p>Community Councils Councillors – Euan Jardine Fay Sinclair Hannah Steel Neil MacKinnon</p>	<p>Living Streets Langlee Community Groups Tweedbank Community Groups Local Police Scottish Borders Council</p>	By December 2024



Action	How	Who is involved?	Who is responsible?	Timeline
Feed information back to relevant local partners about issues raised during School Street Reviews.	<p>Support school and community to advocate for improvements to footways, appropriate positioning of dropped kerbs, smooth walking surface instead of cracked paving, and tackling potholes on walking desire lines and close to the footway on carriageway</p> <p>Pinpoint which organisations/departments within the SBC are responsible for crossings and arrange a meeting to show findings. Seek advice from the Living Streets Technical Team on possible solutions.</p> <p>Establish a course of action, give responsibility to key partners to action</p>	<p>Energise Galashiels Scottish Borders Council (Engineering and Street teams)</p> <p>Living Streets</p> <p>Head Teachers</p> <p>Local Police</p>	<p>Living Streets</p> <p>Langlee</p> <p>Community Groups</p> <p>Tweedbank</p> <p>Community Groups</p> <p>Local Police</p> <p>Scottish Borders Council</p>	March 2025
Determine who can take on responsibility for advocating and moving this action plan forward	<p>Distribute action plan and conduct stakeholder mapping to understand makeup of local organisations and where their priorities link to action plan</p> <p>Start process for working group</p>	Local organisations	<p>Living Streets</p> <p>Langlee</p> <p>Community Groups</p> <p>Tweedbank</p> <p>Community Groups</p>	December 2024



Action	How	Who is involved?	Who is responsible?	Timeline
Galashiels need further investigation into the needs of the local community regarding walking locally.	<p>Next steps include outreach work to identify groups, holding events and discussion, hosting CSR to explore and document barriers to walking.</p> <p>Identify formal evidence in line with the community consultations and build a coherent picture to inform improvements to the walking infrastructure. Including pavement improvements and enhancing offer for members of the community with restricted mobility. (Dependant on funding)</p>	Living Streets	Living Streets	By December
Promote benefits of Walking, and improvements to Walking infrastructure through local media channels.	<p>Provide articles promoting active travel along with press releases of local walking activities, campaigns and community events.</p> <p>Investigate opportunities for further engagement with the community and lesser heard voices to be as inclusive as possible. Plan events based around making walking locally the natural choice for residents of Galashiels this could include initiatives like walking challenges and walking diaries.</p>	Living Streets Borders Telegraph Southern Reporter	Living Streets	By December 2024



Action	How	Who is involved?	Who is responsible?	Timeline
Promote benefits of Walking, and improvements to Walking infrastructure through local media channels. (cont...)	<p>Build understanding of walking motivations in Langlee and Galashiels based on survey results and any required, additional primary research</p> <p>Determine what activity should take place in Galashiels to support walking, based on motivations for Galashiels residents (e.g. activity, event, paper resources) and launch with residents</p>	<p>Galashiels Community Council</p> <p>Borders Telegraph</p> <p>Living Streets</p>	Living Streets	On-going until March 2025
Conduct Community Street review or workshop with Langlee and Tweedbank community to build relationships and better understand barriers to walking	<p>Contact community organisations and Langlee and Tweedbank community groups to organise community street review or workshop</p> <p>Conduct street review/workshop</p>	<p>Living Streets</p> <p>Langlee community organisations</p> <p>Tweedbank community organisations</p>	Living Streets	By July 2024



APPENDICES

Additional information for Tweedbank Primary School walking routes to school.

Refresh crossing points at Tweedbank Primary School.



All Tweedbank school crossing points supporting safe travel to school are badly worn and in need of updating. The paintwork has all but washed away and there is very little signage on the street or road to encourage drivers to give way and allow safe crossing or to alert them to the presence of children.

Install dropped kerbs on Cotgreen Road



On Cotgreen Road directly opposite the school there is only pavement on one side of the road - where there are a number of residential buildings and private car parks. Where the pavement stops to allow vehicular access to private car parks, no drop kerbs have been installed to ensure wheelchair users and walkers pushing prams can continue their journey unabated.





Junction at Cotgreen Road and Tweedbank Drive

Hareshaw Bank and Blakehope Court (houses in the background) are residential areas catering to families whose children walk to school. Children use a path running down the grassy verge and cross Tweedbank Drive without any designated crossing point. The children advised that they do not use the crossing point located further down Tweedbank Drive because it was too far away and much quicker to cross at the top of the road.

Although limited to a 20mph speed limit and with signage in place, the design of the junction into Cotgreen Road is wide and with sloping corners that does little to discourage speeding cars. There are drop kerbs in place to facilitate crossing but could benefit from a raised bed or island installation that would reduce car speed and better safeguard crossing children.

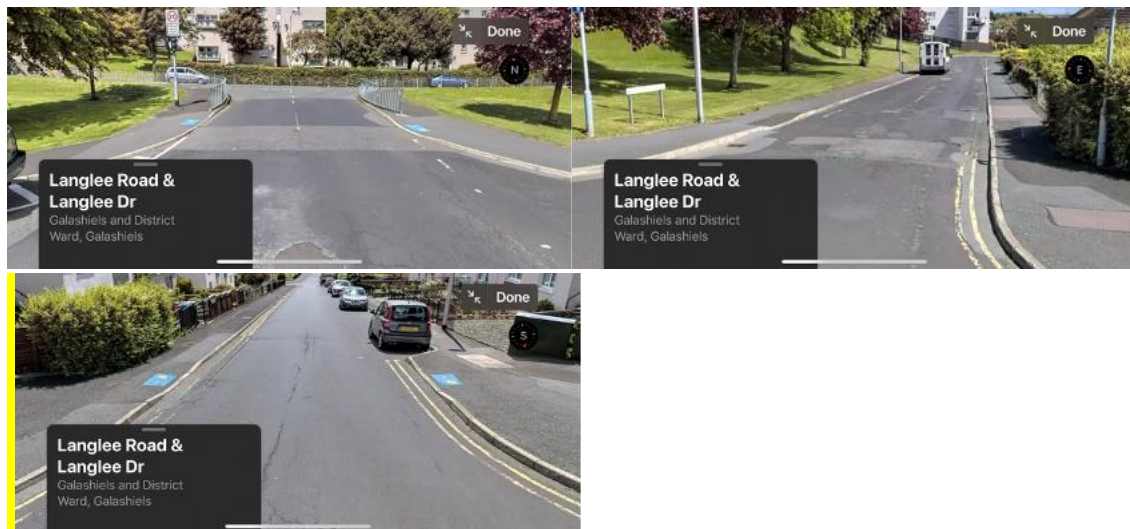
Junction at Langlee Road and Langlee Drive

This junction is busy during the school pick up and drop off with traffic entering Langlee from Melrose Road, located centrally within a residential area with children walking to school from all directions. There are four intended crossing points for children which are highlighted by now faded paint on the pavement reading 'Stop, Think, Listen'.

There are no markings on the road, no signage alerting traffic to the presence of school children and no measures taken to limit speed of cars, or to empower pupils with the right of way that would ensure cars stopped and allowed safe crossing.

It is recommended that a coloured, raised table would better highlight that this is a pedestrian crossing point and encourage cars to give way to children and families – and that some signage is installed to inform drivers that there is a local primary school nearby.







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