



CIHT / Living Streets Roundtable

**Safer and more inclusive walking
and wheeling for everyday journeys**

August 2023

Working Group*

Dr Rachel Lee

Living Streets

Professor John Parkin

**Emeritus Professor, University of
West England**

Glenn Higgs

**Technical Director (WSP) and CIHT
Technical Champion**

Robert Huxford

Urban Design Group

Lynda Addison

CIHT Technical Champion

Karen Agbabiaka

**Non-executive Board Member of
Active Travel England**

Michael Lorimer

**Inclusive Mobility and Transport
Advisory Committee**

Bert Bailie

CIHT Technical Champion

Lucy Saunders

Healthy Streets

Sally Gibbons

Department for Transport

Mark Philpotts

SWECO, CIHT Technical Champion

Phil Jones

**Non-executive Board Member of
Active Travel England**

*The individuals listed above were invited to give their personal professional views and, as such, they do not represent the views of their organisation.

Key messages from the roundtable:

<p>What can be done right now?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure Department for Transport (DfT) looks at the walking strategies as part of new Local Transport Plans (LTP). Local plans and local transport plans should include proposed networks for the short, medium, and long term across all modes, including policies and conditions necessary for their delivery. 2. Conduct ‘potential for walking’ data analysis (granular data) as part of plan preparation to identify journeys that could be walked and replace short car trips. 3. There needs to be a ‘push’ from the Government to encourage local authorities to use the Manual for Streets (or any new walking design guidance) to achieve a real change. People in the sector will continue doing what they have previously been doing unless there is a requirement to follow the guidance built into relevant policies and plans (e.g., the National Planning Policy Framework, Local Plans and Local Transport Plans). 4. Street lighting design needs to recognise that the whole street - and not just the carriageway - needs to be illuminated. A sense of place can also be created through greater emphasis on ‘green streetscaping’ to make streets more welcoming to people who walk/wheel. 5. Institutions like CIHT should play a role in moving forward the idea that streets should be designed less in terms of ‘pure engineering’ (meaning the material qualities of footways). More attention should be given to how separate elements add up to create streets that people want to spend time in, such as: plants, good lighting, street cleaning and maintenance, etc. CIHT also has a number of valuable
---	---

	<p>resources, such as Designing for Walking report or Creating Better Streets paper, that might come in handy for those involved in walking and wheeling.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Place pedestrians at the centre of every maintenance activity by incorporating footway improvements in a holistic approach to street works and highway upgrades. Better maintenance will save money in the long term. 7. Establish minimum standards for the level of acceptable defects on the footway. 8. Provide training for local authorities on best practice for designing streets for people walking and wheeling, efficient use of available resources, and placing pedestrians at the centre of every maintenance activity. 9. Review funding and provide a better support for walking and wheeling infrastructure; and to fill the skills shortfall. 10. Proactively manage vehicle parking with pedestrians in mind. It is important for two reasons: limiting the supply of parking slots can encourage people to walk rather than drive for shorter journeys. On street parking, and indeed often on footways, limits the free movement of people who are walking and wheeling.
<p>These suggestions will take time to implement:</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Planning and transport sectors must adopt a walking and wheeling perspective. Both sectors should work towards providing walking and wheeling routes that are continuous and navigable, forming a continuous network. 2. We need comprehensive walking guidelines (a walking equivalent to LTN 1/20 on cycle infrastructure design) and a coherent approach across UK nations. The Wales Active Travel Guidance is a good example of how a single document can provide consistent delivery of active

	<p>travel infrastructure. Such a document would need to be regularly updated to include new infrastructure designs.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Review street design guidance in line with the Highway Code, which places pedestrians at the top of the road user hierarchy, to eliminate inconsistencies between desired and enabled road user behaviour. 4. Review vehicle design standards to ensure that their size is proportionate to the road space/traffic calming measures in place. 5. Improve and standardise data collection on pedestrian falls. The Department for Transport could establish a standard classification of footway faults consistent with the hospital admissions data. 6. Develop the necessary mindset and skills – currently many people who are making decisions have been designing the environment for cars for many years, so it is a challenge to make a shift towards designing for active travel. 7. Walking/wheeling is an important part of every journey. A behavioural change in the society towards active travel is needed. Local authorities will need more support towards this change. There is also a scope for a political campaign for walking and wheeling. Politicians need to understand the real benefits of walking and wheeling, and it is not only about the health benefits of active travel.
--	---

<p>Desired Outcomes:</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Behavioural change in the society and within the sector towards active travel. 2. Development of the necessary mindset and skills and knowledge to deliver policies on walking and wheeling. 3. Consistent and available data on pedestrian falls and the cost of poor maintenance. 4. Application of guidelines on the design for streets for walking and wheeling as a part of a multi-modal transport system should be mandatory.
---------------------------------	--

Introduction

Every journey begins and ends with walking or wheeling - either as a means of going to the destination, reaching the nearest point of public transport, or getting to a car/taxi. This includes movement on foot and wheeling using a wheelchair, mobility scooters, prams, pushchairs or buggies. In line with the current policy to achieve net zero by 2050, the government has a policy focus on the need to increase levels of active travel as one means to accomplish this, not to mention other benefits of supporting active travel¹.

But walking and wheeling are often neglected by transport and urban planners whilst planning, upgrading, and maintaining infrastructure. We have come to the point where many people are not encouraged or do not feel safe to walk or wheel for reasons such as: poor lighting, uneven and narrow footways, fear of being hit by other vehicles (like e-scooters or bicycles).

Land-use planning has not supported the provision of sustainable transport into new developments and therefore created a car-centric transport environment.

The working group believes that the combined importance – but often neglected or unappreciated mode – of walking and wheeling needs a renewed focus by the government, by the profession and by society at large. As such, the working group developed this briefing to help advise the government and other professional institutions on existing challenges and potential solutions.

¹ According to Gear Change (2020), cycling and walking can help tackle some of the most challenging issues we face as a society – improving air quality, combatting climate change, improving health and wellbeing, addressing inequalities and tackling congestion on our roads
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/904146/gear-change-a-bold-vision-for-cycling-and-walking.pdf

On 25th July 2023, CIHT - in partnership with Living Streets - hosted a virtual roundtable with a group of 12 transport experts working mainly on active travel. The focus group was asked a series of questions around walking and wheeling during the discussion to formulate a policy brief with a set of points of discussion for the sector:

1. Discuss whether the current target to achieve 50% of all trips in England being walked/wheeled or cycled till 2030 is still achievable.
2. Explore how we can improve walking and wheeling for women in terms of safety.
3. Are current infrastructure design/standards supporting walking and wheeling effective enough?
4. Discuss footways and maintenance issues associated with them.

In the next section you will find different opinions captured during the roundtable.

Discussion

Discuss whether the current target to achieve 50% of all trips in England being walked/wheeled or cycled till 2030 is still achievable.

The Second Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy (CWIS2) sets a number of objectives, including the percentage increase of short journeys in England’s towns and cities that are being walked/wheeled or cycled from 41% in 2018 to 2019, to 46% in 2025, 50% in 2030 and 55% in 2035.

During the roundtable discussion, there was intense debate and conflicting opinions on whether current targets are achievable and whether targets are needed whatsoever.

What is the problem?

- One of the main concerns is the available funding for walking and wheeling: the Transport Secretary has recently announced the funding for active travel is to be reduced from almost £4 billion to £3 billion², including reduced investment in walking and wheeling infrastructure – which makes the target of 50% of all

² Sustrans open letter to the Prime Minister: ‘Stop active travel funding cuts’ (March 2023).

trips being walked, wheeled, or cycled harder to achieve. A report by the National Audit Office³ confirms this assumption and states that 3 out of 4 national 2025 targets are highly unlikely to be met.

- There is a lack of available data on what is working/ not working well. Data is crucial to demonstrate whether we are making progress.
- People who are walking/wheeling may not feel safe on footways because of conflict with other road users (e.g., people cycling or using e-scooters) resulting from competition for available space/infrastructure. This may influence their choice to walk/wheel local journeys.

Is the 50% target achievable?

- While some participants thought that targets should not be the way to plan for transport, others believed targets are a good mechanism to plan, evaluate progress - and be transparent about what is needed.
- Achieving the target is difficult because of decades spent accommodating car-based development. Urban sprawl, the absence of dedicated cycling infrastructure and increased distances to people's destinations reduce the convenience and viability of active and shared modes of transport. Until there is a much better integration of sustainable transport within the planning of developments progress will be lacking⁴.
- There is a need for more specialists and increased awareness of the issues facing active travel among decision-makers.

What should be done?

- The Department for Transport (DfT) must include walking strategies as part of new Local Transport Plans (LTP). It is vital to have a comprehensive strategy for short, medium, and long term for private and public transport, parking, as well as active travel. Local plans and local transport plans should include the proposed networks for the short, medium, and long term across all modes, including policies and conditions necessary for their delivery.

³ Active Travel in England (June 2023). Department for Transport, Active Travel England.

⁴ In 2023 CIHT responded to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) framework consultation [CIHT Responds to Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities NPPF Consultation](#) and the Scottish Government's consultation on 20-minute neighbourhoods [CIHT response to the 'Local living and 20-minute neighbourhood' Scottish Government consultation.](#) | CIHT

- Planning and transport sectors must adopt a walking and wheeling perspective. Both sectors should work towards providing walking and wheeling routes that are continuous and navigable, forming a continuous network.
- As a part of plan preparation, central government and local authorities should conduct a joint ‘potential for walking’ data analysis (granular data) to identify journeys that could be walked and replace short car trips.
- Walking/wheeling is an important part of every journey. A behavioural change in the society towards active travel is needed. Local authorities will need more support for this change. There is also a scope for a political campaign for walking and wheeling. Politicians need to understand the real benefit of walking and wheeling, and it is not only about the health of active travel.
- Proactively manage vehicle parking with pedestrians in mind. It is important for two reasons: limiting supply of parking places can encourage people to walk rather than drive for shorter journeys. Parking on street, and indeed often on footways, limits the free movement of people who are walking or wheeling.

Explore how we can improve walking and wheeling for women in terms of safety.

Walking/wheeling is a different experience for men and women. In the report ‘Walking for Everyone’⁵, it is stated that:

1. In comparison to men, women make more walking trips. In England, on average, women make 15% more walking trips per year.⁶
2. Women have serious concerns about safety and are less likely to walk at night than men.
3. Overall, women feel less safe on the streets, with many women experiencing sexual harassment. The number of walking trips made by women aged 17 to 20 in England has decreased 33% from 2020 to 2021 - a 60% reduction compared to 2002 (DfT, 2022).⁷

⁵ Walking for Everyone (2022). Living Streets, ARUP, Sustrans.

⁶ Walking for Everyone (2022). Living Streets, ARUP, Sustrans.

⁷ Walking and cycling statistics, England: 2021 (Report published August 2022).

The group agreed that safety for women is important, but it is also essential to make walking and wheeling safe for everyone whatever their needs. By designing streets for the most vulnerable pedestrians (e.g., children), everyone benefits.

What is the problem?

- People (not only women but also men, children, elderly, those with a disability etc.) have different needs. It is hard to balance conflicting elements – like people using cycles and e-scooters being asked to share the footway with people walking and wheeling.
- Physical barriers to actual/perceived safety may include poor lighting of streets, blocked sight lines (e.g., in a subway or from physical obstructions), general disrepair or empty streets with no other people around.
- Responsible highway authorities may not see personal safety and security as their duty. Due to the complex meaning of safety, some aspects, such as people's perceptions of safety – are often neglected or seen as an optional issue.
- Many different things can make an individual feel safe or unsafe, and this will vary by individual (e.g., presence of the police or the activities of people lending passive surveillance).
- Not much funding for safety purposes. There is a desire amongst those working in the transport planning to address safety issues, but funding resources are limited. There is also a lack of evidence and data covering the range of safety issues from perceptions to reality across all modes, locations, and people.

What should be done?

- There needs to be a 'push' from the Government to encourage local authorities to use Manual for Streets (or any new walking design guidance) more consistently to achieve a real change. People in the sector will continue doing what they have previously been doing unless there is a requirement to follow set guidance built into relevant policies and plans (e.g., National Planning Policy Framework, Local Plans and Local Transport Plans)
- Street lighting design needs to recognise that the whole street - and not just the carriageway - needs to be illuminated. A sense of place can also be created

through a greater emphasis on ‘green streetscaping’⁸ to make streets more welcoming to people who walk/wheel.

- Institutions like CIHT should play a role in moving forward the idea that streets should be designed less in terms of ‘pure engineering’ (meaning the material qualities of footways). More attention should be given to how separate elements add up to create streets that people want to spend time in, such as: plants, good lighting, street cleaning and maintenance, etc. CIHT also has a number of valuable resources, such as [Designing for Walking](#) report or [Creating Better Streets](#) paper that might come in handy for those involved in walking and wheeling.
- Develop necessary skills – currently many people who are making decisions have been designing the environment for cars for many years, it is a challenge to make a shift towards designing for active travel.

Are current infrastructure design/standards supporting walking and wheeling effectively enough?

What are the current challenges?

- There is no single set of design standards for walking (there is broad brush guidance e.g., in Manual for Streets and Inclusive Mobility). However, the availability of guidance does not guarantee its uptake and leaves room for interpretation – resulting in some good and some very poor infrastructure for walking and wheeling.
- There is a mismatch between what the government encourages people to do and what the infrastructure enables them to do – for example, the Highway Code gives pedestrians waiting to cross the road priority at side road junctions, but wide junctions and visibility splays discourage drivers from slowing down or giving way.
- New infrastructure designs (e.g., bus stop bypasses, continuous footways, or informal zebra crossings on side roads) create opportunities and new barriers to walking and wheeling.

⁸ Green Streetscape includes green urban infrastructure (such as street trees, plants, vegetation, green walls) that provides comfort and make the street more enjoyable and pleasant and encourages walking/wheeling in the community (Mari Toppen Notsund, Aalborg University, 2019). More information on Green Infrastructure can be found in the [CIHT Green and Blue Infrastructure Report 2023](#).

- Living Street’s report on pedestrian falls states that one-third of older people do not have a decent infrastructure for walking on their local streets and are faced with cracked and uneven surfaces.⁹
- There is presumption written into guidance that it is acceptable to take space from pedestrians – e.g., Inclusive Mobility (section 4.2) recommends a minimum footway width of 2m, but then presumes that EV charging units will be placed in the footway allowing a restricted footway width of 1m for a distance of up to 6m.
- Wider practices of cluttering footways (e.g., with e-bike docking stations). Apart from that, the current 2m standard of footways is not even comfortable for walking if there is more than one person walking, with a greater challenge for people using a stick, a white cane, a guide dog, or any other mobility aid.
- There is a shortage of skills and capabilities in understanding and applying guidance and standards for active travel.

What are the solutions?

- We need comprehensive walking guidelines (a walking equivalent to LTN 1/20 on cycle infrastructure design) and a coherent approach across UK nations. The Wales Active Travel Guidance is a good example of how a single document can provide consistent delivery of active travel infrastructure. Such a document would need to be regularly updated to include new infrastructure designs.
- Review street design guidance in line with the Highway Code, which places pedestrians at the top of the road user hierarchy, to eliminate inconsistencies between desired and enabled road user behaviour.
- Review vehicle design standards to ensure that their size is proportionate to the road space/traffic calming measures (e.g., chicanes).
- Review funding and provide a better support for walking and wheeling infrastructure – and to fill the skills shortfall.

Discuss footways and maintenance issues associated with them.

⁹ Pedestrian slips, trips, and falls: an evaluation of their causes, impact, scale, and cost (2023). Living Streets.

What are the current challenges?

- There is a lack of national data on pedestrian falls caused by poor footway maintenance because local reports are not collated nationally (and there is no consistency in the way that footway faults and resulting injuries are reported). The best estimate of the scale of the problem is based on hospital admissions data.
- Academic literature suggests that there could be as many as a million outdoor falls among older adults (65+) in England every year. Peak falls occur in people aged 80-84, hip fracture is the most common injury. Personal injury claims payments against local authorities in England for pedestrian falls due to footway condition ranged from approximately £15.6 million in 2018 to £7.3 million in 2020.¹⁰
- Although many footway repairs are undertaken, they are often of poor quality and uneven. We need to have higher standards of repair that create conditions that are suitable for people of all abilities. A comprehensive assessment of the nation's footways in England carried out in 2019 and again in 2021 by Gaist on behalf of the Department of Transport estimated the mean cost 'of all maintenance operations that would need to be carried out to either address poor condition on a footway or to preserve the footway in its current condition and prevent further deterioration' in England (excluding London) was £1.695bn.
- Even though the primary concern around maintenance is the budget, it became evident from the discussion that many politicians and stakeholders involved need to change their mindset and think about existing problems from a different perspective.
- Lack of priority for footway maintenance is compounded by the damage to footway surfaces from pavement parking and repeated excavation (and poor reinstatements) for utilities and services (e.g., EV charging points).
- The design of footways also affects people's confidence to go outside. For example, where water collects as a footway joins a crossing (ponding) or the camber of crossovers which benefits vehicles but can make it harder for people pushing buggies or with balance issues.

What should be done?

- Place pedestrians at the centre of every maintenance activity by incorporating footway improvements in a holistic approach to street works and highway upgrades. Better maintenance will save money in the long term.

¹⁰ Pedestrian slips, trips, and falls: an evaluation of their causes, impact, scale, and cost (2023). Living Streets.

- Improve and standardise data collection on pedestrian falls. The Department for Transport could establish a standard classification of footway faults consistent with the hospital admissions data.
- Establish minimum standards for the level of acceptable defects.
- Provide training for Local Authorities on best practices for designing streets for people walking and wheeling, efficient use available resources, and placing pedestrians at the centre of every maintenance activity.