

On the move: by foot

A discussion paper



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1. INTRODUCTION

In its November 2001 response to the Environment and Transport Committee's report on Walking in Towns and Cities, the Government agreed to publish a new strategy document, building on "Encouraging Walking"¹, to promote more walking in England.

For a number of reasons – particularly because we have more cars, travel further, and because of past planning decisions - people in England are now walking less than ever before. But walking is still a very important part of how we get around in this country. 25% of the total number of journeys, and 80% of journeys under a mile, are on foot. And getting people to walk more could reduce the pressure on congested transport systems, and improve our health and the health of our local communities.

Since "Encouraging Walking" was published in 2000, the Government has taken forward a broad range of health, planning and transport policy initiatives aimed at improving local quality of life. Some of the most important ones are set out in the Annex to this paper. Promoting walking has the potential to make a great contribution to many of the other things we care about in our local communities.

This discussion paper is aimed primarily at practitioners in local authorities and the health sector. We would also, however, like to receive views from the much wider range of people and organisations which influence the street and surrounding environment (such as telecommunication and utility companies). We also want to hear from voluntary groups and communities themselves. This document suggests how we might both improve conditions for walking and increase the number of journeys made on foot. Some ideas have already been suggested to us at a series of seminars run for local authority experts throughout England during 2002. It is our aim to build on these views and the responses to this discussion document to produce the new strategy document which will be a part of the Department for Transport's (DfT) contribution to the broader "liveability" agenda being developed across Government.

¹ DETR, March 2000

2. THE CASE FOR WALKING

The case for walking has several strands, each persuasive in itself, and even more in combination.

The health case

Walking provides an opportunity to undertake daily exercise without the need for specialist equipment. Britain has a higher rate of coronary heart disease (CHD) and associated illnesses than most European countries. A modest amount of regular moderate-intensity exercise such as walking or cycling can help to protect against developing such illnesses as CHD, stroke, non-insulin-dependent diabetes, osteoporosis, and, by improving strength and co-ordination, protect against falls, fractures and injuries.²

The transport case

Getting around on foot imposes no negative environmental costs on local environments. Good provision for walkers can also support use of public transport, as people are more likely to use buses or trains if the walk between the station or stop and home, work or shops is straightforward, pleasant, safe and accessible. More travel on foot – for short journeys like many school runs

– has the potential to take cars off the road at busy times, reducing congestion for other users of the road travelling longer distances.

The equity case

Three in ten households in the UK do not have access to a car. Ensuring that there is a safe and convenient way to get to jobs, education, health care and other services for people without a car is an essential part of promoting social equality. Walking is a cost-free means of getting around which is available to almost all ages.

The sustainable communities case

Walking is the most important way that we come into contact with our public spaces. We have responsibilities for ensuring that we

achieve cleaner and safer public spaces and local environments. Walking helps support local facilities and reinforces community cohesion.

The total case

Taking these strands together, it is clear that walking has a central role in creating liveable town and cities, and promoting social inclusion and health improvements. And there are broader benefits too. Improvements to the walking environment are an inherent part of improving life and living spaces in towns and cities. In essence, walking can be about pure and simple enjoyment – the chance to appreciate the environment in which we live. Walking adds to our choice of how we engage with our town or city.



3. THE KEY CHALLENGES

We would like to propose three key challenges to all those – including central government and local authorities – who have the potential to contribute to higher levels of walking:

First, we want to make walking for a purpose more enjoyable. We need to improve the experiences of the millions of people who already walk every day, to get to schools, to shops or to work.

Second, we want to see more short journeys made on foot. Although we

recognise that there will often be good reasons why people travel by car, even for journeys under one mile, we believe that there is scope for the percentage of journeys which are carried out on foot to be higher than the current 80%.

Third, we need to create more attractive places where people want to be and which they want to experience on foot.

The sections below set out the four key elements of our proposed action

plan for delivering on these challenges. These are:

- the right planning policies and practice;
- a better physical environment for walkers;
- supporting the choice to walk; and
- improving the institutional framework.

At the end of each section we include a series of questions which seek your views on what needs to be done to ensure that action is delivered for each of these elements.

² Davis A, Active Transport, HEA 1999

4. THE RIGHT PLANNING POLICIES AND PRACTICE

The most significant physical barrier to walking is the distance that people need to go to get to their destinations. This reflects historic trends towards low density, dispersed patterns of land use, which are only now starting to be reversed. People will not walk if houses are too far from shops, schools, parks, libraries and workplaces. So ease of access to basic facilities will remain an essential part of integrated transport and planning policies.



Since most journeys start or end at home, the location of new housing is particularly important. PPG3 Housing (2000) calls for more sustainable patterns of development and better use of previously developed land. To achieve this, local planning authorities are required to:

- place the needs of people before ease of traffic movement when designing the layout of residential developments, avoid inflexible planning standards and reduce road widths, traffic speeds, and promote safer environments for pedestrians;
- seek to reduce car dependence by facilitating more walking and cycling, by improving linkages by public transport between housing, jobs, local services and amenities, and by planning for mixed use; and
- promote good design in new housing developments in order to create attractive high-quality and sustainable living environments where people will choose to live, work and spend their leisure time.

The Government has also put in place a national target that by 2008, 60% of new housing should be provided on previously developed land and through conversions of existing buildings. The Government has already met this target but has made it clear that the challenge now is to maintain this rate by continuing to promote brownfield development. However, more than 90% of the urban buildings and infrastructure that will exist in 30 years time, has already been built.

Another factor obliging people to travel longer distances and, therefore, not to walk, has been the trend towards concentrating services such as hospitals, shopping malls, leisure venues, schools and council offices on large, single sites outside centres. While this has cut costs for service providers, it has made it more difficult for staff and users to reach them.

The Government's planning guidance on transport (PPG13, 2001) aims to ensure that people can walk to new developments, and that development patterns should encourage walking. The key measures are:

- major travel generators such as large shops and offices should be focused in city, town and district centres and near to major public transport interchanges; and local facilities such as small shops and GP surgeries should be located in local centres, near their clients and easily reached on foot;
- development such as employment, retail and other services should offer a realistic choice of access by walking, as well as cycling and public transport;
- local authorities are encouraged to introduce wider pavements, pedestrian-friendly road crossings and pedestrianisation schemes;
- Transport Assessments of new developments, on which the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

(ODPM) is due to publish good practice guidance shortly, that can be used to help identify ways of improving access on foot to new developments;

PPG13 also promotes travel plans for new developments. A travel plan is a strategy for managing multi-modal access to a site or development, focusing on promoting access by sustainable modes. These are increasingly required by local planning authorities. They have been adopted with enthusiasm by an increasing number of schools and workplaces as good practice spreads the benefits of reduced peak-time congestion and improved fitness.

PPG6 Town Centres, which seeks to focus new investment in shops, leisure, offices and other key uses in town centres, places a strong emphasis on creating attractive pedestrian environments and keeping activities within walking distance of each other. The success of our town centres depends strongly on the attractiveness, safety and convenience of pedestrian routes, both for getting to the centre from arrival points and getting around within the centre.

Q1 Is there any further guidance that needs to be given to local authorities about how good provision for pedestrians can be secured through the planning system?

Q2 How far is current practice reflecting the objectives of existing guidance?

Q3 Could more be done to ensure that developers provide well designed, convenient and direct pedestrian access to all buildings, particularly new ones, and public spaces and if so, what?

5. A BETTER PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT FOR WALKERS

The other main physical barrier to walking is a poor quality street environment. Keeping road traffic moving is an important job for highway engineers, but in the past this was sometimes delivered to the exclusion of other objectives. In the future, we will want better provision for pedestrians and road schemes that deliver a better balance of interests between pedestrians and road vehicle users, so that we will have:

- some specific projects to redesign the pedestrian environment and revise priorities in favour of pedestrians to create new public spaces and improve conditions for walking;
- roads which are designed for pedestrians as well as motor vehicles;
- footways that are wide enough for the number of people using them;
- well designed crossings that are located where people want to cross;
- networks of green spaces in our towns and cities which promote walking and other forms of recreation;
- footways clear of obstacles, including inappropriately-sited road signs, traffic lights, railings, phone boxes, bus shelters, shop signs and other street furniture; illegal parking on the footway or at junctions; and uncollected rubbish;
- less illegal cycling on footways and better restrictions covering on-pavement parking;
- well designed adjacent or shared-use schemes where footway or footpath space is partially reallocated so that cyclists can also use the route (DfT is preparing revised design guidance);
- better managed and maintained streets, tackling cracked and uneven footways, utility works, litter, fly-tipping, graffiti, dog mess fouling and broken streetlights;
- better information for pedestrians, through programmes like TravelSmart. The TravelSmart

programme provides people willing or able to reduce their private car use with personalised travel information and incentives to switch to public transport, walking and cycling. TravelSmart schemes have made a significant impact on travel behaviour in Western Australia and have been used to great effect in other European countries. In England, Sustrans have piloted this programme in Gloucester and Frome with considerable success and are currently using it in Bristol, Gloucester, Northumberland and Sheffield (www.sustrans.org.uk);

- better access to facilities. The Government's Social Exclusion Unit report *Making the Connections* sets out a strategy for improving "accessibility planning" and the DfT's Mobility and Inclusion Unit has assumed the lead role in taking this forward.

GOOD PRACTICE

Bristol City Council has introduced the Legible City scheme which includes the installation of a comprehensive system of maps for pedestrians to give a clear idea of scale and distance between destinations. In an innovative and user-friendly design feature, each map's orientation matches the user's direction of view and a red circle is used to delineate the area which can be walked in around four minutes. The detailed maps identify the distinct quarters of the city centre and are accompanied by a larger-scale map to help put them in context. The location of nearby maps is also indicated. Maps are made from high quality materials to withstand the elements.

The power to overcome most of these barriers rests at local government level, though influenced by central government guidance and information. Progress in tackling the barriers will be

a combination of new initiatives, using existing powers and trying different approaches. There is a clear need for better information on good and bad practice on both design and management issues. DfT is working with a range of partners on the development of a web site to enable sharing of experience and information.

Ideas from our walking seminars

- national highway and design guidance should be developed for those streets which are not part of the trunk road network. This would help tackle the problem of excessive dependence on existing design guidance such as the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges, which is not intended or appropriate for local roads;
- publication of revised guidance on pedestrian crossings, to encourage provision of more walking-friendly environments (already a commitment from DfT);
- a pilot programme of 20mph limits on busy mixed-use main roads, where they pass through areas of housing, local shops, or near schools. These could be developed as part of speed management plans, as is already happening in cities such as York and Hull;
- widespread adoption of integrated street management programmes, as exemplified by Camden's "Boulevard Project", which brings together street cleansing, pavement renewal, street greening, and anti-vandalism schemes under one team (www.camden.gov.uk/living/boulevard/boulevard.htm);
- new revised Design Bulletin 32 on the design of roads in residential areas, as well as guidance for town centres and shopping streets.

Q4 What particular problems do transport authorities face in balancing the needs of pedestrians and other road users? Is further guidance needed from central government and would you support a Government initiative to produce guidance for those streets which are not part of the trunk road network?

Q5 What changes to policy or practice could help reduce the

impact of speeding traffic in both urban and rural areas?

Q6 In addition to perhaps more seats and toilet facilities, what other basic amenities could lead to an increase in walking? How could this be achieved?

Q7 Would the development of a website to share current good practice be a worthwhile initiative?



6. SUPPORTING THE CHOICE TO WALK

Even within an ideal physical environment, there are many reasons why people do not feel able to choose to walk. These reasons vary across age, gender and culture. Measures to reduce fear of crime, fear of traffic, and to promote the health benefits of walking might, over time, influence these choices in favour of walking.

Fear of crime

Fear of crime puts many people off walking, especially women and older people³. ODPM, in conjunction with the Home Office, is producing good practice guidance, which is relevant to local authorities, the police and all those involved in the development



process. This guidance will be issued later this year. It will provide further advice on effective methods of implementing crime prevention measures and securing community safety through the planning system. The intention is to secure sustainable, well-designed developments, which are free of crime and make people feel safe.

GOOD PRACTICE

In Nottingham, a programme is underway to replace unpopular pedestrian subways with surface-level crossings. Across the city, badly-lit, unpleasant subways are being filled in. The new crossings are complemented by adjustments to the phasing of traffic lights, improved surfacing and minimal use of barriers.

Unpleasant local environments can increase fear of crime. Dirty, badly maintained streets send the signal that “no one cares” and can encourage criminal and anti-social behaviour. To help tackle these conditions, 245 neighbourhood and street warden schemes, involving some 1400 wardens, have been established in England with funding from the ODPM’s Neighbourhood

Renewal Unit. Many more are planned over the next three years. Most warden schemes have anti-social behaviour as one of their key objectives. A full evaluation of their success is underway but indications are that wardens are an increasingly effective deterrent to anti-social behaviour. They have built strong working relationships with local residents and with the relevant local agencies which respond to incidents and take enforcement action.

Fear of traffic

Traffic is another important psychological barrier, especially among parents of young children. The proportion of children aged 5-16 who walked to school fell from 56% in 1989/1991 to 49% in 1999/2001. The proportion travelling by car rose from 21% to 28% over the same period.

8.5% of 6 year olds and 15% of 15 year olds are obese (HSE 2001) Between 1996 and 2001 the proportion of overweight children (aged 6-15) increased by 7.0% and the prevalence of obesity increased by 3.5%. Making moderate exercise an integral part of a child's day, through a walk to and from school is an excellent way to guard against

³ Personal Security Issues in Pedestrian Journeys, May 1999

excess weight and improve general health.

We need to improve information and the local environment so that parents are reassured that they can safely let their children walk to school and more parents and pupils make the choice to do so.

DfT, with the support of Department for Education and Skills and Department of Health, is encouraging more walking and cycling to school by promoting the development of School Travel Plans. These are packages of practical measures tailored to the needs of an individual school and designed to improve safety and reduce car use on the journey to and from school.

School Travel Plans generally involve the development of Safer Routes to School, but also other measures that help and incentivise children who walk such as road safety training, improved facilities e.g. drying areas and lockers, improved school timetables that avoid the need for children to carry an excessive weight of books or equipment, setting up 'walking buses' and providing 'rewards' such as stickers for children who walk. Local authorities are expected to include in their Local Transport Plans a strategy for reducing car use and improving children's safety on the journey to school, and to set out how they will work with individual schools to develop comprehensive School Travel Plans.

Health promotion

The decline in walking parallels a drop in many other forms of sport and physical activity. All have suffered because of pressures on leisure time, moves to more sedentary deskbound work and wider use of labour saving devices.

Many schools have significantly changed the way children travel to school following the implementation of School Travel Plan measures.

School	Decrease in children driven to school
Holmer Green First School, Bucks	36%
Wheatfields Junior School, St Albans	30%
Royal School for Girls, Hampstead	21%

The Prime Minister's Strategy Unit has put the cost of physical inactivity at around £2 billion a year, with around 54,000 lives lost prematurely. A 10% increase in activity would benefit the country by at least £500 million a year. Walking and cycling are the easiest ways that people can achieve the recommended half an hour of daily physical activity. Research⁴ shows that one of the main reasons people may choose walking over the car is to 'get some exercise'.

Doctors and other health service professionals can play a big part in persuading people that walking is good for them.

GOOD PRACTICE

In Chesterfield, a disused, derelict and forbidding stretch of canal has been redeveloped into an attractive and accessible series of footways. The restoration project has helped regenerate some of the area's most socially and economically deprived communities by providing new opportunities for employment and recreation, as well as convenient routes to local facilities. The redevelopment has been taken forward in conjunction with local initiatives to promote the health benefits of walking. It is connected to a long-distance footpath, the Cuckoo Way, so also benefits wider tourism and leisure activities.



⁴ Source:ONS Omnibus survey, January 2001

The health benefits of walking are well known, but often underestimated. Regular walking can lead to significant reductions in all causes of death, and can halve the risk of coronary heart disease. 36% of heart disease is attributed to lack of physical activity. Regular walking can also lessen the risk of developing conditions such as Type 2 diabetes, colon cancer and osteoporosis by up to 50%, as well as contributing to improved mental health and well-being and reducing obesity. More walking would not only make people more physically fit, but would help to minimise inequalities in health, and help to create a cleaner environment.

Ideas from our walking seminars

- a national programme to provide a safe route to school for every child, with dedicated revenue funding to enable local authorities to make a “step-change” in the rate at which such schemes are being developed;
- extension of the government’s “Street Warden” scheme, where wardens act as the “eyes and ears” of the local authority on the street, quickly identifying and tackling problems such as graffiti, dumped rubbish, or broken streetlights; and
- further targeted individual marketing campaigns (such as “Walk In to Work Out”, which is funded by DfT) to encourage people to walk instead of driving for very short journeys.



- Q8** Is research needed to find out more about why people decide whether or not to walk?
- Q9** What other measures can (i) the government and (ii) local authorities take to reduce fear of crime for pedestrians?
- Q10** What measures are needed to address the specific needs of the increasing number of older people or people with mobility impairment?
- Q11** What are the most effective ways in which the NHS can influence walking?

7. IMPROVING THE INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

Physical and psychological barriers are made worse by underlying institutional barriers. In particular:

- the allocation of staff resources in government at all levels where work on small-scale local schemes benefiting pedestrians has rarely been seen as a route to career advancement;
- fragmented management responsibilities for public spaces;
- the lack of local data on use of streets for walking and other activities, compared to the comprehensive information available on traffic movements; and shortages in the skills and training needed to create welcoming public spaces.

Urban designers and landscape architects, as well as transport professionals, have a key role to play in assessing and delivering an environment in which people do not think twice about walking. The need for the integration of these skills has been investigated in depth and a comprehensive strategy is to be developed with the ODPM in the lead. The first stage of this is the current review of the skills needed to deliver sustainable communities.

Ideas from our walking seminars

- special elements on streetscape design should be included in all professional training courses for those who are responsible for streets;
- the government should look again at the relative priority being given to capital and revenue schemes, and should seek ways to address the perceived shortage of revenue funds;
- introduce a programme to engage local communities in identifying and reporting obstacles and other difficulties encountered when walking;
- give local authorities more flexibility in how they apply traffic regulations.

Q12 What more needs to be done to tackle the skills shortage among transport professionals with particular emphasis on walking?

Team (as with cycling) to advise and support local authorities?

Q13 Would it be helpful to establish a Walking Regional Development

Q14 How might a one-off Walking Projects Fund help partnerships between sectors for practical projects to encourage walking?



8. INDICATORS

It will be important to monitor progress towards achievement of the strategy's objectives. Ideally, indicators should relate to outcomes, for example the number of people walking to work and the amount of litter in a street. But outcomes can be costly to measure, requiring local surveys, and there can be a lack of reliable data. There is also often a time lag between actions and outcomes; it takes a while for people to change their behaviour once a better walking environment has been established.

GOOD PRACTICE

In St Helens local groups worked together to develop the *Pavements for People* initiative to make pavements clearer and more accessible. The group works closely with the local council, police, chamber of commerce and further education college. The initiative aims to develop effective policies for pedestrians, raise awareness of problems caused by pavement obstructions, foster coordinated enforcement action to remove obstructions and promote the health and environmental benefits of walking. The initiative led to St Helens Council launching a Pedestrian Strategy, the first on Merseyside.

It may therefore be appropriate to also use some indicators relating to inputs (e.g. money spent on footway repairs), processes (e.g. number of LTPs with walking strategies) or intermediate outputs (e.g. individual traffic management schemes). They also need to allow analysis of changes over time (e.g. in the modal split for school travel). And they need to provide both quantitative



information (e.g. proportion of the footway network that is defective) and qualitative data (e.g. public satisfaction with the state of footways).

While decision makers need to have objective ways of comparing performance in two different locations (e.g. amount of litter), allowance needs to be made for the fact that public perceptions may be influenced by past experience. A street might go from being badly littered to being only slightly littered. Local people would experience this as an improvement, even though the absolute standard remained lower than elsewhere. That improvement would need to be acknowledged, while further efforts were made to achieve greater improvements.

The list of headline indicators should be relatively short. It could include:

- public perception and reality of how easy a destination is to reach without motorised transport;

- proportion of trips under one mile on foot and change over time;
- a modal share indicator for school travel;
- health related indicators, such as walking for a total of half an hour a day; and
- proportion of LTP funding spent on improving conditions for walking.

Q15 Which of the indicators suggested are the best ones to use, either locally or nationally?

Q16 What, in your experience, are the most prominent barriers to walking - be they physical, psychological or institutional - that need to be tackled most urgently?

9. BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER

Towns and cities in the UK and abroad - Birmingham, Hull, York, San Sebastian, Portland and Copenhagen - are getting things right for pedestrians. This is the result of sustained effort over lengthy periods, often in the face of debate and controversy. The same long-term, energetic approach will be needed in order to deliver results throughout England.

There is already much excellent work in progress. Several examples are illustrated in this paper. Transport 2000's good practice guide *Walking – The Way Ahead*, published in conjunction with this document, details these and many other schemes which are transforming streets and public spaces.

The key features that people seem to want before they will consider walking are:

- more of the places they want to go to are within 'easy' walking distance;
- well-planned routes linking key destinations;
- a better balance between the needs of pedestrians and vehicles;

- the street environment is "attractive" in the broadest sense (that is, well-designed, safe, free of barriers and obstructions, well managed and maintained); and
- people have the inclination to walk; they are motivated – for health or other reasons - to walk rather than drive if they have the choice.

A key local delivery agent in all this will be local authorities, who are best placed to identify and respond to the needs of all local stakeholders. Should any measures taken forward as a result of this consultation exercise place new financial burdens on local authorities, the DfT will work with the Local Government Association to determine the likely costs and ensure that any costs are fully funded.

But achieving our objectives would go much wider than this walking strategy alone. They raise questions about the land use planning system, patterns of development and locational decisions by both public and private sector organisations. We will need to influence not just those directly involved in national planning policies



but also those responsible for major public services such as public utilities, statutory undertakers, the NHS and education authorities. NHS Strategic Health Authorities have drawn up Local Delivery Plans which provide a framework for how the local NHS and partners will tackle poor health and the root causes of ill-health. They provide a great opportunity to formulate joined-up policies which will once again make walking and other physical activity an integral part of daily life.

Overcoming the other physical and psychological barriers requires changes in guidance, funding, training, career structures and established ways of doing things. It also requires a challenge to some deep-seated assumptions about what streets are for, who should get priority in them, and how they should be designed and managed. Revised guidance from DfT will describe opportunities for a range of measures (such as reduced motor vehicle traffic flows, lower driving speeds, traffic management techniques balanced for all road users, and, where needed, road



space reallocation) all of which would play a part in improving conditions for pedestrians.

We will also need to build on our experience encouraging action and innovation through the promotion of good practice, and the use of marketing campaigns such as 'Walk to School Week', 'Walking the Way to Health' or 'Walk In to Work Out'. Again, this strategy will not succeed unless these efforts are sustained over time, and closely allied to health promotion.

Key participants

For the strategy to succeed, its implementation should engage a wide range of partners. These include:

- local government (including PTEs) in its role as highway and planning authority, as well as public transport and other service provider;
- local communities and community groups;
- expert groups such as Living Streets, Transport 2000, the London Walking Forum, the Institution of Civil Engineers;
- Government departments (including DfT, ODPM, DEFRA, DFES, DCMS, Home Office,

Department of Health);

- agencies such as NHS Strategic Health Authorities and Primary Care Trusts, Sport England, the Countryside Agency and the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE);
- other local agencies (e.g. the police, Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships);
- regional bodies;
- public utilities and other statutory undertakers;
- transport operators;
- the business community (e.g. developers and retailers) and their national and local representative organisations such as CBI, London First, British Retail Consortium, British Chamber of Commerce and local chambers of trade;
- colleges, schools, universities and professional bodies; and
- NGOs (which work very effectively with other players), e.g. The Groundwork Trust.

The rights and responsibilities of the public will also have a strong influence. For example, the public has a legitimate expectation to have streets kept clean and clear, and to

have graffiti removed within a reasonable period of time.

However, it is members of the public who drop litter, break the speed limit, park on pavements and allow their dogs to foul the footway. Creating and maintaining a safe, accessible and attractive walking environment involves seeking a positive response from most people to do the "right thing" most of the time.

Q17 What campaigns or marketing initiatives are needed to promote walking?

Q18 How can central government ensure that local authorities and other agencies maintain a commitment to the walking environment over time?

Q19 Where does the primary responsibility lie for addressing the problems identified?

Q20 What partnerships to promote walking have been effective at a local level, and how?

10. YOUR VIEWS

We would like your views on any of the issues and proposals contained in this paper. Please send your comments by email to cycle.walk@dft.gsi.gov.uk or by post to: Walking Consultation
3/23 Great Minster House
76 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DR
Tel: 0207 944 2290

Comments are required by 26th September 2003.



ANNEX: THE EVOLVING CONTEXT

There have been a series of policy developments since March 2000 which are directly relevant to the promotion of walking:

- The Transport Act 2000 placed a statutory duty on local transport authorities in England to prepare Local Transport Plans (LTPs).⁵ The Act also gave local authorities the powers to introduce Home Zones and Quiet Lanes. Each authority is strongly encouraged to include a strategy to encourage walking in its plan;
- *Tomorrow's Roads - Safer for Everyone*, published in March 2000, set out to improve road safety over the next decade and set out casualty reduction targets;
- Planning Policy Guidance note 3, *Housing* (March 2000), advocates a sustainable approach to planning for housing which requires much more integration of planning, housing and transport on the ground. It requires local planning authorities to produce policies which seek to reduce car dependence, for example by facilitating more walking and cycling, and to promote quality design in new housing developments in order to create attractive residential environments. PPG3 is supported by *Better Places to Live*, a good practice guide published in September 2001;
- *Transport 2010 - the 10 Year Plan*⁶ recognised that poor facilities and an unsafe environment continued to inhibit any increase in the amount of walking;
- *Our Towns and Cities: The Future*⁷ provided a new vision of urban living, focusing on improving the quality of public spaces and putting good design at the heart of urban planning. *Our Countryside: The Future*⁸ addressed rural transport issues and maintaining basic services locally;
- in his speech on *Improving Your Local Environment* in April 2001, the Prime Minister said "Britain needs to feel proud of its public spaces, not ashamed. We need to make it safer for children to walk or cycle to school in safety. We need local parks which are well looked-after and easily reached with a pushchair. We need streets to be free of litter, dog mess and mindless vandalism. This will not only make life better for people. It is also good for business. Inward investment, whether to a town or a country, requires the creation of places and spaces where people want to live and work";
- the NHS has been reorganised under the *Shifting the Balance of Power* programme. This includes the establishment of community-focused Primary Care Trusts to lead and drive programmes to deliver significant improvements in health, prevent disease and reduce inequalities. The NHS faces a significant public health challenge, with obesity having an increasing influence on levels of disease and death. Rates of obesity have tripled among adults in the last 20 years due, in part, to declining levels of physical activity such as walking;
- the Environment, Transport and Regional Affairs Committee published its report on *Walking in Towns and Cities* in June 2001 and in November 2001 the Government published its response(www.local-transport.dft.gov.uk/etrac/walking/index.htm);
- in April 2002 the *Transport Planning Skills Initiative* was launched by DfT in partnership with a range of professional institutions, employers and training providers. This provides a clear focus to increase the number and depth of skills of transport planners who are needed to deliver the Government's Ten Year Transport Plan and implement Local Transport Plans.

⁵ London Boroughs have a duty to produce similar plans to support the Mayor's integrated transport strategy.

⁶ Published July 2000, DfT

⁷ Published November 2000, ODPM

⁸ Published November 2000, ODPM

- in May 2002 the National Retail Planning Forum published [Going to Town: Improving Town Centre Access](#) - companion guide to PPG6 which looks at improving the pedestrian environment in town centres, particularly the links from car parks, trains, and buses to the main shopping areas;
- in July 2002 The Commission on Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) published [Paving the Way](#) which identified changes in guidance and practice needed to create clean, safe and attractive streets;
- an interdepartmental review of all programmes and policies that affect public space was undertaken as part of Spending Review 2002. Two documents arising from that review were published in October 2002. [Living Places: Cleaner, Safer, Greener](#) sets out the Government's vision for public space and [Powers, Rights and Responsibilities](#) is a discussion paper which describes options for reforming the legislative framework as part of the Government's strategy for clarifying and improving statutory powers, rights and responsibilities associated with achieving cleaner and safer public spaces and local environments. More recently, these documents have been supported by the OPDM's [Sustainable Communities - Building for the Future](#) which put high quality and well-designed local environments at the heart of plans to create thriving, sustainable communities, announcing a package of £201m to enhance local liveability;
- in December 2002 DCMS published [Game Plan: a strategy for delivering government's sport and physical activity objectives](#). This recognises the important contribution walking can make to increasing levels of physical activity and the resulting health benefits and recommends the formation of a cross government Sport and Physical Activity Board (SPAB) to increase levels of participation in sport and physical activity across the population; and
- from November this year, local authorities will have a duty to prepare [Rights of Way Improvement Plans](#) and in doing so should develop proposals to improve and manage their rights of way network in ways which benefit health, transport, recreation, tourism and other local needs. From 2005 Rights of Way Improvement Plans will be linked to Local Transport Plans.

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