



DIY Streets helps residents to re-design their own streets affordably, putting people at their heart, and making them safer and more attractive places to live.

DIY Streets is a new pilot project launched by the Liveable Neighbourhoods team at Sustrans, bringing a new twist to creative street design, inspired by the original Dutch home zone concept. We will work with local communities to help residents develop low-cost capital solutions to making their streets safer and more attractive, aiming to find simple interventions and materials which can be both effective and durable.

With funding from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, Transport for London and local partners, DIY Streets is initially being piloted in ten communities, in areas of deprivation with the intention of becoming replicable on a national scale in the near future, delivering the benefits of people friendly streets at a fraction of the typical cost of a home zone.

During the project we will be compiling a comprehensive toolkit to aid residents to set up their own DIY Street, comprising of tips, contacts and further resource links.

The DIY Streets pilot programme has attracted significant support from well-respected professionals in relevant fields. Sustrans has assembled an advisory group to take oversight of the project and bring their own insight to bear on the ten pilot streets. The group consists of representatives from: CABE, National Children's Bureau, Living Streets, Guide Dogs for the Blind, Wayne Hemingway Design, and Phil Jones Associates, as well as an experienced highways engineer to offer technical assistance.

The main problems which DIY Streets aims to tackle include:

- Inappropriate traffic speeds and levels
- Rat-running vehicles
- Nuisance parking
- Poor accessibility for children and people with mobility difficulties
- Lack of safe routes for pedestrians and cyclists
- Run-down appearance
- Lack of greenery
- High levels of perceived/actual crime or fear of crime

Participating streets:

Penn Street, Manchester

Monsell Road, London Borough of Islington

Clapton Terrace, London Borough of Hackney

Brooke Road/Evering Road, London Borough of Hackney

Somerset Street, Cardiff

Firshill Road/Passhouses Road, Sheffield

Ellacombe Road, Torquay

Castle Street, Port Talbot

Heol Degwm, Bridgend

Iden Road, Coventry

Beech Croft Road, Oxford (see page 4)

Sustrans' Liveable Neighbourhoods programme works with local residents and other partners to create high quality urban environments which promote sustainable travel behaviour and are safe, pleasant places to live in and visit. Sustrans is the UK's leading sustainable transport charity and works on practical projects to encourage people to walk, cycle and use public transport to benefit health and the environment.

Sustrans, 2 Cathedral Square, College Green, Bristol, BS1 5DD



The background

Successful home zones create streets where pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles share the space on equal terms. They are streets in which people can socialise and play, or move through without fear of speeding traffic. Home zones are designed so that drivers naturally chose to proceed slowly and carefully.

Home zones help to deliver a wide range of objectives including sustainable development of communities, planning and transport. A key element of home zones is that the community is involved in redesigning their streetscape. This co-operation between residents can help to foster a greater sense of community, leading to wider social benefits which complement those brought by the re-designed street.

However, all of this comes at a cost; transforming existing streets in home zones doesn't only require time and effort from residents and others, it needs significant funding. Since 2000, a number of home zones have been developed in the UK, most with funding from the Department for Transport's 'Home Zones Challenge Fund'. These are successfully providing a body of practical examples of how streets can be made more liveable (see www.homezones.org.uk). However, they have all involved significant capital investment. With the ending of the Challenge Fund, it is unlikely that such large-scale budgets will continue to be generally available.

DIY Streets aims to trial a more cost effective way of trying to realise some of the benefits of home zones by creating affordable home zone type areas. In order to create successful low cost traffic calming interventions it is essential to work closely with residents as they participate in the design process. New designs must suit their needs and help to support the strengthening of community links.

A case study: Ashley Vale, Bristol

A working group of local residents developed a new street design, funded by section 106 money from an eco-self-build residential development in this small community in central Bristol.

The Ashley Vale scheme was completed for about £17,500 capital costs; very significantly less than the sums required for typical home zones. The whole process from the first residents survey to completion June 2004 took only 18 months.

The main features of the design were:

- A change from undesignated parallel parking bays to perpendicular parking bays.
- Narrowing of running track to 3.6m allowing for a single car with appropriate passing space.
- Narrowing a junction by adding a large planter and pavement build-outs.
- Additional crossing points at junction with dropped kerbs

Costs were cut by:

- maintaining existing drainage and levels
- building the planters on top of the original tarmac (though with drainage channels)
- residents taking responsibility for planting
- using local recycled materials where possible
- agreeing the design quickly
- minimising signage
- arranging the building contractors themselves without going through the Council



The street in Ashley Vale as it looked before the works...



...and after

The process

Choosing DIY Streets

The ten pilot communities have been selected according to set criteria. These included evidence of:

- Enthusiasm amongst residents who are prepared (with support and training from Sustrans) to help bring about the changes
- Commitment from the local highway authority
- Availability of local revenue funding (to match the contribution from Esmée Fairbairn Foundation) and capital funding
- Evidence of physical feasibility, e.g. sufficient space to allow effective traffic calming measures to be put into place.

Community Involvement

Community involvement is integral to the project's success. Residents are encouraged from the beginning to look at the issues that need to be addressed, to contribute their opinions and ideas and to help to formulate new designs. One important aim of this process is to ensure that residents feel they have a say in the way their street operates and is managed. Although many residents are already very active in their local communities, it is hoped that DIY Streets will provide a focus on achieving positive and practical outcomes and a building block for future community development work.

Street design

Residents, the DIY Streets' design officer and relevant council officers will work together to produce the new street designs, which will be developed during a series of workshops and trial events. Sustrans will draw on best practice examples of creative traffic-calming from all over the world to help ensure a design where cars will naturally travel at walking speed in these residential streets. Wherever possible, designs will use appropriate local materials (including artwork) and native greenery that best enhance the area's character. The local highways partner will be responsible for signing off the design, and letting and managing the works contracts.

Changing travel behaviour

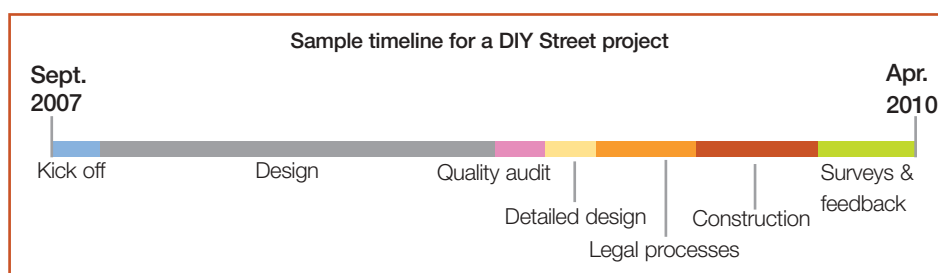
Creating a safe and pleasant physical environment for walking and cycling is one important part of ensuring that communities can leave their cars at home for many journeys, but information and support to make more sustainable travel choices can also be necessary. Sustrans will work with local residents in each project help them to overcome specific barriers, such as lack of confidence (through e.g. advice or cycle training) or lack of information (through providing local information materials such as bus timetables or local maps).



Involving young people should bring added energy, enthusiasm and creativity



Street parties help residents to get to know each other and experience their street in a very different way



Evaluation

Alongside detailed individual surveys and capturing data on traffic speeds and volumes, DIY Streets will be evaluated by CABE Space's new tool, Spaceshaper. This tool captures the perceptions of both residents who live in, and professionals who are responsible for, the street.

Spaceshaper aims to:

- Identify the main issues/weaknesses of the space
- Draw out the existing strengths of the space which residents may not have considered or verbalised
- Measure how the space works for its different users
- Establish any conflicts which may exist or occur between user groups
- Compare the views of those who look after the space and those who live in the space
- Stimulate new ideas for how the space could be shaped

Outcomes

DIY Streets will aim to achieve:

- Safer streets through reducing traffic speeds and returning priority to pedestrians and cyclists.
- Enabling all residents and stakeholders, irrespective of gender, ethnic origin, colour, nationality, disability, age or sexual orientation, to participate fully in the process of reclaiming their streets.
- More attractive streets through landscaping, planting or street furniture leading to a greater sense of community as residential streets are turned into valued social spaces.
- Increased community capacity as people work together to change their streets and increased skills as

they are trained and supported to run consultation and design processes.

- Increased opportunities for physical activity by encouraging active travel modes and creating space for safe play by children.
- Local, regional and national policy-makers and practitioners informed about the impacts of the pilots.
- Local communities more aware of sustainable travel options and sustainable living in general and aware of what they can do to make their streets safer and more attractive for walking and cycling.

The Eleventh Street: Beech Croft Road

While the problems addressed by DIY Streets are usually more acute in areas of disadvantage, they still exist in areas of comparable advantage. In fact, there are a number of inherent difficulties specific to less disadvantaged areas that need to be overcome in order to make them more liveable spaces in which people feel safe to walk, cycle and spend time in (e.g. higher levels of car ownership, tendency to travel further for work, school and leisure).

Sustrans will be working with the Beech Croft Road Residents Association in Oxford to test DIY Streets in this different environment, with support from a separate grant from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation. Residents have been campaigning for a safer street since a child was injured by a car in the street in the late 90s, performing a series of temporary experiments using inexpensive creative interventions, and developing strong community links through the Association and an annual street party. Follow their work on www.beechcroftroad.org.uk



Greener streets is likely to be an outcome of many of the DIY Streets projects



Safety for children is a key focus for DIY Streets

Liveable Neighbourhoods

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Sustrans would like to thank everyone who has contributed photography including its own staff and the Ashley Vale Action Group.

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