



Home zones - planning and design

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Introduction

Home zones are residential streets in which the road space is shared between drivers of motor vehicles and other road users, with the wider needs of residents (including people who walk and cycle, the elderly and children) being accommodated. They are about promoting quality of life and neighbourliness.

Although the introduction of a home zone can contribute to highway safety, the main benefit for people is a change in the perceptions of how the street environment can be used. Introducing a home zone allows greater scope for a wider range of activities in street space that was formerly considered to be for exclusive use by vehicles.

Case Study - Northmoor, Manchester

This is a large regeneration project in an area of social deprivation. The area has high-density terraced housing built in a grid pattern with on-street parking and limited recreational facilities for children. Northmoor covers some 1400 dwellings dominated by pre-1919 two bedroom terraced properties with no front gardens and small rear yards.

Work on the first of four streets in phase one of the project was completed in April 2001. A dramatic streetscape design has been adopted after extensive community consultation. The carriageway has been relaid with a shared use surface with interesting designs. Parallel parking has been replaced by echelon parking which also acts as traffic calming. The Council intends to demolish some houses in the middle of each terrace in order to create a green street through the neighbourhood which will provide lawned areas, play spaces and walkways. A number of new three storey houses will be built, overlooking the green streets and providing natural surveillance.

Legislation

The Transport Act 2000 makes provisions for home zones in England and Wales. This came into effect on 1 February 2001 and local traffic authorities now have a specific power to designate home zones in their area. They will also be able to make orders about the use of the roads and about speed reduction measures in home zones, subject to regulations to be made by the Secretary of State (for England) or the National Assembly (for Wales). Similar provisions exist in Scotland and are being considered for Northern Ireland.

Potential Benefits of Home Zones

A home zone can turn streets into a valued public space and foster a sense of community. Greater use by people of the street space leads to an increase in natural surveillance, which in turn acts as a deterrent to crime. Any reduction in crime or fear of crime can lead to more people using the streets, so that a virtuous circle is created for the benefit of the residents.

By encouraging more people to use the streets on foot or by bicycle, home zones have the potential to contribute to a reduction in congestion and noise pollution, as well as improving air quality.

Many residents, particularly older ones, may feel isolated from their immediate neighbours. Returning the streets to areas where residents can mingle with each other can lead to a reduction in social exclusion.

By creating an attractive urban environment, home zones may also help in curbing the demand for new housing in the countryside.

Government Policy

The Government announced in 1998, in the *Integrated Transport White Paper*, that it would work with local authorities to evaluate the effectiveness of home zones. In order to do so, nine pilot schemes were established in England and Wales. These were subject to a three year monitoring period.

Transport 2010 - The 10 Year Plan pledged to contribute to major improvements in the street environment in towns and cities by funding more home zones.

The Governments Road Safety Strategy and Speed Policy Review, as well as Planning Policy Guidance Notes 3 (Housing) and 13 (Transport), reinforced the Government's commitment to home zones.

Case Study - Sittingbourne

This is a modern housing society development (1993) of about 120 dwellings along a hook shaped cul-de-sac with off-street parking in lay-bys and small car parks. There is limited traffic calming (road humps) included within the original road layout but residents wish to see speeds reduced further. Play areas are provided but there is concern about the safety of children gaining access to them.

Phase one of the scheme has been completed. This consists of an entry feature to reduce speed and make drivers aware they are entering a different area as well as speed reducing measures within the zone. Work on phase two of the scheme (the Spur Road) is almost complete. The design changes the priority of a junction, provides a planting and seating area, and links with the adjacent play area. Work on phase three(a piazza) is due to start in the Autumn.

Further details on all of the pilot schemes may be found at www.homezonenews.org.uk

Planning A Home Zone

Community involvement is an essential ingredient. The involvement of residents is critical to the successful introduction of home zone schemes within established residential areas. Consultation will enable a scheme to reflect as fully as possible local peoples needs and aspirations for their street environment. Time devoted to engaging communities at the start of a project will help prevent friction and misunderstandings between local authority officers and residents later in the process.

The planning process for a home zone may benefit from independent facilitation by professionals with awareness of community development issues, community planning techniques and knowledge of highway, landscape and urban design. That will ensure the fullest possible community involvement, allay any possible fears that a scheme is being imposed on the community by a local authority, and also encourage a more responsive and creative scheme. Initial experience suggests that the intermediary could be from a design consultancy, a local housing association, or a local authority's own community development section.

The planning of a home zone should ensure the involvement of people who would benefit disproportionately from environmental improvements to their local area, for reasons of immobility or social exclusion. In particular, elderly people, those who are disabled, children and young people, ethnic minorities and socially disadvantaged people should be specifically encouraged to contribute to the

project, in ways that enable them to express their ideas with confidence.

Many people do not understand technical plans for their environment. Home zone schemes should be presented in model form, using familiar pictorial views or even using a simulated event as part of a fun day. Simulations have been successful in encouraging awareness of a scheme and its implications for individuals, whilst associated street activities have encouraged people to reconsider how their street space is used, whilst also improving neighbourliness within the street.

Design

Home zones, unlike 20 mph zones, aim to change the role and function of the street. Distinct features of highway, landscape and urban design must encourage an understanding that the living environment is clearly as important as any provision for traffic.

Cars dominate the streets in many urban and rural communities. Within a home zone, design features should deliver self-enforcing vehicular speed restraint to the extent that drivers of vehicles understand and accept the rights of other users of the road space and adjust their speeds accordingly. Designs should be sensitive to the environment and aim to produce a pleasing streetscape.

Some households in home zones - maybe a few, maybe many - will own cars and will want convenient parking close to the house. If this is done in an effective and attractive way, it could be one of the successes of the home zone design.

Use orders have the potential to make improvements to the quality of life for home zone residents. The orders permit the use of the road for purposes other than moving up and down the road. Any uses identified should reflect activities that are supported by the local residents. Orders carry with them requirements not to obstruct the lawful use of the road by others or to deny reasonable access to premises.

Speed orders enable local traffic authorities to take measures to reduce the speed of motor vehicles and pedal cycles. The scope of the orders need not be limited to traffic calming. Within an order, local authorities need to specify the speed below which they intend to hold the traffic. Speed orders will not by themselves impose speed limits - these will still need to be set for individual roads. Local speed limits below 20mph will continue to require the consent of the appropriate national authority.

Home zone treatments can readily be applied to new-build situations, where they will provide an attractive marketing opportunity, allowing developers to distinguish their proposals from more traditional residential layouts. Local authorities should ensure that their local standards for adopting highways give sufficient scope for home zones to be actively considered. Further advice on applying the Governments policies for planning for new housing is given in the companion guide to PPG 3 Better places to live.

In considering any proposal, local authorities need to make certain that routine maintenance programmes are extended so that home zone features are fully covered.

Case Study - Nottingham

The Nobel Road Area is a 1970s residential estate in Clifton at the south-west edge of the city. It contains about 600 dwellings on 19 cul-de sacs leading off a curved central spine road (Nobel Road). There are many small areas of low quality open space within the estate as well as a central green. There is a good bus service along the spine road. There is communal off-street parking, but this is under used as residents prefer to park on street. The aim is to reduce vehicle speeds along the spine road and create mini home zones within the cul-de-sacs.

Major works were completed on the central spine road in May 2001. This phase consisted of 9 plateau features, 7 of which are narrowed to require single way working, with tree planting at each corner. Designs for mini home zone areas for two cul-de-sacs are being developed by residents and a landscape architect. These will act as demonstration projects to inspire designs for the remaining cul-de-sacs to be treated in future phases.

Case Study - Magor Village, Monmouthshire

Magor village is a small cluster of narrow streets containing about 40 houses and several local businesses (mainly in the village square). Homes are traditional village design. Some of the streets have no separate footways. The local primary school with public open space abuts the village core area. Conflicts between pedestrians and vehicles can occur, particularly at the start and end of the school day. Construction of Phase 1 was completed in Autumn 2001. Future proposals include road humps, junction plateaux, a one way system, street trees and planters, cycle stands, some games areas for children, introducing social spaces and removing raised footways.

Meeting the Challenge

The Government is keen to accelerate the growth of the programme of home zones and £30 million was made available in 2001 for a Home Zone Challenge scheme in England. Local authorities with traffic and/or highway functions were eligible to bid for funding. They were encouraged, where appropriate, to form alliances with other public authorities, private developers or housing associations in developing their proposals.

Pilot Home Zones

Local authorities are piloting nine home zones in England and Wales supported by the Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions (DTLR). The DTLR has commissioned TRL Ltd to monitor the pilot schemes. Elements being measured include traffic volume, speed and displacement, environmental improvement, street activity and changing attitudes. The local authorities are using a range of approaches to implement these home zones.

The nine pilot home zone schemes are in Manchester, Plymouth, Leeds, Nottingham, Peterborough, West Ealing (London), Lambeth (London), Sittingbourne and Magor Village.

A working group advises the Department on the results of the monitoring effort, including design and implementation issues. Membership of the group includes local authorities, the Association of Chief Police Officers, the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee, the Children's Play Council, Transport 2000, Sustrans, TRL, DTLR, and members of the devolved administrations.

References and Additional Reading

A New Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone. The Governments White Paper on the Future of Transport. The Stationery Office. July 1998. ISBN 0-10-139502-7. Â£16.50.

Transport 2010: The 10 Year Plan. DETR. 2000. ISBN 1-851124-13-6 Â£15.

Guidance on Full Local Transport Plans. DETR. 2000A Good Practice Guide for the Development of Local Transport Plans. DETR. 2000.

Tomorrows roads: safer for everyone The Governments road safety strategy and casualty reduction targets for 2010. DETR. 2000.

New Directions in Speed Management - A Review of Policy. DETR. 2000.

Planning Policy Guidance Note 3 - Housing. DETR. 2001. ISBN 0-11-753546-X Â£7.

Planning Policy Guidance Note 13 - Transport. DETR. 2001 ISBN 0-11-753558-3 Â£8.

Traffic Advisory Leaflet 7/01 - Walking bibliography. DTLR. 2001.

Traffic Advisory Leaflet 4/01 - Cycling Bibliography. DETR. 2001.

Traffic Advisory Leaflet 5/01 - Traffic calming bibliography. DETR. 2001.

Places, Streets and Movement. A companion guide to design bulletin 32. Residential roads and footpaths. DETR. 1998. ISBN 1-851-12113-7. Â£20.

By Design. Urban Design in the planning system: towards better practice. DETR. CABE. 2000. ISBN 0-7277-2937-3. Â£19.95

Better places to live. By Design. DETR. CABE. 2001. ISBN 0-7277-3037-1. Â£19.95.

Home Zones: A planning and design handbook. Mike Biddulph. Policy Press 2001. ISBN 1-86134-371-X. Â£13.95

Code of Practice for Delivering Best Value in Highway Maintenance. Institution of Highways and Transportation. 2001. Â£85.

Transport 2000 Resources

To order: sfp@transport2000.demon.co.uk

Streets for People network

A network for community groups to deal with traffic problems and create a safer and pleasant living environment. Membership includes briefing sheets, telephone advice, and conferences. Cost to join: Â£5

2000, Living Streets, a guide to cutting traffic and reclaiming street space

A guide for local campaigners, community action groups and local councillors. A vision of what our streets could be like with less traffic. Counters the common arguments against traffic reduction. Publication Â£10. Slide set also available.

2000, Restraining the traffic - how much does it cost?

Four page info sheet for home zone campaigners (and walking, cycling, traffic calming campaigners) with costs and pros and cons of using different road safety measures...crossings, gateways, humps. Free.

2000, Experts Directory - a resource for transport campaigners

Listing of campaigners and people who can help with design, legal advice and planning. Free.

Traffic Advisory Leaflets are issued free and are available from DTLR on 020 7944 2979.

Children's Play Council Resources

To order: homezones@ncb.org.uk

1997, Home Zones: reclaiming residential streets

A4 full-colour 12-page briefing making the case for child-friendly residential streets, published in 1997. Single copies free, 2-9 60p each, 10-99 50p each, 100+ 40p each.

1999, Home Zones: a new look for your street?

A5 full colour leaflet introducing the home zone concept, with space for overprinting local details. 10p each (single copies free).

1999, Home Zones video: at home in my street

Video of a 1999 study tour of continental home zones, with notes on how to use it as part of a residents meeting. Produced with Transport 2000. Â£10 local groups and individuals, Â£20 corporate bodies.

Home zones news

Free full-colour newsletter, produced three times a year. Supported by DTLR.

www.homezonenews.org.uk Web site, updated monthly. Supported by DTLR.

Useful Addresses

Children's Play Council National Children's Bureau
8 Wakley Street, London EC1V 7QE
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Transport 2000
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The Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions sponsors a wide range of research into traffic management issues. The results published in Traffic Advisory Leaflets are applicable to England, Wales and Scotland. Attention is drawn to variations in statutory provisions or administrative practices between the countries.

The Traffic Advisory Unit (TAU) is a multi-disciplinary group working within the Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions.

The TAU seeks to promote the most effective traffic management and parking techniques for the benefit, safety and convenience of all road users.

Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions

Requests for unpriced TAU publications to:
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Scottish Executive

Within Scotland enquiries should be made to:
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The National Assembly for Wales/Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru

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