



Walking in Towns and Cities: government response to Select Committee report

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Introduction

This paper sets out the Governments response to the Environment, Transport and Regional Affairs Committees report **Walking in Towns and Cities** (HC 167-1, published 30 June 2001). The Government welcomes the detailed consideration which the Committee has given to this important subject, and is glad to note the Committees general support of its publication *Encouraging walking: advice to local authorities*. The Government agrees with the Committee that action is needed to increase walking in our urban areas, and it is taking action to that end.

Promoting walking forms an important element of the Governments transport and planning policies, as part of its wider objectives of sustainable development, urban renaissance, quality of life and social inclusion.

We aim to make it easier, safer and more convenient to walk by concentrating major travel generators in city, town and district centres and near major public transport interchanges; ensuring that developments comprising jobs, shopping, leisure and services offer a realistic choice of access by walking, cycling and public transport; and encouraging the provision of day-to-day facilities in local centres within reach by walking. In particular, high density, mixed use development and retail, office and leisure uses should be located in and around town centres.

Local authorities are encouraged to identify key routes and networks for walking; to create more direct, safe and secure walking routes; and as part of their local walking strategy to improve walking conditions for example through wider pavements and good crossings. High quality, and attention to the fundamental principles of urban design in new development is also important, to create attractive living environments, to help places connect with each other sustainably and to provide conditions that encourage walking.

Response to Recommendations

Recommendation (a)

Walking is a major mode of transport. Increasing the number of walking trips can have a significant impact on urban road congestion and air quality. Walking is also healthy. In addition, creating a pleasant environment which is conducive to walking is essential to the urban renaissance and, in particular, to the quality of life of the three in ten households without a car (paragraph 17).

The Government agrees with the Committee about the attractions and importance of walking. Encouraging walking and improving provision for pedestrians is an integral part of its strategy for promoting sustainable transport and reducing dependence on the car, as set out in the Integrated Transport White Paper and the 10 Year Plan for Transport.

The Government agrees that good urban design and high quality urban environments, including well-designed and maintained streets, have a vital role to play in helping to make towns and cities places that people choose to live, work and relax in. The Government encourages local authorities to improve their town centres by focusing development there, improving the pedestrian environment and generally improving the attractiveness and competitiveness of their town centres. The recent Beacon Council awards

for town centre regeneration illustrate success in achieving this.

Recommendation (b)

There has been very little research into walking in the past and it is important to gain a better understanding of the contribution of the relevant factors if the decline in walking is to be reversed. Accordingly we recommend that the Department commission further research into this matter and other aspects of walking behaviour and motivation which are poorly understood (paragraph 35).

The main factor underlying the decline in walking is well understood and also underlies the historic declines in cycling and in the use of local bus services. It is the increasing ownership of the private car, which offers a more convenient alternative than all of the modes mentioned for most journeys, albeit at a cost in terms of personal health and environmental effects including congestion and deterioration in the walking environment. Other factors are also involved, including fear of traffic and other dangers which particularly affect parents willingness to let their children walk to school. The Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions (DTLR) agrees that these other aspects of walking behaviour and motivation are less well understood and is developing a research strategy in support of the Integrated Transport Policy and the 10 Year Plan. Research on aspects of walking will be included in the research programme as appropriate.

Recommendation (c)

A philosophy of danger reduction should replace the prevailing orthodoxy of accident reduction. It can be more effective in reducing pedestrian casualties, leads to better urban design and is more convenient for pedestrians. As part of this shift, guard railings and staggered crossings, which are barely used on the Continent, should be scrapped where traffic speeds can be reduced. Local Transport Notes 1/95 and 2/95 should be withdrawn and replaced. Existing zebra crossings, marked by Belisha beacons, are very satisfactory for pedestrians as long as they are respected by motorists and enforced. They should be retained except where a thorough investigation shows they should be replaced. In such cases puffin crossings should be employed (paragraph 70).

The Government is in favour both of danger reduction and of accident reduction. It shares the Committees desire to create a more attractive environment for pedestrians. This is an essential element of the urban renaissance to which it is committed.

The targets in the road safety strategy, *Tomorrows Roads: Safer for Everyone* are expressed in terms of **casualty** reductions. The Government does not intend to change this approach, and will not change the requirement for local authorities to have a local road safety strategy including local casualty reduction targets which support the national targets. Nor will it withdraw Local Transport Notes (LTN) 1/95 and 2/95.

LTN 1/95 recommends a methodology for local authorities to assess where pedestrian crossings are needed and to decide what type of crossing is best suited to a particular site. LTN 2/95 gives advice on the design of pedestrian crossings. The Government stands by the advice in both LTNs, though LTN 2/95 is supplemented by Traffic Advisory Leaflet 1/01 about puffin crossings, and the two need to be read together.

The Government believes that the Committees underlying objectives will be better met by issuing new **policy** guidance to local authorities and that is what it will do. This guidance will encourage local authorities to develop the most pedestrian-friendly environment which can be achieved consistently with meeting the local casualty reduction target and with properly serving the interests of other road users. This may be a matter of a simple change, for example replacing a staggered pelican crossing by a straight-across puffin crossing. Or it may need changes much further back in the planning process, for example to reduce traffic speeds and flows at particular locations to levels where guardrails are not required. The Government will expect local authorities to follow this policy guidance both in their local transport plans and in their decisions on individual cases.

Recommendation (d)

We recommend that the police ensure that the *Secure by Design* initiative promotes personal security by higher density developments which encourage walking in streets and public spaces which are well overlooked. Getting more people walking is a major aid to security (paragraph 73).

The Government agrees that community safety and crime prevention should be central concerns for local authorities when exercising their planning responsibilities. We want to see community safety integrated into the design of new development and not left as an afterthought. We are committed to reviewing and updating the 1994 Circular *Planning Out Crime* and have announced this in the Urban White Paper.

Our policies to make towns and cities more attractive places to live and work in, and to promote the vitality and viability of town centres, will encourage more people to walk and so raise levels of personal security.

We have underlined in recent planning guidance including on planning for housing the importance of thinking about crime prevention when designing new development. We are backing this guidance through the good practice advice we issue (eg. *By Design*). We also propose to build up with the Home Office a body of knowledge of what works in designing out crime, and this might include, for example, overlooking of footpaths or communal areas. We will work up and publish good practice guidance which is relevant to both local planning authorities and police; and, practicable and robust in a wide range of circumstances. The aim is to secure sustainable developments which are free of crime and where people feel safe.

Recommendation (e)

We recommend that priority be given to walking through:

[e i] Planning policies which promote high density, mixed use, compact towns and cities which keep distances short;

The Government agrees. Our planning policies seek to promote sustainable development patterns which provide quick, easy and safe access to services by walking, cycling and public transport.

Planning Policy Guidance (PPG)13 on Transport seeks to promote compact towns and cities and access to services by locating major travel generators in centres and near major urban public transport interchanges; and by locating day to day facilities in local centres so they are accessible by walking and cycling. It also

encourages mixed use of land, combining uses such as employment, shopping, leisure, services and housing, which enables walking to become a primary mode of travel. Our new Transport Assessments will help ensure new development which provides realistic, safe and easy access by walking through careful consideration of the siting of buildings and entrances and measures to improve access.

PPG6 on Town Centres and Retail Developments encourages walking by concentrating retail, leisure, offices and other key uses in town centres. PPG6 in particular seeks to keep distances short and encourage improvements to pedestrian access by promoting retail, leisure, offices and other key uses in existing centres. Developers must be able to demonstrate that they could not find a central site, after having been flexible about format, scale, design and car parking, before choosing edge-of-centre or out-of-centre locations. The definition of edge of centre to determine acceptable alternative sites is based on what is an easy walking distance. The advice recognises that people are unlikely to walk more than around 220330 yards (200300 metres) carrying shopping whether walking to the primary retail area, to a town centre car park or to public transport. For other uses, such as offices, people might be prepared to walk further. PPG6 suggests this is likely to be in the region of 550 yards (500 metres) from a station or key public transport interchange for offices.

The guidance indicates that what is edge of centre depends on what is an easy walking distance and that this will vary from place to place, depending on the size of centre, local topography including barriers to pedestrian movement, the strength of the attractions and the attractiveness of the route. In order to minimise the distance and improve the routes, developers are encouraged to design their schemes with the store on the part of the site closest to the town centre, preferably with a direct street frontage so that the store is welcoming to people arriving on foot. The effect of this policy has been to secure an increasing proportion of new retail and leisure development in existing centres where access on foot is vital to the majority of customers regardless of how they arrived in the town centre.

Our policies on planning for housing (PPG3) advise local authorities to focus on the quality of the places and living environments being created and give priority to the needs of pedestrians rather than the movement and parking of vehicles. They should also reduce car dependence by facilitating walking and cycling, by improving linkages by public transport between housing, jobs, local services and local amenity, and by planning for mixed use.

[e ii] Transport Strategies which give priority to and promote walking, including the re-classification of the urban route network to take account of all its functions;

The Government has urged local authorities in England to develop local walking strategies as part of their local transport plans. These local walking strategies should identify clear targets to encourage walking, both for short journeys and for access to public transport. We also advise authorities to use the principles and messages contained within the national guidance for encouraging walking, to inform both their strategic planning and day-to-day provision. In addition, Traffic Advisory Leaflets 2/00 and 6/00 on **Framework for a local walking strategy and Monitoring Walking** were published in June 2000.

The Local Government Act 1966 introduced the current classification for local authority roads. The classification of each road is determined by its importance in the local distribution of traffic. Local authorities can make written applications to the Director (Transport) for the Government Office for their Region for changes in the classification of individual roads. The Government does not see a case for a wholesale reclassification of urban roads or a review of the criteria for determining their status.

[e iii] and promote convenient alternatives to car travel such as home delivery.

The Government is keen to promote alternatives to car use. New information and communications technology (ICT) offers a range of opportunities for putting this aspiration into practice. The UK is now the largest e-commerce market in Europe. ^[1] However, in the 10 Year Plan we noted that predictions of the effects of greater use of the internet, or e-commerce, and of teleworking vary considerably. ^[2] The Department has commissioned research into the effects of ICT on transport patterns, in order to increase our understanding of how this area is developing. With regard to home shopping, much of the reason for this uncertainty stems from the fact that, at present, businesses have not developed profitable business models for conveying goods from shop or warehouse to home. It is for business to work this out. Central Governments role is essentially one of encouragement rather than direct intervention. It will be important to ensure that we do not inadvertently encourage increased congestion and pollution through increased movements by delivery vehicles.

We must also be careful that promotion of facilities such as home delivery does not deepen the digital divide into social divisions. To this end, the Government has set itself the goal of ensuring that everyone in the UK who wants it will have easy, affordable access to the internet by 2005. This in itself will provide an alternative to some car travel, particularly by making telecommuting more of a possibility, but also in facilitating the search for consumer goods.

Better conditions for pedestrians by:

[e iv] ensuring that walking routes are continuous, well-connected to key destinations and wellsigned, and that where such routes meet major roads in urban areas, pedestrians have priority; particular emphasis should be given to creating good routes to important facilities, including schools and rail and bus stations and bus stops;

The Government advises all local authorities to include in their local transport plans measures to identify and provide for new, high quality networks of walking routes, and to improve the condition of those that already exist. Local authorities are recommended to audit and improve walking routes to key destinations such as schools, workplaces, shopping areas and public transport interchanges (including bus stops). Local transport plans should, in addition, provide evidence that the needs of pedestrians are given a high priority, and adopt a formal order in which the needs of pedestrians are placed first. The Government is also an integral partner in the Safe Routes to Schools and the Safe Routes to Stations initiatives.

PPG13 on Transport encourages local authorities to identify networks of routes and locations, including links between key uses such as schools, town centres and transport interchanges, where the needs and safety of pedestrians will be given priority. They are also encouraged to create more direct, safe and secure walking routes, particularly in and around town centres and local neighbourhoods and to schools, stations and public transport; to promote pedestrian-friendly crossings which give pedestrians greater priority at traffic signals and avoid long detours and waiting times, indirect footbridges or underpasses.

[e v] traffic restraint, including establishing more high quality pedestrian priority zones in city and local centres, which are well connected to outlying areas by high quality pedestrian routes and by public transport;

The Government recognises that pedestrianisation schemes and vehicle restricted areas are both popular and economically successful, and that they have helped to return vitality to town centres. One of the key elements in this is careful consultation and ensuring that appropriate provision is made for, amongst others, disabled people, cyclists, buses and deliveries. Local Transport Note 1/87 **Getting the Balance Right** is the key guidance on this issue. The Government notes that access routes into town centres have often been neglected and that wider improvements are needed to ensure that people are able to walk to, as well as within town centres. Through planning policy guidance, and other publications like *By Design*, the Government also encourages greater consideration of the impact of new development on existing movement patterns, especially in relation to routes that are currently popular with pedestrians and cyclists.

[e vi] dealing with safety issues by reducing the impact of motor traffic and moderating traffic speed;

The Government fully recognises that fear of traffic speed, both real and assumed, has a major impact on those walking in towns and cities. The Government has set about addressing this problem and by so doing, encouraging people to walk, by three key actions.

Regulations were made in 1999 to make it easier for local authorities to introduce 20 mph zones. These zones, that make the 20 mph limit self-enforcing by the use of traffic calming features, have been proved to make urban, and in particular residential, roads safer for pedestrians.

High streets and similar mixed priority routes can pose particular problems for pedestrians. Local authorities have been invited to participate in a number of demonstration projects aimed at better managing traffic through mixed priority routes. The Government is providing funding for these.

The better use of speed and traffic signal enforcement cameras is proving to be the most important development for some time in reducing road collision casualties. The system that allows some fixed penalty fine receipts to be netted off to cover the cost of purchasing, placing and operating cameras has now been extended nationally.

A combination of these actions should result in people feeling less threatened by passing traffic that by and large will be travelling at more sensible and slower speeds.

[e vii] improvements to the management and maintenance of public space and personal security; in particular a greater police presence on the streets;

The Government agrees that we need to improve the management and maintenance of public space so as to provide better conditions for pedestrians. We are taking forward a number of measures to help achieve these improvements.

In his speech in April 2001 the Prime Minister set out the Governments proposals for improving the quality of life in our towns and cities. The Government recognises the importance that issues such as personal safety and the general attractiveness of the environment have for peoples perception of a place. The Governments aim is to tackle those small or minor nuisances that makes our towns and cities less attractive places to live in.

In August this year we announced a Â£50m street warden scheme to help improve local neighbourhoods. The street wardens will help improve peoples quality of life in 100 new schemes across the country. Street wardens are expected to improve the physical appearance of streets and open spaces and deter anti-social behaviour. We are also providing more CCTV cameras in our towns and cities. In April the Government announced another Â£108m for CCTV projects across the country. The Government has also announced Â£43m for neighbourhood management which focuses on improving the environment and community safety.

The Government welcomes the increasing visibility of the police and other figures such as neighbourhood and street wardens, who provide reassurance and security to people walking those streets. In 1999/2000 just over half the police officers in England and Wales were deployed on patrol duties. However, decisions on the allocation of resources to patrol and other duties are for the professional judgement of Chief Officers of Police.

The Government has also recently announced that it is undertaking a fundamental cross-cutting spending review, to examine what can be done to ensure more clearly defined and coherent policies, funding and targets bearing on the quality of public space. The aim is to ensure that streets and public open spaces are made cleaner, safer and more attractive. This will encourage walking directly by making the streets more pleasant, and also indirectly, by increasing social activity on the streets which helps foster a sense of community and greater safety.

[e viii] and extending the ban on pavement parking to towns and cities outside London and ensuring that it is enforced;

The Government agrees with the Committee that pavement parking is generally unsatisfactory. But this is not the same as saying that it should be made universally illegal. In some circumstances it is less unsatisfactory than the alternatives.

The right approach is for local authorities to consider the issue for each section of each street. In some cases an absolute ban on pavement parking may be desirable. In other cases for example in order to ensure that other vehicles can get through, including perhaps emergency vehicles it may be desirable to allow parking to straddle the kerb, either always or at certain times of day, provided that this leaves sufficient width of pavement for pedestrians. In yet others the best course may be to move the kerblines so that there is a satisfactory area for parking on the carriageway, and then to ban parking on the pavement. In some instances physical measures to prevent vehicles mounting the pavement may be preferable and guidance on this approach has been given in Traffic Advisory Leaflet 4/93 on **Pavement Parking**. Bans on pavement parking, whether total or partial, can be achieved by means of Traffic Regulation Orders. Where local authorities have taken on decriminalised parking enforcement powers they are able to enforce such orders themselves and do not have to rely on the police, who may not be able to effectively enforce a ban because of higher priority calls on their resources.

[e ix] and paying particular attention to the needs of the elderly and disabled (paragraph 76).

Following an extensive research programme, DTLR has issued guidance to local authorities on a wide range of issues affecting the mobility of older and disabled people as pedestrians. In relation to road crossings for example, we have produced guidance on the design of dropped kerbs and the layout of tactile paving at pedestrian crossing points, to ensure that physically disabled and visually impaired pedestrians are able to use crossings more easily and safely. We have also developed systems, and issued advice, on

the provision of audible and tactile signals at controlled crossings to assist visually impaired people.

Before the end of this year DTLR, in collaboration with the Institution of Highways and Transportation, the County Surveyors Society and others, will be publishing new comprehensive guidance on the design of public transport and pedestrian infrastructure to take account of the needs of older and disabled people. That guidance, **Inclusive Mobility**, will be widely disseminated to local authorities and others involved in the provision of such facilities.

[1] Office of the E-Envoy (2001), *UK Online Annual Report 2000* at <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/e-government/>

[2] DETR (2000), *Transport 2010: The 10 Year Plan*, para 9.4

Response to Recommendations

Recommendation (f)

Professionals need to pay much more attention both to the needs of pedestrians and to the aesthetics of the street. These matters must be addressed in university and other courses and in continuing professional development, including the training of officers by local authorities (paragraph 81).

The Government agrees that there is a need for new and improved skills levels amongst transport professionals to reflect changing transport policies and priorities. We are collaborating with the professional institutions, and through them with education providers, to help secure this. For walking in particular, there is a wide range of agencies already in place to identify and address skills shortages. The Government believes that these should be relied upon, rather than attempting to devise new alternatives. In order to assist these agencies, the Government recognises that it could help by providing information and assurances about likely levels of long-term demand as the delivery outputs of the 10 Year Plan become clearer.

The Government believes that targeted actions in specific areas are the most likely to be effective, given the diversity of sectors and jobs involved. In this respect, a DTLR working group has recently published, with the support of the Royal Town Planning Institute, the Institution of Highways and Transportation, the Institution of Civil Engineers, the Institute of Highway Incorporated Engineers and the Institute of Logistics and Transport, **Education and Training for Cycling and Walking Practitioners**. This gives an insight into various training routes that can lead to a career in cycling and walking promotion. In addition, the working group has contacted over 400 universities and colleges of higher education, to identify those which run courses that could support the education and training of people involved in improving conditions for cycling and walking. This information will be collated with other sources available to the working group, to produce an additional information leaflet.

The Government also recognises the wider problem in relation to the urban design skills deficit that currently exists amongst professionals working in fields that affect the quality of the built environment. That is why the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) was asked to set up the Urban Design Skills Working Group, who have recently drawn up a comprehensive report outlining the extent of the skills shortage in this area, and a detailed action to help address it. The report will be published shortly.

The issue of street aesthetics is currently being investigated by the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (see also response to recommendations (g), (h) and (i)).

Recommendations (g), (h) and (i)

(g) Street management is unco-ordinated and suffers from the involvement of a plethora of different agencies and professionals. We endorse those recommendations of the *Designing the Streets Inquiry* which apply to the establishment of street management strategies, street management codes and design codes (paragraph 84).

(h) We recommend that each local authority establish a small team of experts in street design who would work with highway engineers on all projects affecting streets and with planners on new developments (paragraph 85).

(i) We recommend that consolidated guidance be issued, which promotes the co-ordination of all work affecting the function and appearance of streets and public spaces, and sets out best practice mechanisms for implementation and monitoring (paragraph 88).

The Government agrees that more needs to be done to improve the co-ordination of street management. The Government has demonstrated its commitment to encouraging greater attention to the need for high quality public spaces through the creation of the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment and the publication last year of *By Design*, which sets out the principles underlying the creation of high quality places and offers sound practical advice to achieve them.

We have also commissioned CABE to carry out a research project to consider and define the primary influences on the achievement of quality in the streetscape, what the barriers to achieving them are and what mechanisms there are for exerting influence to improve standards.

Several local authorities have already undertaken studies and developed good practice manuals for improving the pedestrian environment.

As noted in the response to recommendation e(vii), the cross cutting review will be looking at many of these issues. We are determined to ensure that streets and public and open spaces can be made cleaner, safer and more attractive. Improving the quality of the public realm is crucial to achieving urban renaissance and, therefore, to delivering the commitments set out in the Urban White Paper. But we do not want to start prescribing how local authorities and others should tackle this issue until we have seen the outcome of the review.

As to consolidating guidance on all work affecting the function and appearance of the street, in April 2001 we introduced new regulations permitting local authorities to charge undertakers for works overrunning an agreed deadline. Over 100 authorities are operating these powers, which relate to works both in the carriageway and on the pavement. Ministers have also recently launched a consultation on lane rental pilot schemes, which would permit two boroughs (Middlesbrough and the London Borough of Camden) as part of Local Public Service Agreements to levy charges on undertakers for occupying their streets from the beginning to the end of works. These schemes are expected to be in place from the beginning of 2002, and as with overrun charges it is envisaged that the net revenue from them should be specifically earmarked to local transport policies. The Government will closely monitor the effectiveness of the overrun schemes and the lane rental schemes.

In April 2001 DTLR (then the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions (DETR)) issued guidance on **Best practice in street works and highway works**. It aims to help utility companies, highway authorities and other organisations carrying out works in the street to build on these principles to avoid unnecessary disruption and inconvenience to the public. Other relevant regulations and codes of practice, eg. on the reinstatement of excavations, are in the course of review, and a revised code of how to carry out works safely and with consideration for all road users practice (*Safety at Street Works and Road Works: A Code of Practice (2nd edition)* TSO) will be published shortly.

The Government believes that the standards of street management could be enhanced through close co-operation across the disciplines within local authorities, and we are not opposed to the development of consolidated guidelines, provided that they do not dilute the message of existing best practice guidance.

Recommendation (j)

We recommend that the quality of engineering work be raised by the introduction of and subsequent requirement for qualifications. Contracting supervision and quality assurance procedures should be tightened (paragraph 89).

The Government recognises that the increase in investment in new transport infrastructure, including provision for pedestrians, will increase the demand for engineering skills to design and implement new projects. We are taking steps to ensure that those involved in the construction and provision of this new infrastructure, and the education and training sector, are well aware of the likely scale of new demand.

Recommendation (k)

We recommend that the DETR ensure that its staffing for this policy area is commensurate with the importance of walking as a mode of transport. They will need to publish and monitor a national strategy, commission research into walking, issue consolidated guidance on street design, replace existing guidance about guard railings and staggered crossings, help local authority officers with preparing walking strategies and ensure that development plans are consistent with local transport plans (paragraph 96).

DTLR will ensure that its staffing in each policy area is appropriate for the actions to be taken by central Government in that area. This will reflect not only the importance of the policy area concerned, but the role of central Government in it. Important policy areas may be relatively lightly staffed if the main agents are outside central Government, for example local authorities.

The Government accepts the work programme proposed by the Committee. Its detailed proposals are as follows:

- **publish and monitor a national strategy.**

The Government will publish a new edition of *Encouraging walking* as a national strategy document, and will monitor implementation through local authorities annual reports on local transport plans.

- **commission research into walking.**

This will be done as appropriate. See response to recommendation (b).

- **issue consolidated guidance on street design.**

We will consider this in the light of the CABA project mentioned in the response to recommendations (g), (h) and (i) above.

- **replace existing guidance about guard railings and staggered crossings.**

The Government will issue policy advice to encourage the provision of more pedestrian-friendly crossings, and the creation of environments where guard rails are not needed. See response to recommendation (c).

- **help local authority officers with preparing walking strategies.**

Traffic Advisory Leaflet 2/00 *Framework for a local walking strategy* was published in 2000. Local authorities have prepared walking strategies as part of their first full local transport plans submitted in July 2000. We will consider whether there is a need for further guidance on implementing and developing local walking strategies. The Government is proposing to hold a series of seminars for local authority walking officers and employers in 2002.

- **ensure that development plans are consistent with local transport plans.**

The Government agrees with the Committee that plans ought to be mutually consistent, though some temporary inconsistencies may be unavoidable because the plans will be rolled forward on different timescales. The next round of statutory local transport plans, due for submission in summer 2005, should be consistent with the statutory development plans in force at that time, or with an emerging development plan which is being produced to update the development plan. The Government will check for this consistency. Individual development proposals should be consistent both with statutory development plans and with statutory local transport plans. Checking for this consistency is a matter for the local planning authority in the first instance.

Recommendation (l)

The proposals in *Encouraging walking* show that some DETR officials know what should be done. However, as things stand we see little likelihood of progress because Government has not willed the means to do it. As a result the excellent suggestions in its publication are likely to remain pious but unfulfilled aspirations (paragraph 98).

The Government largely shares the Committees objectives, but not the Committees pessimism about implementation. The Government has willed the means, by providing policy guidance and, crucially, the resources necessary for delivery (see response to recommendation (v)), and it expects local authorities to achieve improvements accordingly over the period of the 10 Year Plan.

Recommendation (m)

We are very concerned that with certain exceptions local authorities will not have given sufficient priority to walking in their local transport plans (paragraph 100).

The Government has urged local authorities in England to develop local walking strategies as part of their local transport plans. These local walking strategies should identify clear targets to encourage walking, both for short journeys and for access to public transport. In notifying authorities of their capital allocations for 2001-02, decision letters provided detailed feedback on the degree to which the local transport plans had fulfilled the criteria for each element of the plan, including those set out for walking strategies. They also identified, where appropriate, any specific areas in which authorities needed to improve their local transport plan. Our guidance on annual progress reports makes clear that the annual reports should summarise actions taken to address these identified areas and to provide evidence of improvement.

Recommendation (n)

There is concern that the message that walking is healthy is not getting through to the public, as a recent study of increased levels of obesity indicates. We know what to do, and there have been a number of excellent studies of walking and health, including *Making T.H.E. Links*. This contains important recommendations which must be acted upon as a matter of urgency (paragraph 102).

The recent National Audit Office report on obesity noted that levels of overweight and obesity were rising, and that declining physical activity (including walking) was a major contributory factor. However, this is unlikely to be due to the message not getting through to the public. Research indicates that the vast majority of the public knows that walking is healthy, but this does not necessarily lead to increased walking. As the report points out this is for a variety of reasons including a lack of time; the convenience of the car; and the physical effort needed for walking.

Making T.H.E. Links contained 69 recommendations, mainly concerned with action to improve joint planning and operations between health and local authorities. While responsibility for the majority of these issues remains at a local level, many of the recommendations have been addressed in subsequent government guidance and policies including:

- local transport plan guidance which encouraged joint working with the health sector especially on strategies for reducing car use on journeys to work and school;
- Health Improvement Programme guidance which encouraged joint planning with local authority transport and environment departments;
- National Service Framework for Coronary Heart Disease and the NHS Plan which set standards for local plans on physical activity (including walking) to be developed in conjunction with local authority partners;
- Revised PPG 13 on planning and transport; and
- Health Act 1999 which enabled pooled budgets between health and local authorities for issues including transport.

Recommendation (o)

We recommend that the health service ensure that GPs are aware of the most recent advice about exercise levels and that they advise their patients of them. We further recommend that there be a co-ordinated national campaign led by the health service to inform the public of the benefits of walking (paragraph 103).

The Department of Health is planning to publish a document targeted at health professionals (including GPs) to clarify the health benefits of physical activity and explain the recommendations. This would complement the recently published guidance on exercise referral systems which has been widely distributed within the NHS.

The Government agrees with the Committee about the value of publicity, and wishes to encourage increased physical activity generally including, but not confined to, walking. The Department of Health is working closely with the Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, and the Department for Education and Skills on a range of initiatives to encourage increased activity through sport, recreation and physically active transport.

The health benefits of walking have been included as a key message in the recent DETR *are you doing your bit?* campaign, which used TV, radio and press advertising as well as PR and promotions. In addition there are plans for a new resource to be produced jointly by DTLR and DH aimed at increasing rates of walking and cycling to work. This will be based on a successful intervention used in Scotland. Key milestones have also been set within the National Service Framework for Coronary Heart Disease, for the implementation of a range of programmes at a local level to include effective policies on increasing physical activity. Components of a local strategy may include interventions to promote physically active transport such as walking.

Recommendation (p)

To attempt to meet the needs of people in deprived areas, the Government needs to ensure that the same measures are pursued as elsewhere, but it will be necessary to pursue them with greater vigour. It should:

- **[p i] create good walking routes;**

The Government advises all local authorities to include in their local transport plans measures to identify, and provide for, new high quality networks of walking routes, and to improve the condition of those that already exist. It recognises that there are clear links between improving conditions for walking in deprived areas and policy initiatives contained in, for example, the Urban White Paper and Neighbourhood Renewal Strategies. The interaction of these policy initiatives needs careful consideration, to ensure that issues such as social exclusion are tackled effectively across Government. DTLR will continue to liaise with other Government Departments to that end.

- **[p ii] improve management of streets and other public spaces, and in particular focus on reducing the fear of crime;**

The Government shares the Committees view that management of the streets and other public spaces is of great importance in meeting the needs of people in deprived areas. We are taking forward a national strategy for neighbourhood renewal to narrow the gap between our richest areas and poorer areas. We have set up the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit to drive forward this strategy. Initiatives include the neighbourhood warden and neighbourhood management schemes which aim to tackle local environmental problems.

As noted in the response to recommendation (e vii) we have recently announced a Â£50m street warden scheme to help improve local neighbourhoods. The street wardens will help improve peoples quality of life in 100 new schemes across the country. Street wardens are expected to improve the physical appearance of streets and open spaces and deter anti-social behaviour.

Neighbourhood Management is particularly about agencies and service providers on the ground working together in neighbourhoods with residents to improve the environment and services. This means improving community safety and general health and safety, and reducing actual crime and the fear of it. It should translate into safer walking conditions as traffic and pedestrian management schemes are planned and implemented in neighbourhoods overseen by local partnerships which could include representatives from local authorities, Police, transport providers, traffic/neighbourhood warden, residents etc. The emphasis is on better coordination and integration of all services including street management, better use of mainstream funds, and identification of key individuals with responsibility to ensure that issues such as those affecting pedestrians are dealt with.

There are now twenty Neighbourhood Management Pathfinders who were announced on 9 July 2001, but many other neighbourhoods have expressed an interest in neighbourhood management or are already pursuing their own neighbourhood management projects. Ten more pathfinders are expected to be announced in the autumn of this year and launched at the beginning of next year.

Through the Reassurance Strand of the Public Reform Programme, the Home Office and the Police Services are devising a package of measures aimed at increasing public confidence and reducing the fear of crime. This includes increasing the uniformed presence of authority figures; tackling environmental issues such as graffiti and abandoned vehicles; and informing the public about real levels of crime and disorder and the steps being taken to tackle them. One of the aims of this work is to make people feel safer when they are out and about on the streets.

- **[p iii] ensure planning policies locate facilities where they are accessible on foot by poorer households without a car; and**

The Governments planning policies seek to give poorer households without access to a car better access to services. PPG13 seeks to locate day to day facilities in local centres within reach by walking; and encourages local authorities to provide local play areas, public open space and other recreational facilities in locations that are accessible without a car. PPG6 advises local authorities to encourage a wide range of facilities in district and local centres, consistent with the scale and function of the centre, to meet peoples day-to-day needs; while PPG3 asks that all housing developments are accessible by a range of modes besides the car. Better attention to urban design, as described both in *By Design* and *Better Places to Live*, can help to ensure that facilities are located to achieve maximum accessibility.

The problem of lack of access to services in deprived areas was highlighted by the Social Exclusion Units Policy Action Team (PAT) reports, including one on access to shopping (PAT13) and another on access to financial services (PAT14). This revealed the problems of food deserts places where local people did not have easy access to shops selling fresh food. The Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy proposed that local retail strategies need to be developed that are informed by the needs of local residents for access to these services.

The Social Exclusion Unit is currently undertaking a project to analyse the nature of the transport barriers to accessing work, learning, health care and other key activities and services, and is seeking to develop policies to remove them. The study will be looking, among other things, at improving access on foot. The report will be published next spring and its findings will feed into the next Spending Review.

- **[p iv] consider subsidising local shops in deprived areas in the same way that some village shops are subsidised.**

Last years green paper Modernising Local Government Finance proposed a scheme of rate relief for all small businesses, wherever they were located. It sought views on whether any additional relief was needed for small retailers in deprived urban areas, as the Urban Task Force report had recommended relief only for this group. The Green Paper noted the PAT13 reports view that the scope to help such urban retailers through rate relief was limited, as rates were generally low in deprived urban areas. PAT13 suggested that the proposed relief for all small businesses was sufficient for small retailers in deprived urban areas. We are currently considering next steps, which will be announced as part of the Local Government White Paper later this year.

- **[p v] Funds should be provided to implement these proposals from urban regeneration monies, including the New Deal for Communities Fund, the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, and the Single Regeneration Budget (paragraph 104).**

The Government agrees that various sources of regeneration funding be directed to assist deprived areas in overcoming higher levels of crime and other factors which hinder walking. Funding from the New Deal for Communities (NDC) programme is provided to each of the 39 local NDC partnerships on the basis of a Delivery Plan developed by the partnership, based on detailed analysis of the priority issues in that neighbourhood. Where a partnership identifies these issues as key priorities in its Delivery Plan, the partnership may allocate funds to projects addressing them. Most partnerships identify crime and aspects of the public environment as priorities. The Neighbourhood Renewal Fund is to help improve services in the most deprived areas. It is allocated to 88 of the most deprived local authorities. Decisions on how this funding should be used are taken at a local level by the local authority in consultation with the local partners. These decisions should take into account Government set floor targets, but also consider local priorities.

The Single Regeneration Budget is now closed to new schemes and will be subsumed into the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) single programme from April 2002. It will be for the RDAs to decide what activities to support in order to implement their Regional Economic Strategies. It is possible that RDAs will identify these issues as a key priority in their region.

Recommendation (q)

Many organisations have an important role to play in facilitating walking as well as DETR and local authorities. These include the Departments of Health, Education and Employment, the Home Office, the RDAs, the Social Exclusion Unit and public transport operators. The general picture which emerges from a consideration of the schemes which they have initiated is that there are some promising projects that began in the mid-1990s which recognise the importance of and promote walking. However, at present they remain valuable ideas or pilot projects applied in a piece-meal way (paragraph 108).

The Government agrees that there is a need to create partnerships at all levels to help communities put theory into practice. It also recognises the need to relate transport provision to wider economic, education, social and environmental policy. It will take a variety of actions to these ends see in particular the response to recommendation (t) below.

Recommendation (r)

We recommend the establishment of a National Walking Strategy. This would indicate:

- **the criteria against which local strategies would be examined for the purpose of funding;**
- **a shift of priorities in respect of policies and spending in its overall transport strategy; and**
- **how different Government departments will coordinate policies to facilitate and promote walking.**
- **Guidance should be issued under the following headings for drawing up specific local measures:**

Changing priorities

Funding

Planning

Conditions for walking

Quality of design

Campaigns to promote walking

Research.

In practice this would mean that local authorities and others should undertake the measures recommended by the Government's own Advisory Group on walking. All local authorities should publish local walking strategies which should determine funding allocations (paragraph 122).

The Government agrees that there should be a national strategy for encouraging walking. It will prepare a new edition of **Encouraging walking** to set out the strategy, which will include the first three items listed above by the Committee. The Government has already published advice on some of the specific issues listed by the Committee, and will consider the best way forward on the others.

Changing priorities: Information on highway priority/hierarchy is included in the local transport plan guidance.

Funding: Information on funding is contained in local transport plan guidance. We will consider publishing information on other sources of funding.

Planning: A range of Planning Policy Guidance notes have been published.

Conditions for walking: Information is contained in guidance already issued to local authorities (eg. local transport plan guidance); however, there may be a lack of information published in a technical form for local authority professionals.

Quality of Design: The Government will examine the best way of encouraging better attention to urban design, including the dissemination of existing guidance. This could include information on best practice or design competitions.

Campaign to promote walking: The Government recognises the need to promote walking at a local level. There are already campaigns to promote walking to the public, for example the Countryside Agency/British Heart Foundation Walking the Way to Health initiative. When developing a walking strategy, the Government will consider whether there is a need to follow the mechanism used under the National Cycling Strategy for a marketing contract to promote walking.

Research: The Government notes the need for guidance on local research. This will be considered alongside the need for research on walking to be carried out on a national basis.

Guidance on Full Local Transport Plans advises that the main elements of a local walking strategy should be included in a local transport plan. Authorities are also expected to ensure that all relevant aspects of their local transport plan (including road safety, planning and social policies) work together with plans to promote walking. There was evidence of a walking strategy in all local transport plans. The Government notes the recommendation that local walking strategies should determine funding allocations. The quality of the local walking strategy is already one of the elements that influences the local transport plan financial settlement.

Recommendation (s)

Although walking is the second most common mode of transport, it shares with the car the distinction of being the only two modes for which there are no targets in the 10 Year Transport Plan. We recommend that national targets should be established for car travel and walking, provided it can be demonstrated that the share of walking trips can be measured with sufficient accuracy. The targets in the 10 Year Transport Plan should be revised with targets set for all modes of transport on the same basis. The targets should take the form of the percentage of trips to be undertaken by each form of transport: walking, cycling, public transport and car travel. The key target should be to increase the share of walking trips and reduce the share of car trips. This target would not be inconsistent with the expected increase in the number of miles travelled by car, but would have the significant advantage of setting the goal which the Government seeks reducing urban congestion by replacing car trips by walking trips. Local targets should be set as part of all local transport plans (paragraph 123).

The Government is not convinced that setting national targets for either walking or car travel would be useful in achieving improvements in the things that matter to people.

So far as walking is concerned, we do not believe that the achievement of our objectives would be helped by the adoption of a national target for increasing walking. However, we do see a role for local targets, and these have been set in local transport plans. As a result of the proposed new national walking strategy we would expect to see first an end to the decline, and then an increase, in the number of walking trips recorded as people choose to walk more often, both as a means of transport and as something that is enjoyable in its own right.

So far as traffic is concerned, the Government believes it is more important to concentrate on reducing the adverse impacts of car travel, in terms of congestion and pollution, and improving the alternatives. So the 10 Year Plan focuses on addressing these objectives rather than achieving a particular traffic reduction target. And given that for most people the car will continue to be the travel mode of choice for most journeys, we will not achieve our underlying objectives through changes in modal share alone although modal shift is expected to occur as a result of the package of measures the Plan contains. Nor would overall national targets for car travel provide a meaningful indicator of the localised impacts of traffic in our towns and cities and other vulnerable areas. We have however, encouraged local authorities to set targets for reducing the level of local road traffic or its rate of growth in their Road Traffic Reduction Strategies.

Recommendation (t)

At present the pedestrian lobby is the weakest of any mode of transport hence it is ignored despite its importance. We recommend the establishment of a National Walking Forum with the objective of ensuring that national and local policies and provisions are producing an increase in walking. The Forum would;

- **exchange best practice**
- **advise on Government policy**
- **examine local transport plans**
- **monitor progress**
- **and publish a training strategy**

The aim of the forum would be to carry out and monitor many of the aspects of the national strategy. It would check that the action plan was being carried out, that local transport plans were appropriate, that suitable research was being undertaken (paragraph 124).

The Government agrees with the Committees analysis of the pedestrian lobby. As long as the vast majority of people walk but feel no need for specialist representation on this issue, this situation is unlikely to change. The question, therefore, is how best to fill the gap.

It is for the Government to give a lead. This has happened, and will happen further with the publication of the strategy document and other guidance.

The Government does not believe that a forum would be the right body to undertake three of the five tasks listed by the Committee to examine local transport plans, to monitor progress, and to publish a training strategy. These are tasks for the Government itself. The first two are being undertaken already. The last one will be considered in consultation with the professional institutions.

The Government agrees with the Committee that there should be exchanges of information on best practice, and that it will benefit from outside advice on policy. It is willing to establish a forum for these purposes. But it is not attracted, in this case, to the traditional form of regular meetings of a dozen or so representatives of different interest groups not least because of the special problems of representation of walking interests referred to above. The Government is more attracted in this case to the idea of an interactive website and it will explore this idea further in consultation with others whom it knows to be interested. Other forms of consultation and participation, including occasional Ministerial-level meetings and conferences, will continue to have their place and will be used as appropriate.

Response to Recommendations

Recommendation (u)

In view of the difficulty in determining the priority given to walking in their local transport plans, the Institution of Highways and Transportation recommended that the DETR should encourage local authorities to be explicit in terms of expenditure allocated to walking, and the outcomes derived, in the annual progress reports as part of the local transport plan process. We agree, although we recognise that some forms of spending (eg. 20 mph zones in residential areas) are in part investment in walking because they reduce traffic speeds (paragraph 132).

The Government tends to agree. Indeed, as part of their annual progress reports authorities are expected to record actual and proposed future spend on local transport plan funded schemes, including walking schemes. Authorities have been asked to identify separately all schemes costing between Â£250,000 and Â£5m. Schemes costing less than Â£250,000 should be grouped together under an appropriate category. For walking these categories are:

- new or improved footway schemes;
- pedestrianisation schemes;
- new or improved pedestrian/cycle bridges;
- other walking schemes.

Additionally authorities have been asked to include a summary implementation programme (if available) in their annual progress reports that show how their local transport plan settlement has been divided between the main programmes. This too should enable spend on walking schemes to be identified.

Authorities have also been asked to record in their annual progress reports the walking outputs in terms of the number and length of schemes that have been, or expect to be, derived from local transport plan investment. These should be recorded for each of the walking categories identified above.

However, as the Committee acknowledges, the expenditure on, and outputs derived from, walking schemes alone do not provide the full picture. Other local transport plan measures, such as traffic management, road maintenance and road safety schemes will also have a positive benefit for walking.

Recommendation (v)

The Government has opted to fund big rather than small schemes in its 10 Year Plan, but does not know which offer the best value for money. This oversight must be addressed. We recommend that the Government ensure that in future a higher proportion of funds in Local Transport Settlements, commensurate with the importance of walking as a mode of transport, be spent on the measures put forward in the National Walking Strategy we propose. We also recommend that a higher proportion of funds in the 10 Year Plan be spent on local transport plans. There should be a corresponding reduction in the sums spent on new national roads (paragraph 135).

The Government disagrees. The 10 Year Plan provides the funding framework for both large and small-scale transport schemes, and represents a balanced package aimed at improving transport provision across all modes.

In determining the proportion of funding in the 10 Year Plan for local transport plans and each of the other main funding areas, we drew on an assessment of how much was needed to meet the Plans overall objectives and targets. The Plan will be reviewed periodically to ensure that it continues to provide the most cost-effective and efficient means of delivering the overall transport strategy.

The Plan sets out an overall programme of investment. Individual projects and schemes will flow from decisions taken by a variety of agencies, local authorities and the private sector. Value for money is always an important consideration in determining which schemes are progressed. All major transport schemes (costing more than £5m) and small national road schemes (costing less than £5m) are appraised in line with the New Approach to Appraisal (NATA) to determine their economic impact, including their value for money. NATA also takes account of the other four over-arching transport objectives environment, safety, accessibility, and integration in informing the decision making process. Schemes are assessed in terms of their potential impact on all users, including pedestrians where appropriate.

Authorities have identified many hundreds of small-scale integrated transport schemes in their local transport plans, such as walking, cycling and bus priority measures. It would not be practical to require such schemes to be assessed against the same criteria as major schemes. However authorities are expected to carry out a NATA appraisal of the local transport plan as a whole, to ensure that it meets the local transport plan objectives and represent good value for money.

The local transport capital investment identified in the 10 Year Plan is £19.3 billion, compared to £7.2 billion allocated in the previous decade. This represents a doubling in real terms. Small-scale schemes are being supported to a greater extent than ever before, and spending on maintenance and small-scale schemes is higher than on major schemes.

The local transport plan system is designed to allow authorities discretion, reflecting their local knowledge, in the use of the resources available for smaller schemes to deliver the objectives and targets set out in their local transport plans, rather than central Government ring fencing allocations to specific schemes or modes.

Recommendation (w)

The proposed review of planning gain should consider how developers contributions could most appropriately facilitate walking. We recommend that developers contributions for this purpose be the norm in new developments. We also recommend that local transport plans contain approved plans for pedestrian networks in order to facilitate developers contributions (paragraph 138).

PPG13 on Transport makes clear that contributions may be sought through planning obligations to achieve improvements to walking, where they would be likely to influence travel patterns to the site; and that planning obligations should seek to improve accessibility to sites by all modes, with the emphasis on public transport, cycling and walking. Transport Assessments will help to inform local authorities on appropriate measures for promoting walking, which could be covered by planning obligations; and the local walking strategy may also contain measures relevant to a development such as wider pavements or pedestrian-friendly crossings.

The Government advises all local authorities to include in their local transport plans measures to identify and provide for new, high quality networks of walking routes and improve the condition of those that already exist. Local authorities are recommended to audit and improve walking routes to key destinations such as schools, workplaces, shopping areas and public transport interchanges.

Recommendation (x)

Now that PPG13 has finally been published it is important that its daughter documents are published as a matter of urgency. These are *Guidance on Transport Assessments* (which will indicate the share each mode of transport should achieve at new developments) and *Planning and Sustainable Access* (which illustrates how new developments can be planned to reduce dependence on the car for access). Both of these projects are complete. We recommend that the national research on parking standards which supported PPG13 now be published (paragraph 145).

The Transport Assessment Guide is currently being finalised, and will be published with Planning for Sustainable Access as soon as possible. Research on methodologies for devising parking standards will be published in due course, once the other good practice guides have been issued.

Recommendation (y)

It is a matter of concern that the Treasury's inquiry into planning policy has been undertaken with the aim of undoing the important policies to restrain out-of-town development which were put in place in the last decade. If this were done, it would have severe consequences for walking, congestion and the Urban Renaissance. We note with approval the following conclusion of the Treasury Committee:

We are concerned that the Treasury as an institution has recently begun to exert too much influence over policy areas which are properly the business of other departments and that this is not necessarily in the best interests of the Treasury or the Government as a whole.

We can think of few areas where these remarks are more appropriate than land use planning, the complexities of which should not be dealt with superficially. We trust our successor Committee will monitor developments in this area keenly (paragraph 146).

A review of planning has been undertaken jointly by DTLR and Treasury with the status of policy advice to Ministers. A Green Paper on reform of the planning system will be issued later this year or early next. The Secretary of State has already launched a public debate with his speech to the Institute of Public Policy Research on 26 July 2001 which emphasised both the importance of community engagement to effective planning and the need for the planning system to support national and regional productivity and competitiveness.

In that speech, the Secretary of State praised the role of planning in reinvigorating town centres, specifically endorsing the success of planning policies in curtailing development of out of town retail and major cinema developments. He said:

A short while ago we strengthened the rule on out-of-town shoppingwe are winning the battle. For the first time in 20 years, new shopping space in major town centres exceeded new floorspace in out-of-town shopping centres and retail parks.

The Secretary of State also recognised the role of planning in promoting greater accessibility and social inclusion. He also endorsed policies on greenfield development. He said:

And recently, we strengthened our policies on preserving greenfields from unnecessary housing development. I support that policy. And I am happy to restate our commitment to achieving a 60% target for recycling brownfield land.