



Living Streets Briefing: Housing Developments & Active Travel

Briefing for: **Name of official**

Purpose: Outline **Local Group name** Living Streets' priorities for housing developments.

Contact: **Your contact details**

About Living Streets

Living Streets is the UK charity for everyday walking. Our mission is to achieve a better walking environment and to inspire people of all generations to enjoy the benefits of walking. Our campaigning led to the UK's first zebra crossings and speed limits.

Short paragraph on your Local Group (e.g. when it was formed, what your key aims or achievements have been to date)

Next Steps

We ask that you:

- 1) **Write to the Secretary of State for Transport and Chief Secretary to the Treasury and ask them to ensure that active travel remains a core priority for the government.**
- 2) **Raise the importance of 20-minute neighbourhoods in the upcoming Adjournment debate on 'Unadopted roads and facilities for new housing estates'.**
- 3) **Meet with Living Streets to discuss how you can make the case for development that supports active travel.**

Edit these asks as appropriate. Make sure any actions you are asking the official to take are clear.

Overview

Streets that support walking, wheeling and cycling are better places to live, work and learn, and can support community cohesion. By cutting congestion, 20 minute neighbourhoods unlock opportunities for local economic growth, help us to be more active, improve local air quality and reduce carbon emissions.

Priorities for development

Living Streets supports the development of 20-minute neighbourhoods. This refers to compact and connected places with a range of services that meet most people's daily needs, positioned within a 20-minute walk.

We recommend that planners, developers and residents working on neighbourhood plans assess all new housing developments against the [Transport for New Homes checklist](#). The list sets out what makes new housing areas good to live in without dependence on cars.

Providing good walking, cycling and public transport infrastructure, together with access to local facilities and employment allows local communities to grow and flourish. Investing in better walking environments increases footfall and can boost retail sales by up to 40%.¹

Benefits for growth & health

Evidence shows that almost 80% of journeys under a mile are walked.² Homes that are closer to services and workplaces cut congestion, with huge benefits for both health and economic outcomes.

In 2019, British people wasted 115 hours in congestion, costing the country £6.9 billion, an average of £894 per driver.³ People walking spend more money than those in cars, helping local businesses to flourish. On average, walkers have been found to spend as much as £147 more than those driving in town centres.⁴

Cutting congestion benefits the NHS, too. According to modelling used in Public Health England's air pollution project, the total cost of PM2.5 and NO2 combined between 2017 and 2025 is estimated to be £1.6 billion and total health costs resulting from air pollution range between £8.5 billion and £20.2 billion a year. It has already been calculated that the health benefits of increased walking and cycling could save the NHS £17 billion over the period 2012 - 2031.⁵

The case for Active Travel Investment

Pound for pound, investing in active travel makes sense. By planning housing developments to encourage active travel, we not only create a greener, healthier society but generate revenue for the exchequer.

Physical inactivity is associated with 1 in 6 deaths in the UK and is estimated to cost the UK £7.4 billion annually.⁶ Shifting investment from cars to more sustainable modes of transport delivers a high return on investment, the Department of Transport estimates this to be at least £4.5 for every £1 invested.⁷

Further information:

Provide name, email, phone number.

¹ Living Streets, Pedestrian Pound, p.23.

² National travel survey table NTS308

³ [INRIX Global Traffic Scorecard: Congestion cost UK economy £6.9 billion in 2019 - INRIX](#)

⁴ Living Streets, Pedestrian Pound.

⁵ [Health Matters: Air pollution – sources, impacts and actions - Public health matters \(blog.gov.uk\)](#)

⁶ [Public Health England](#), 2022.

⁷ Department for Transport, Investing in Cycling and Walking, <
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/877511/cycling-and-walking-business-case-summary.pdf>.