

Health Streets Summary

MHA+ Lunch & Learn
17th September 2026

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Purpose of this Session

Brief Summary of the Healthy Streets Approach
and how it is relevant to Local Authorities

- **What is the Healthy Streets Approach**
 - Origins / Health / Decision makers
- **The 10 Healthy Street Indications**
- **Language and Framing**
- **Policy Context - more relevant than ever**
- **Relevance to Local Authorities**
- **Further reading / Discussion**

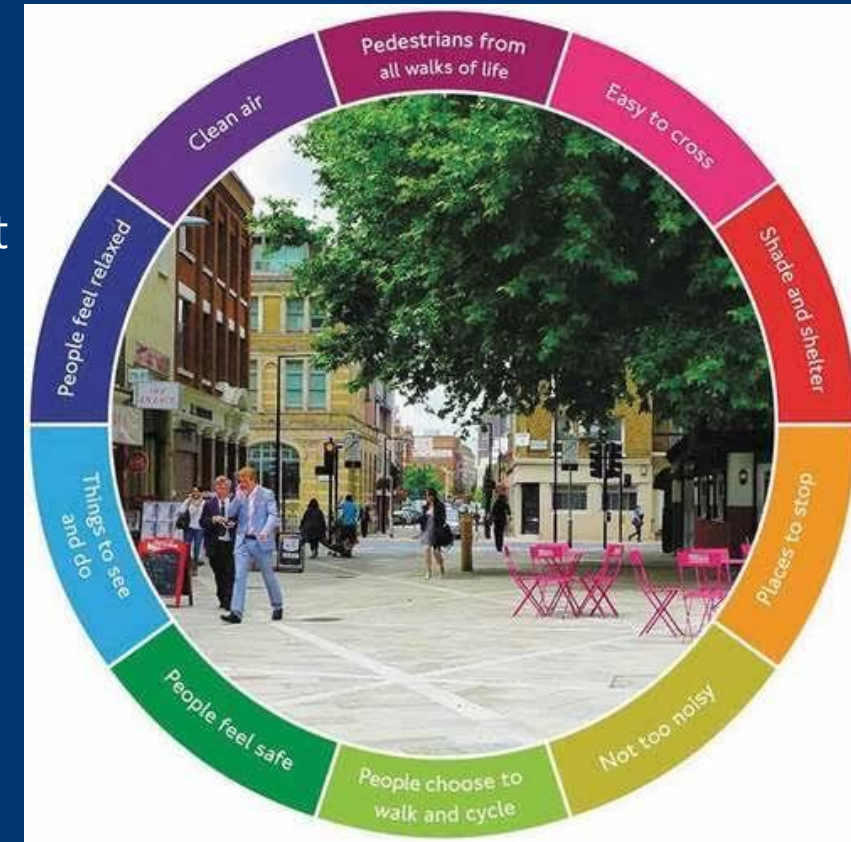
Brief Summary of the
Healthy Streets
Approach (20 mins)

Questions and
Discussion (20 mins)



What is the Health Streets Approach?

- Developed by Lucy Saunders and Transport for London (TfL) through the Health Action Plan in 2014
- Healthy Streets Approach is a people-centred framework that places health, wellbeing, and quality of life at the heart of transport and public realm planning.
- It focuses on creating streets that are attractive, inclusive, safe, and easy to use for everyone, regardless of age, ability, or mode of travel.
- The approach is underpinned by the 10 Healthy Streets Indicators, which measure how effectively streets support walking, wheeling, cycling, public transport, and healthier lifestyles.
- Rather than prioritising vehicle movement, Healthy Streets promotes a balanced approach that considers social, environmental, economic, and public health outcomes.



Confession...

- DMRB-Design Manual for Roads and Bridges
- Manual For Streets
- LTN 1/20
- PERS - Pedestrian Environment Review System
- VURT - Valuing Urban Realm Tool
- CLoS - Cycling Level of Service

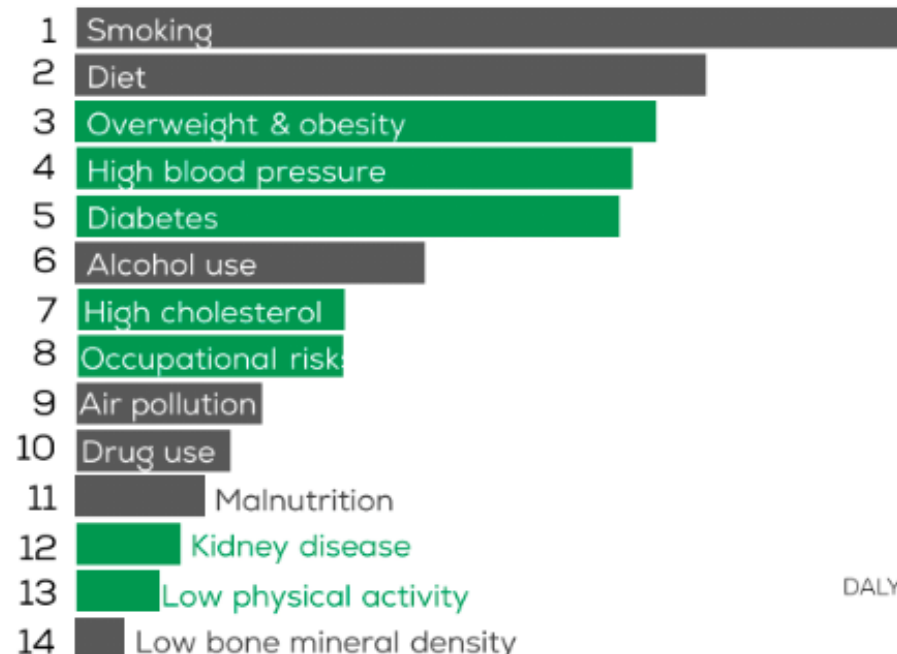


Origins - Public Health



- Developed by Health Professional rather than Engineers / Planners
- TfL Health Action Plan 2014
- Involved in introducing smoking ban in 2007
- Today, in urban areas around the world the main causes of illness and early death relate to how people live their everyday lives.
- Developed Healthy Streets approach as improving transport and public realm planning is the most effective and efficient way to improve public **physical / mental / social health.**

Top causes of illness and early death in the UK



The big public health challenges of the centuries

19th



20th



21st



The big public health challenges of the centuries

19th



Sanitation and running water

20th



Smoking

21st



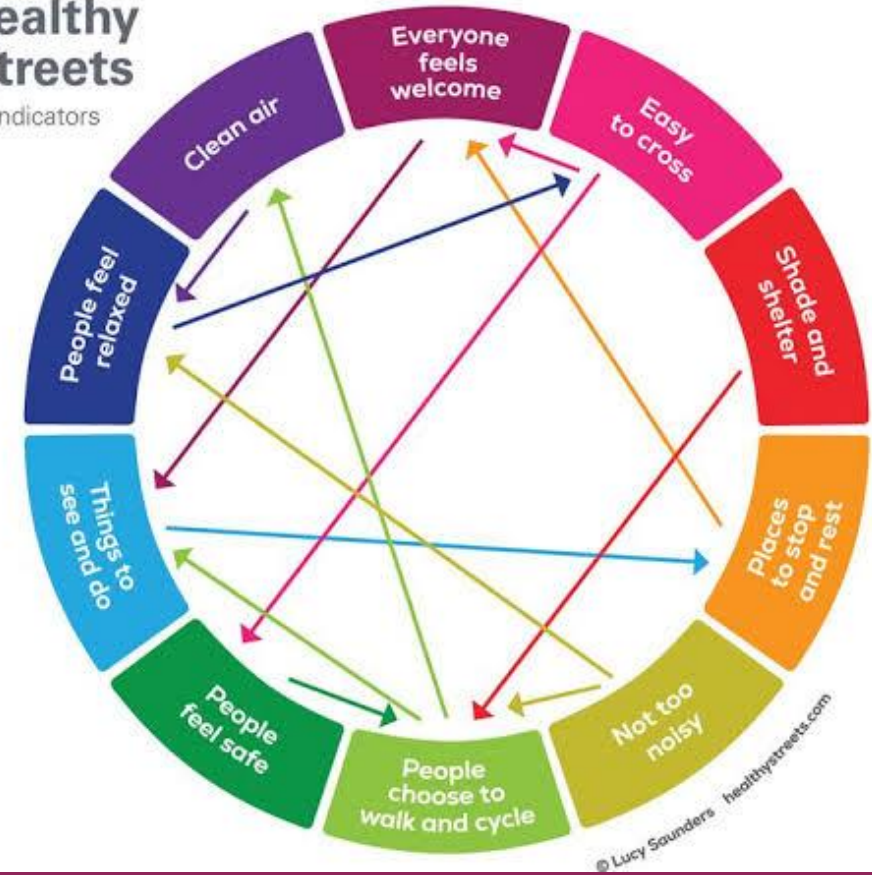
Sedentary lifestyle
Car dependency?



The 10 Health Streets Indicators

1. **Everyone feels welcome**
2. **People choose to walk, wheel and cycle**
3. **People feel safe**
4. **Easy to cross**
5. **Shade and shelter**
6. **Places to stop and rest**
7. **Not too noisy**
8. **People feel relaxed**
9. **Clean air**
10. **Things to see and do**

The 10
**Healthy
Streets**
Indicators



Language and Framing

- It is describing the human experience rather than the street itself and is therefore applicable to all street environments everywhere
- It uses a plain language that is shared by the breadth of people and organisations who have a stake in the design, management and use of street environments. This enables people to work together to identify opportunities for improvement and deliver them.
- It presents a positive vision for how the human experience of being on streets could be better. This encourages constructive collective action.
- It focuses on how the human experience of an environment can be improved i.e. a street will be a healthier environment to live in, rather than proposing how humans should live differently.
- People engage with messages that offer to give them something positive rather than take something from them (even if they know it is for their own benefit).
- It has the breadth to encompass all measures that contribute to improving the human experience of being on streets – not just technical or engineering measures.

People-centred

Non-technical

Positive

Improvements

All solutions –
psychological



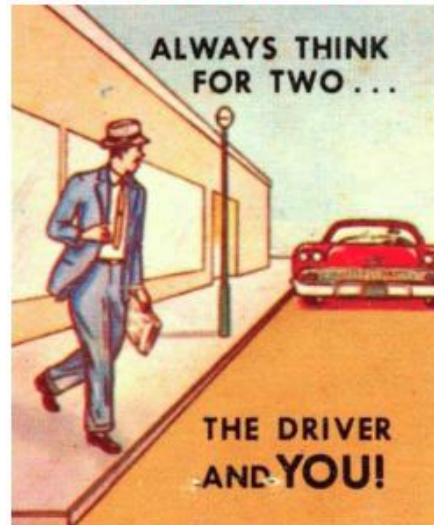
They hear “We want you to do more of this”



They want to hear “We will give you more opportunity to do this”

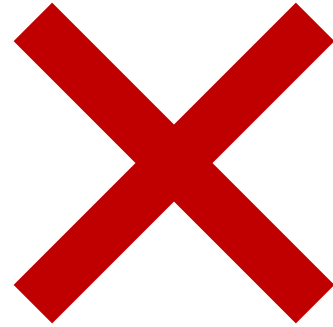


Language can reinforce the 'Cars first' framing mechanism



What not to say....

- Cyclist
- Pedestrian
- Segregated
- Mode
- Infrastructure
- Accident
-



Mayoral quote for Old Street roundabout

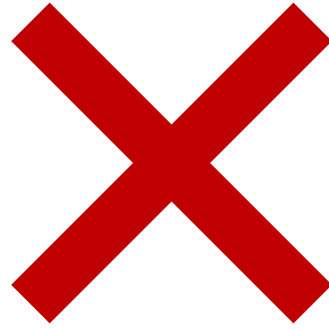


"New segregated cycle lanes will transform safety for cyclists, and new pedestrian crossings and a new public space will make Old Street cleaner, safer and more pleasant for everyone spending time in the area."

"Every death or serious injury on London's roads is one too many, and the improvements at Old Street are part of our ambitious plans to improve road safety all across London."

What not to say....

- Cyclist
- Pedestrian
- Segregated
- Mode
- Infrastructure
- Accident
- Green
Sustainable etc



Mayoral quote for Old Street roundabout



"New **segregated cycle lanes** will transform safety for **cyclists**, and new **pedestrian** crossings and a new public space will make Old Street cleaner, safer and more pleasant for everyone spending time in the area.

"Every death or serious injury on London's roads is one too many, and the improvements at Old Street are part of our ambitious plans to improve road safety all across London."

People don't like feeling they are being told to do something effortful



Communication and framing?

What message about health & transport resonates most with councillors and decision maker or the general public?

- Non-technical language
 - Easy to digest
 - Strong messaging
 - Appeals to their emotional response?
- Don't tell people what to do
 - Strong narrative
 - In-touch with people's priorities
 - Offer benefits



Health and transport intrinsically linked

'People feel scared about walking': the cost of car culture in Birmingham

After pedestrian deaths and assaults on traffic wardens, a city designed for motorists is fighting for change



57 lives were lost on our roads in 2022, and around 950 people suffer from serious, sometimes life-changing injuries each year.

Midlands borough among UK's 'unhealthiest places' where 7 in 10 are 'too fat'



A third of adults in WMCA are inactive, doing less than



30min
per week of activity

The cost of physical inactivity to the region economy is

£147m

The Government recommends

150min

per week of moderate intense physical activity for a health-related benefit

Percentage of trips and distance travelled for short journeys by main modes

		Walk	Cycle	Car	Public transport	Other
Trips	Less than 1 mile	80%	1.1%	18%	0.7%	0.6%
	1 to 2 miles	31%	2.8%	60%	5.3%	1.9%
Distance travelled	Less than 1 mile	76%	1.2%	21%	1.0%	0.6%
	1 to 2 miles	31%	2.9%	59%	5.4%	1.9%





Healthy Streets Imagery Guide



[Tools & Resources — Healthy Streets](#)

Policy Context – More relevant than ever



Chris Whitty

- Routine Exercise designed into our cities as Prevention: the most effective way to improve holistic health
- Preventing Long-Term Sickness
- Protecting the Workforce: substantial knock-on effect productivity and economy.
- Embedding Exercise: building physical activity into people's normal, daily routines rather than treating exercise as an isolated, optional activity



Heidi Alexander

- Social Cohesion: Streets designed for active travel foster interaction and a sense of pride in local neighbourhoods.
- High Street Revitalization: Pedestrians and cyclists shop more locally and frequently, creating resilient and economically vibrant neighbourhood centres.

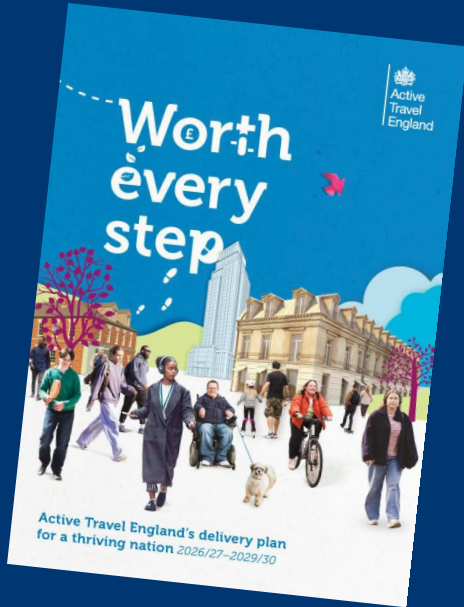


Chris Boardman

- Imagine if a single intervention could deliver huge benefits:
 - Free up 1.7 million GP appointments
 - Cut 4.4 million sick days annually
 - Prevent 2,500 premature deaths
 - Boost the economy by £115 billion
- ...This single intervention is getting more people walking and cycling



Policy Context – More relevant than ever



- Walking, wheeling and cycling deliver benefits across every aspect of life - improving physical and mental health, boosting economic growth, cleaning up our air, and giving people of all ages real, affordable transport choice to cut the cost of living.
- That's why we are setting a vision that walking, wheeling and cycling is a safe, easy and accessible option for everyone and that **by 2035, 55% of all trips in towns and cities will be walked or cycled.**



- High return on investment: £5.62 return for every £1 invested.
- Healthcare Savings: the potential to save £780m in mental health care and £540m in GP visits.
- Wider Impacts: supporting prevention-focused healthcare that improves wellbeing, whilst contributing to economic and environmental goals.



Discussion

- Have you noticed a shift in local politics
- Emphasis of priorities
- What resonates with Councillors?
- Language
- Economic growth
-



Tools and Resources - Further Reading



TOOLS & RESOURCES

A range of free tools for measuring the Healthy Streets Indicators

[Find the right tool for you](#)

[On-Street Assessment](#)

[Design Check](#)

[New Development Check](#)

[Qualitative Street Assessment](#)

[Evaluation Framework](#)

[Healthy Streets Index Maps](#)

[Healthy Streets Diagram](#)

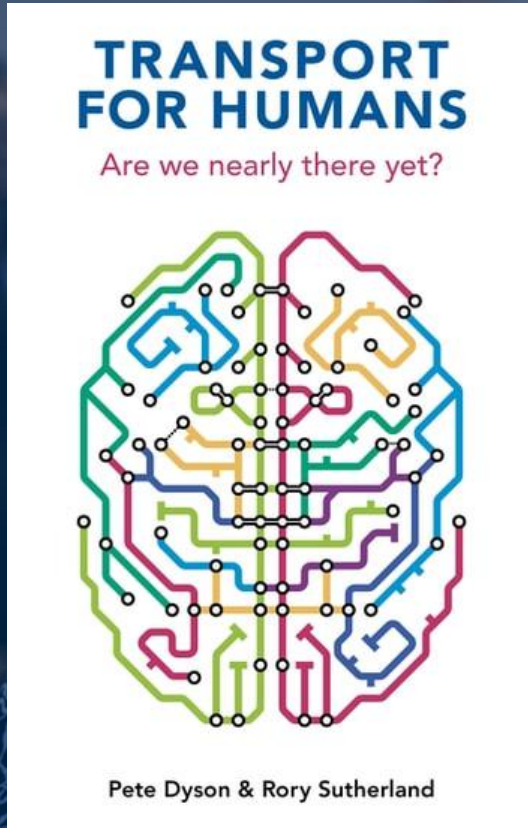
[Healthy Streets Imagery Guidance](#)

Training Courses

- Fundamentals Short Course
- Practitioner Course
- Designer Course



Further reading



Rory Sutherland



Pete Dyson

Thank you



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Who's going to ATE Making Active Places?



Making Active Places – 22 and 23 September 2026

Join us at Aviva Studios, home of Factory International, in Manchester.