

Care For your Area

Ideas for Action

Safer Streets

Traffic on roads can create all kinds of problems for the people who live on and near them.

The speed and amount of traffic means it is not safe for children to play outside their homes, so for families living in houses with no gardens or nearby parks it makes it harder for children to play and socialise with their friends

- Busy roads mean that it is hard to get across them easily, so children are not allowed to go to the park the other side of the road, and people take chances trying to dodge between fast moving constant streams of traffic.
- Busy roads split up communities and discourage people from talking to others on their street – its very noisy and unpleasant
- The level of pollution is higher nearer to main roads, many of the emissions from cars and lorries are bad for peoples health – here are some examples; nitrogen dioxide makes asthma worse, sulphur dioxide can lead to chronic bronchitis, carbon monoxide affects concentration and damages foetuses, ground level ozone is responsible for causing asthma
- 24 hours opening of supermarkets increases the number of cars and lorries on the streets around the stores throughout the night which affects peoples sleep
- Speeding traffic in residential areas leads to more people, particularly children being killed or badly injured
- Rat runs created by drivers to avoid roadwork's can suddenly make streets unsafe because people are not expecting many cars or lorries.

Examples of actions that can be taken

Home Zones

A home zone is a street or group of streets where pedestrians, cyclists and vehicles share the space on equal terms, with cars travelling at little more than walking pace, thereby creating streets through which people can move without fear of speeding traffic.

Home zones subvert the traditional distinction between carriageway and footway. They see the street as a valuable part of the local community's living space, although they are often promoted as 'traffic management' projects. home zones require a significant programme of amount of community involvement and participation.

UK home zones have been inspired by Dutch woonerf [translates as 'living yard']. Typically, a woonerf combines shared surfaces, trees, planters and parked cars along with seating, artwork and / or children's play areas to create a street-space so unlike a traditional street that vehicle speeds are significantly reduced by the instinctive, behavioural change in drivers. With vehicles travelling at low speeds, all users are able to establish eye contact and negotiate with one another. Home zones are based on the design principles of safety through uncertainty, whereby an absence of priority along with short driver sight-lines, social activity and a lack of clarity regarding vehicle routes, significantly reduce vehicle speeds. The same principles can be successfully applied to shopping areas and public squares and spaces as well as residential areas.

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Case Study

Dings Residents

The residents in Ding asked Sustrans for support to develop their own home zone, one in which they would be in charge of the decision making process. This required the residents to learn new skills and gain some technical knowledge. The Dings residents have found ways to make sure that all parts of the community have been involved in the design and development of the home zone. The police, fire brigade, local traders, community groups, local school, Barratt Homes who are building the neighbouring residential development and others have all played a part. Local residents have played a key role in all decision making from the overall design of the streets right down to detailed decisions on the choice of road surface, planting and artwork. Since the project began residents have formed the Dings Residents Association, an Arts group and a number of residents have led community gardening days.

A website at www.homezones.org.uk aims to provide a one-stop-shop for advice on Home Zones and to showcase new build and 'retrofitting' of Home Zones. Home Zones: Challenging the Future of Our Streets can be downloaded at www.dft.gov.uk from the department of transport web site