

Going outside

Ensuring that all our pavements are safe, accessible and welcoming for everyone

Streets are the first public space people encounter. They are the first space children become familiar with outside of their homes. It is essential they are designed to welcome everyone, into their local neighbourhood and wider community.



Objective 1: Providing a safe and accessible pedestrian environment

Streets for People commits us to providing quality public space that is accessible for all people. Too often, however, our streets are a barrier to movement, isolating people in their homes or encouraging them into cars if they want to get around.

To deliver on our commitment to create Streets for Communities, we need them to be places where everyone feels safe and comfortable. People in Southwark told us that cluttered, narrow, dirty, badly-lit and uneven pavements and paths discourage them from walking more⁵. Badly-designed pedestrian spaces make people feel unwelcome and unsafe. We need to redesign these spaces so people feel protected from collisions, crime and harassment.

We are committed to Vision Zero, and ensuring no-one is killed or seriously injured on our streets. Pedestrians are the most vulnerable road users, and

street design needs to protect them from dangerous and illegal behaviour by others. Streets should be a space for pedestrians first, where other visitors, especially motor vehicles, are guests.

The width of many pavements does not give enough space for all pavement users, including wheelchair users, people pushing prams or carrying shopping and making deliveries.

Signal-controlled crossings force pedestrians to wait, slowing down their journey; crossings with multiple phases are slower and less accessible and can leave pedestrians feeling vulnerable in the middle of a busy road. The Highway Code says that motor vehicles and cyclists on main roads should give way to pedestrians who have started crossing side roads. This is not reflected in the design of most junctions and often not respected by drivers. Redesigning our streets around pedestrian safety and comfort is key to addressing these issues. By reducing the space given to motor vehicles, we can ensure our streets are accessible to all pedestrians. By reducing vehicle speeds and dangerous conflicts with pedestrians, we reduce the risk of collision and injury, making our streets a safer environment.

Southwark is a signatory of the **Equal Pavements Pledge**, committing us to working with disabled groups and delivering a public realm that is accessible to everyone, regardless of their mobility needs.

Equal Pavements Pledge

The Equal Pavements Pledge (see Appendix) commits us to do the following to make sure our pavements are accessible for disabled people:

- Listen, and act
- Keep it clear
- Cut the clutter
- Mind the trash
- Drop the kerbs
- Protect Blue Badge Bays
- Work with disabled experts

Source: *Transport for All*



What we will do:

- 1.1 Engage with local people and residents groups**, especially those representing traditionally excluded groups, to help design our streets.
- 1.2** In Streets for People, **we committed to delivering pedestrian paths of at least 2.4 metres wide**, wherever possible. This increases to four metres or in more in busy places. This width will be kept free from obstruction, such as street furniture, trees and new crossovers.
- 1.3** When we add things to the street, such as cycle parking, electric vehicle chargers or new planting, **we will not make pavements narrower** and will install them on the carriageway instead.
- 1.4** Ensure that **new pedestrian paths are as flat as possible and easy to use**, free from trip hazards such as loose paving and tree roots.
- 1.5 Ensure good drainage** to prevent standing water.
- 1.6** Design pedestrian infrastructure to be **usable in all weather and seasons**.
- 1.7 Use tactile surfaces and other guides** to make our streets as easy to navigate as possible for blind and partially-sighted people.
- 1.8 Not allow staggered barriers to be installed on paths on the highway**; these reduce access for people in wheelchairs and mobility scooters, or pushing prams.
- 1.9** Deliver safer facilities for all cyclists with our Cycling Plan. This will help **reduce cycling on the pavement**.
- 1.10 Design crossings and junctions to meet the needs of pedestrians.** Crossings will be located along desire lines: where people want to cross. They will be designed to prevent parking nearby, giving clear sightlines and allowing people to cross safely. Crossings at junctions will be designed to encourage drivers to give way.
- 1.11 Allocate space for motor vehicle parking where it is safe to do so.** We will use street design and traffic enforcement to prevent parking near junctions, as this makes crossing unsafe, and in front of dropped kerbs, which are essential for accessibility.
- 1.12 Design roads to encourage drivers to move at safe speeds.** Protecting pedestrians from traffic collisions is one of the most important things we can do to improve safety. Reducing speeds will reduce the chance of collisions and of serious injuries.
- 1.13 Whenever someone is killed or seriously injured on our streets, we will make sure we understand what happened** so we can keep making our streets safer.
- 1.14** Only **use signal-controlled crossings where they are necessary**, such as where there are high volumes of motor traffic. Crossings will allow pedestrians to cross the road completely, and not to wait halfway.

1.15 Update the Southwark Streetscape Design Manual to reflect these commitments. This will ensure they are delivered as part of all development in the borough, not just projects led by the council.

1.16 Use street lighting effectively to make sure people feel safer going out at night, while limiting the harmful effects of light pollution on humans and animals.

1.17 Make sure waste is collected on time and streets are cleaned frequently so rubbish doesn't block footways.

1.18 Support businesses to keep pavements clear and use our enforcement and licensing powers to ensure this if necessary.

1.19 Factor in utilities access when designing pedestrian spaces, so works don't block all of the pavement. Make sure that pedestrian spaces are restored to the highest quality after highways and utility works.

1.20 Continue to respond to at least 95% of maintenance call-outs on time and ensure at least 93% of our pavements are maintained in good order at any one time.

