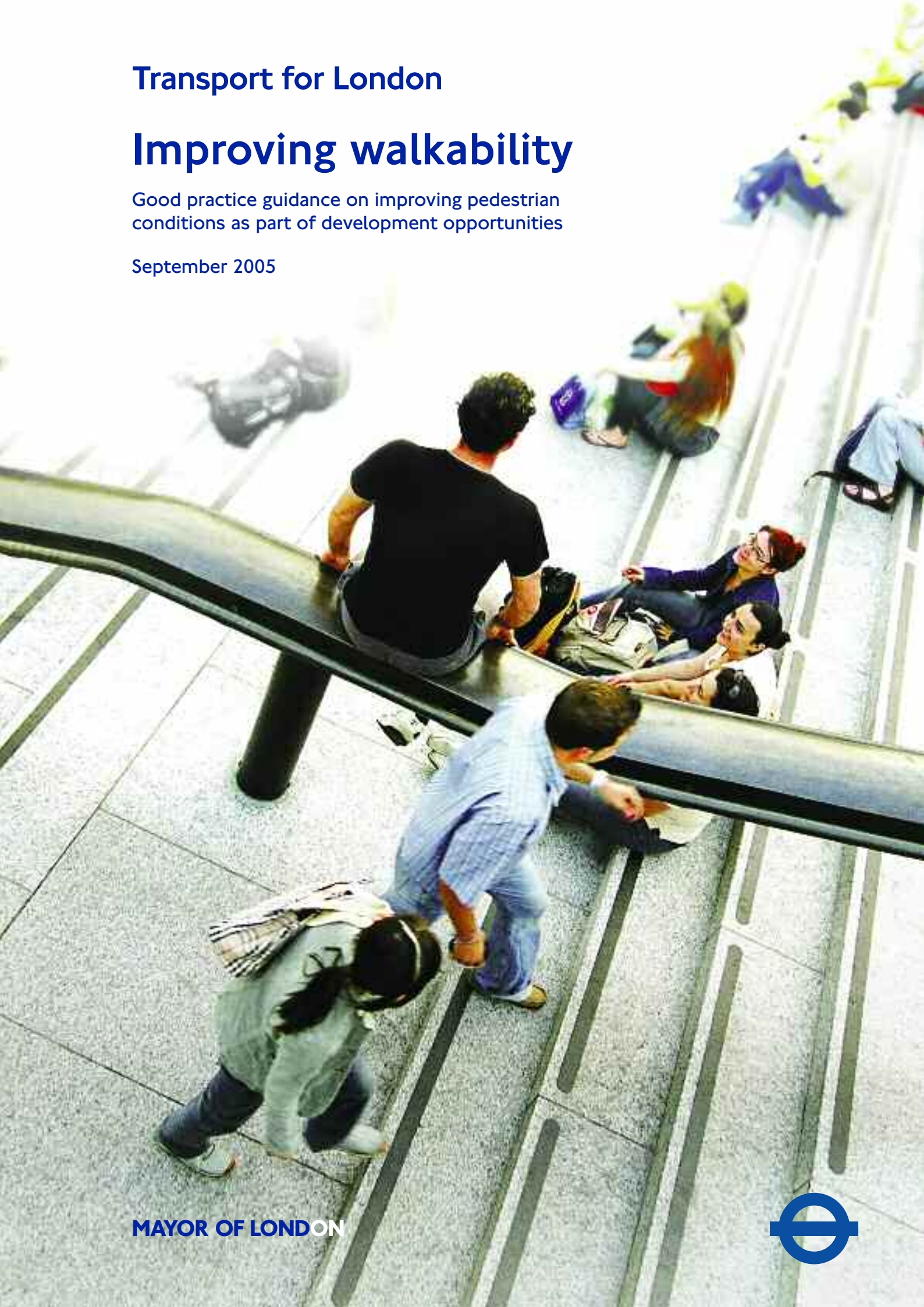


Transport for London

Improving walkability

Good practice guidance on improving pedestrian conditions as part of development opportunities

September 2005



Contents

	Page
Who should use this guide?	4
What is the guide for?	4
1.0 The planning context for this guide	6
2.0 Why this guide is important	8
3.0 Strategy	10
4.0 Policy	16
5.0 Implementation	26
6.0 Conclusions	42
7.0 References	44
8.0 Contacts and addresses	46
9.0 Acknowledgements	48

Who should use this guide?

This guide is aimed at local authority officers, elected members, developers and their agents

It is intended for those involved in formulating planning policies, considering future improvements to a site or area, and assessing development proposals. It should also be used by developers when preparing planning applications.

What is the guide for?

New developments bring opportunities for improvements

The Walking Plan for London (Objective 4.2) stated that guidance would be produced for local authorities in London on how to secure improved walking conditions through the planning system.

This guide highlights the importance of securing high quality improvements to the walking environment, including all streets and spaces that are used by the public, and shows how new developments provide opportunities to achieve such improvements.

It is a good practice guide to improving what may be termed the 'walkability' of the streets, squares and spaces that make up the public realm. Walkability is a measure of the extent to which the public realm provides for movement and other activity on foot in ways that are both efficient and enjoyable.

The 'walkability' of a place can be characterised by the '5Cs', which is that walking networks and facilities should be **Connected, Convivial, Conspicuous, Comfortable and Convenient** (see panel, page 21). These principles can assist with assessing and negotiating proposals through the Development Control process, especially if they form part of adopted plans and policies. Developers can also make use of these principles in drawing up development proposals and related access arrangements.

Constrained footway resolved with new development (Wandsworth). Small scale improvements can be as valuable as improvements made through larger schemes, such as those identified later in this guidance document.

Before



After



1.0

The planning context for this guide

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 is aimed at creating a planning system that is more proactive and less reactive. Decisions should be driven by pre-defined and adopted strategies, plans and policies to achieve better outcomes. This guide will assist with this 'front loaded' approach to the promotion of better walking conditions.

Planning documents in London now give prominence to the encouragement of walking. This guide is intended to help ensure that policy is matched by practice. It is intended to supplement other plans and strategies.

The guide suggests how local authorities can maximise funding for improvements to the walking environment, especially through developer contributions.

'DETR Encouraging Walking', 2000, "Land use planning is the most important long term solution to our transport needs. We need to change the way that we plan, with greater emphasis on enabling access by walking..."

'Walking in Towns and Cities', Eleventh Report of the Environment, Transport and Regional Affairs Committee, May 2001, Recommended the preparation by all local authorities of a local walking strategy, including planning mechanisms as a key part of implementation.

London Planning Documents

- The Walking Plan for London (TfL 2004, Objective 4), says that the needs of pedestrians should be fully considered in all public and private development proposals and that designs should maximise pedestrian access and convenience and minimise crime risks.
- The Mayor of London's Transport Strategy, TfL, 2001, says that TfL will work with the London Boroughs and others to make London one of the most walking friendly cities for pedestrians by 2015.
- The London Plan (Policy 3C.20) sets out criteria which Development Plan policies should follow for improving conditions for walking.



2.0

Why this guide is important

The value of walking improvements

Walking should be encouraged because it is the most efficient and the only fully sustainable mode of travel. Yet walking as a mode of travel has been declining in London. The Walking Plan for London seeks to reverse this trend. Improved walking conditions can:

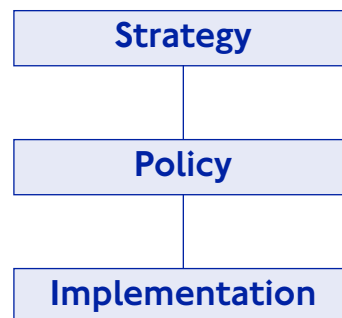
- Increase the proportion of travel made on foot
- Enable greater use of public transport
- Improve personal health
- Help those who have least travel choices
- Benefit the environment
- Encourage trade and competitiveness
- Increase land and property values

From a **transport viewpoint**, increased walking can mean less use of cars and congested public transport services.

Many journeys by car are short and could transfer to walking. Also, by making walking a more pleasant activity, people can be encouraged to walk to a nearer destination rather than drive to a more distant one. If people walk rather than use public transport modes this can reduce the need for costly public transport upgrades.

From a **commercial viewpoint**, good walking conditions can benefit trade and competitiveness. A good walking environment will attract customers and investors and ultimately this will be reflected in land and property values and rents. Developers therefore have a direct financial interest in quality public realm.

Having set out the need for planning action to improve walking conditions the remainder of this guide sets out how this can be done most effectively. It is structured into three sections:



The term 'walking improvements' should be taken to mean the full range of improvements to life in public spaces:

- Walking from A to B (whether as the sole method of travel, or as part of a journey involving public transport or car);
- Circulation and social exchange, involving a range of activities on foot including window shopping, meeting people;
- Recreation and enjoyment of outdoor space, including walking for pleasure, dog walking, and local activities such as children playing in the street, or people sitting at pavement cafes.

Good walking conditions are good for business, see:

'Quality Streets', Central London Partnership/ TfL 2003;

'The Value of Urban Design', CABE/ DETR 2001;

'The Benefits of Town Centre and Public Realm Schemes', TfL Street Management, 2002.

Key points

- Walking brings many individual and community benefits
- Good quality provision encourages walking and adds value to developments
- The planning system has a major role to play in identifying and delivering improved walking conditions.



3.0

Strategy

The need for Borough and local area walking strategies

The Walking Plan for London sets a context whereby local authorities are encouraged to produce local walking strategies.

Planning decisions are most effective when underpinned by robust and clear strategies that are based on the characteristics and priorities of individual Boroughs. Improvements to the walking environment can in this way be brought to the forefront of Borough planning priorities.

At the Borough level, the strategy for improving walking conditions and for enhancing the quality of the public realm should inform or form part of the Local Development Framework which includes:

- Development Plan Documents (DPD's) including Core Strategies and Area Action Plans (AAP's);
- Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD's).

It will be helpful if the walking strategy is reflected in other documents such as:

- Local Implementation Plans for transport (LIPS);
- Community Plans;
- Economic Development Plans.

Examples of strategic policy:

1. L. B. Wandsworth Unitary Development Plan 'New development will only be permitted when:
 - a) It is physically integrated with its surroundings; and
 - b) It provides safe and convenient access for cyclists and pedestrians, within the development and to the surrounding area'
2. TfL Londonwide targets for walking:
 - a) Short term – stop the decline in walking journeys
 - b) Long term 2015 – Increase mode share of walking for trips under 2 miles by 10%; Increase the level of walkability, both perceived and measured; To increase the average number of trips made on foot per person per year by 10%



For the purpose of securing improvements through the planning system the ultimate requirement is that the strategy for improved walking conditions should provide material considerations in the determination of planning applications.

New Borough strategy documents could provide extra encouragement if they address distinctive characteristics of the area concerned. These might include, for example:

- Provision required because of high numbers of tourists and visitors e.g. signs;
- Mitigation of community severance problems created by major roads e.g. crossings;
- New routes to open up areas for development and regeneration;
- Exploiting the recreation and leisure potential of attractive routes;
- Overcoming problems of anti-social behaviour or crime in public places e.g. ensuring new buildings have active frontage at footway level.

The strategy might also include objectives and targets such as:

- Stopping the decline in the number of walking journeys per person;
- Increasing the proportion of trips made on foot;
- Completing a particular route or network;
- Setting targets related to specific types of walking, such as for the journey to school as part of Travel Plan targets, or for access to town centres.

Who writes the planning components of the Walking Strategy?

- Led by Planning officers
- Cross-working with other departments
- Member-level commitment

Who can help in producing / revising a walking strategy?

- Other Council departments
- Transport for London
- Living Streets
- Local stakeholders
- Adjacent authorities



The strategy can indicate how walking conditions and priorities can be balanced with other competing demands in the planning and management of the Borough street network. The Mayor's Transport Strategy (Policy 4G.2) states that on the Transport for London Road Network (TLRN) and most other 'A' Roads there is a general presumption in favour of distribution, while on other London roads there is a presumption in favour of access and amenity.

Streets in the Borough network can be categorised reflecting the degree of priority to be accorded to movement on foot as opposed to vehicular movement although simple street hierarchies may not be adequate to address the variations in function and character that occur. For example there are often sections of streets with important distribution functions where walking is also an intensive activity. This reflects the Traffic Management Act (2004) which recognises the need to strike a balance between all road users requirements. At such locations, often comprising local retail or neighbourhood centres, special attention should be paid to providing extra priority for walking activity.

Having identified the locations where walking and especially street crossing requires priority, street design standards can be specified. These standards then inform works that are required in support of new development that are appropriate to the specific locations, position and function within the wider network.

Action points

– strategy and development plans

1. Help deliver the TfL London walking strategy at the Borough level, highlighting local characteristics and requirements;
2. Define or refine objectives for walking and the public realm;
3. Identify improvements required: footway improvements, network enhancements (including linkages to other modes), public spaces, recreational walks etc;
4. Consider separate strategies for key areas or routes, e.g. routes to key attractors such as public buildings and public transport interchanges;
5. Work in partnership with stakeholders to develop the walking strategy;
6. Ensure the walking strategy informs the Local Development Framework, including associated planning documents;
7. Set out ways in which walking conditions are to be improved through the planning system and identify funding mechanisms;
8. Make Walking Strategy available on the Internet.

Complete re-grading of a 100 metre stretch of footway, removing footway gradients and kerbs, to create a level pedestrian environment (Islington).



4.0

Policy

Adopted and up-to-date policies and proposals bring successful outcomes

Borough policies for walking should be designed to meet the strategic objectives and will need to be sufficiently specific to guide developers in preparing development schemes.

The need to be proactive

The new Local Development Framework system of plan-making is aimed at a planning system that is more policy-led and less reactive. Strategic and local policies designed to secure better walking conditions will enable a more proactive approach to Development Control. Getting the policies right is therefore crucial to the achievement of quality outcomes. The policies should be aimed at helping developers and applicants to draw up schemes that maximise the benefits for walking, as well as providing firm grounds for negotiating design improvements on-site, and S.106 contributions towards off-site improvements. If schemes and improvements are identified in advance then there is a greater chance of them being implemented when opportunities arise through development proposals (see opposite page).

Charter Quay, Royal Borough of Kingston

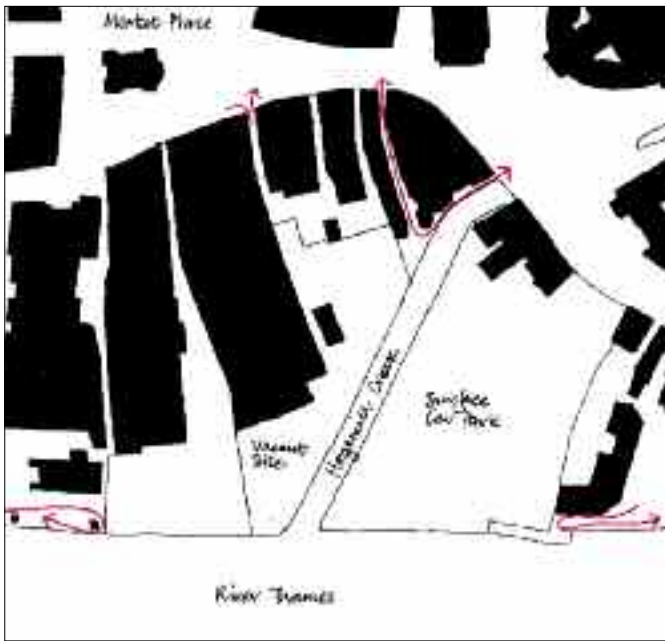
Description of improvements

Improvements, as part of mixed-use residential scheme, reconfigured this previously impermeable area that turned its back on the riverside. The riverside walk was completed and new links and spaces were created between the town centre and riverfront (see opposite page).

Lessons

- Proactive policy approach to pedestrian improvements setting minimum requirements and outlining additional expectations.
- Successful use of policy framework to defend rights of public access.
- Consultative approach allowing incorporation of advice from stakeholders.
- Off-site pedestrian improvements secured to enhance link to town centre.
- Creation of leisure spaces, not just access routes.

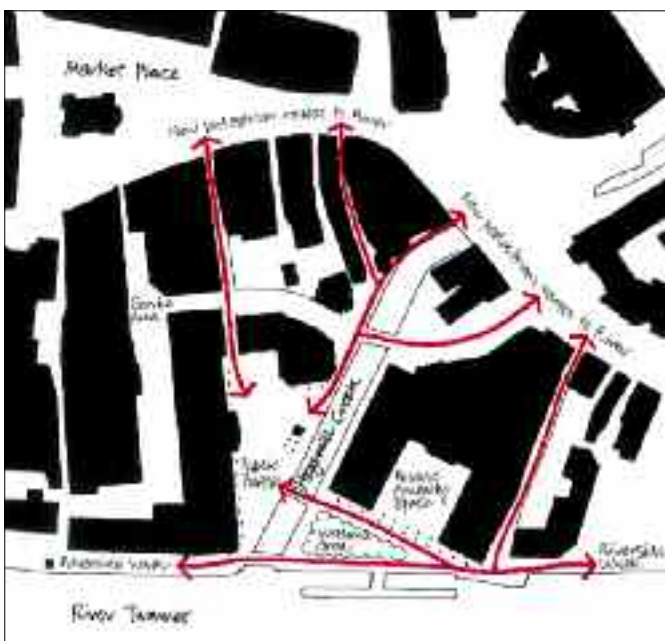
Before; no way through



More than a link – leisure space alongside creek



After; pedestrian permeability prioritised



Policy preparation

The policies will need to address a much wider agenda than that of highway and traffic departments. Joint working with adjacent authorities will be crucial over cross-boundary issues and schemes. Policies that have the support of stakeholders and the public will be generally much more effective (see Charter Quay).

Policy topic areas may include both process aspects and substantive policy aspects and examples are listed below.

Process

- A formula for establishing appropriate S.106 contributions for improvements to the walking environment. The formula may relate to a financial contribution per square metre of floor space (with possibly different levels of financial contributions for each type of land-use), contributions per number of bedrooms/houses (residential developments), or a pooling of contributions from various developments.
- Expectations for reinstatement of disturbed footways, through S.278 or other means;
- Mechanisms that will be used to assess the weight given to walking and use of public space in determining planning applications. Considerations should include:
 - Walking access to and from the site
 - Generation of walking activity by the development
 - Capacity and quality of the local network, and opportunities and requirements for improvement

- Inclusion of walking in the Transport Assessment (formerly Traffic Impact Assessment) for the development
- Inclusion of measures in the Travel Plan for the development to maximise walking to and from the site;
- Procedures for the carrying out, funding, monitoring, and enforcement of planning conditions relating to walking;
- Policy criteria for adoptable spaces and public rights of way;
- Mechanisms for ongoing maintenance of areas accessible to the public (see panel opposite: Albion Wharf).

Examples of Borough policies for walking

- A Borough map showing locations where improvements are sought (based on walking audits)
- Design standards covering footways, crossings, public spaces, access to public transport facilities, etc
- Construction and materials standards for reinstatement works whether or not these are required as part of a S.278 planning provision
- Area or route-based special policies such as 'green chain' or riverside walks

Albion Wharf, London Borough of Wandsworth

Description of improvements

Large riverside residential development incorporates new pedestrian links and public spaces. Use of materials, such as granite paving, provides quality finish.

Lessons

- Routes through the development, which have full public rights of way, are the maintenance responsibility of the developer/site owner.

New space linked to existing riverside walk



New pedestrian link under building



Substantive issues

- Design standards to ensure new developments are planned to maximise the quality of walking conditions, and permeability of developments;
- Avoiding the conversion of private gardens to hard standing and provision of new crossovers that compromise footway quality;
- Protecting footway space. Footway space should not be reduced as a result of new development. Increases should be considered when the opportunity arises. Plans can indicate where increased footway space is required or desirable (see panel on page 24: Hardwicks Way);
- Fixing missing links in the footway or footpath network (see panel on page 25: Imperial Wharf). Missing links that could be rectified when development provides the opportunity can be shown on a plan;
- Specifying routes or areas to which new developments should conform and contribute. Such policies need to be backed with plans showing scheme locations. Examples might be:
 - Creation of new public space (see panel on page 22: Duke of York's Square)
 - Creation of new avenues of trees or other landscape features (future maintenance must be borne in mind)
 - Conversion of streets as an aspect of speed management, e.g. Home Zones or 20 mph zones
 - Creation or improvement of leisure walking routes
 - The provision of pedestrian direction signing etc.
 - Reducing street clutter

- Locations on the road network where higher priority is required or can be given for walking and related activities. Examples of measures might be;
 - Footway widening or upgrading
 - Simplifying pedestrian movements, e.g. replacing staggered crossings
 - Removing guard railings
 - Provision of seating, better street lighting
 - Reducing obstruction by removing street clutter

Proposals map of intended improvements could show:

- New links required to fix gaps in the network;
- Locations that would benefit from new public space;
- Recreation paths, including links to adjacent Boroughs;

Such maps may form part of Supplementary Planning Documents, Area Action Plans, and masterplans for specific development and regeneration sites.

The '5Cs' of Good Walking Networks

1. Connected

Walking routes should connect each area with other areas and with key 'attractors' such as public transport stops, schools, work, and leisure destinations. Routes should connect at the local and district level, forming a comprehensive network.

2. Convivial

Walking routes and public spaces should be pleasant to use, allowing social interaction between people, including other road users. They should be safe and inviting, with diversity of activity and continuous interest at ground floor level.

3. Conspicuous

Routes should be clear and legible, if necessary with the help of signposting and waymarking. Street names and property numbers should be comprehensively provided.

4. Comfortable

Walking should be enjoyed through high quality pavement surfaces, attractive landscape design and architecture, and as much freedom as possible from the noise and fumes and harassment arising from proximity to motor traffic. Opportunities for rest and shelter should be provided.

5. Convenient

Routes should be direct, and designed for the convenience of those on foot, not those in vehicles. This should apply to all users, including those whose mobility is impaired. Road crossing opportunities should be provided as of right, located in relation to desire lines.



Location-specific policies will benefit from an audit of the quality of walking networks and facilities in the Borough. Even without a comprehensive audit the '5Cs' (as first mooted in the LPAC Walking Strategy for London) can be used to judge the quality of provision in the vicinity of development sites. Further guidance on walking audits is available from the organisation 'Living Streets'. TfL has worked with the TRL Ltd to develop the Pedestrian Environment Review System (PERS) that acts as an audit framework to assess the quality of the pedestrian environment and the level of service offered to those on foot (further details on TRL website: www.TRL.co.uk).

The '5Cs' are the principal criteria against which the quality of provision for walking can be assessed but they provide only a broad guide and Boroughs may want to generate more specific criteria. Ways of quantifying each criterion could be devised, for example minimum footway widths in relation to pedestrian flows, or maximum lengths of 'dead' frontage to be allowed alongside walking routes. When set alongside such criteria proposals can be judged for their contribution towards walking conditions.

Action points - policy

1. Identify (through partnerships/ joint working) key walking policies which may be borough wide, or related to specific development sites or areas;
2. Audit the quality of walking routes and spaces, if necessary, involving local or London groups in this process;
3. Ensure network policies link into adjacent boroughs;
4. Specify the financial contributions required from developers, or define formulas or criteria for determining the level of contributions;
5. Provide a street design standard to improve standards of provision.

Duke of York's Square, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea

Description of improvements (see opposite)

- New public space
- New square designed especially for pedestrian use

Lessons

- Proactive policy approach to remedy identified open space deficiency.



Hardwicks Way, London Borough of Wandsworth

Description of improvements

Hardwicks Way is situated to the rear of congested Wandsworth High Street. The scheme has enabled the creation of a new pedestrian link to relieve the main street. A shared surface, pedestrian priority urban square is being constructed.

Lessons

- Maximising the quality margin for the pedestrian by prioritising pedestrian usage and the dimensions of the pedestrian environment.
- Creation of new pedestrian environment as alternative to traffic dominated High Street.



Imperial Wharf, London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham

Description of improvements

Large residential mixed-use scheme provided opportunity for continuation of riverside walk and creation of new public space.

Lessons

- Proactive policy approach to improvements to the riverside environment.
- Development phasing secured public realm improvements prior to completion of residential element of the scheme.

View from Imperial Wharf: enhanced riverside pedestrian and cycleway



New link to Chelsea Harbour under railway bridge



5.0

Implementation

Pro-active rather than reactive Development Control

Having established the strategy and policy framework for achieving improvements through the planning system, this section provides guidance on implementation, including examples and details of best practice.

Implementation - Development Control

It is important to 'get in early' - and to make clear from the start of the development process what improvements will be required and how this is expected to be achieved through:

- The design of new developments;
- S.106 contributions and requirements;
- Co-operation, consultation and partnership working with others affected.

It will be important to make clear to applicants the importance that the Borough attaches to the quality and quantity of access on foot. The benefits to the developer and subsequently to owners and occupiers also need to be explained. For larger developments it may be appropriate to involve local or London groups concerned with the walking environment.

Developers of larger schemes are required to submit Transport Assessments. These should include specific data and analyses to demonstrate how the scheme responds to the Borough's Walking Strategy (see panel opposite).

The quality of the walking environment around and within developments will in itself influence the amount of walking activity which in turn will inform the design of facilities and the financial contributions that it will be reasonable to seek.

A pro-active approach to Development Control means:

- 1) Informing the developer of requirements
- 2) Providing design guidance to developers (see page 36)
- 3) Attaching clear conditions to planning consents, and ensuring that developments conform with these
and for larger schemes;
- 4) Clarifying requirements at pre-application meetings
- 5) Negotiating the best possible outcomes during the application process

When required to submit a Transport Assessment, developers should be encouraged to include;

- Context maps showing walking access to and from the site
- Surveys or audits of the quality of provision for walking related to the site with priority given to routes from key attractors (e.g. public transport interchanges)
- The likely impact of the development on walking in the area
- Details of the measures proposed to maximise the quality of walking and public realm provision
- Measures to maximise the number and proportion of trips to the site that will be made on foot.



Section 106 contributions

For improvements to the walking environment external to the development site there will be reliance on Borough (or TfL) engineering departments for design and implementation.

Such improvements should also be subject to design scrutiny as part of the Development Control process, including use of a Borough design standard or checklist. It will be in the developer's interest to ensure that monies contributed actually lead to improvements and not to deterioration in the local environment.

For example:

- Developer contributions should normally be used to fund only those measures that are likely to improve pedestrian comfort and convenience. Measures such as provision of guard rails, and removal of zebra crossings should be avoided unless a feasible or practicable alternative cannot be found;
- Contributions relating to paving, hard and soft landscaping, and street lighting and furniture may require reciprocal agreement in terms of ongoing cleaning and maintenance (with developer come-back if the Borough fails to ensure proper maintenance).

St. Paul's Green, London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham

Description of improvements (see opposite)

- Creation of a green space refuge in area dominated by road infrastructure.
- Continuation of pedestrian and cycle access between the river, town centre and transport interchange.
- Improved context for listed St. Paul's church.

Lessons

- Consultative approach and cross-departmental working. Successful use of policy framework to secure public space.
- Pooled S.106 financial contributions from series of projects in vicinity of site.
- Identified need for additional public space within planning policies.

Improved setting for listed church



New pedestrian and cycle link to town centre and transport hub



Implementation - funding

Once specific improvements to walking conditions or the public realm have been identified the method of funding these improvements must be decided. This is best done at the outset of the development process, as part of the 'get in early approach' (see page 29: St. Paul's Green).

The principal use of the planning system in securing funding for such improvements is currently via S.106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, by way of planning obligations. S.106 is likely to be replaced with new clauses under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (PCA) 2004 or by provisions enabling the Secretary of State to make regulations enabling planning contributions to be made.

This change will provide developers with a choice of either negotiating an agreement/optional payment with the local authority, or making a planning contribution towards services and facilities (or a combination of both). Local authorities will be able to set out developments and uses for which they will seek contributions, and will be able to define the level of contribution required. This should be identified in the LDF process.

Circular 1/97 sets out tests for assessing whether planning obligations are appropriate, and it is likely that the key point will remain, namely the requirement that contributions should only be sought for items that are needed for the viability or acceptability of the development. The ODPM has consulted on a revised circular on planning obligations.

These planning obligations or contributions are likely to remain the principal method of funding improvements through the planning system. However, one of the difficulties faced by Local Authorities, confirmed with the research for this guide, is that commonly they have difficulty in securing improvements to the walking environment from development proposals. (see panel on opposite page).

Expectations of the likely contributions through S.106 agreements should be made clear from the outset, preferably at the pre-application stage. These will need to be calculated either to a standard formula, applicable to all developments, or to explicit criteria relating to individual developments. Such criteria should include:

- Measures to maximise the mode share of walking for access to and from the development, for example through the provision of a Travel Plan;
- Measures required off-site to mitigate negative impacts on walking caused by traffic and parking generated by the development;
- Measures off-site required to accommodate additional movement on foot;
- Measures off-site to improve the quality of the walking environment in the vicinity, to enhance the quality and value of the development itself;
- Measures being sought by the Council as part of an area or route improvement, where S.106 contributions are to be pooled to provide the necessary funding;
- Measures designed to address local issues and problems.

Difficulties may be overcome if the following are adhered to:

- Clear strategies and policies should be in place, as recommended in this guide;
- Requirements and aspirations for specific improvements in the area should be included in the Local Development Frameworks/ Documents and made available to developers;
- The level of financial contribution required, or formula or set of criteria for determining contributions, should be established within Local Development Documents;
- The importance of high quality walking conditions and public realm must be emphasised within the Council in order to ensure an adequate allocation of S.106 contributions for this purpose;
- The local authority can encourage developers to recognise the potential benefits of a high quality environment for land and property values and for trade and competitiveness;
- The local authority must engender faith in the system by being diligent in cleaning and maintaining all public realm works, including those where financial contributions have been received from developers or property owners.



Local authorities should have a choice of either a negotiated approach or tariff (formula) based approach. Formulas or tariffs should be clearly set out in policies, plans or strategies.

The relationship with contributions for other purposes must be made clear, including any guarantees that the monies raised for pedestrian improvement elements will not be used for other purposes.

Specific levels of contributions often cannot be determined in advance of a specific development proposal being formulated and submitted for approval. However, the likely type and scale of improvements being sought can be determined, especially if, as recommended, the Borough has pre-defined policies and plans (see opposite: Paddington Basin).

Where a number of developments are expected over a period of time, as in regeneration areas, it may be appropriate to create a 'pool' of contributions so that area-wide improvements can be made without the burden falling entirely on a single developer or the first developer (see panel opposite: Memorial Square). Care must be taken to ensure that the contributions are clearly related to the development. Pooling is likely to be more effective if:

- The amounts are equitably related to the scale of each development;
- The improvements are implemented promptly, if necessary in advance of all the contributions being received;
- The range of improvements is clearly identified;
- The benefits to developers and end users are promoted.

There may be other sources of funding that can be secured. An example in commercial areas is the creation of Business Improvement Districts (BIDS), which can offer improvements to the walking environment as part of the funded programme. Other ways of securing improvements must be recognised, for example as part of transport or highway schemes. Further opportunities for funding include parking revenue surpluses.

South Shoreditch draft Area Action Plan (L. B. Hackney, January 2005) proposed a pooling arrangement for S.106 contributions, backed by a 'project bank' that identified 14 specific public realm improvements to be funded.

Paddington Basin, City of Westminster

Description of improvements

- New and enhanced north-south links reduce severance created by major road.
- Provision of five new bridge links across the canal.
- Continuous access along the canal towpath.
- Improved access to, and within, the Paddington transport hub.

Lessons

- Proactive, partnership approach from the Council using the UDP/SPG policy framework to jointly produce public realm guidance.
- Co-ordinated maintenance and ownership. Developers maintain public access areas.
- Collaborative approach to off-site improvements.



Memorial Square, Royal Borough of Kingston

'Pedestrian zone ends': Memorial Square will be integrated into pedestrian zone using S.106 funds pooled from town centre developments



Implementation

– monitoring and enforcement

It is important that improvements through the planning system are implemented as set out in the planning consent. The developer is responsible for the scheme on-site, and the local authority will need to ensure that it is properly carried out in accordance with the specifications. This will include an inspection of works undertaken in areas that are to be adopted as public highway or footway. Enforcement action should be taken where works do not match the required standard or design specification.

For off-site improvements such as footway, highway and public space improvements funded by developers through S.106 agreements, the local authority will need to supervise and monitor the works for which it is itself responsible. This will usually mean the supervision of contractors. Developers will want to be assured that their contributions are being used effectively.

Implementation

- maintenance

Poor maintenance can be as much a contributor to poor quality environment as sub-standard design. Standards of street maintenance and cleanliness are inadequate in many parts of London. Although this is not directly a matter for the control of development, it is important to take maintenance issues into account when negotiating the design of streets and spaces.

The expense of good designs and high quality materials will be wasted unless full maintenance can be assured. This might militate against the use of non-standard surfaces, for example, for which there may be no ready access to replacement materials. Also the likelihood of subsequent street openings for utility repairs should be assessed. If possible, major street improvements should be accompanied by replacement of obsolescent sub-surface utility infrastructure, if necessary with costs apportioned appropriately to the utility companies.

Action points - implementation

1. Ensure developers are aware of the Walking Strategy and specific schemes affecting their development sites;
2. Make clear from the start what is expected from the development in terms of encouraging and providing for access on foot;
3. Make clear from the start what financial contributions will be sought for improvements to the walking environment off-site;
4. Identify any other funding opportunities that may enable improvement over a wider area;
5. Ensure developers include all of those provisions identified/relevant to their site within the planning application to be submitted;
6. Use the '5Cs' criteria as the basis for assessment of proposals, together with more specific design criteria;
7. Agree measures in terms of (a) mitigation, and (b) enhancement;
8. Ensure that planning consents include provision of all appropriate measures to maximise the role and quality of walking, including Travel Plans, design and layout requirements, and funding and other agreements;
9. Monitor and supervise works on and off site, and take enforcement action where standards fall short.

Improved disabled access and simple enhancement of the streetscape (Westminster).



Implementation

– design standards and checklists

Changing the way we plan for people on foot

Design checklist for planning applications

The Development Control function will be speedier and more effective if officers have a design checklist against which to assess development proposals.

The '5Cs' criteria provide a broad checklist, but to be fully effective they need to be elaborated and more specific design codes need to be adopted.

There has been a tendency over recent decades for streets to be designed and managed primarily in the interests of free-flow of motor traffic. Consideration of pedestrians and the walking environment has tended to focus almost exclusively on the question of road safety. Attempts to cut collisions and casualties have been pursued at the expense of environments that are convenient and pleasurable to use by people on foot. There have been some exceptions to this such as in the Strand (Westminster) and Kensington High Street (Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea).

When planning to bring better walking conditions on both the TfL and Borough road networks those responsible need to ensure that they do in fact lead to improvements for those on foot, not just mitigate deteriorating conditions.

When considering improvements that can be sought through the planning system, planning officers should be prepared to scrutinise proposed provisions, and if necessary seek technical advice from pedestrian planning specialists (see contacts list for advice).

Different officers and departments may not always share the same views, even within the same local authority. It is therefore important to open up dialogue on the difficult issues (see opposite page). Key issues might include;

- Assess design quality using the '5Cs', not just road safety audit;
- High quality street environments reflect many requirements;
- Appropriate scheme designs can be informed by Borough-wide strategic priorities (as suggested above);
- The allocation of space (and time, at signals) between traffic and pedestrians can be guided by such priorities;
- Interaction between vehicle and pedestrian traffic can be managed in different ways; e.g. 'speed management', 'soft separation' (i.e. use of lines and different coloured materials instead of kerbs and bollards, etc).

Planning officers will want to encourage innovative and inspired design solutions (see panel opposite: Battersea Wharf). The report 'Towards a fine City for People' (Gehl Architects, 2004), provides valuable insights into how things can be done better.

Battersea Wharf, London Borough of Wandsworth

Description of improvements

New residential mixed-use development, adjacent to Chelsea Bridge, provided opportunity to complete missing link in riverside walk.

Lessons

- Cross-departmental approach to securing benefit from the development.
- Use of design specification to guide pedestrian improvements.
- Innovative pedestrian design solution to ensure continuous access.
- Joint approach to maintenance and public access.

New link ensures continuous access along riverfront to Battersea Park

Innovative: cantilevered bridge provides pedestrian/cycle link at Chelsea Bridge



An example design checklist

Boroughs may want to develop design codes and checklists that are relevant to their own circumstances and priorities. An example checklist is given below.

Checklist

3

On-site arrangements

- Are the buildings arranged on site to minimise walking distance to and from the local network?
- Do all front doors face directly onto the street?
- Is all frontage to the street 'active frontage', e.g. overlooked by windows especially at ground floor level?
- Does the layout avoid 'dead' spaces that have no function and which can become the focus of unsocial behaviour including litter and graffiti?
- Are all entrances to the development compliant with disability design codes?
- In large developments, are there good quality arrangements for internal movement on foot?

Off-site provision

- Is the proposed development connected to all adjacent areas with footways and footpaths?
- Is the proposed development permeable to those on foot?
- Are there opportunities to create new connections?
- Are new footway vehicle crossovers proposed, if so can the additional inconvenience to pedestrians be justified?
- Will the development itself lead to an increase in walking activity?
- Are footways leading to the development (particularly those linking to public transport facilities) adequate in width for the volume of pedestrian and other activity?
If not, is widening proposed?

Off-site provision (continued)

- Is all existing footway space retained or enhanced?
- Is there scope for the provision of a 'quality margin' of extra space for walking and other public realm activity?
- What plans and proposals are there for improving walking conditions in the vicinity (Borough proposals) and if so does the scheme contribute towards their achievement?
- Are the spaces to be retained in private ownership clearly demarcated from those to be adopted by the Borough for maintenance?
- If re-instatement work is required following construction, have all opportunities been taken to build-in improvements?

1 Strategy

Local walking strategy

Working in partnership with stakeholders

2 Policy

LDF

1 Development Plan Documents (DPD's) including:

- Core Strategy
- Area Action Plans (AAP's)
- Site specific allocations
- Proposals map

2 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD's)

3 Working in partnerships/
Joint working/Workshops/
Stakeholder consultation
process in line with the
Statement of Community
Involvement (SCI's)

3 Implementation

A Pre-application meetings/discussions/consultations

B Application submission

C Deliverability

D Monitoring and management

1 Strategy

- Define objectives
- Identity improvements: Walking Improvements / Public Realm / Green Grid etc.
- Possibly identify funding mechanisms
- Stakeholders: other council departments, other London boroughs, TfL, Living Streets, GLA, developers, landowners, local residents etc. Working partnership with these stakeholders to develop the walking strategy

2 Policy

- 1** • Identify (through partnerships / joint working) key walking policies that maybe boroughwide, policies that relate to identified development sites.
 - Specify the levels of financial contributions required, or define formulas or a set of criteria for determining the level of contributions etc. towards the provision of walking improvements
- 2** • More detailed site or area specific proposals and policies identified (again via joint working/ consultation process)
 - Identify funding mechanisms (including formulas etc.)
 - Identify methods of implementation/deliverability
 - Develop Design Codes
 - Public Realm Strategies for sites/areas
 - Policies or strategies for specific routes

3 Implementation

- A** • Inform developers of the Walking Strategy, policy, objectives, site specific improvements, funding objectives and delivery mechanism identified (and hopefully adopted) in 1 and 2 above.
 - Ensure developers include all of those provisions identified/ relevant to their site within the planning application to be submitted
 - Therefore agree relevant contributions/provisions/obligations/delivery mechanisms as (a) mitigation, and (b) enhancement measures
- B** • Little negotiation should be required at this stage as all matters/provisions relating to the walking improvements should have been identified and agreed in the proceeding stages
- C** • Planning permission(s) granted with relevant conditions and Section 106 Agreements defining, amongst other things, the walking improvements required, how they will be delivered (who by and when), levels of financial contributions and monitoring and management arrangements
- D** • Monitoring and management arrangements defined above. To be carried out to ensure completion of identified deliverables; long term management where applicable
 - Enforcement if required

6.0

Conclusions

Improvements to walking conditions and the public realm should be secured when opportunities are presented by new developments and regeneration projects. The plan-led approach is paramount so that development control is pro-active rather than reactive.

Such improvements can bring benefits to the public and can enhance the value of developments.

Many improvements can be secured within and adjacent to development sites through good design. It is in developers' interests to ensure high quality spaces and routes as part of their schemes, but local authorities can assist in negotiating the best possible outcomes.

Improvements can be funded wholly or in part by contributions from developers through S.106 agreements. Other sources of funding may be available and should be considered especially when S.106 criteria are not met. Key points are:

- 'Context sensitive design' – improved walking conditions should be set in the context of creating high quality public realm;
- Developers should be required to provide full information as to how their schemes respond to the Walking Strategy and other plans;
- 'Get in early' – discussions of requirements should take place early in the development application process;
- 'Provide a framework' – both strategic principles and specific schemes drawn up in advance by Borough Councils can greatly assist developers in formulating schemes;
- Area policies and design codes help to achieve good outcomes;

- 'Funding contributions' – the justification for and the benefits from funded facilities should be clear to all parties;
- 'Monitor and maintain' – agreed schemes need to be monitored and enforced. Provision is needed for ongoing maintenance, adopted and non-adopted spaces for public use.

Good practice outcomes

- Less confrontation with developers with agreement between the local authority and developers/applicants prior to the submission of applications;
- More certainty for developers as policies guide and inform the preparation of development proposals;
- More proactive and less reactive planning with greater emphasis on deliverability, than negotiation and reaction after receipt of the application;
- More stakeholder and community involvement and partnership, rather than consultation 'after-thoughts'.

This document focuses on the use of the planning system to bring about pedestrian improvements. It must be emphasised that this is only one element of public realm improvements, and that cycling, floorspace, street furniture, safety, security, parking and the relationship between buildings and space must also be considered when development proposals and plans are being designed and brought forward.



7.0

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8.0

Contacts and addresses

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www.extranet.tfl.gov.uk/boroughs
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9.0

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