Levelling Up

EAST LANCASHIRE

Lancashire County Council

Safer, Greener and Healthier Streets

Potential interventions – October 2023

Working with you to improve travel choices in your local area to deliver:

- Safer, Greener and Healthier Streets
- Walking and cycling routes
- Public transport improvements

Appendix 1 Potential Interventions

Introduction

As part of the Levelling Up Fund bid process for East Lancashire, a toolkit was prepared as part of the delivery guidance for developing the Safer Greener and Healthier Streets element. The toolkit includes a list of potential interventions that can be introduced. These are grouped either as public realm interventions or speed management interventions. This example in Brierfield is a good example of both public realm and speed management aspects integrated to deliver successful schemes.

Sackville Street, Brierfield

The following interventions included within the toolkit do not necessarily require new road or point closures or modal filters to be effective and contribute towards East Lancashire LUF objectives.

Public Realm Interventions

Public realm infrastructure includes the following:

Tree planting

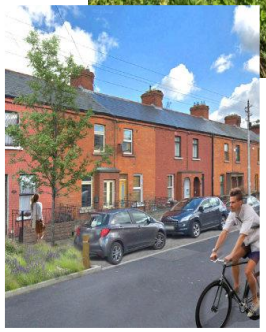
Trees make an essential contribution to the character and quality of urban environments, creating distinct identities for neighbourhoods, streets, roads and parks. They can also reduce the impacts of climate change. They work very hard across our towns and cities providing shelter and shade and habitat for wildlife. They cool the air and capture carbon as well as harmful airborne pollutants, they exude oxygen and can reduce noise from the street network and are a vital component of attractive places. In addition, street trees can provide benefits for drainage when integrated with sustainable drainage systems (SuDS). SuDS allow rainwater to soak into the ground in a way that mimics natural drainage (unlike hard roads and pavements), releasing water gradually to help prevent flooding and improving water quality by filtering-out pollutants.

Planting

Planting can be designed into streets through street trees, verges, living green walls and planting areas. These elements are not only visually attractive but can be developed as a sustainable drainage system (SuDS) that help to control surface water close to where it falls, mitigating the risk of flooding elsewhere whilst also delivering multiply benefits for biodiversity, water quality and amenity.
Green spaces and planting are essential for health and wellbeing, for biodiversity, shading and cooling, noise mitigation, air quality and mitigating flood risk as well as contributing to tackling the climate emergency. It is also central to the creation of beautiful places, enhancing walking and cycling routes and establishing or maintaining a strong sense of place.

Pocket parks

At the neighbourhood level pocket parks can include formal squares and village greens or smaller areas of informal green open space. They can also comprise residential communal gardens, allotments and food growing (community gardens, orchards, and urban farms) as well as green walking and cycling corridors such as canals, rivers, roadside verges, and dismantled railway lines.

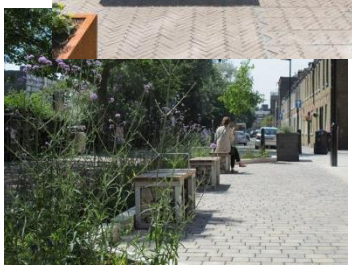


High-quality green open spaces play a distinctive role for nature, leisure, and quality of life. Access to these open spaces is important for the health and well-being of local citizens and can deliver wider benefits for biodiversity and support efforts to address climate change. Specifically, open spaces when part of an accessible network of multi-functional green space, enable and support healthy lifestyles (encourage walking / wheeling and cycling) and promote social interaction.

Seating

Connected street networks form the basis of most of our beautiful and well-used places, which include a mix of uses that support everyday activities to help us live, work and play. A fundamental part of this is street furniture which helps to support a wide variety of activities and encourages social interaction, promoting health, well-being, and social inclusion.

All streets and spaces provide potential places for formal and informal activities such as resting, meeting and playing, and seating is an important element. Different types of seating at regular points along and within these places allows for inclusive and generational accessibility, which encourages use. Seating can be formal, such as benches, with and without backs and arms rests and of different heights, as well as informal such as walls and play equipment. Seating can also provide opportunities for innovative design that can help lift the visual appearance of an area.



Cycle racks and shelters

Street improvement schemes can enable and support healthy lifestyles through the provision of facilities that promote cycling. Accessible, well-designed, secure, high-quality and attractive cycle parking in close proximity to homes and businesses for occupants and visitors can encourage cycle use.

Visitor cycle parking is best provided as cycle racks (which can be in a shelter depending on location) in the public realm, prominently located, overlooked and well maintained. Cycle parking for residents is most used when it is secure and covered. For residential terraced housing streets, it is possible to provide communal bike hangars/ pods accommodating up to 10 cycles using a single car parking bay.

Wider footways

Patterns of movement on our streets are integral to the design of schemes to improve the street scene. Understanding these patterns can enable better design to achieve inclusive, safe, accessible and high-quality places, which promote health and well-being. Adequate footway widths are a fundamental part of this, allowing for free-flowing movement to accommodate the needs of all citizens while considering the placement of seating, planting and other street furniture that improve the sense of place.

Wider footways can have a profound visual and psychological impact on a street scene, reinforcing the balance between vehicular and pedestrian or cycle priority. They can also help promote social interaction and allowing more comfortable passage for pedestrians within and between neighbourhoods. They also help to provide attractive, clear and legible pedestrian public space.

Quality materials – including surfacing

Good quality materials can enhance the street scene by creating attractive, welcoming, and distinctive places, which helps to establish and/or maintain a strong sense of place. The consideration of materials used can affect how well a place functions and is maintained over time.

The appropriate choice of quality materials will consider and enhance the existing character of the area or can enable the development of new character. This includes creating a consistent pallet of materials for streets to improve the overall quality of the area and facilitate and encourage walking and cycling. This will help to create places that are attractive, safe, inclusive, and accessible to all.

Speed management interventions

Traffic calming solutions include the following:

Pedestrian refuges (islands)
A pedestrian refuge is a waiting area, or island, between two traffic lanes that splits crossing into multiple stages, reducing the distance crossed in one go. Refuges can be used on a range of streets to narrow the road or create a chicane, and they give an indication of pedestrian presence to encourage slower traffic speeds.

The reduced crossing distance allows people to focus on traffic from one direction at a time, and can make crossing a road easier and safer for more vulnerable pedestrians.

Speed humps and tables
Speed tables and humps are one of the most effective forms of traffic calming, and can significantly reduce traffic speeds on a road, particularly when that road has relatively high traffic speeds before installation. Speed tables and humps are also a flexible form of speed management and can be adapted to most street types.

Speed tables and humps can be flat-topped to accommodate a pedestrian crossing that is level with the footway, enabling access for all. Research undertaken on behalf of the Department for Transport shows that vehicles are more likely to allow pedestrians to cross at speed tables, even if a formal pedestrian crossing is not present.

Road narrowing
Footway build outs take space from the road to provide more space for pedestrian movement. They are of varying lengths and can be used to realign a road to create chicanes. Footway build outs and chicanes create a narrowing in the road, while maintaining two-way traffic, which encourages drivers to travel at slower speeds. Some chicanes slow vehicles by narrowing a two-way road to a single lane with one traffic lane having priority over the other, which can include cycle lanes that allow people on bikes to bypass the chicane, reducing the conflict with other road users.

Pedestrian crossings can be incorporated within footway build outs and chicanes to reduce the width of road for pedestrians to cross. In addition to reducing traffic speeds, chicanes and in particular footway build outs can provide space to increase accessibility for bus stops and also give the opportunity to formalise on street parking and provide space for cycle parking, seating and planting.

Lighting
Creating well lit safe routes provide a sense of security and ensure that places are inclusive, accessible and legible. Street lighting is essential to help to reduce the incidence and the fear of crime, and helps to connect our networks, ensuring that they are safe to use at all times of day and throughout the year.

The provision of good quality street lighting must consider appropriate and unobtrusive lighting levels to meet the anticipated levels of human activity, including considerations for potential times for street lighting to be switched off. Lighting can help to provide a clear purpose for streets, providing appropriate levels dependent upon levels of use, types of place and street character. Lighting can also enhance the local sense of place, through the illumination of features or local landmarks.

Managing traffic speeds is beneficial to improve safety, reduce pollution and noise, and to improve pedestrian / cyclist journey times, all of which contribute towards making streets safer places that people want to spend time in and easier to move and travel around in. Managing the speed of vehicles on our streets also allows communities to become more connected as it reduces severance.

Pedestrian priority

A key goal of SGHS is to enhance the attractiveness of walking / wheeling and cycling for short journeys. Pedestrian and cycle priority measures are therefore important components in designing successful safer, greener and healthier streets and should be placed along routes where the demand from people who walk / wheel and cycle is highest, known as desire lines.

Side Road treatments

Side road treatments are usually characterised by a raised (kerb-level) section of roadway (such as a speed hump or table). They are designed to slow vehicles down, and can be enhanced with tactile paving, tightened corners, and alternative materials to make crossing side roads more accessible for people walking / wheeling and cycling.

Improving side road crossings will support the attractiveness of walking / wheeling and cycling for shorter journeys, helping to achieve decarbonisation and physical activity goals, particularly when they are linked into the existing pedestrian and cycle network. They make streets feel safer and more accessible for all users and can enhance the sense of community as more people access local facilities by walking / wheeling or cycling.

Courtesy crossings

Courtesy crossings, also known as Copenhagen crossings or blended crossings, are crossings at side roads that are characterised by continuous footways or cycleways that give priority to people who walk / wheel or cycle. They are visually very different to traditional road junctions and are designed to slow vehicles down when entering or exiting side roads, encouraging those who drive to give way to pedestrians crossing the road. This also means that people who walk / wheel or cycle do not necessarily need to stop before crossing the side road, as they have priority over vehicles in accordance with the new highway code.

These types of crossings can support the attractiveness of walking / wheeling and cycling for shorter journeys, helping to achieve decarbonisation and physical activity goals, particularly when they are linked into the existing pedestrian and cycle network. They make streets feel safer and more accessible for all users and shift the balance of provision, convenience and priority towards walking / wheeling and cycling, helping to enhance the sense of community.

Zebra / parallel crossings

Zebra crossings, marked by black and white painted stripes on the road and flashing amber beacons, give priority to pedestrians waiting at the crossing. Parallel crossings, consisting of a zebra crossing and a parallel cycleway, give priority to both pedestrians and cyclists crossing the road. Signal-controlled crossings include pelican (pedestrian only) and toucan (pedestrian and cycle) crossings, and are characterised by their traffic signals for motorists and their red and green signals for pedestrians and cyclists.

These types of crossing support the attractiveness of walking / wheeling and cycling for shorter journeys, helping to achieve decarbonisation and physical activity goals, particularly when they are installed on pedestrian and cycle desire lines and linked into the existing pedestrian and cycle network. They make streets feel safer and more accessible for vulnerable users, and the presence of more pedestrians and cyclists moving in and around a neighbourhood enhances the sense of community.

Mobility inclusivity

All our neighbourhoods should be inclusive and safe places which enable and support healthy lifestyles, especially where this addresses local health, social and cultural well-being needs. The provision of safe and accessible layouts encourage walking and cycling for all members of society, providing access to all modes of transport as well as local services and green spaces.

An inclusive street benefits the whole community. This includes creating safe, defined pedestrian and cycle routes, sufficient footway widths, considering the placement of street furniture and the frequency and type of crossing points, providing detectable kerbs, tactile paving, seating, and high colour tonal contrast for materials.