

Making better places

Well designed streets are vital to thriving communities. Understanding streets and balancing competing demands is an essential skill.

The issues

Streets make up the majority of the public realm. They must cater for traffic movement, parking and utilities as well as providing enjoyable and inclusive places in which people can live, walk, cycle and socialise. Well designed streets can meet all these demands and contribute to places that are active, economically thriving and socially cohesive. Schemes that aim to create or regenerate communities must achieve well-designed streets but this is complex and challenging in practice.



How we can help

We have the breadth of experience required to support the public sector and developers in putting streets at the heart of communities. We create project teams that can offer services at all stages of street development:

- Streets policy;
- Street audit;
- Highway design;
- Parking schemes;
- Access auditing;
- Crime management strategies;
- Traffic management schemes;
- Community engagement;
- Decluttering and signing rationalisation;
- Routing strategies for freight, traffic, pedestrians, cyclists and public transport.

Understanding all these requirements and optimising them as a package leads to better streets and better places.

Our staff are at the forefront of the streets agenda. We understand the relevance of streets to a broad range of policy areas including climate change, traffic reduction, public health, accessibility and inclusion and making stronger communities.

Manual for Streets

Our key staff contributed to the Department for Transport and Communities and Local Government's Manual for Streets guidance. This document creates a new agenda for streets and has been described as "perhaps the most important urban design document for fifty years". We help our customers understand and effectively respond to this new agenda. We are contributing to a training package to help local authority engineers and their consultants to improve outcomes on their streets.

Street Auditing

Our staff have experience of auditing streets to identify both strategic improvements and quick wins. We have trained Transport for London engineers and urban designers as well as other consultancies in techniques for street audit and designing for pedestrians, cyclists and disabled people. Our staff also helped the Highways Agency develop its standard for Non-motorised User audit.

Policy Advice

As a cross-cutting topic, streets need to be understood across a range of local authority areas. We offer policy advice to a wide range of organisations, including the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment.

Masterplanning

We advise on the development of Masterplans for retail, residential and mixed use schemes and work with multi-disciplinary teams to ensure that transport needs fit into but do not dominate street patterns and designs. We specialise in the analysis of data, option identification, stakeholder liaison and strategic advice and we participate in team-based approaches such as enquiry by design.

Signing and Traffic Management

We have advised the Department for Transport on implementing effective traffic management while minimising sign clutter and the effect on the streetscape. Our focus is on practical application and we have worked with local authority partners to develop and implement demonstration schemes which can increase the understanding of best practice among highway authorities, planners and other consultants.

Community Skills

We are experts at community engagement and qualitative research into key topics such as fear of crime, transport need and accessibility. We use a wide range of survey and participatory techniques to involve communities in developing their own solutions. Equally we work with diverse professionals to facilitate improved outcomes.

We offer a resource of skills and knowledge to our clients and the industry. Our focus is to help customers achieve balanced and effective functional streets that contribute to better and more sustainable places and communities.

