



Healthy Streets: a Business View

Results from a survey of London's
Business Improvement Districts

Report prepared by the University of
Westminster as a commission from
Transport for London

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This study has been produced by Dr Rachel Aldred and Megan Sharkey, University of Westminster, as part of a commission by Transport for London (TfL).



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Introduction

This report summarises the views of representatives of London Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) who responded to a survey conducted in March 2017 asking them about their views on the Healthy Streets Approach. It includes anonymised qualitative and quantitative material from the survey.

After the survey, short phone and email interviews were conducted with twelve BIDs who expressed an interest in providing more information about their views. These interviews have been used to discuss in more detail barriers and challenges that BIDs wanted to highlight, alongside several additional good examples and suggestions from the BIDs.

The key overall message from the study is that many BIDs strongly support the goals of the Healthy Streets Approach, even to the extent of being willing to contribute towards street changes. They feel that this change is needed to

support the business performance of their areas, with only around half the BIDs rating their local area as good to walk or spend time in, and only just over a quarter saying it was good for cycling.

The study was funded by Transport for London and conducted by the University of Westminster. The report was written by Rachel Aldred and Megan Sharkey.

Key findings

Survey findings

- A high response rate was achieved, with 76 per cent of London's BIDs completing the headline questions and 60 per cent completing the full survey.
- Over 85 per cent of responding BIDs said a good environment for walking, cycling, and spending time in is important for business performance.
- However, when asked how their BIDs are currently performing in terms of these environments, under half of the BIDS said their environment was currently good for walking and only just over a quarter said it was good for cycling.
- There was strong support for the Healthy Streets Approach, and improving areas against the Healthy Streets Indicators was seen to be very important for business performance.
- From a list of twelve plus user-defined options, the top three interventions to improve the street environment were improving public realm quality, reducing the amount of motor traffic, and improving pedestrian crossings.
- Challenges included funding and lack of organisational resource, traffic and car dependency, and the need to ensure organisational cultures were in line with the Healthy Streets Approach.
- Current examples of places that performed better against the Healthy Streets Indicators tended to be those with priority for pedestrians over motor traffic
- Places that performed worse against the Healthy Streets Indicators tended to be dominated by motor traffic, with poor public realm and low comfort for pedestrians and cyclists.

Interview findings

- BIDs experienced barriers to working with other organisations, primarily TfL and boroughs, including a perceived failure to prioritise walking and cycling.
- BIDs felt they were willing to make small improvements, including providing some funding for this. Perceived barriers included lack of ownership and permission to intervene in the street environment.
- BIDs supported initiatives such as the Good Growth Scheme, a £70m regeneration programme funding a variety of place-making and small-scale street infrastructure projects. However, BIDs would appreciate more advance notice of such funding opportunities.
- BIDs would appreciate more information on what TfL would prioritise or see as legitimate BID-led schemes; including a Healthy Streets Guide that could also provide more information about the concepts, examples, and the business benefit of Healthy Streets.
- BIDs were interested in trialling schemes, both infrastructure and around the re-organisation of deliveries.

How TfL are responding to these findings

The findings of this survey show that Business Improvement Districts see creating great environments for walking and cycling, and delivering Healthy Streets across London, as important for business. The findings show that making it easier to walk and cycle is seen to boost the vitality of areas, increase footfall and help attract and retain staff.

The survey also highlights a number of challenges that BIDs are facing to improve their areas for people walking and cycling. Many of these challenges will require a collaborative approach to overcome. Since the survey took place in early 2017, we have taken concrete steps towards addressing these challenges. For example:

- In 2017, TfL published 'Small Change, Big Impact'¹, a practical guide for implementing light touch and temporary projects. This document, aimed at both communities and organisations such as BIDs, includes advice and technical guidance alongside links to other tools and resources. We have also provided Healthy Streets training sessions for TfL and borough officers throughout 2018 and, where there is interest, we will work with BIDs to extend this training to their teams.
- Since the survey took place in 2017, TfL have taken action to embed Healthy Streets within the organisation and its priorities. The Healthy

Streets Approach provides the overarching framework for the Mayor's Transport Strategy, and a range of tools have been developed to ensure that active travel is prioritised in our processes and policies. For example, the Healthy Streets Check has been incorporated into our corporate scorecard, ensuring that it will drive decisions at every level of TfL.

- The Mayor's Transport Strategy published in March 2018 sets out an ambitious, London-wide plan to reduce levels of traffic through a shift towards active, sustainable and efficient modes. On a practical level, we have made changes to the way we manage the operation of London's streets to boost walking, cycling and public transport. For example, our annual review of traffic signals now includes 'pedestrian time saved' as a key performance metric. In 2017, we reduced pedestrian wait times at 200 crossing locations and, as set out in the Walking Action Plan², our target for 2018/19 is to save 15,000 people hours spent at traffic signals for people walking, cycling and using public transport. Changes such as this will make it easier for TfL, boroughs and BIDs to work together to reduce motor traffic. Boroughs have also been encouraged to Traffic Reduction Strategies as part of their Local Implementation Plans (LIPs).

1. Small Change Big Impact is available to download at: <http://content.tfl.gov.uk/small-change-big-impact.pdf>

2. The Walking Action Plan is available to download at: <http://content.tfl.gov.uk/mts-walking-action-plan.pdf>

Project background

The Healthy Streets approach

The Healthy Streets Approach provides a framework for putting human health at the heart of planning the city. It aims to create vibrant, liveable streets where people choose to spend time and travel by walking, cycling and using public transport. The Healthy Streets Approach uses ten Indicators, shown here, to assess the experience of being on our streets. The Indicators have been developed to measure the extent that individual streets are appealing places to walk, cycle and spend time.

Further details of the Healthy Streets Approach are set out in Healthy Streets for London and the Mayor's Transport Strategy.

There are 10 Healthy Streets Indicators:

1. Pedestrians from all walks of life

London's streets should be welcoming places for everyone to walk, spend time in and engage in community life.

2. People choose to walk, cycle and use public transport

A successful transport system enables more people to walk and cycle more often, either to make an entire journey or as part of a longer journey made using public transport.

3. Clean air

Improving air quality delivers benefits for everyone and reduces unfair health inequalities.

4. People feel safe

The whole community should feel comfortable and safe on our streets at all times. People should not feel worried about road danger.

5. Not too noisy

Reducing the noise impacts of traffic will directly benefit health and improve the ambience of our streets.

6. Easy to cross

Making streets easier to cross is important to encourage more walking and to connect communities.

7. Places to stop and rest

A lack of resting places can limit mobility for certain groups of people.

8. Shade and shelter

Providing shade and shelter enables everybody to use our streets, whatever the weather.

9. People feel relaxed

More people will walk or cycle if our streets are not dominated by motor traffic, and if pavements and cycle paths are not overcrowded, dirty or in disrepair.

10. Things to see and do

People are more likely to use our streets when their journey is interesting and stimulating, with attractive views, buildings, planting and street art.



Source: Lucy Saunders

Business Improvement Districts (BIDs)

Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) are groups that are set up to represent the interests of local businesses, generally in a specific area or location. BIDs are set up and initiated by a vote from local businesses, and are primarily operated as not-for-profits. They are funded through a business levy paid by businesses within their area.

BIDs represent the local businesses and promote the area as a place to live, work, visit and do businesses. They engage with local authorities on a variety of issues. In relation to Healthy Streets, they can help promote regeneration of

the area, infrastructure, place making and overall liveability of the area.

There are over fifty BIDs in Greater London, shown in Figure 1, representing a wide range of businesses including retail, food services, office administration, construction, transportation and higher education.

Accumulatively, London BIDs have a total income of over £25m and total business turn over in BID areas in London now amounts to over £400m.

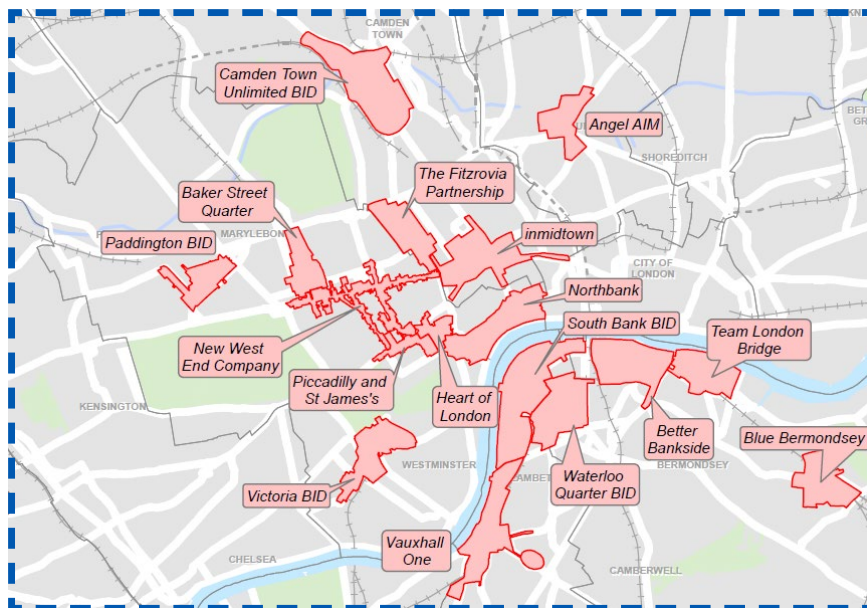
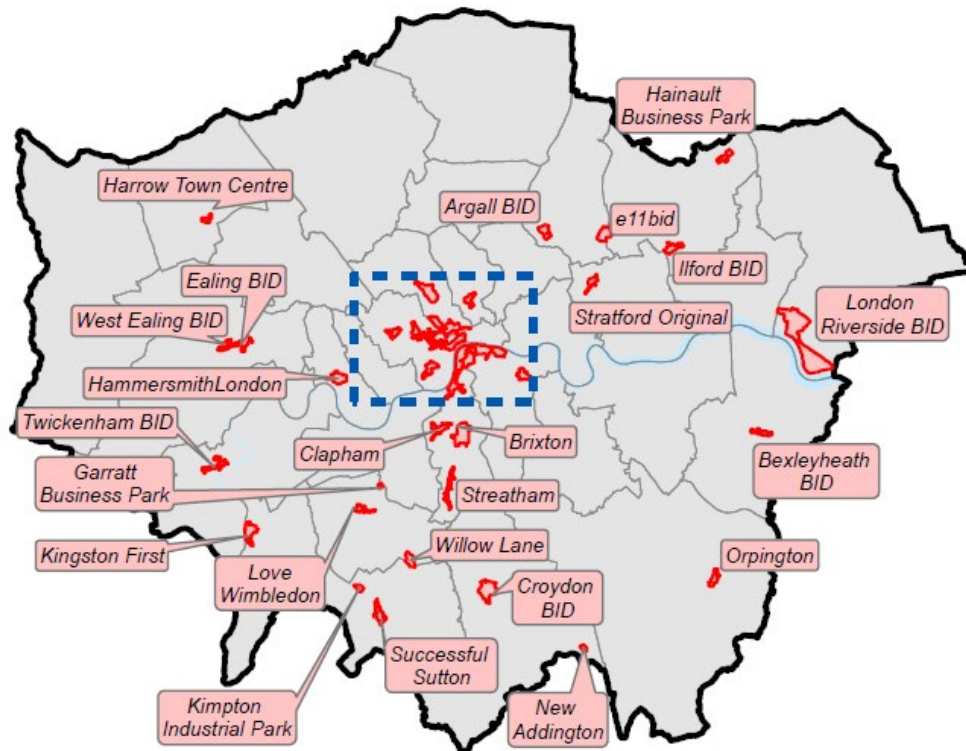


Figure 1: Business Improvement Districts in London.

Reproduced from www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/bids_map_january_2015.pdf.
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Survey Background

This survey was carried out to better understand the views of London's BIDs with regards to the relationship between the Healthy Streets Approach and business performance. The survey was designed and administered using Qualtrics survey software. It ran between February and March 2017.

At the time of the survey, there were 50 London BIDs, all of which were invited to participate in this project. BIDs were initially contacted through e-mail, with follow up e-mails and phone calls made to non-respondent BIDs.

Of the 50 BIDs invited to participate:

- 38 BIDs (76 per cent) completed the main sections of the survey.
- 30 BIDs (60 per cent) completed the supplementary sections of the survey.

The main section of the survey consisted of a range of quantitative questions to understand business views on the Healthy Streets Approach. The supplementary sections included the option for respondents to give qualitative information about schemes, initiatives, places, challenges, and so on. Data was collected on the types of businesses represented in the BID. These were fairly diverse, with respondents representing a varied range of organisations, in central, inner and outer London areas (see Figures 2 and 3 below).

Geographical split of BIDS

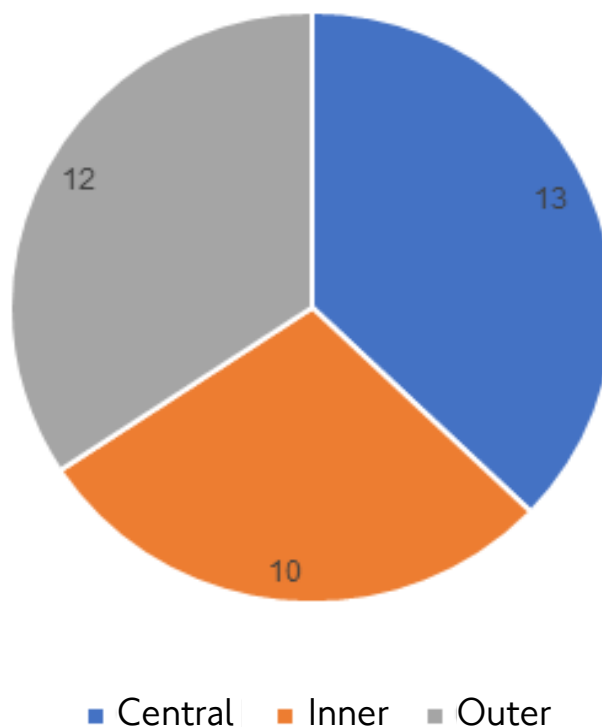


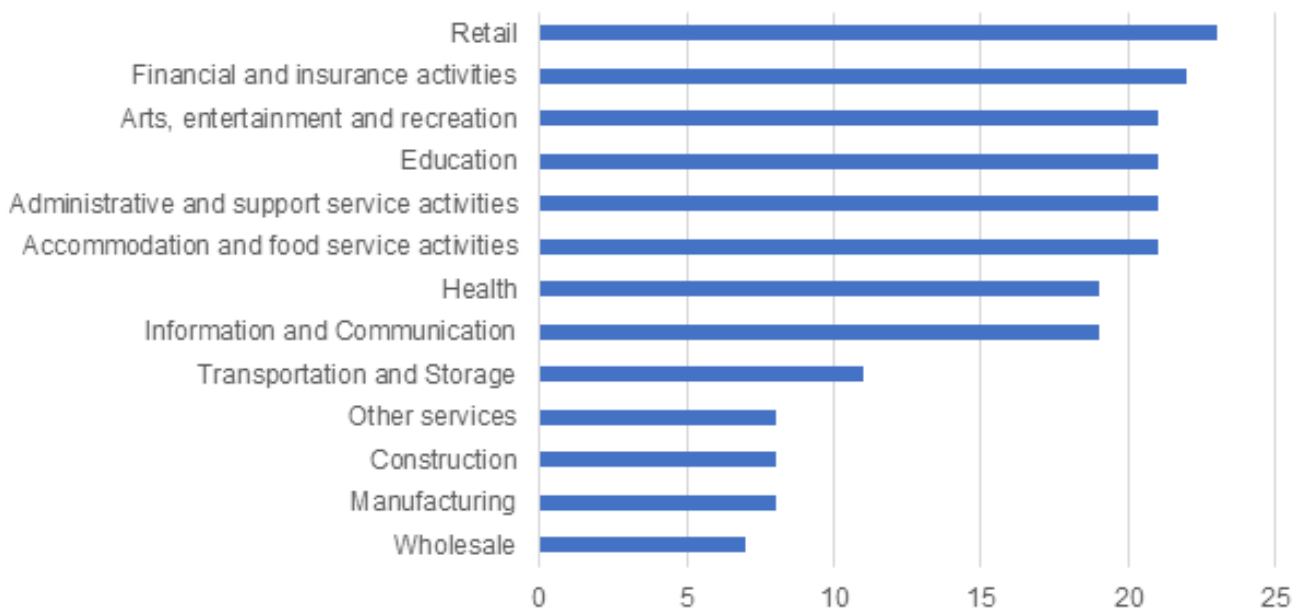
Figure 2: Numbers of BIDs in Central, Inner, and Outer London

Separating out types of BID in a meaningful way proved challenging, as most reported that they represented a range of sectors. For instance, few respondents could be categorised as ‘retail’ or ‘industrial’ only.

Only two of London’s seven industrial BIDs responded to the survey, while most responding BIDs who represented retailers also stated they represented other business types. Of the sixteen

BIDs who reported representing some ‘industrial’ businesses (defined as wholesale, construction, manufacturing, or transportation and storage), seven were in inner London, six in outer London, and just three in central London.

Types of organisation represented in BIDS



The importance of Healthy Streets for business

Overwhelmingly BIDs rated an appealing environment for spending time in, walking, and cycling, as either very important or moderately important for business performance.

Specifically, 95 per cent of BIDs said that a good environment walking was important to business performance, 85 per cent for cycling, and 97.5 per cent for spending time in (n=38).

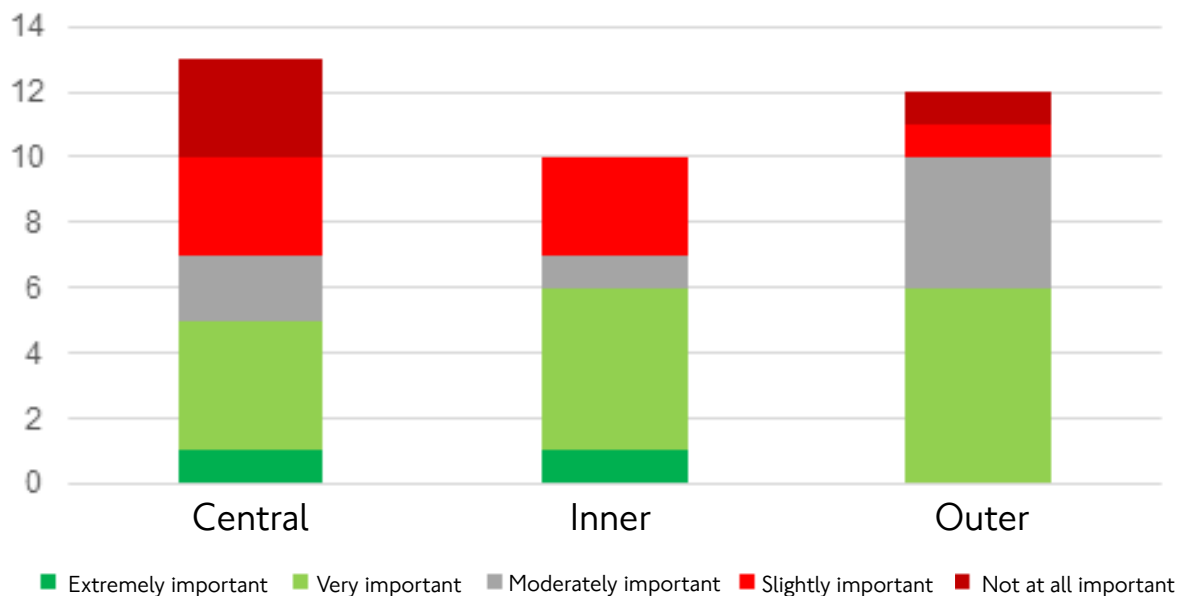
However, BIDs were less positive when asked about the current quality of their local area in relation to walking, cycling, and spending time in. Only 55 per cent of BIDS said that their area was currently good for spending time in; 48 per cent said that their area is good for walking, and 29 per cent said it was good for cycling (n=38). Improving the quality of areas against these metrics is

therefore a key opportunity for TfL and boroughs, with the support of BIDs.

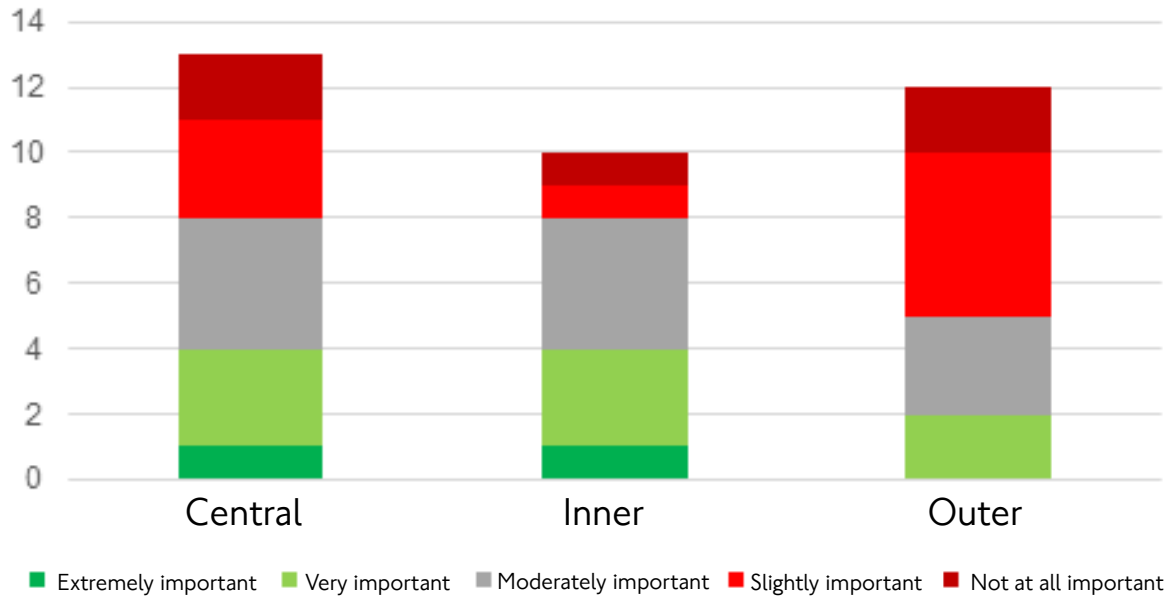
Figure 4, Figure 5 and Figure 6 illustrate the breakdown of responses to these questions by location (central, inner, and outer London). The walking environment is generally perceived to be most problematic by central London BIDs, with almost half describing it as 'extremely' or 'somewhat' bad.

The same proportion of central London BIDs described the dwelling environment as bad, again higher than for inner or outer London BIDs. By contrast, the cycling environment was worst in outer London, with nearly 60 per cent describing it as 'extremely' or 'very' bad.

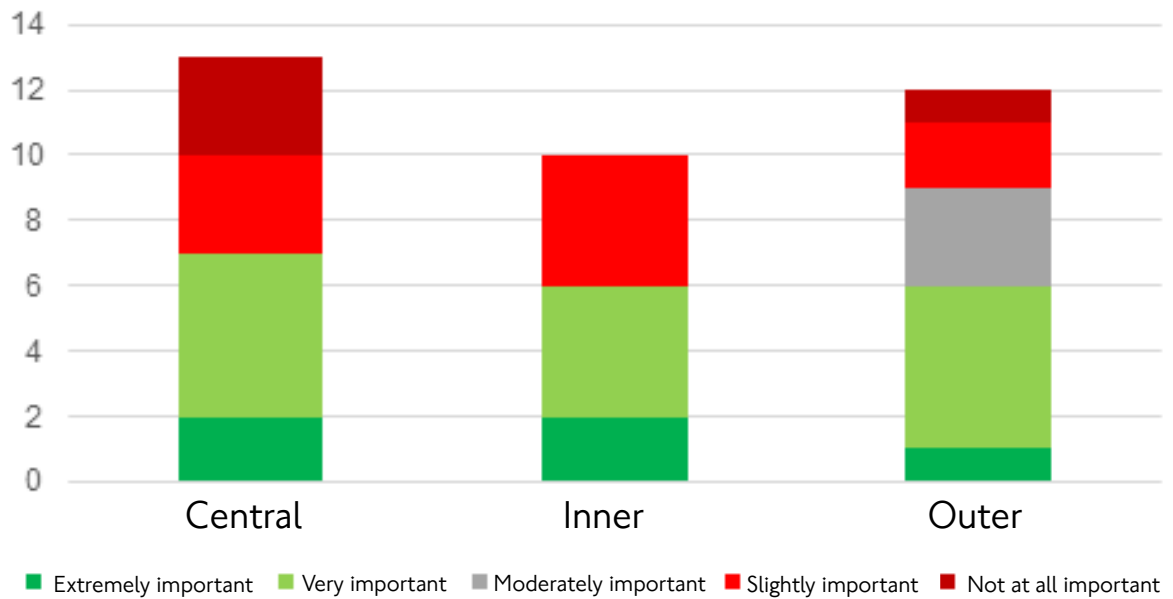
Perceived walking environment, by location



Perceived cycling environment, by location



Perceived dwelling environment, by location



As well as asking BIDs about the relationship between business performance and good environments for walking, cycling and spending time in, they were also asked for their views on the importance of each of the ten Healthy Streets Indicators for business performance.

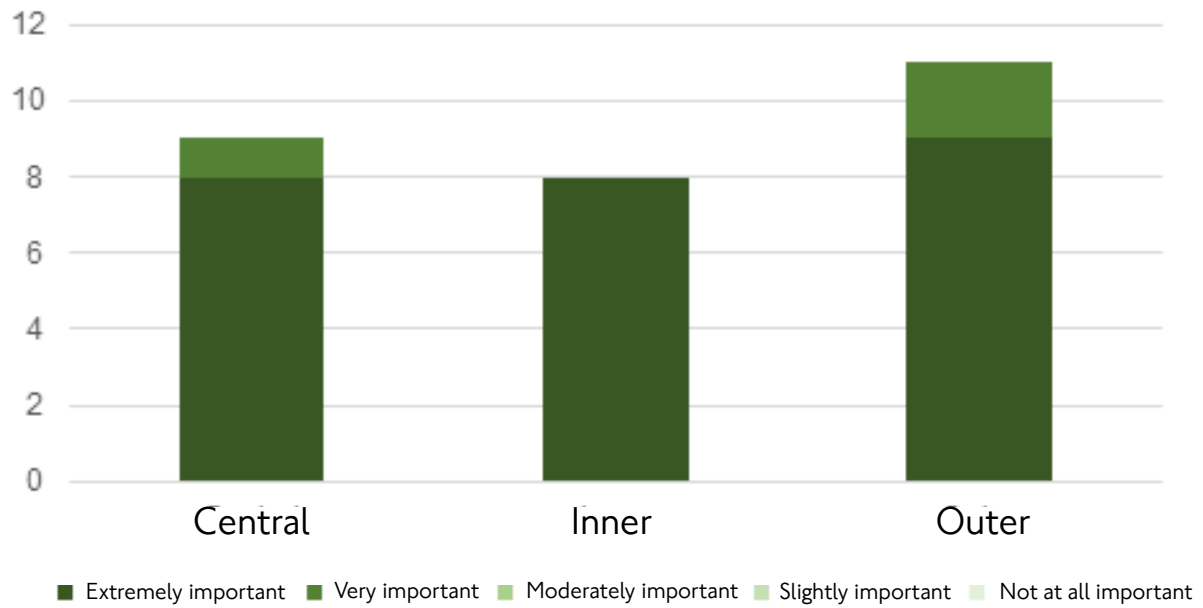
It is important to recognise that the Healthy Streets Indicators are interdependent. For instance, streets where people feel relaxed are also streets where people feel safe, there are places to stop, and where it is easy to cross the street and not too noisy. This question aimed to understand which of the Indicators were perceived as being most important to the business performance of the area.

The table below shows many BIDs rated each of the Healthy Streets Indicators as being 'extremely important' to business performance.

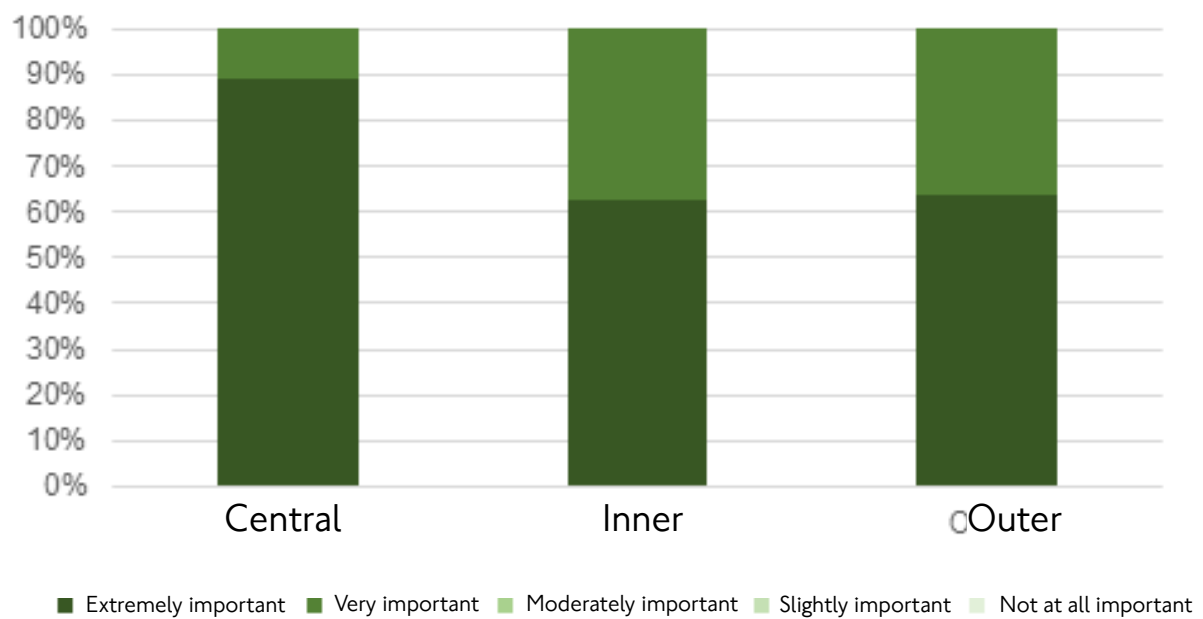
Question	BIDs describing Indicator as 'extremely important'
People feel safe	89 per cent (25)
Easy to cross the street	71 per cent (20)
Things to see and do	61 per cent (17)
Clean air	59 per cent (16)
Places to stop	50 per cent (14)
People feel relaxed	50 per cent (14)
People chose to walk, cycle and use public transport	50 per cent (13)
Pedestrians from all walks of life	46 per cent (13)
Shade and shelter	29 per cent (8)
Not too noisy	29 per cent (8)

Figure 7 to Figure 16 below break down how BIDs from Central, Inner, and Outer London responded to each of the ten indicators.

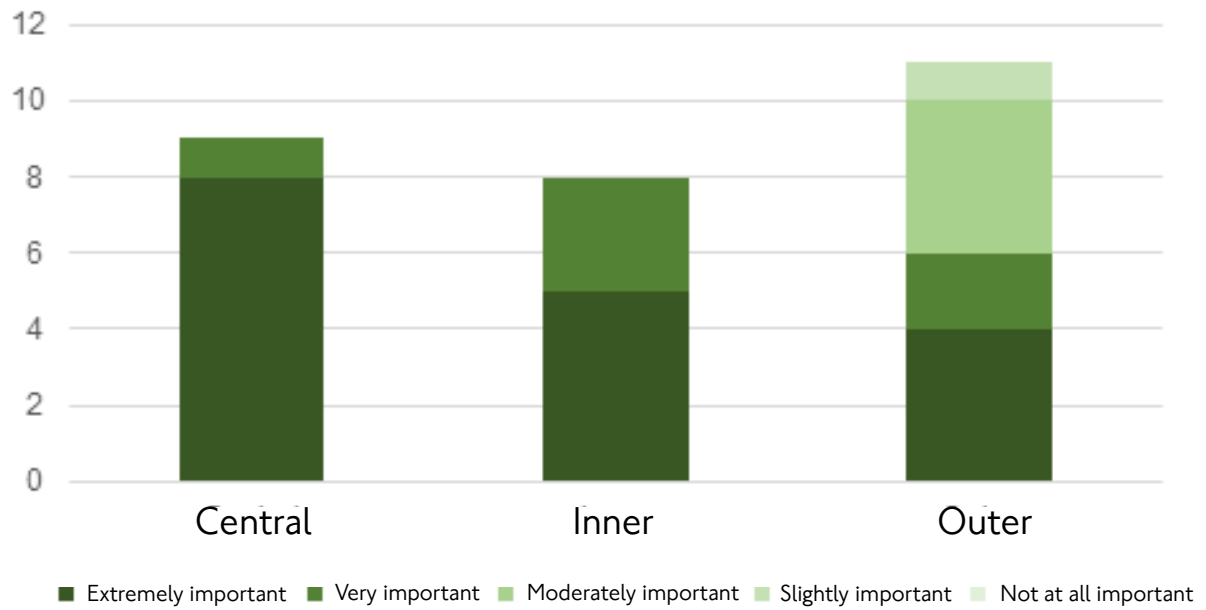
People feel safe



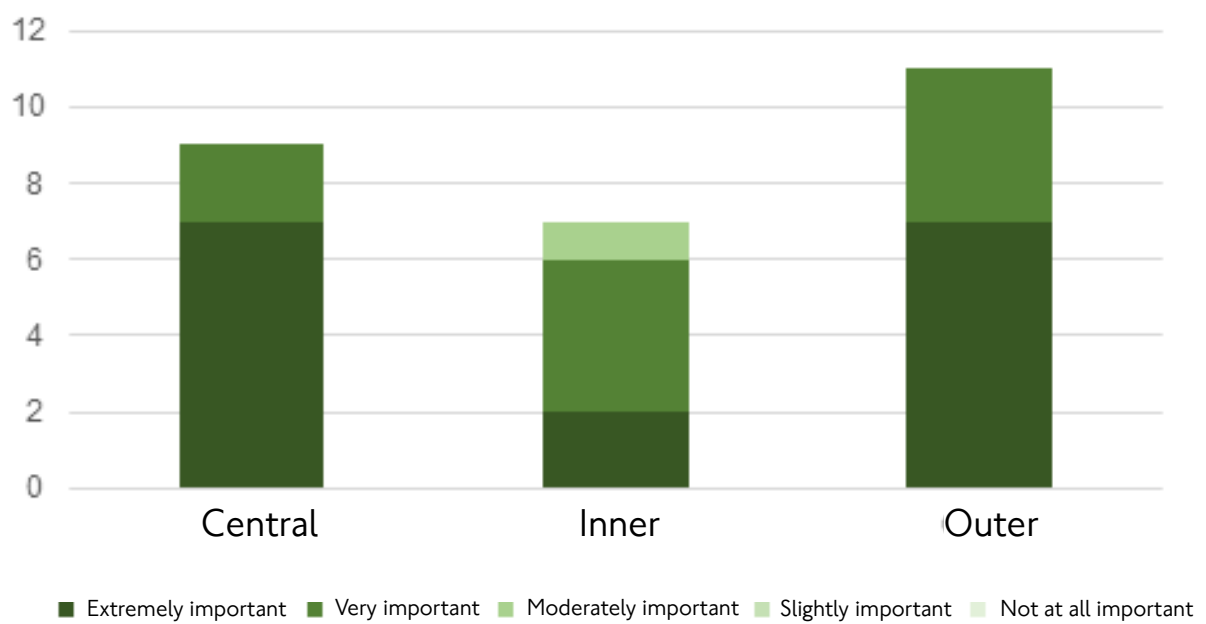
Easy to cross the street



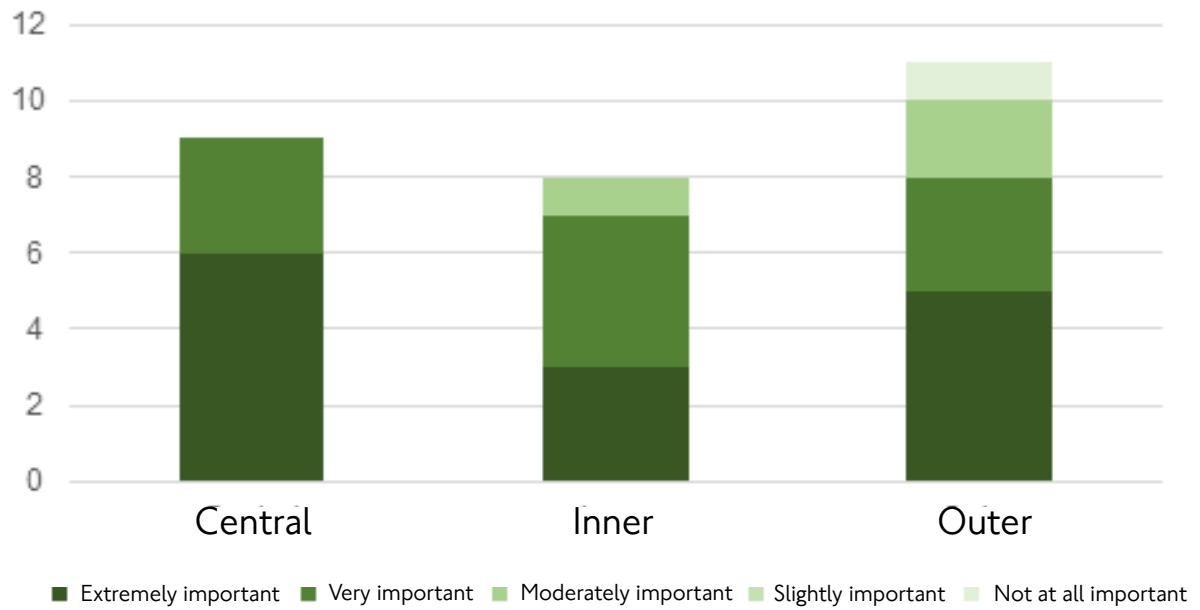
Things to see and do



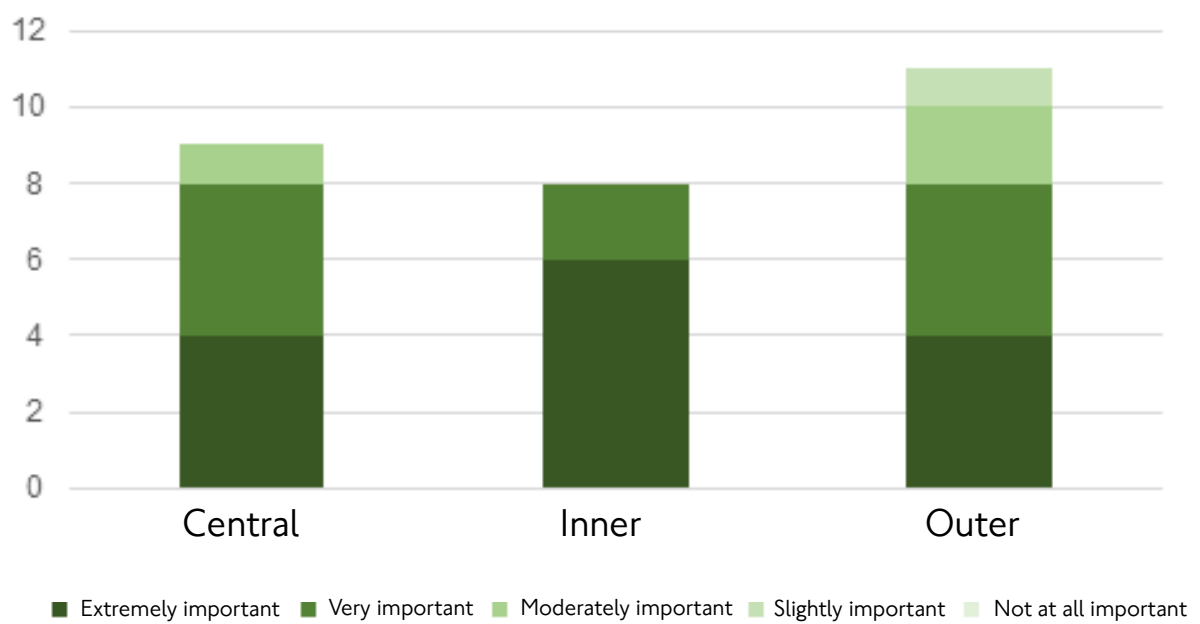
Clean air



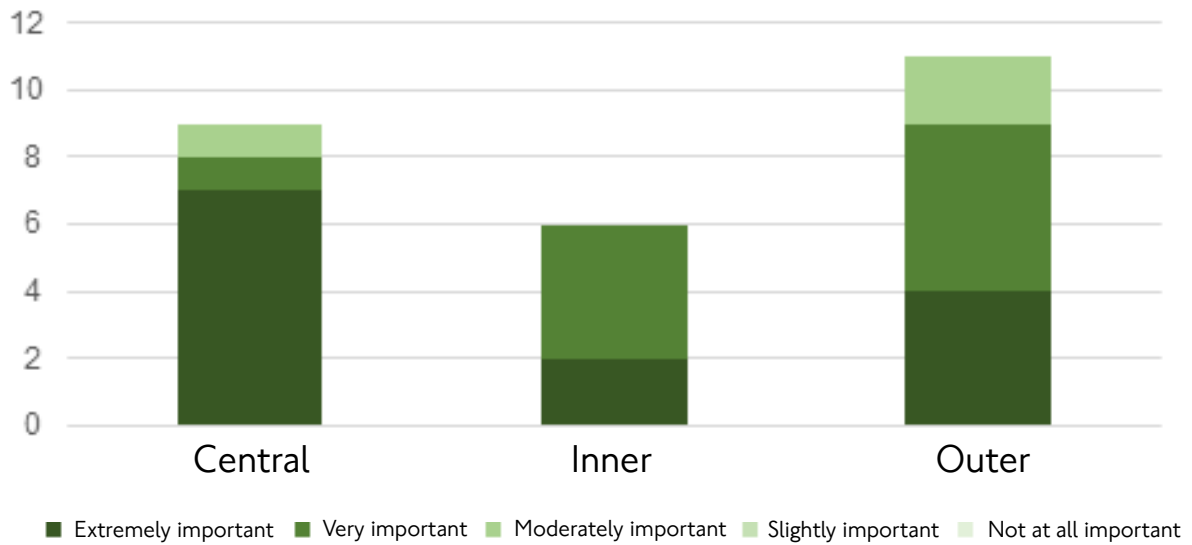
Places to stop and rest



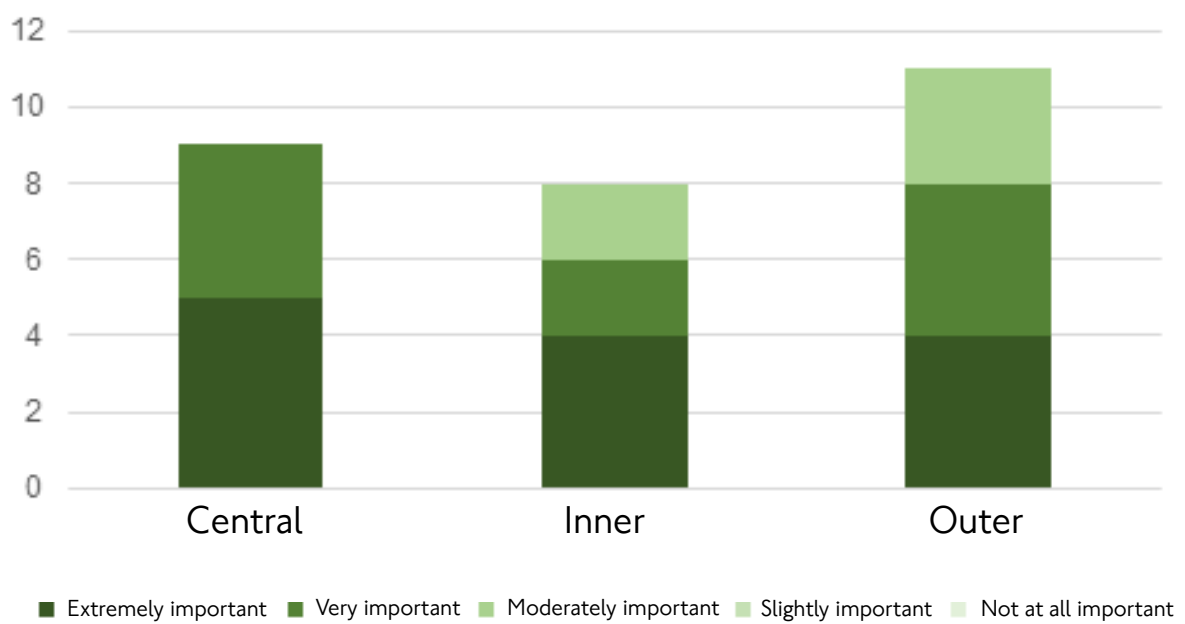
People feel relaxed



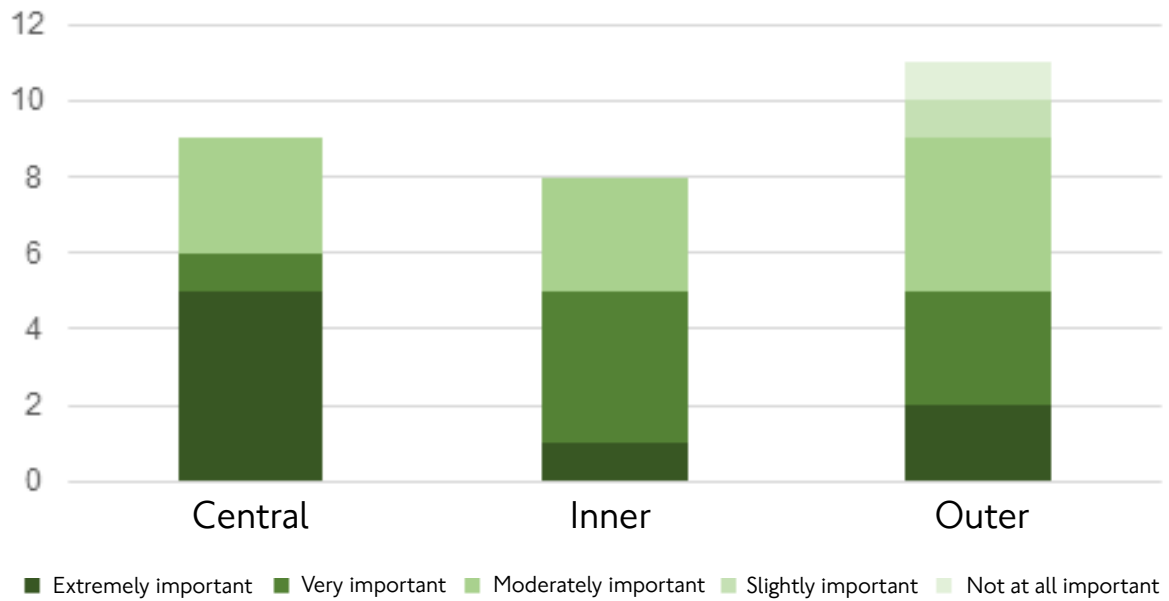
People choose to walk, cycle or use public transport



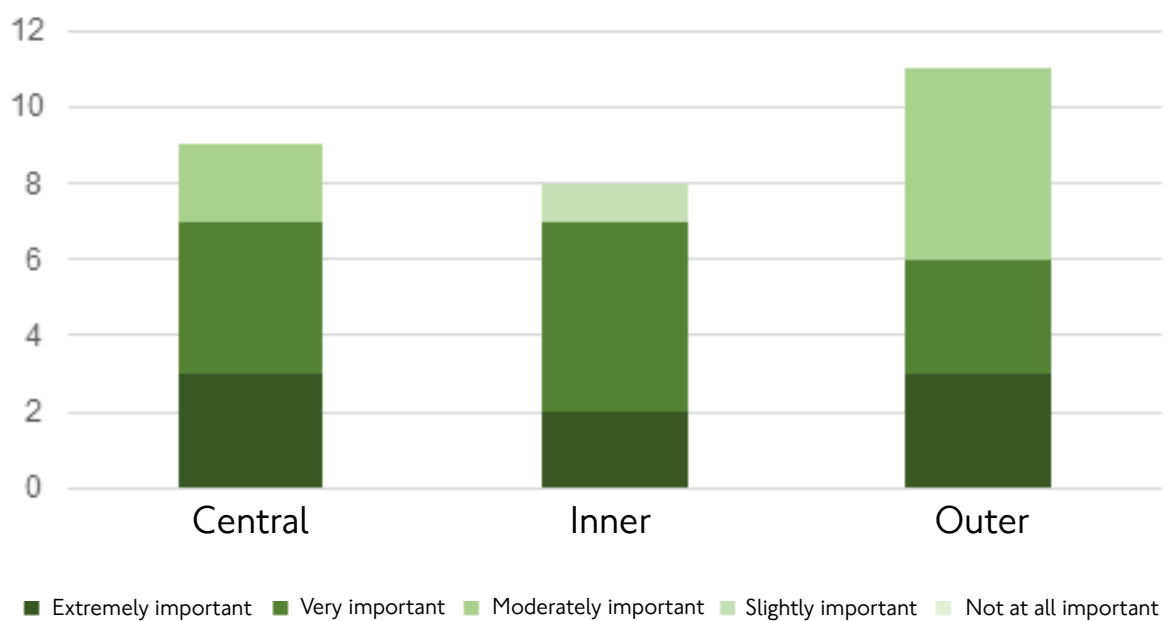
Pedestrians from all walks of life



Shade and shelter



Not too noisy



Businesses see streets that perform well against the Healthy Streets Indicators as key to business performance. Overall, 79 per cent (n=28) of BIDs ranked improving their area against the Healthy Streets Indicators ‘very important’. This included 89 per cent of central London BIDs (8/9), 88 per cent of inner London BIDs (7/8), and 64 per cent (7/11) of outer London BIDs. Table 2 below shows a breakdown of BIDs rating a series of potential key benefits of the Healthy Streets approach.

These figures point to a wider benefit of the Healthy Streets Approach beyond creating places that are pleasant for shopping. They highlight the importance of creating places where people want to work, and can travel to work in the way they want. These figures point to a wider benefit of the Healthy Streets Approach beyond creating places that are pleasant for shopping. They highlight the importance of creating places where people want to work, and can travel to work in the way they want.

Table 2: Reasons why the Healthy Streets Approach is important for businesses (N=30)

Reason	BIDs listing as a key benefit of the Healthy Streets approach
Increasing the vibrancy of an area	90 per cent
Attracting more customers	83 per cent
Attracting or retaining staff	73 per cent
Increasing retail occupancy	70 per cent
Increasing customer spend	67 per cent
Improving productivity of staff	43 per cent
Increasing office occupancy	40 per cent
Attracting global talent to London	37 per cent
Attracting global investment to London	33 per cent

Delivering the Healthy Streets Approach in Business Improvement Districts

Overview

The survey and interviews showed that BIDs have many ideas for initiatives that could help their area perform better against the Healthy Streets Indicators and in many cases, are already implementing these initiatives.

These are largely changes that BIDs and their members could lead on, or support the implementation of, ranging from small-scale public realm schemes to trials of new ways of organising deliveries.

In the survey, BIDs were specifically asked what they were currently doing to improve their area for walking and cycling; and their aspirations for improving walking and cycling, including what they would like TfL and others to do to improve walking and cycling.

Most BIDs who responded to the survey (25/30) gave examples of initiatives they were already undertaking to encourage walking and cycling in their area as well as improve performance against other Healthy Streets Indicators. These included actions directly taken by the BID, encouraging or supporting actions by member businesses, and acting to lobby other organisations to implement Healthy Streets initiatives and interventions.

What BIDs are currently doing to improve their area for walking and cycling

BIDs supported a broad range of actions related to the public realm. At a strategic level, they did so through lobbying the local authority and TfL, engage with businesses and developers on appropriate public realm design, or lead opportunities for changes and applying for available grant funding.

Encouraging walking and cycling and the public realm

Some of the most active BIDs spoke of creating their own strategies and manuals to intervene pro actively in the development of public realm and encouraging walking and cycling.

They have developed place shaping strategies or guides for businesses when undertaking projects, and worked on cleaning the streets.

In addition, they use events, social media, and wayfinding to promote walking and cycling with BIDs citing a range of services (for example, guided walks, social media messaging) and products (for example, cultural maps, trees planted, free cycles for employees to trial).

BIDs also spoke of encouraging and supporting member businesses to directly implement initiatives and schemes, for instance, planting trees or installing cycle tracks.

Case Study: INStreatham BID – some change, but more wanted

The BID believe that adding greenery to the central reservation in Streatham has improved the feeling of the area, giving it life and breaking up the starkness of the road. The BID feels that the greenery made a difference, with the street now more welcoming for visitors.

“They [TfL] put the central reservation from Streatham Hill station to Becmead Avenue. By changing that it has massively improved the landscape. That has made it look much better.”



However, the interviewee noted that improvements could go further, giving examples of another area which had benefited from continuous footways, traffic reduction and calming, and additional public realm enhancements.

“In areas like Clapham they have shared spaces for cycling and pedestrians and the quality of the public realm is a lot better.”

Street Cleaning and Greening with Planters – BID Quotes on direct action from BIDs

“A priority for the BID is to improve the quality of the public realm. To achieve we provide additional street cleaning on Sunday mornings. We are also investing and working with partners to improve the public realm and make the area more attractive. This includes completion of a GI [Green Infrastructure] audit and creation of a public art strategy. We have delivered 4 greening projects including planting projects and hanging baskets. In the process of creating a new pocket park behind Tube Station. We have installed lighting up in seven trees. Created a cultural map with a view to publishing walking guide to the area.” – Inner London BID

“Additional street cleansing and planting, walking maps, guided walks” – Central London BID

“Trying to reduce street clutter, sprucing up the flower beds and lobbying the council to plant more trees and replace non-living ones.” – Outer London BID

“We are taking action to deter pigeon feeders and reducing the number of pigeons in the area because of the detrimental impact they have on the street environment and making it more risky for pedestrians.” – Outer London BID

Promoting Walking and Cycling – BID Quotes on direct action from BIDs

“Staff seminars for healthy walking routes, walking challenges” – Central London BID

“We have run a campaign to promote cycling and have used social media to share the message” – Outer London BID

“Smarter Travel: Employee Cycle Services (Dr Bike, HGV cycle safety event, pool bikes, commuter bike loans)” – Central London BID

“Parklet under [Mayor’s Air Quality Fund 2] – Walking and Cycling trail maps – promoting Santander business offer – anti idling days” – Central London BID

“Part of our Industrial Park is quite old but have some facilities for storing bicycles safely. [...]

We have a large number of “New Builds” that all have good facilities” – Outer London BID

“Free Brompton bikes available for employees to trial cycle ownership” – Inner London BID

“Holding cycle events and high street trails” – Outer London BID

Case Study: Brixton BID: Pedestrian Action – Flash Crossings

'Flash crossings' were suggested by Brixton BID as a good example of BID-led initiatives to encourage walking. Flash crossings involve painted designs at pedestrian crossings. They seek to enliven the area, generating interest in the space and encouraging users to take notice of what is happening at the crossing.

"[The crossings were installed] one year ago for Brixton Design Trail. The whole idea is making the crossing safer, and to create a place because Atlantic Road and Coldharbour Road. It was first tested outside the tub station, and then we wanted to make it a permanent feature."



Public Realm Engagement and Development – BID Quotes on direct action from BIDs

“Employed Street Team to improve perception of safety and stewardship within area, installed Christmas lights, produced Eating Out guide to encourage local food uptake from offices and hotel guests.” – Central London BID

“We have a place shaping strategy with specific objectives around creating great streets for walking and cycling. [...] We are also delivering several projects to green and clean the BID area. [...] We are looking to increase cycle parking in the area and set up a cycling forum to promote cycling and improve local conditions for cycling.” – Central London BID

“The BID is in the process of delivering an Urban Spaces manual to identify projects that improve greening in the BID area, as well as encourage people to walk in the area by reducing carbon emissions. Further, the BID has already delivered projects or is in the process of delivering more, such as an orchard, and a ‘flash crossings project’ which had the benefits of increased visibility for those crossing, as well as creating a destination.” – Inner London BID

“Clean Air Mini Neighbourhood – greening and public realm improvements combined with looking at how improving backstreet routes and promoting them can help reduce pedestrian exposure to air pollution. Combined with efforts to reduce freight and delivery trips in the immediate area.” – Central London BID

Businesses installing infrastructure

“Encouraging businesses to adopt the trees outside their premises to water and generally nurture. Have lobbied for the installation of more cycle racks and actively promote these within the town.” – Outer London BID

“Encouraging bike racks and looking for new sites for new ones” – Inner London BID

A strategic and direct voice to TfL and boroughs

As BIDs rely on support from highway authorities to implement initiatives, they spoke of the need to work with authorities for better provisions for walking and cycling, and improved public realm (such as commenting on schemes and actively identifying locations for cycle parking).

Working with TfL

“Working with key partners such as TfL and local authorities on cycling infrastructure projects”
– Central London BID

“Worked with [Council] and TfL to produce a public realm improvement programme, which has unlocked further funding.” – Inner London BID

“We are working very hard with TfL, [Council], Network Rail to achieve these aims. [...] We are commenting on any cycling/public realm schemes.” – Central London BID

Working with Boroughs

“Discussing with the Council the issue of appropriately-located bike racks without overly congesting the street scene. Looking to discuss cosmetic improvements to Tube with TfL.” – Inner London BID

“Working in partnership with [local borough] to improve public realm and supporting the introduction of a new diagonal crossing.” – Outer London BID

BIDs not taking action

Whilst most BIDs were taking some sort of action on walking or cycling there were three cases where BIDs explicitly said they were not doing anything to encourage use of walking and cycling for a range of different reasons. For example:

- “Situated on [road] our BID is not currently encouraging people to cycle as there are no safety provisions in place” – Inner London BID
- “This is an industrial BID. Access by walking and cycling [is] not good and the BID are pressing TfL to improve the bus network.” – Outer London BID

The other BID which specifically said it was not doing anything for walking and cycling was an outer London BID. Another outer London BID commented: “Cycling – [we are currently doing] nothing. We are taking action to deter pigeon feeders and reducing the number of pigeons in the area because of the detrimental impact they have on the street environment and making it more risky for pedestrians.”

By contrast, 24 BIDs (9 in central London, 7 in inner London, and 8 in outer London) did give one or more specific examples of interventions aimed at supporting walking and/or cycling.

Summary of actions

The survey found that most BIDs were taking some sort of action to increase walking and cycling, and to improve their area against the Healthy Street Indicators.

Some BIDs were extremely active at a strategic level, as well as local measures such as making physical changes to the local environment, or running or supporting services to encourage employees and visitors to travel by foot and by cycle.

Some BIDs also saw their role as being a broader voice for public realm and active travel improvements, communicating with highways authorities and other relevant stakeholders, as well as advising and helping businesses within their area.

Case Study: Clapham BID – big benefits for businesses

Clapham Old Town is an award-winning mix of traffic calming, public space, event space and business revivals. The BID wants to see more of these schemes in their area, and believes that the success of this project has opened doors for discussion across their area and with the local council.

“Old Town has been completed: public plaza that has re-transformed [the] area. Business have been happy with it ... they are likely doing more trade.

It has decreased [volumes of motorised] traffic. It is still technically a high road, but has very low levels of vehicles, with residents and homes with parking areas.

There is definitely more walking and cycling. We use it to host events. Benn Street is open to traffic during the week, and pedestrians on the weekend. Bolter Road – [we are] looking to do the same.”



The priorities of BIDs for walking and cycling

Respondents were given 12 options (plus user-defined) for improving the street environment around their BID, and asked to select their top three. The three options selected by the most respondents (n=30) were:

- Improving the quality of the public realm, such as planting, small parks, or water features (63 per cent)
- Reducing the amount of motor traffic (47 per cent)
- Improving pedestrian crossings (37 per cent)

“We have big ambitions to generally reduce motorised traffic in our area and as a result reduce congestion and air pollution, whilst creating more space for walking and cycling.”

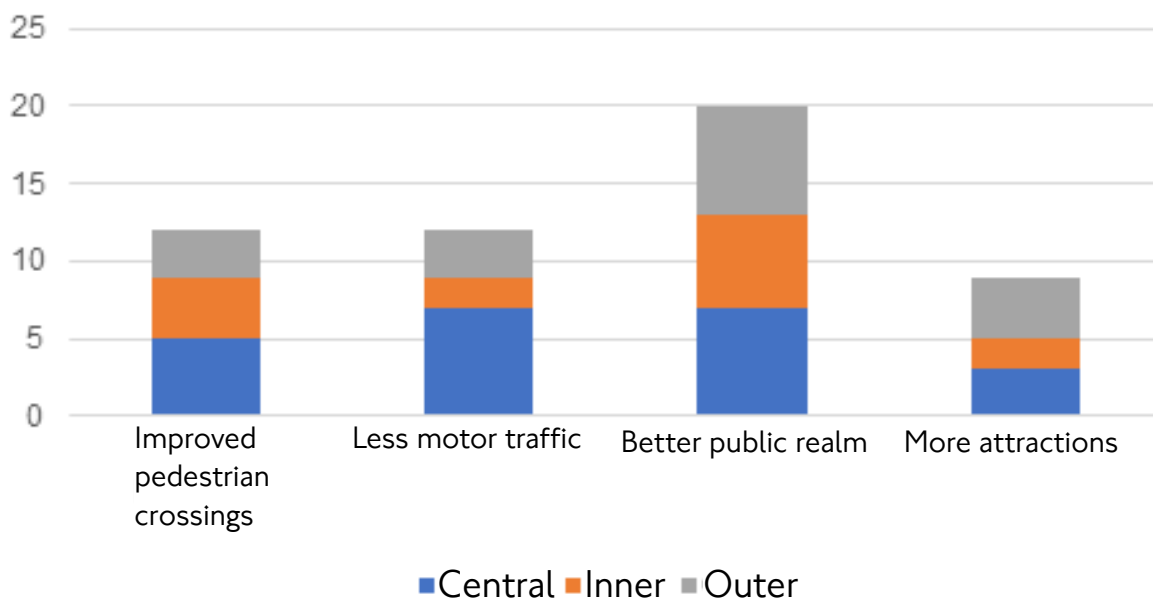
“The BID would like to see safer cycle paths, aesthetic improvement of the public realm, improvement of air quality and greening projections, strategically placed seating areas to support dwell-time, improved lighting, electronic wayfinding.”

Priorities	Number of BIDs selecting as ‘top 3’ priority (N=30)
Improved public realm	20 (67 per cent)
Less motor traffic	13 (43 per cent)
Improved pedestrian crossings	12 (40 per cent)
More attractions	10 (33 per cent)
Changing the mix of traffic	5
Safer junctions for cycling	4
More shade and shelter	4
Slower motor traffic speeds	4
More places to sit	4
Cycle tracks on busy roads	3
Wider footways	3
More cycle parking	1

Alongside the options shown in the table, BIDs were also given the option of specifying their own priorities for improving the street environment. These included more buses, more EV charging points, and more projects aimed at improving air quality (the respondent specified examples of freight consolidation, green walls, reducing the number of lorries for deliveries).

Figure 17 below shows, for the top four priorities, the split by location. Central London BIDs are particularly keen to reduce the amount of motor traffic, with motor traffic reduction in the top three priorities for seven of the nine central London BIDs who responded.

Priorities by location, selected items



Improving the public realm

Two-thirds of BIDs responding to this question selected 'improving the quality of the public realm' as one of their top three priorities for improving the street environment in their area. Businesses themselves note this with one BID stating, "This was identified by a survey that we ran for our members."

Motor traffic as an issue for the public realm

"Stark environment, lacking greening with no places to stop along a long stretch of busy road. E.g. planters, benches, etc. Please note, this priority only works in tandem with traffic reduction otherwise no perceived impact" – Central London BID

"[To] create a better environment for people to enjoy and not just a busy thoroughfare." – Inner London BID

No pleasant or social spaces as an issue for the public realm

"Currently large parts of the public realm have been neglected and in a poor state. It makes the area uninspiring and appear run down. We want to attract more people at all times of the day to spend time in the area. Developing attractive places to sit, relax and enjoy time is key to this." – Inner London BID

"There is currently nowhere off the main road to sit and have some peace and quiet outdoors – we are desperate for this." – Outer London BID

Lack of support to implement BID vision

"BIDs are here to do this too, any assistance such as funding for a competition to produce a winning strategy and to implement the strategy would be much appreciated." – Outer London BID

"This is essential in attracting more people to an area to improve vibrancy and economic performance." – Central London BID

"We are already doing a lot here. But there are still large parts of our area which are poor quality." Central London BID

Case Study: Bromley BID – promoting the public realm

Bromley BID ran a competition in which children from 25 local schools were invited to design and plant up wheelbarrows for display in Bromley town centre. Awards were given for the best design according to a panel of four judges as well as running a people's choice award.

The success of the wheelbarrows in creating a green and attractive space in the town centre means that the BID is now investigating the possibility of pocket parks that could be designed and planted in collaboration with the local schools.

“People said they were so wonderful [...] creative, thoughtful and very moving.

Plus, the engagement with schools was good. We will be entering an award [for the scheme]. People were disappointed they had to be moved”.



Reducing the amount of motor traffic

Nearly half (13/30) of BIDs responding cited reducing the amount of motor traffic among their top three improvements. Reasons given for prioritising motor traffic reduction were overwhelming around air quality and encouraging people to be on the street with examples below.

Air Quality as a reason to reduce motor traffic

“Improved air quality and well being” – Central London BID

“Reduction in noise and air pollution.” – Central London BID

“To improve the air quality for those wishing to spend dwell time on the high road.” – Inner London BID

Well-being as a reason to reduce motor traffic reduction

“Volume of traffic can lead to feeling stressed.” – Outer London BID

Footway and business health as a reason to reduce motor traffic reduction

“There are lots of cafés/restaurants/bars with outside seating next to extremely busy roads which can deter customers from using them.” – Outer London BID

“This goes hand in hand with public realm improvements and increasing vibrancy and people priority for the area.” – Central London BID

Suggested policies to reduce personal and freight motor vehicle movements by BIDs.

“Measures to attract people out of their cars and into other forms of transport, pilot home deliveries for customers who have bought more than they can carry back on public transport.” – Outer London BID

“Freight reduction schemes across the area, electric taxis, etc.” – Central London BID

Improving pedestrian crossings

A third of the BIDs cited improving pedestrian crossings as being among their top three priorities, with several specifically mentioning the need to give pedestrians more priority over motor vehicles, and a feeling that pedestrians ‘take second place to traffic’ (Inner London BID). Reasons given for wanting improvements included:

Maintenance of pedestrian spaces – BID quotes

“Surfaces of the crossings need to be improved – they are cracked and trip hazards.” – Inner London BID

Safety concerns for pedestrians – BID quotes

“Safety and more crossing points will make it an easier choice for people.” – Inner London BID

“To reduce fatalities and accidents in our area.” – Central London BID

“[] Road is difficult and dangerous to cross as a pedestrian, with few points to cross and getting stuck in central refuges often. E.g. more of them, longer pedestrian signal cycles, straight-across crossings, etc.” – Central London BID

Pedestrian Wayfinding – BID quotes

“Making walking routes easier to navigate.” – Central London BID

Other priorities

Mixed Traffic

One option given was ‘changing the mix of motor traffic’ – several BIDs who selected this cited problems with excessively large HGVs or construction traffic speeding to access a local industrial estate.

Cycle Infrastructure

Improving cycle infrastructure (tracks and/or junction improvements) was cited as helping cyclists feel safer on the roads and encouraging more cycling. One respondent commented that ‘there is too much traffic that I would find intimidating if I was a cyclist, including lots of buses.’ (Outer London BID)

Speed Reduction and Enforcement of Speeds

Speed reduction was supported on safety grounds, with one respondent saying that without enforcement, 20mph zones were regularly ignored in the local area.

Respondents said that increasing the number of attractions, and/or creating places to sit and experience the urban environment, could help increase ‘dwell time’ among visitors, improve vibrancy and help ‘community feel’.

Attractions and social spaces

Respondents said that increasing the number of attractions, and/or creating places to sit and experience the urban environment, could help increase ‘dwell time’ among visitors, improve vibrancy and help ‘community feel’.

Attractions and Social Spaces – BID quotes

“It is a popular destination at weekends and in the evenings, but is open to increasing levels of competition. We want the area to be a vibrant interesting place to visit and spend time. We are developing a public art strategy to meet these ambitions.” – Inner London BID

“People need to feel they are part of a community and want entertainment and pleasure alongside their shopping requirements.” – Outer London BID

“Where there are places to sit down that are not just limited to benches, they are inundated with people so there is obviously a need there, more place availability will create a more continental al fresco appeal to an area.” – Inner London BID

“We want more sense of how to use the urban space and have it fit for visitors with more seating to encourage people to leave their offices and have a more nuanced experience in the town centre.” – Inner London BID

Summary of Priorities

The survey showed strong support for the Healthy Streets Approach to improve business performance, not just to attract customers but also to attract and retain staff. Priorities included making places more pleasant to draw and attract people and enliven the streets. The BIDs preference indicates an understanding that pedestrian traffic may impact their business to a greater degree than motor vehicles. The priorities show an opportunity for transport

authorities to work with BIDs on traffic calming, reducing motor traffic, and improving footways. The desire for reductions in motor vehicle use more broadly indicates the potential to build business support for evidence-based policies that can increase the modal share of walking and cycling, and make freight transport more sustainable.

Challenges in meeting aspirations for walking and cycling

BIDs were asked about the challenges preventing them from realising their ambitions for the area. Themes included:

- the need to restrain demand for motor vehicle use, and
- the need to better embed the Healthy Streets Approach within a range of organisations.

Motor traffic/car dependency/deliveries

Motor traffic is a major challenge for achieving the Healthy Streets Approach in BID areas. BIDs all had issue with motor traffic of some sort, whether passing through on the way to central London, construction traffic in the BID area, or parking or general congestion around BIDs. Deliveries were noted as an increasing concern for BIDs with personal deliveries on the rise.

Summary of challenges

Challenges followed the three themes highlighted above:

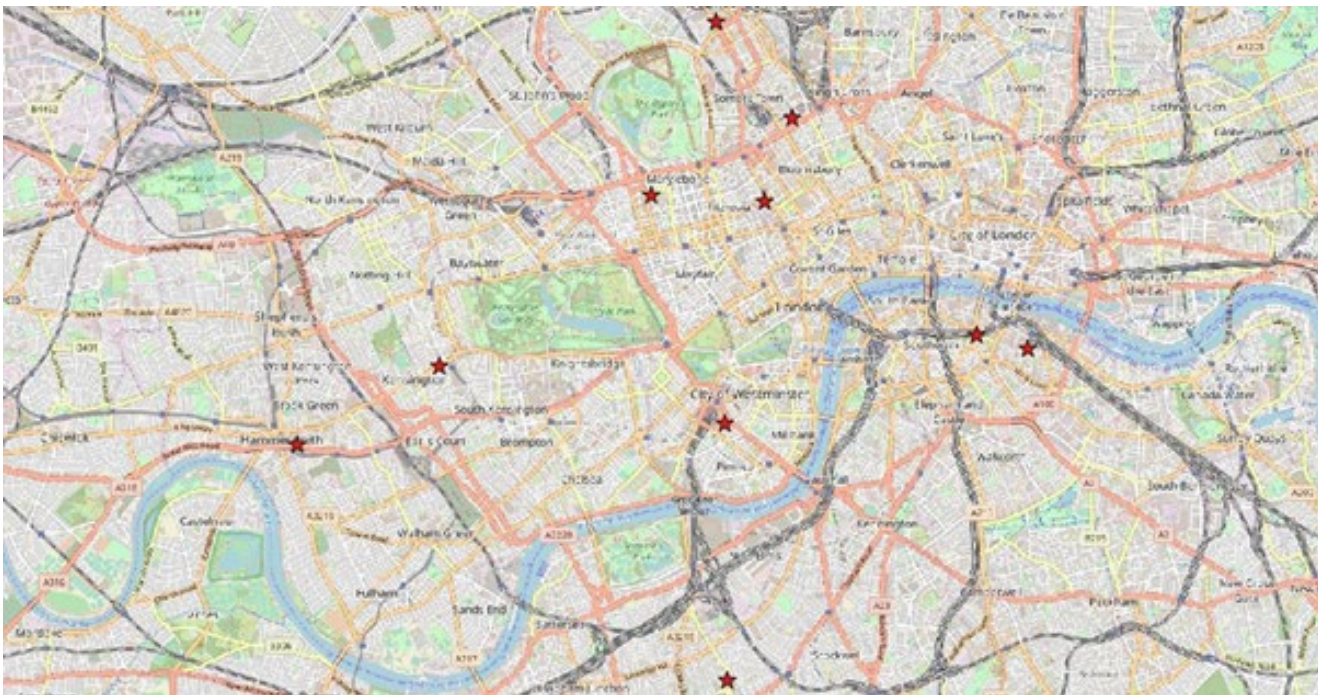
1. The need to restrain demand for motor vehicle use; and
2. The need to better embed the Healthy Streets Approach in transport authorities and other organisations whose activities have an impact on the streetscape.

Challenges were accompanied by suggested changes, for instance, devolving more funding to boroughs, introducing restrictions on deliveries, freight consolidation, incentivising people to use sustainable travel, increasing the role of urban designers and place-shaping, and high-level leadership on the importance of health (over, for instance, motor traffic flow).

Streets that are perceived to perform well against the Healthy Streets Indicators

Nine respondents provided locations that were examples of streets within their BID areas that were perceived to perform well against the Healthy Streets Indicators, in most cases giving details of why these places were felt to perform well against the Indicators.

Several BIDs explicitly linked these to business benefits (comments included ‘few voids’ [vacancies] and ‘sought after location’). The streets identified generally had good provision for people walking, with wide pavements cited by several respondents. Greening and good public realm were also highlighted as components of current good practice.



The list below gives examples of specific schemes (as opposed to already existing streets) highlighted by BIDs as having creating improved performance against the Healthy Streets Indicators.

Schemes cited by BIDs as improving places against the Healthy Streets Indicators
Clapham Old Town – an award-winning scheme to prioritise walking and cycling, including continuous footways over side roads; discussed in more detail later in the report.
Talgarth Road – another award-winning scheme described as “having gone from an uninspiring grey area into a flourishing green corridor by with a new cycle lane and planting, new trees and SUDs drainage to help attenuate rain water using SUDs reduce carbon and attract new wildlife.”
A pocket park which swapped footway parking for green space and planting.
A scheme to improve conditions a section of a busy cycling and walking corridor, also providing enhanced public space, with places to eat and shop.

In saying why each of the places were seen to perform well against the Healthy Streets Indicators, respondents wrote:

Reasons why places were identified as performing well against the Healthy Streets Indicators
“Great quality of public realm, pavements, trees, signage, shared spaces, car users are more courteous of other road users because the space looks shared.” – Inner London BID
“It comes up well against all 10 of the Healthy Streets Indicators. The scheme has also contributed to brand new businesses opening up including a sizable investment in the [] complex and two new business openings.” – Central London BID
“It performs well against most Healthy Street Indicators. It has few voids and is well known as an attractive street. It is a sought after location [for businesses].” – Central London BID
“[The street previously included a] lecture hall, which added no benefit to the street, and attracted pavement parking. Through funding, including the Mayor’s pocket park fund, it has been transformed into an oasis of green, colour, garden smells, and seating. Being on a corner, means that it improves the vistas along two roads, and has helped transform a whole area.” – Central London BID
“Local green spaces – space to have lunch, AQ [air quality] and diversity.” – Central London BID
“The pavements are step free, derailed and one lane/one-way prioritising walking with the parking merged onto pavements allowing more space to walk when not in use. Lots of trees etc making it pleasant to environment for pedestrians and businesses.” – Inner London BID
“Wide pavements create good public space where pedestrians are prioritised. Road used for market Wednesday to Friday and closed to vehicles. Trees and seating line the streets. Restaurants have lots of outdoor seating helping to contribute to the community feel.” – Central London BID
“Wide pavements, integration between pedestrians and vehicular traffic. Floral displays.” – Inner London BID

One difference by location was the lack of specific ‘good examples’ given by the outer London respondents.

All other ‘good examples’ came from central and inner London. While there was generally somewhat higher engagement with the survey questions from central and inner London BIDs (and these BIDs also tended to express stronger support for the Healthy Streets Approach) the complete lack of good examples given by the outer London BIDs is nonetheless notable.

Streets where improvement is felt to be needed

The examples below illustrate places where respondents felt the Healthy Streets Approach was insufficiently realised, with suggestions made for improvement, often around better pedestrian environments and improved public realm.

Links were made between pedestrian and cyclist safety and comfort, and business performance, through people being more willing to access and spend time in an area. Greater priority for pedestrians over motor vehicles was another theme.

Pedestrian barriers create a huge impact for BIDs – BID quotes

“Creating a new crossing, better layout, reducing the deaths! I think if pedestrians felt more safe they would use this area of the high road more and we would get a better quality of retail environment.” – Inner London BID

“A road that is stark and uninviting to pedestrians and cyclists. With high levels of traffic and resulting congestion, it has high pollution levels and is a difficult environment to cross. It acts as a barrier for pedestrians. We feel that almost all of the Healthy Streets Indicators could be improved.

Significant changes to pedestrian crossings, pedestrian safety and safety of vulnerable road users, greening, seating along the road, noise reduction, air quality improvements, slower speeds, reduction in traffic levels. This would help to make the businesses attract more customers, as currently the footways are uninviting for people to wander along.” – Central London BID

“[Currently] narrow pavements, too much traffic, limited pedestrian crossings, crowded, depressing railway bridges. [Needs] wider pavements, less street clutter, less traffic.” – Inner London BID

“Priority given to vehicles with multiple lanes. Narrow dated pavements and little or no trees. Cycling is hazardous on this stretch of the road as well ... [Needs] wider step free pavements, more trees and perhaps cycle markings on the road. – Inner London BID

Drab places impact visual appeal of area and of businesses – BID quotes

“Greener environment, hanging baskets, art, Deep cleaning better signage [needed].” – Outer London BID

“[Current] clutter and waste consolidation. [Needs] improved street maintenance – more greening– slower vehicle movements.” – Central London BID

“Very dirty, traffic dominated with exhaust fumes that have stained all the nearby buildings, barbed wire as I mentioned before. Very dark dingy and depressing place that people have told us they avoid. [Needs] large clean up, jet washing, new hoardings, covering barbed wire. Basically and complete regeneration and refresh of their area.” – Inner London BID

“There is a long tunnel which is a well used pedestrian link to shops and the river – but it is noisy, dark and polluted. There is very little greenery. [The street would benefit from] a new crossing to support access and the success of future use/enterprise in the railway arches, better lighting and noise mitigation in the tunnel to improve the connectivity between priority areas, and more urban greening – a big request from our business community.” – Central London BID

“[Needs] art projects to liven up the side of station which is a blank space and makes the road look dismal. Street furniture and planting on the East side of the road would re-energise this road and help to bring footfall to these businesses.” – Central London BID

Air quality and motor traffic are seen as an interconnected problem – BID quotes

“Very busy, noisy, hot in summer, windy in winter, suffers from poor air quality (particularly the northern end) and yet is one of the most historic streets in London. Visually, there is lots to see if one can be distracted from the poor pedestrian experience. We are already working across all our programmes to make the street better including [a scheme] to create interesting backstreet routes in historic yards and facade improvements through targeted help to landowners.

We would like to see greater changes to help reduce the traffic dominance of the street and make it easier for businesses located along the street to feel less hemmed in by through traffic.” – Central London BID

“Radical reduction of traffic to improve air quality. £200m public realm and traffic reduction scheme with the arrival of the Elizabeth Line.” – Central London BID

Motor traffic and congestion are bad for business and healthy streets – BID quotes

“An ideal spot for a pocket park with some seating and public realm improvements.

There are other areas that with a little thinking outside of the box could have a significant impact on business performance [...] The junction frequently has serious congestion as traffic gets stuck in the junction and the right filter does not allow movement. Vehicles are often sounding their horn creating a very disturbing junction for the businesses around. All it needs is a yellow box and a tweaking of the traffic signals to allow for a better flow.” – Outer London BID

“I would like to have been able to include the two main streets as both have significant ‘Healthy Streets’ issues. Both are currently frequently congested with backed-up traffic, polluted, difficult to cross, stressful for pedestrians to navigate, noisy and particularly in one case, dangerous for pedestrians owing to the quantity and size of vehicular traffic and the narrowness of the pavements (kerb damage in some areas illustrates this). All this is at odds with what is in essence a very attractive and historic environment with plenty to see and do, stop and rest etc.

These two streets should have much less congestion and pollution and associated noise, which impede enjoyment of what is otherwise a delightful area and raise health & safety concerns. Improving accessibility and addressing the problems associated with heavy traffic and overly-large vehicles thundering through our small streets to Central London would help pedestrians and cyclists feel relaxed and safe in our area, help us to be perceived as an attractive and desirable destination for shoppers and increase dwell-time in and therefore likely increase spend.” – Inner London BID

“[Needs] less domination by buses, buses at lower speeds, greening and improved cleansing, effective enforcement against illegal traders and buskers. All of these would encourage more visits to the town centre to enjoy a better quality environment in which to spend time.” – Outer London BID

Healthy streets must be a priority – BID quotes

“Public realm and traffic improvements should be implemented against all healthy street Indicators. Public realm and traffic management improvements/ greater priority for people, reduced priority for vehicles, improved links to [streets and squares].” – Central London BID

“Increase bus provision, safer access for cycling, provision of EV charging points.” – Outer London BID

Final comments

Finally, respondents were asked about their vision for the future, and any additional comments they would like to make about walking, cycling, and Healthy Streets.

The responses revealed an enthusiasm for Healthy Streets, alongside concerns and challenges around areas such as cycling safety. Lastly, one outer London BID mentioned pollution, stating that “polluting diesel vehicles must be reduced sooner rather than later.”



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