



A vision for kids streets

**Mayor of the
West Midlands**

Foreword

Every child in the West Midlands deserves safe, welcoming streets where they can walk, wheel, and cycle freely. For too many children, that freedom has been lost as streets have become dominated by traffic, pollution, and unsafe conditions. Kids Streets responds to this challenge.

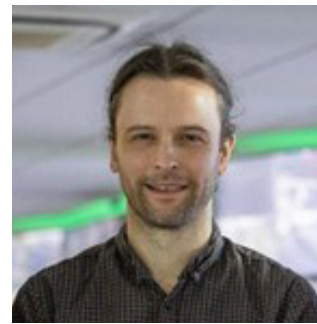
It commits us to empowering our children to help design their own streets, mitigating the dangers they are subject to from through traffic and creating a safer, healthier and more welcoming environment for their whole community. At its heart, Kids Streets is about safety.

It means reducing the potential for road harm, managing speeds, improving crossings, protecting pavements and creating places where children and families can move, play, and connect with confidence. Safer streets are not just a policy choice – they are a moral responsibility.

Kids Streets is also about opportunity. Calmer, greener streets support active travel, cleaner air, and better mental wellbeing, while helping tackle inequalities faced by disabled children, those in more deprived neighbourhoods, and families who rely on walking, wheeling or cycling. Working in partnership with local authorities, communities, and schools, this Vision builds on successes such as School Streets to scale change from individual streets to whole neighbourhoods.

By putting children and their communities at the heart of decisions, Kids Streets sets out a clear path to a healthier, fairer West Midlands.

“The Mayor has been clear that safer and healthier streets are essential to building a fairer and more prosperous West Midlands. This Vision for Kids Streets responds directly to that challenge. It sets out a shared ambition to design our streets through the eyes of children, recognising that when streets work for children, they work better for everyone.”



Mat MacDonald
Road Safety Commissioner



Becca Marston
Active Travel Commissioner



Our Vision



“Our streets should be attractive and welcoming places designed around, by and for children, enabling safe and independent movement while supporting opportunities to be active, play, and socialise within local neighbourhoods”



Our Vision



More Inclusive

Traffic-dominated streets can feel stressful and unsafe, with the greatest impact on children, parents, and people with mobility or sensory needs.

Kids Streets change this by calming traffic and creating more welcoming spaces where children can move and play with confidence.



Healthier

Children deserve streets that enable active movement and access to cleaner air.

Kids Streets improve local environments and make active travel an everyday choice, boosting physical and mental wellbeing in our communities.



Safer

Many of our streets prioritise traffic over people, creating environments that feel unsafe for children on their daily journeys.

Kids Streets put safety first, creating places where children can move, play and thrive.

Streets are the backbone of our towns and cities – the largest shared public space and the setting for everyday life. When designed through the eyes of children, they reveal what truly matters: safety, freedom, and joy.

Kids Streets go beyond the school gate, transforming neighbourhood streets into places where children can move, play, interact and learn.

By calming traffic and creating space for walking, wheeling and cycling, they support health, confidence, and social connection.

Co-developed with children and their communities and communities, these streets benefit everyone, with children's presence signalling safe, healthy, and thriving neighbourhoods.

Co-design will be at the heart of how we achieve this vision.

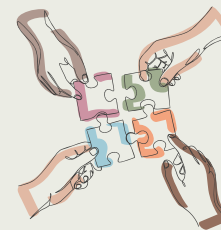
This will involve:



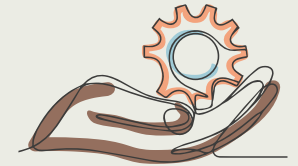
Giving children a voice



Inclusive Community Engagement



Co-creation and prioritisation



Community ownership and stewardship

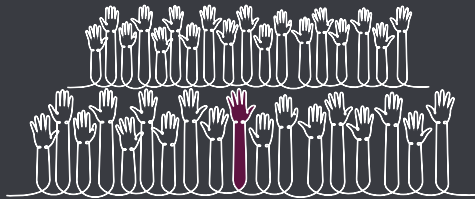


Safer Streets



Children deserve streets where they can walk, wheel, cycle, and play without fear. But in 2024 alone, 1,158 people were killed or seriously injured in the WMCA region and 15% of them were young people under 16, much higher than the national average. Behind every number is a family changed forever. Safer streets therefore cannot only be considered a policy choice; they are also a moral responsibility and an equity imperative.

We plan to change this. By empowering our children to identify and tackle the harms they face on our streets, we will better manage speeds, reallocate road space and make crossings safer. This will transform hostile roads into people friendly spaces where children thrive, and our communities feel safe and secure.



Nearly 1 in 400 children will be killed or seriously injured each year on the region's roads. 400 is the average school size.

Did you know?



Independent travel by primary school children was 86% in 1971, 35% in 1990 and down to 12% in 2014

1158

1,158 people were killed or seriously injured in the WMCA region in 2024



81% of children want quieter routes to walk, wheel and cycle, 78% of children want segregated bike lanes



More Inclusive Streets



Not all children experience our streets in the same way. For many – including disabled children, those growing up in more deprived neighbourhoods, or families who rely on walking, wheeling and cycling – everyday routes can feel inaccessible, unsafe, inhospitable, or simply not designed with them in mind.

These barriers limit independence, restrict access to play and community life, and deepen existing inequalities.

Kids Streets can help change this. By calming traffic, protecting pavements, improving crossings, and creating welcoming public spaces, we can ensure that every child moves confidently through their neighbourhood.

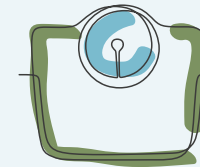
Streets designed with inclusivity at their core give all children the freedom, dignity, and sense of belonging they deserve – places that open opportunities rather than closing them off.



Did you know?

1 IN 8

1 in 8 households in the UK do not have access to outdoor space, making safe public areas vital for health and wellbeing



Childhood obesity affects 1 in 3 children in the poorest areas



17.8% of people in the West Midlands have a disability



Healthier Streets



Every child deserves streets that help them grow up healthy, confident, and free to explore their community. But today, too many of our neighbourhoods make that harder than it should be. Children are spending their early years surrounded by polluted air, fast traffic and a lack of safe space to move, play and express themselves. These conditions fuel inactivity and take a toll on their physical and mental wellbeing.

The data makes this impossible to ignore. The West Midlands has the highest percentage of reception-aged children who are obese in the country (11%), and by Year 6, nearly one in four children (24%) are overweight. Inactivity is not the only cause – but it is one of the most powerful, and one we can change.

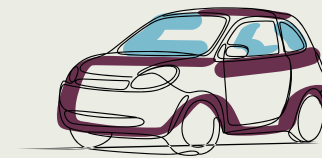
Kids Streets are part of the solution. When children have safe, welcoming places to walk, wheel, cycle, and play, they naturally become more active and breathe cleaner air. They feel more connected to their neighbourhood and to each other. These everyday experiences build stronger bodies, calmer minds, and healthier habits that last a lifetime.



Did you know?

44%

44% of children and young people in the West Midlands reported being physically active, the lowest of all regions in the country



More than 40% of children aged 5 to 10 are driven to school in England

2300

Up to 2300 early deaths every year in the West Midlands are attributable to long-term exposure to fine particulate matter

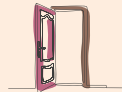


Achieving the Vision



We can deliver the Kids Streets vision by making physical changes to our streets, so they are safer, healthier, and more welcoming for children. This could include measures such as improved pedestrian crossings, protected cycle routes, planting trees, and other public realm enhancements.

By delivering place-based packages of measures, we will ensure neighbourhoods are safer, better connected and more pleasant places for children and their communities.

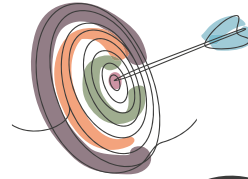


Neighbourhood Street Doorstep

However, we recognise that physical changes alone will not be sufficient. To ensure this vision becomes a reality, infrastructure improvements must be complemented by effective and targeted behaviour change initiatives.

We will learn from successes in the West Midlands and elsewhere to understand what has worked well and why. Giving children a voice, listening to their communities and working closely with them to co-design and deliver these improvements will be vital to their success.

The Vision



Physical Measures

Pedestrian crossings, protected cycling and walking paths, cycle parking, School Streets, modal filters, planters, benches, shade and shelter, play equipment, integrated art and design

Behaviour Change

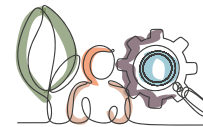
School and Community Engagement, Walk Wheel Cycle activation activities such as travel planning, Dr Bike, school active travel grants. Additional support from national and local charities, groups, and suppliers for targeted campaigns such as 'Walk once a week', Bikeability training, 'Park and stride', walking and bike buses, and play street events. Road safety campaigns, Community Speed Watch, and training.

Enforcement

Speed reduction measures, 20mph zones and limits, pavement parking bans, cameras to reduce through traffic



Community co-design



Tailored to communities needs



Apply best practice





We recognise that this vision will not be delivered overnight. This roadmap sets out the actions we will take in the coming months to build a strong foundation for long-term success.

3 – Test and Learn

What we learn through engagement will inform a programme of pilots and trials, enabling us to test different approaches, understand what works, where, and for whom, and refine solutions before wider rollout.

5 – Build momentum and scale success

By working together, we can build momentum, attract investment and scale up successful approaches. This marks the start of a long-term commitment to creating safer, healthier and more inclusive streets for every child in the West Midlands.

4 – Support delivery and embed Kids Streets locally

We will develop a clear delivery pathway for local authorities, setting out practical tools, guidance, and support to help embed Kids Streets within wider transport, planning, and neighbourhood programmes.

2 – Listen to Communities

We will start by listening—capturing the views, experiences and aspirations of children, families and local communities. This insight will help us understand local challenges and opportunities and ensure that interventions respond to real needs.

1 – Work in partnership to target the greatest impact

Over the coming months, we will work with local partners across the West Midlands to prioritise neighbourhoods where change can deliver the greatest benefits for children and families.





KIDS STREETS

Get in touch

If you want to find out more about our plans for Kids Streets:

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Kids Streets Vision produced with support from WSP Ltd

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Mayor of the West Midlands