

***Manual for Streets* is worthy in many respects but has its flaws**

The *Manual for Streets* (and now the *Eco-towns Prospectus*) recommends “in general” full permeability for all modes. In other words, cars should be allowed to go everywhere alongside walkers, cyclists and public transport users. We at Sustrans disagree. We believe that you will generally not encourage people to travel sustainably if you make car use as convenient or more so than walking, cycling (or taking the bus). In light of this fact, it is more than a little worrying to consider that over the next ten years or so a further three million homes are to be built following this guidance.

There are many reasons why *Manual for Streets* should be used (in residential areas at least) and because of this Sustrans generally supports the decision to recommend it in the *Eco-towns Prospectus* but there is a clear caveat needed here to ensure that this particular piece of advice on permeability is not adopted by practitioners.

In Groningen, the Netherlands, modal share for cycling is about 60%. Being a university town certainly has an effect but not nearly as great an effect as the gradual reallocation of road space they've implemented since the 1970s. With proper planning and design you can maximise 'footfall', which provides what designers and police call 'passive surveillance'. Sustainable modes can be made comparatively more convenient and security can be enhanced through prudent route allocation and permeability.

And it's not just newbuild neighbourhoods that could benefit from good design; through Sustrans' new DIY Streets pilot we are hoping to help residents in ten streets in the UK increase permeability for walkers and cyclists by making the street environment safer and more attractive.

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