

# Interim Highway Authority Strategic Design Objectives And Strategic Design Policies

Southwark Streetscape Design Manual

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*Note: This document is a published version of a report agreed by individual decision of the relevant Cabinet member on 31.10.2012. All photos are new insertions not included in the original report.*

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## Introduction

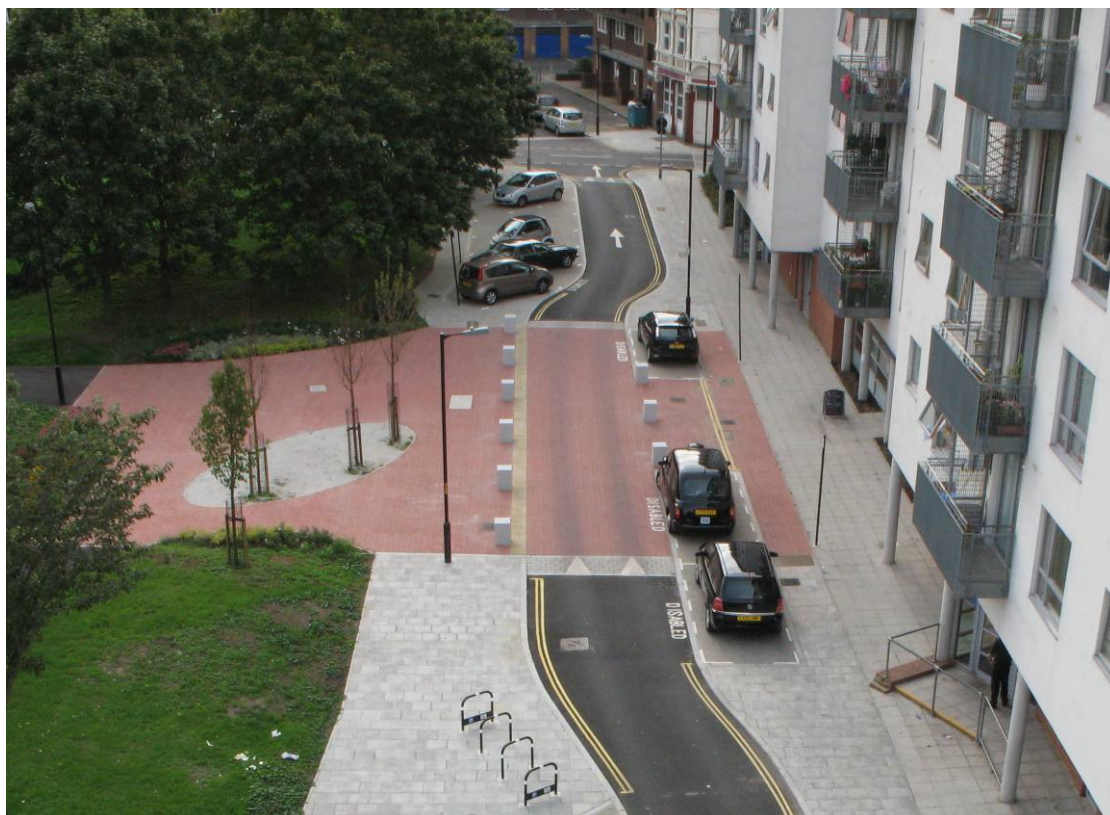
In March and April of 2011, the public were consulted on the draft Southwark Streetscape Design Manual (SSDM) Framework Plan (formerly known as the SSDM Summary Guide). This included a series of [Strategic Design Objectives \(Objectives\)](#) and [Strategic Design Policies \(Policies\)](#). These were developed following a substantial evidence base review so as to be both supportive and supported by wider policy, strategy, duties and research. This review can be found as background information to the main IDM report to which this document is an Appendix.

The Objectives and Policies are intended to perform a number of important functions for the council acting as Highway Authority as part of the wider SSDM:

- The [Policies](#) will provide the basis and justification for the adoptable Highway design standards and other operational requirements set out in SSDM Part 2 (Technical Information) documents. These documents will be agreed under delegated authority by Chief Officer or Head of Service decision in accordance with the constitution. However, all will need to be consistent, on balance, with the various Policies. This helps strike a balance between the ability to constantly grow and evolve our design requirements on many detailed technical matters whilst maintaining consistency with publicly agreed positions.
- The [Policies](#) will be used within the design process for individual schemes to provide evidence of reasonable decision making for audit trail purposes related to Road Safety Audits (RSAs). These are commonly conducted on design proposals to help demonstrate that the Highway Authority is meeting statutory duties in relation to the promotion of road safety. Exceptionally, where it is felt that scheme proposals cannot be adjusted to satisfy concerns raised by Auditors without compromising the wider scheme objectives, then a risk:benefit analysis will be undertaken to assess impact on balance across all the [Policies](#). This will help us to determine how to proceed.
- A set of Design Indicators related to the [Policies](#) will be developed and included in SSDM Part 2 (Technical Information) content. Targets for improvements against these will be set for projects at their outset and proposals assessed against these throughout their development. This will allow the Highway Authority to monitor and demonstrate how it is fulfilling these [Policies](#). Similarly, a series of Monitoring Indicators will be established to assess and monitor outcomes related to [Objectives](#).

Further to completion of the public consultation on the draft SSDM Framework Plan and an associated Equalities and Rights Impact Assessment, the [Strategic Design Objectives](#) and [Strategic Design Policies](#) have been reviewed in light of findings. This has led to a number of changes to the draft versions as well as the introduction of some new [Policies](#). Further information about this review can be found in background information documents to the main IDM report to which this document is an Appendix.

As a separate outcome of the public consultation on the draft SSDM Framework Plan it is recommended that the Framework Plan be progressed as a Supplementary Planning Document. This is so that it can be given greater weight by the Council acting as Local Planning Authority when making decisions related to applications for Town and Country Planning Consent. Due to statutory requirements, this will take several years.



**So as not to delay agreement of the proposed amended Strategic Design Objectives and Strategic Design Policies by the Council acting as Highway Authority for their non-planning purposes, it is proposed that these are agreed by the Cabinet Member for Environment, Transport and Recycling by individual decision as Interim Highway Authority Strategic Design Objectives and Strategic Design Policies – to be superseded by those in the future SSDM Framework Plan SPD once this is agreed.**

*[Note: the above recommendation was approved by individual decision of the relevant Cabinet member on 31.10.2012]*

The proposed Interim Highway Authority [Strategic Design Objectives](#) and [Strategic Design Policies](#) presented for agreement are explained in the following sections along with an overall Vision Statement.

## Our Strategic Design Objectives

The **Objectives** are the improvements that we hope the physical changes we make will bring about. They are:

- [SDO1: More inclusive and accessible streets](#)
- [SDO2: Greater active travel in streets and healthier lifestyles for residents](#)
- [SDO3: Improved road safety and reduced road danger](#)
- [SDO4: Enhanced permeability and journey experience for all street users](#)
- [SDO5: Visually simplified street layouts](#)
- [SDO6: More sociable streets and spaces](#)
- [SDO7: Economic enhancement of communities](#)
- [SDO8: Greener streets that are better adapted to climate change and more attractive and comfortable to walk, cycle and socialise in.](#)
- [SDO9: Increased security and community confidence](#)
- [SDO10: Greater sustainability in our use of resources](#)



## Our Strategic Design Policies

Each of the above [Objectives](#) is supported by one or more [Policies](#). These describe the physical changes we intend to make that we think will help achieve the [Objectives](#). They are as explained below. As discussed above, SSDM Part 2 (Technical Information) documents that explain our detailed requirements will be developed giving due regard to all these [Policies](#). Whilst it might not be possible for those documents to satisfy every aspect of every [Policy](#) all of the time, we will endeavour to show that their requirements strike the best balance. Notwithstanding this, we will also implement a [Departure Procedure](#) to ensure that where a reasonable case can be made for [Departing](#) from our detailed requirements, this can be considered and permitted where appropriate.

- [SDPi Levels](#)  
Require level access for pedestrians along footways, at crossing points over ways for vehicles and at boundaries with private properties. Require side road crossings in new streets to be located on raised tables for ease of crossing by pedestrians and introduce this on existing streets where possible. Require new vehicle crossovers in footways to be raised so that the main surface is at grade with the footways to either side.
- [SDPii Obstructions](#)  
Require intrusions within footways from all street furniture, vegetation, and vehicle parking to be removed where possible in order to achieve passing widths appropriate to the area and the likely level of pedestrian flow encountered there. Require that remaining items of street furniture are appropriately conspicuous for visually impaired users.
- [SDPiii Rest opportunities](#)  
Require benches or informal seating opportunities for less mobile pedestrians to be introduced along streets to help them with their journeys. Set spacings in relation to the distances those users are likely to be able to walk between needing rests. Require at least one item of seating in any grouping to have armrests and back rests.
- [SDPiv Pedestrian crossings](#)  
Require frequent and direct opportunities at junctions and along links for vulnerable and less mobile pedestrians to cross the street, ensuring that such locations have hazard warning aids and appropriate levels of conflict control. Require special consultation with equalities target groups in any exceptional circumstances when it may be proposed to remove existing controlled crossing facilities.

- [SDPv Maintaining safe, navigable and vehicle free paths through streets and spaces for vulnerable pedestrians](#)

Irrespective of whether some parts of the street are to be shared by pedestrians and vehicles, require direct and convenient pedestrian-only routes also to be provided for the comfort of more vulnerable people unless exceptional grounds can be demonstrated. Require these routes to be delineated with hazard warning and navigation aids that are (a) supported by the majority of local and national organisations representing vulnerable pedestrians (b) validated by robust independent research as being readily identifiable by vulnerable users and/or (c) prescribed for that purpose in national guidance on accessible street design. Should acceptable alternative delineators to vertical kerbs be identified then (d) only permit the replacement of kerbs with these in existing streets when this is supported by the majority of respondents following consultation and (e) involve vulnerable user groups closely in the design process. Require a distinction to be maintained between pedestrian only areas and those which vehicles can use which is both visually and tactilely clear. Implement these measures consistently so that streets are predictable for vulnerable pedestrians.

- [SDPvi Street user priority](#)

Prioritise street users in our decision making in the following order of descending importance: disabled and vulnerable pedestrians, other pedestrians, cyclists, public transport and community transport, freight vehicles, taxis, powered-two-wheelers, private cars. Ensure that representative consultation takes place with disabled and vulnerable pedestrians where proposed departures from our design standards could impact significantly upon them.



- [SDPvii Supporting children and young people's right to play and congregate in public space and travel independently](#)  
 Require the provision of safe conditions for independent travel by foot for children of all ages and for young people's independent travel by pedal cycle. Support their right to play or congregate civilly in public spaces. In quiet, low speed environments, make provision on or off carriageway for informal play space where this is requested or no alternative opportunities exist. Support the introduction of bespoke street furniture where this would be for the interest or enjoyment of children and young people.
- [SDPviii Road danger reduction](#)  
 Require proposals to tackle safety concerns by addressing the things that are the root cause of actual or perceived danger (rather than restricting users likely to be impacted by those dangers). Require that safety improvements provide enhanced conditions for pedestrians, pedal cyclists and social activities, rather than solving safety issues by designing these users and activities out.
- [SDPix Encouraging sharing of carriageway space by vehicle users whilst reducing conflict on footways](#)  
 Require proposals to create conditions so that pedal cyclists and other vehicles can safely and comfortably share carriageways, so avoiding potential conflict with pedestrians and associated street clutter on footways.
- [SDPx Enhancing permeability for all modes of transport](#)  
 Require proposals to provide permeability for all modes of transport giving due regard to our street user hierarchy ([SDPvi Street user priority](#)) and with a particular focus on access to town centres and public transport facilities.
- [SDPxi Creating the conditions for smooth journeys at consistent low speeds](#)  
 Require proposals to create conditions that support consistent low speed travel at 20mph or less for all types of vehicles, giving due regard to our street user hierarchy ([SDPvi Street user priority](#)). At the same time attempt to remove sources of unnecessary delay, physical discomfort and stopping and starting for both pedestrians and vehicles.
- [SDPxii Visual clutter reduction](#)  
 Require proposals to avoid visual clutter from street furniture, traffic signs and road markings, coloured road surfaces and needless changes in paving materials by reducing and removing this when it is found - particularly where there is no mandatory requirement for it and where hazards are readily foreseeable to street users.
- [SDPxiii Enhancing sense of place](#)  
 Require proposals to be configured (a) so that these make buildings, greenery and the social activities that take place in or around these appear as the most noticeable elements of streets and spaces (not traffic infrastructure, signs or road markings) and (b) to achieve a clear unobstructed visual relationship between these areas and the carriageway.
- [SDPxiv Vibrancy, vitality and opportunities for interaction](#)  
 Require provision to be made for relevant social uses on all streets alongside traffic and movement functions. In doing so, design in provision for incidental social interaction wherever possible to address social isolation, increase sense of community, and make it more attractive for people to walk and cycle. Ensure that new social and community spaces are designed to be inclusive of the needs of vulnerable people so that they are able to safely and comfortably take part in public life.



- [SDPxv Expanding vehicle traffic free space and the wider pedestrian realm](#)  
Require unused or unjustified carriageway space to be reclaimed to provide opportunities for street greenery and pedestrian and social activity which is free of vehicle traffic, or to help reduce vehicle speeds. Try to redesign parts of existing streets used by vehicles for easier use by pedestrians.
- [SDPxvi Respecting historic assets and local distinctiveness](#)  
Require historic street elements to be maintained unless they adversely impact accessibility or have onerous maintenance implications. Enhance such assets where possible within the limits of available budgets and our statutory duty to maintain the highway to satisfactory standards. Retain existing locally distinct street elements or other unique aspects of character outside of our standards where these are of value.
- [SDPxvii Bringing streets up to specification area standard](#)  
Require existing sub-standard street furniture, surface materials and design details to be replaced or upgraded so that they meet or exceed the relevant Specification Area standard. Apply Specification Area standards consistently and irrespective of existing local precedents - except where these are of particular heritage value or are locally distinct and accepted to be of value.
- [SDPxviii Increasing tree canopy coverage to address climate change and improving our planting practice](#)  
In new streets and spaces and other existing streets and spaces undergoing significant redevelopment, require substantial levels of tree canopy coverage to help control urban temperatures and mitigate flood risk. Adopt a “quality over quantity” approach to planting, setting standards that will (a) encourage the use of larger species (b) reduce maintenance issues with surrounding pavements (c) prevent the creation of potential accessibility issues and (d) significantly increase the expected life span and ultimate canopy size of trees. Require that new tree installation meet these standards in full, paying particular attention to provision of soil and moisture volumes large enough to sustain trees at maturity.



- [SDPxix Mitigating flood risk and improving water quality](#)  
In order to mitigate flood risk, require new streets and spaces to include acceptable surface water attenuation and/or infiltration measures for surface run off from the public highway, whilst retaining suitable conventional drainage systems to reduce impact should the capacity of these systems be exceeded. Require similar measures to existing streets and spaces where these are within catchments where a flood risk exists. Consider proposals by developers to allow infiltration or attenuation of run of from private land within the existing public highway where they are willing to fund associated improvements. In order to improve water quality, require new streets and spaces and other existing spaces undergoing substantial improvement to include bio-retention features to treat initial surface run-off, favouring the use of soil volumes for street trees and other soft landscaped areas.
- [SDPxx Caring for green spaces](#)  
Where residents request new areas of street planting within the highway that might not be feasible due to limited maintenance funding, encourage local organisations to plant, adopt and maintain these areas themselves, providing suitably robust long-term maintenance arrangements can be agreed, appropriate species are used, and funding for planting is available. Where areas of soft landscaping are proposed in association with new developments, require commuted sums to be provided to cover long-term maintenance.
- [SDPxxi Personal safety and enforcement](#)  
Require design improvements to be configured so that residents and visitors feel safe to use all streets and are not deterred from visiting particular areas by personal safety concerns. Design out circumstances that may promote social conflict between people using streets that could escalate into incidents. Design prohibitions intelligently to minimise signage and road marking clutter whilst keeping these enforceable.
- [SDPxxii Sustainability of materials](#)  
Move towards requiring that the products and materials used in the highway and the suppliers of these have third party accreditation to national or international standards for responsible supply chain sourcing and management and product environmental performance. Be realistic when setting requirements for individual markets taking account of their state of development and particular regulatory constraints. Utilise products and overall constructions with the lowest whole-life environmental impact.
- [SDPxxiii Maintenance and adoption](#)  
Require materials and methods of construction to be used that can be maintained and obtained with a level of ease appropriate to the importance of their area of use. Ensure all longer term maintenance costs associated with improvements are understood and that associated sums to cover these are obtained to reduce the burden on the public purse. Require features to be designed to minimise the potential obstruction to traffic that may be required as a result of maintenance works to them or reinstatement following utilities works by statutory undertakers. Require proposals to design out existing traffic furniture and traffic signs and avoid the introduction of new instances through appropriate design. Require all new streets and spaces that will be used as if they were highway to be designed and constructed to adoptable standards, irrespective of whether it is intended to offer them for public adoption at that time. Adopt all new streets and spaces that will be used as if they were highway where these are designed and constructed to adoptable standards or can be brought up to these at the landowner's expense.

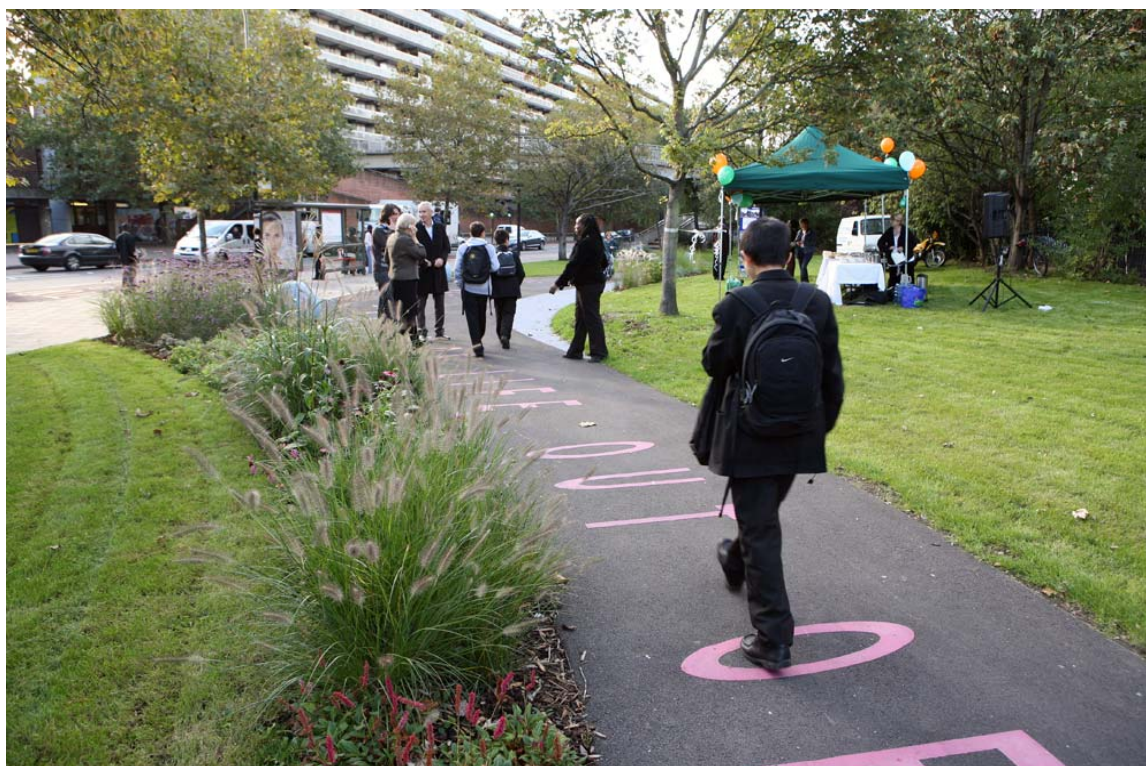
## The Relationship between the Objectives and Policies

Figure 1 shows which **Policies** support which **Objectives**. Individual **Policies** can contribute towards meeting more than one **Objective**.

## Our Vision

Our chosen **Objectives** and **Policies** have led us to the following guiding **Vision Statement**. This encapsulates the type of environments that we want the SSDM to achieve. All those proposing improvements to the highway are encouraged to bear this in mind when developing their proposals:

**Southwark's streets and spaces will be safer, better maintained, greener spaces for living and movement, with reduced vehicle dominance and less obtrusive street clutter. Wherever possible they will use green infrastructure to manage environmental challenges whilst at the same time providing softening landscaping. They will encourage local communities to take pride in their surroundings and promote courteous and considerate behaviour from all street users.**



Strategic Design Policies		SDO1	SDO2	SDO3
SDPi	Levels	✓	✓	✓
SDPii	Obstructions	✓	✓	
SDPiii	Rest opportunities	✓	✓	
SDPiv	Crossings	✓	✓	✓
SDPv	Maintaining safe, navigable and vehicle free paths through streets and spaces for vulnerable pedestrians	✓	✓	✓
SDPvi	Street user priority–		✓	
SDPvii	Supporting children and young people’s right to play and congregate in public space and travel independently	✓	✓	✓
SDPviii	Road danger reduction	✓	✓	✓
SDPix	Encouraging sharing of carriageway space by vehicle users whilst reducing conflict on footways	✓		✓
SDPx	Enhancing permeability for all modes of transport	✓	✓	
SDPxi	Creating the conditions for smoother journeys at consistent low speeds	✓	✓	✓
SDPxii	Visual clutter reduction		✓	
SDPxiii	Enhancing sense of place		✓	
SDPxiv	Vibrancy, vitality and opportunities for interaction	✓	✓	
SDPxv	Expanding vehicle traffic free space and the wider pedestrian realm	✓	✓	✓
SDPxvi	Respecting historic assets and local distinctiveness			
SDPxvii	Bringing streets up to specification area standard			
SDPxviii	Increasing tree canopy coverage to address climate change and improving our planting practice		✓	
SDPxix	Mitigating flood risk and improving water quality			
SDPxx	Caring for green spaces		✓	
SDPxxi	Personal safety and enforcement	✓	✓	
SDPxxii	Sustainability of materials			
SDPxxiii	Maintenance			

Figure 1. Relationship between Interim Highway Authority Strategic Design Objectives and Strategic Design Policies

Strategic Design Objectives						
SDO4	SDO5	SDO6	SDO7	SDO8	SDO9	SDO10
✓						
✓						
✓		✓			✓	
✓						
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