



# Healthy Streets Transport Assessments

## A Vital Step Along the Road to Net Carbon Zero

In June this year, to much fanfare and publicity, the Government formalised a legal commitment to achieve Net Carbon Zero (NCZ) by 2050, which goes well beyond the previous UK commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by the same year. This is without doubt a huge commitment that, if it is going to be achieved, will require significant changes to planning, development, and transport. The construction industry and all its related professions will have to adapt to inevitable sweeping changes in policies, standards and legislation that will be required to ensure new development makes its contribution to NCZ.

It seems an obvious point that transport will be particularly affected by NCZ, given that transport accounts for a third of UK greenhouse gas emissions, with the majority of this coming from road transport. Some 12 or so months prior to the government's commitment to NCZ, Sadiq Khan, the Mayor of London, published his Transport Strategy for the City (the MTS), at the heart of which is the Healthy Streets agenda and a target to achieve 80% of all trips within London by public transport, walking and cycling by 2041.

Some two months prior to the NCZ announcement, TfL formally launched its new Healthy Streets Transport Assessment guidance which represents a radical overhaul of the old guidance requiring much-increased focus on the needs of pedestrians and cyclists in the way developments are designed and the way in which developments are assessed in terms of impacts.



The needs of pedestrians and cyclists are paramount in the new guidance, a big part of which is concerned with Active Travel Zone assessments - an analysis of the walking and cycling accessibility of an area covered by a 20 minute cycle from the site! A more detailed analysis then follows of a smaller zone along key agreed routes to various destinations. It is expected that improvements are identified along the routes audited for consideration by TfL and the Borough, albeit there would not necessarily be an expectation that the same developer paying for the Transport Assessment (TA) would fund the improvements. The forthcoming lifting of Section 106 pooling restrictions will help in this regard, where numerous other nearby planned schemes could also contribute.

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The new guidance requires much greater focus on the role that transport planning has played in the evolution of the development design and calls for much more detail regarding exactly how pedestrians and cyclists will access the site and travel to and from it for the various trip purposes. At the heart of the guidance is a requirement for a Transport Assessment to demonstrate how a development supports the Healthy Streets agenda and thus contributes to the headline 80% by sustainable modes target. It must also explain how the proposed layout and the surrounding streets accord with the various Healthy Streets indicators that are identified in the MTS.

Trip generation analysis is still required albeit this now focuses almost exclusively on sustainable modes, with the expectation that car parking provision at most new developments will be restricted to Blue Badge only, thus almost negating the need for road and junction capacity modelling.

'Vision Zero' is another key facet of the MTS and now also the TA guidance. This strategy seeks to eliminate deaths and serious injuries on London's roads by 2041 and in so doing compliments the 80% MTS sustainable modes target, since safer roads should equate to higher levels of walking and cycling generally.

CEC wholeheartedly welcomes the new TfL TA guidance and believes that it forms an important step along the road to NCZ. We are already engaged on numerous schemes where we are putting the new guidance into practice. The enhanced focus on the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users is supported and has reinforced to our transport planners the importance of the work that they do, and how now, more than ever before, they must stand up and be counted to ensure that the projects they are working on achieve genuinely good outcomes for people and the environment; that is, developments that are accessible with attractive and safe streets and public spaces, in locations close to amenities and high quality public transport and cycle routes, and where the need for car travel is all but obsolete.



**Bristol Office**  
160 Aztec, Aztec West  
Almondsbury  
Bristol  
BS32 4TU  
Tel: 01454 800 474  
Email: [br@ColeEasdon.com](mailto:br@ColeEasdon.com)

**COLE EASDON CONSULTANTS**  
TRANSPORT PLANNING ~ WATER MANAGEMENT  
CIVIL ENGINEERING  
BRISTOL & SWINDON

**Swindon Office (Head Office)**  
Unit 2, York House  
Edison Park, Dorcan Way  
Swindon, Wiltshire  
SN3 3RB  
Tel: 01793 619 965  
Email: [sn@ColeEasdon.com](mailto:sn@ColeEasdon.com)

[www.ColeEasdon.com](http://www.ColeEasdon.com)

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