

Children in Scotland

every child - every childhood

23 March 2009

Transport Admin Team
Scottish Government
Area 2-E
Victoria Quay
EDINBURGH
EH6 6QQ

Dear Sir or Madam,

DESIGNING STREETS

Children in Scotland represents over 400 statutory, voluntary and professional organisations concerned with promoting the best interests of children and young people. We welcome the opportunity to comment on the consultation document 'Designing Streets'. Much of the document deals with technical considerations on which we would not feel competent to comment. We are therefore responding by letter as we wish to make a few points relating to the particular needs of children and young people.

1. We note that reference is made to examples of involvement of young people in street design. We commend and encourage this, and wish to emphasise that even young children can contribute meaningfully to such processes. *Children in Scotland* has undertaken several significant consultations directly with children and young people. Useful examples of these are the current Access All Areas project in Scottish Borders and our extensive work in North Ayrshire last year about the operation of the Additional Support for Learning Act. Information on both of these can be found on our website (www.childreninscotland.org.uk).
2. Safety for children and young people is of paramount importance. Sadly, for many children nowadays this is seen as synonymous with

restriction of outdoor play and activity. The design of streets, particularly in residential areas, should encourage safe use by children of the outside environment. This should include space for safe on-street play and safe routes for children to walk or cycle to accessible off-street play provision. Particular attention should be paid to streets adjacent to buildings where children are the main users, such as schools and nurseries. The needs of specific groups should also be considered such as young children in buggies, children in wheelchairs, and children with visual impairment. These issues are addressed in Scotland's *Child Safety Strategy* (www.rospea.com/news/scotland/css_dec07.pdf), developed by the Scottish Alliance for Child Safety.

3. Traffic speeds around schools and nurseries, and in residential areas, should be restricted. While 20 mph zones operate in numerous areas, this is still insufficiently low to avoid injury to a child struck by a motor vehicle. Other European countries limit vehicle speed to walking pace in residential areas. Lower limits should be considered.
4. Adequate safe provision for cyclists should be part of any good street design process. This should encompass discrete cycle paths as well as ensuring maximum protection for cyclists where street facilities are shared with other street and roadway users. Increasing the number of children who cycle regularly will have both individual health and wider environmental benefits.
5. Street design must consider appearance as well as functionality, and promote community cohesion. Children and young people should be viewed as valued members of their communities, and communal space should encourage positive interaction among all sectors of communities.

I hope this is helpful. Please contact me if you have any questions (mmacleod@childreninscotland.org.uk, 0131 222 2435).

Yours sincerely,

MARION MACLEOD
Senior Policy and Parliamentary Officer

Children in Scotland is Scotland's national agency for organisations and professionals working with and for children, young people and their families. It exists to identify and promote the interests of children and their families and to ensure that policies and services and other provisions are of the highest possible quality and are able to meet the needs of a diverse society. Children in Scotland represents more than 450 members, including 90% of Scottish Local Authorities, all major voluntary, statutory and private children's agencies, professional organisations, as well as many other smaller community groups and children's services. It is linked with similar agencies in other parts of the UK and the European Union.

The work of Children in Scotland encompasses extensive information, policy, research and practice development programmes. The agency works closely with MSPs, the Scottish Government, local authorities and practitioners. It also services groups such as the Cross Party Parliamentary Group on Children and Young People (with YouthLink Scotland). In addition, Children in Scotland hosts Enquire - the national advice service for additional support for learning, and Resolve:ASL, Scotland's largest independent education mediation service.