

ENGLISH HERITAGE

Undertaking Street Audits

David Grech

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Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire & Norfolk



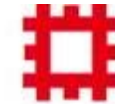
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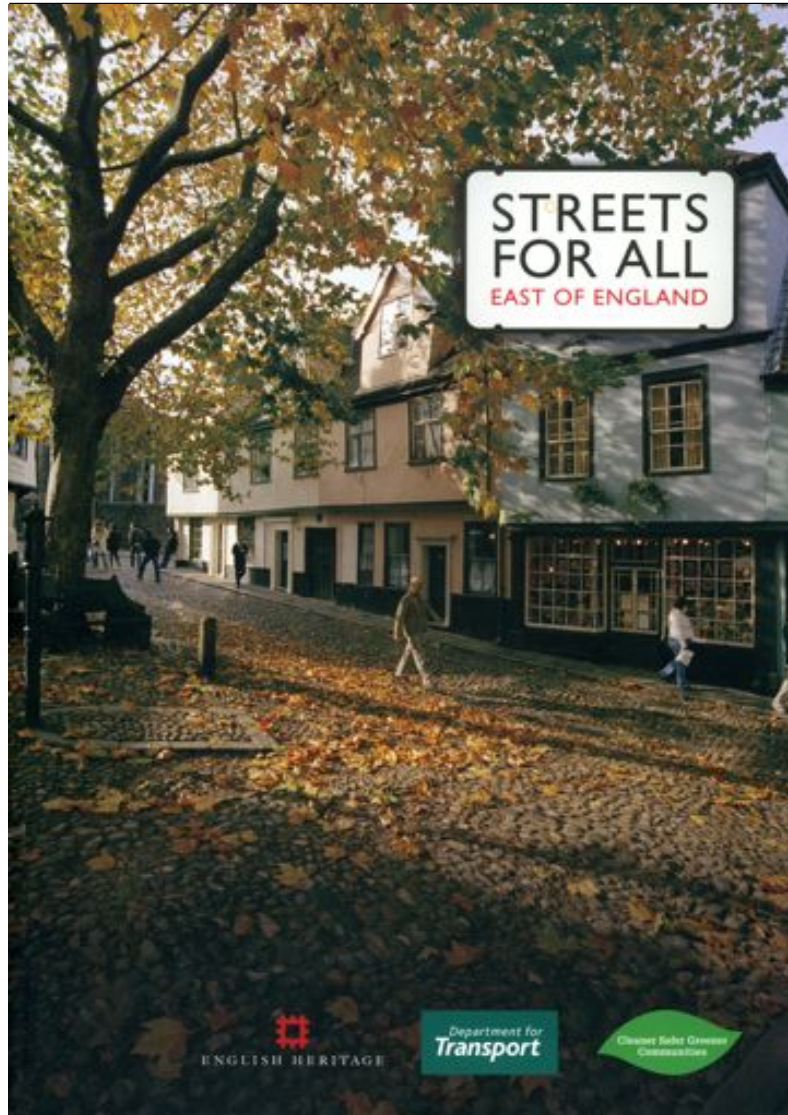
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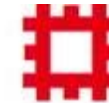


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“A street or public space can be thought of as an ‘outdoor room’.....”

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ENGLISH HERITAGE – STREETS FOR ALL: PRACTICAL CASE STUDY 10

ENGLISH HERITAGE – STREETS FOR ALL: PRACTICAL CASE STUDY 10

10 How to do a street audit

The purpose of a street audit is to look at the quality of the street environment in an objective way. It enables each of the elements within it to be valued in accordance with their purpose and quality. A range of toolkits is available for both the professional and community to use. The range and type of audit requirements will depend on the criteria and final use for which the appraisal is intended, but generally speaking they involve consulting a range of people so as to include a broad spectrum of views, often beyond the usual highway engineer's expertise. The common audit toolkits deal with aesthetic as well as functional issues. Some examples are given below.

A Streetscape Visual Audit – Used to identify areas of clutter within the street which are in need of removal or simplification. They can be carried out by almost anyone but for credibility's sake the auditors must have some knowledge of the need and purpose of signing. English Heritage has a standard form to download from their website which gives a basic checklist to cover and is aimed primarily at non-experts, for example local people and community groups.

B Townscape/landscape and visual impact assessment – Used to analyse and compare proposal options which will have an impact on their surrounding environment. It can be used as part of a planning application to objectively analyse proposals under standard criteria and methods of assessment. The Landscape Institute and Highways Agency have each produced their own standard form of assessment which is adaptable for use in larger scheme appraisals.

C Walkability & Community Street Audit – These can be carried out by members of the public, local stakeholders or by consultants who wish to assess the existing walking conditions of the local street environment. Living Streets has published a guidance document on organising and undertaking one.

D Pedestrian Environment Review System (PERS) – This is an assessment toolkit developed by TRL which enables the pedestrian environment to be reviewed under a wide range of topics, for example links, crossings, routes, public transport, interchanges and public space.

E Placecheck – Developed by the cross professional group Urban Design Alliance (UDAL), 'Placecheck' is a method of assessing the qualities of a place, showing what improvements are needed, and focusing people on working together to achieve them.

F Transport Asset Management Plans – Since October 2005 local highway authorities are required to gather and retain detailed information regarding the street to ensure capital funding and existing assets are used as efficiently and effectively as possible. This maintains a live record of street materials and furniture. Guidelines are published by the County Surveyors Society.

G Other techniques include cycle audits, safety audits and accessibility audits.

Within more sensitive heritage locations an Asset Management Plan may need to be adapted to combine with detailed audits of the street furniture and materials that may hold historic value. These may record information such as the furniture type, location, material, its condition in relation to its surrounding and the contribution it gives to its local environment. A detailed database of information covering the entire borough/county could eventually be created and a site specific strategy developed to safeguard important features which are currently unable to be listed. These can be GIS based and linked to ground level or low level aerial photographs.

General Advice

- 1 Using a street audit is a thorough and inclusive way of assessing the local environment which can then influence small scale improvements to the street, for example, the 'London Borough of Southwark' Street Leader initiative.
- 2 A street audit can be a time consuming task to organise and undertake, but can be very worthwhile, especially if the public or local stakeholders, particularly disabled people, are involved. It is important to make sufficient time and financial allowances available to ensure it is done thoroughly.
- 3 An audit is a rewarding exercise and should be enjoyable for all concerned. Make sure participants get feedback and that opportunities for change identified are given due attention and followed up.

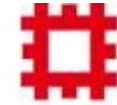
Procedures

- 1 The need for a street audit should be identified at the beginning of a project to enable sufficient resources to be made available. Decide on whether it is a group or individual based event.
- 2 Establish the parameters of the audit in order to address the needs of the project.
- 3 Contact all interested parties, for example client, colleagues, stakeholders and public that need to be involved.
- 4 Prepare mapping and recording material. Ordnance survey plans are usually suitable. Disposable cameras are useful for community groups. Order a topographical survey of the study area to be undertaken, if this will assist with establishing the precise locations of particular street elements of interest.
- 5 Prepare the data sheet that is to be filled in on the day using a standard form or adapting/creating your own to best suit your needs.
- 6 Work out the route you intend to follow. Even if the audit is only to be undertaken by yourself and a colleague it is important to be thorough and a defined route will help achieve this.
- 7 After carrying out the audit all parties involved should meet to give general feedback and thoughts.
- 8 Prepare a report which details and summarises the findings, and drawings/photographs may be helpful.

Relevant Documents and Legislation

- Save Our Streets – Street Clutter Audit, English Heritage, <http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/saveourstreets>
- Manual for Streets, Chapter 3 The design process – from policy to implementation, DfT 2007
- Living Streets DIY Community Street Audit Pack, London: Living Streets, 2003
- Highways Agency HD42 Non-Motorised User Audits – Volume 5 Sections 2 Part 5, Design Manual for Roads and Bridges, London: TSO, 2005
- Highways Agency HD19 Road Safety Audit – Volume 5 Section 2 Part 2, Design Manual for Roads and Bridges, London: TSO, 2003
- Design Manual for Roads and Bridges Volume 11 Section 3 Part 5 Landscape Effects, Highways Agency www.standardsforhighways.co.uk/dmrb/index.htm
- Placecheck, Urban Design Alliance UDAL, www.placecheck.info
- Institution of Highways and Transportation (IHT) (1998) Cycle Audit and Cycle Review, London: IHT.
- Department for Transport (2002) Inclusive Mobility A Guide to Best Practice on Access to Pedestrian and Transport Infrastructure, London: Department for Transport.
- PERS (Pedestrian Environment Review System), TRL, www.trlsoftware.co.uk
- Well maintained Highways, Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance Management, UK Roads Board, 2005, TSO
- Manual for Historic Streets, English Historic Towns Forum, May 2008
- Traffic Management and Streetscape LTN 1/08 Department for Transport, March 2008
- All regional Streets for All guidance documents produced by English Heritage.

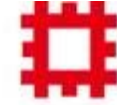
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Procedure

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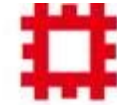


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Procedure

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2. Establish the parameters of the audit in order to address the needs of the project.

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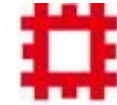


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2. Establish the parameters of the audit in order to address the needs of the project.
3. Contact all interested parties that need to be involved.

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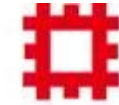


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5. Prepare the data sheet that is to be filled in during the audit – either using a standard form or adapting/creating your own.

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6. Work out the route you intend to follow.

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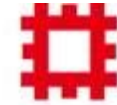


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7. After completing the audit all parties involved should meet to give general feedback and thoughts.

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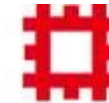


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6. Work out the route you intend to follow.
7. After completing the audit all parties involved should meet to give general feedback and thoughts.
8. Prepare a report which details and summarises the findings. Maps/plans and photographs are likely to be helpful.

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Street clutter audit

Streets don't have to be an obstacle course, and you can do something about it!

- Carry out an audit on a street near you – where you live or shop, go to school or to work.
- Send it to your local council. It'll let them know that you care about the quality of your surroundings.
- Ask friends, relations and colleagues to do the same – the more people doing this the more likely it is to make a difference.

How can I help?

Do this audit on a street near you – don't forget to write down where it is! Just put a cross **X** for every bad example you see. If we have missed anything use the empty space to tell us (draw or write).

What do I do next?














Send this audit to one of your local councillors

They are the elected representatives for your area on the local council. You can find out who they are by telephoning the council (the number is in the phone book) or by entering your postcode at www.upmystreet.com

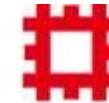
When you've completed the audit, fill in your own name and address, and post it to your councillor.

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Street _____ Town _____	Tell us if you have a special point of view: are you... Carer with buggy <input type="checkbox"/> Unsure on foot <input type="checkbox"/> Wheelchair user <input type="checkbox"/> Other? _____
Paving  <input type="checkbox"/> Messy <input type="checkbox"/> Broken or uneven <input type="checkbox"/> Badly repaired Anything else? _____	Obtrusive adverts  <input type="checkbox"/> Too many <input type="checkbox"/> On walls <input type="checkbox"/> On bus shelters Anything else? _____
Signs  <input type="checkbox"/> Too many <input type="checkbox"/> In the way <input type="checkbox"/> Ugly Anything else? _____	Street lighting  <input type="checkbox"/> Too much <input type="checkbox"/> Not enough <input type="checkbox"/> In the way <input type="checkbox"/> Covered in graffiti
Guardrails  <input type="checkbox"/> Too many <input type="checkbox"/> In the way <input type="checkbox"/> Not right for here Anything else? _____	Benches  <input type="checkbox"/> Broken <input type="checkbox"/> In the way <input type="checkbox"/> Not right for here <input type="checkbox"/> Covered in graffiti
Telephone boxes  <input type="checkbox"/> Broken <input type="checkbox"/> In the way <input type="checkbox"/> Not right for here <input type="checkbox"/> Covered in adverts or graffiti	Plant containers  <input type="checkbox"/> Broken <input type="checkbox"/> In the way <input type="checkbox"/> Not right for here <input type="checkbox"/> Covered in adverts or graffiti
Bollards  <input type="checkbox"/> Broken <input type="checkbox"/> In the way <input type="checkbox"/> Not right for here <input type="checkbox"/> Covered in adverts or graffiti	Anything else? _____ _____ _____
Litter bins  <input type="checkbox"/> Broken <input type="checkbox"/> In the way <input type="checkbox"/> Not right for here <input type="checkbox"/> Covered in adverts or graffiti	Your details Your name: _____ Address: _____ _____ _____
Bus stops/shelters  <input type="checkbox"/> Broken <input type="checkbox"/> In the way <input type="checkbox"/> Not right for here <input type="checkbox"/> Covered in adverts or graffiti	 

Undertaking Street Audits



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Tools to Assess your Local Environment



LIVING STREETS
PUTTING PEOPLE FIRST

Section B Tools to Assess your Local Environment

3.1 Introduction

This section of the toolkit has a number of practical tools which provide a focus for bringing people together, so they can collectively decide how they would like a particular street or space to improve. They can be used for different purposes and can be adapted depending on the nature of the space you want to look at.

The emphasis is on local people being able to do these activities themselves. By empowering local communities there is more chance of being able to create and maintain build environments that meet both individual and community needs, and that are enjoyable to walk and spend time in.

It's not rocket science - most of us will habitually assess where we stay on a regular basis. For example, does guardrail stop you from following the quickest and easiest route from one place to another? Are pedestrian crossings in the most convenient location or do you have to walk 100 yards up the road to cross safely? Are your streets well lit to make you feel safe walking in the evenings?

Our tools help you adopt a more structured approach so you can do something about any problems, and don't have to accept things as they are. They are designed so that you can take the initiative and will give you a greater understanding of both problems and solutions.

There are also materials to support you plan and prioritise improvements whether it's quick fixes or campaigns for longer term solutions. By focusing on small, achievable goals as you go along (such as designing and painting a mural or planting some flowers) you can do wonders to improve the local environment.

To be fully effective we encourage you to use this part of the toolkit in tandem with Section C Taking Action.



Undertaking Street Audits



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Tools to Assess your Local Environment

3.4 Activity - Do your own Community street audit

What is a street audit?

This tool has been designed to help local residents carry out their own street audit. Street audits are for a great way to encourage local people to audit their chosen route, identify issues and decide how they would like them to improve. Things are noted down from the point of view of those who walk in their streets everyday, as well as others who live, work and play in the surrounding area.

Streets are more than just about getting from A to B, they are places to meet, shop, talk, play and watch the world go by. When streets are designed properly they encourage a sense of community and help people to enjoy their public space.

How to carry out a street audit

The method is simple. Small groups of local people walk the area to be audited and look for good and bad points along the way.

As you go round, note down the points that the group feel are important. These are then used to produce your findings which can be used to influence decision makers in the local authority.

How might a street audit be useful in your area?

- Provide a focus for bringing people together.
- Identify what needs to be done to improve the place.

What area should your street audit cover?

This is entirely up to you; you might choose your own street, your estate, a local shopping parade, park, or even a town centre. Choosing routes which people on foot use on a regular basis would be a good idea (e.g. the one children use to get to school, commuters use to get to and from work or main routes to the local town centre and shopping areas).

Trial run

The important thing to bear in mind is keep it to a manageable size – do a trial run of the route yourself. This will give you a feel for what the problems are, and help you decide how big it should be. You can do this yourself – see Activity 3.6 - These streets were made for walking?

Risk Assessment

A trial run will also help you check the risks involved of going on a specific route (e.g. wobbly pavement slabs, a stretch of road with no footway or a loose handrail or steps). This will also help you persuade other people that a street audit needs to be done.

Meeting point

You will need to identify a meeting point to begin your audit from and to finish up at, so you can talk about what you find during the audit. Possible meeting points include: community centres, shopping area, local cafe/restaurant, church, schools, etc.



Tools to Assess your Local Environment

Who should take part?

The people most likely to take an interest are those who use, live or work on the audit route itself. For example:

- Councillors.
- Residents and tenants associations.
- Community groups.
- Local businesses and employers.
- Schools/colleges.
- Town centre planners.
- Environmental and cycling groups.
- Retirement homes/sheltered housing units.
- Youth groups.
- Access and disability groups.
- Black and Ethnic Minority groups.
- Disabled groups.
- Pensioners groups.
- Schools.
- Community Police Officers.
- Walking groups.
- Other agencies (ie. Housing Associations, major landowners).

This is a long list but it may not be necessary to invite all of these groups to be successful. Try and keep the group to a manageable size (approximately 12 people). If more people are interested suggest forming smaller groups to audit different routes.

How to invite people:

See sample invitation.
Word of mouth (often best for local residents).
Press release – local newspapers and radios (see 4.11 - using your local media, and 4.12 - sample press release).
Posters for shop windows, community centres, church and school notice boards (adapt invitation).

What do I need to do to carry out a street audit?

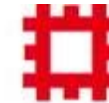
Before:

- Decide on audit route/s – approx 500-750 meters.
- When it is going to take place (daytime or evening)? We suggest you don't make it any longer than an hour.
- Organise a meeting point/venue.
- Prepare maps (a simple sketch will do).
- Decide who is going to facilitate it. See facilitator's tips.
- Decide what methods you are going to use to record it and who is taking responsibility for doing what. For example, taking notes, photographs and other recordings.
- Send out invitations and publicity.
- Risk assessment

During – what you will need:

- Safety briefing.
- Facilitators notes.
- Map of the route.
- Clipboards/pens/paper – for people to take notes.
- Record sheets (see template).
- Attendance list - ask people if they can fill in their name and contact details to keep in touch (see template).
- Appropriate clothing – comfy shoes are a must and warm clothing in cold weather or sunglasses/hat if you're lucky enough for it to be sunny!
- Recording equipment (for example, camera/s are a must, video camera (most mobile photos have them built in, audio recorder to capture quotes and sounds, and paper and pencils for those who want to sketch anything).

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Tools to Assess your Local Environment

Community Street Audit – notes for Facilitators

If you are facilitating a Community Street Audit here are some things you'll need to do on the day:

Explain: what the audit is about – (improving things for residents and pedestrians). What you are looking for, how to record what you find and what will happen with the results.

Describe: good and bad points, obvious things (broken paving, graffiti, overflowing litterbins, overcrowded crossings), less obvious things (how pleasant is the route to walk along? Are benches in the right place, think about other people – would they feel safe (i.e. what about things at night)?

Encourage: encourage people taking part to be creative and positive. How could things be improved?

Reassure: not everyone has to agree, we all use our streets and public spaces differently. Participants should treat each other with respect even if they disagree with their views.

Safety: remind participants they are responsible for their own safety. Keep off the road and mention any hazards people should look out for (i.e. broken glass, loose paving).

Timing: each audit should take about an hour or so – it doesn't matter if every last detail is picked up.

Every so often you might want to stop and talk about something you have come across on the route. Think about how it might be used, is there any evidence of how it influences how people behave or feel about this place?

Top ten questions to ask:

1. Are pavements smooth, even and well maintained?
2. Do conditions encourage you to walk here – is walking enjoyable?
3. Is the route accessible for all users (think about it from the point of view of someone who has mobility problems or has pushchair/young children)?
4. Are street signs well positioned and clear?
5. Do people who live, work and play in the area look after it?
6. Do you feel safe when walking here?
7. Is it easy to cross the road?
8. Is it easy to get where you need to or are there things that block your way (i.e. guardrail or street furniture)?
9. Do people on foot have enough space?
10. Is the traffic under control?

After:

Once you have completed your audit sit down and reflect on how things have gone:

1. What were people's overall impressions of the route?
2. What did you like? What would encourage you to walk or spend time there?
3. What did you dislike? What would discourage you from walking or spending time there?
4. What were the conditions like for people with mobility problems?
5. What 3 things could be improved for next to no money?

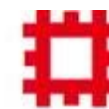
Make sure you agree a follow up meeting with those involved to review the findings and decide how you want to produce them.

Tools to Assess your Local Environment

Community Street Audit - Safety Briefing

- Everyone is responsible for their own safety. If children or young people are present their parents or guardians should look after them at all times.
- Help those who may need assistance at certain points (e.g. those with mobility problems or the elderly).
- Don't go onto the road (except for when needing to cross).
- Keep to all footways/pavements. If they are not present walk as far as you can into the side of the road.
- At pedestrian crossings wait for the signal to appear before attempting to cross.
- If no pedestrian crossings exist do not cross the road until the audit leader says it is safe to do so.
- Take care on wet or slippery surfaces
- Watch out for hazards such as loose paving or handrails and dog fouling.
- Don't wander off on your own – stick with the group at all times.
- If other pedestrians wish to pass make sure you don't block the footways.
- Be extra vigilant next to fast moving traffic and large vehicles such as buses or lorries.

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Tools to Assess your Local Environment

Invitation to a Community Street Audit

**INVITATION TO A
COMMUNITY
STREET AUDIT**



From:.....
 To:.....
 On:.....
 Meeting at:.....
 RSVP:.....
 (Please let us know if you will be coming as places will be limited)

We would like invite you, or the most appropriate person in your organisation, to this Community Street Audit. Community Street Audits have been developed by Living Streets as a tool for assessing streets and public spaces from the perspective of the people who walk in them every day. They are based around facilitated workshops, involving those who live, work and play in the local area, identifying potential improvements to specified routes and areas.

The findings are used to make recommendations and influence improvements. We think our area really needs a Community Street Audit and hope you will be able to join us.

For more information contact Living Streets Scotland on 0131 243 2647 or email: scotland@livingstreets.org.uk



 Cut along dashed lines, children please get supervision from an adult.

Tools to Assess your Local Environment

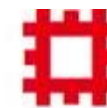
Street Audit Form

Audit:				
Audit Date	Start time	Conditions: (weather/light)	Audit Leader	Page: of
No. on map	Location Details	Comments	Recommendation	

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Undertaking Street Audits



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Tools to Assess your Local Environment

After – arrange to meet up to:
reviewing findings;
produce findings;
decide who is going to do what?

Review your findings

Take some time to sort out your findings. You will probably have a mass of scribbled notes, together with other bits and pieces.

To organise your findings you could list them under these eight categories:

1. Pedestrian issues.
2. Facilities.
3. Space.
4. Social issues.
5. Maintenance.
6. Environment.
7. Design and appearance.
8. Traffic.

Producing findings

A written report is a simple way of presenting your findings in as clear and informative way as possible. When writing a report, it is often best to boil down what you are trying to say to the bare essentials. Don't be afraid to make it look colourful and attractive, using photographs, or other artwork to illustrate your report. People will be likely to find this more interesting than words alone. Don't worry if you can't write in official speak; your own words will make your message ring true.

Try and highlight some important quotes from what people said during the audit. Provide a summary to give readers a sense of what the report contains and whether it is worth reading any further.

What your report should include:

- Contents page
- A summary
- A description of the method you used.
- Your findings
- Recommendations or suggestions

Delivering your report:

You should send your report to all the elected Councillors in your Council and local MSPs. Others to target your report with include Head of Departments in Community Planning, Transportation, etc. (see 4.8 - Who to influence).

Remember to give those who took part in the audit a copy of the report too. Use links you have formed within your community to encourage other people to join your efforts to get changes made.

Tools to Assess your Local Environment

What's next?

A report is just one way you can take local action. It's up to you as a group what action you want to take next. If you do want to take action, we suggest you take a look at the following sections in the toolkit:

- 3.7 Activity - On the fence? Prioritising issues.
- 4.2 - Getting started.
- 4.8 - Who to influence.
- 4.3 - Spreading the word.

Different methods will be best for different purposes. For example, you might want to organise an event to talk more about your findings with decision makers (see planning an event or raising awareness events). An article for your local newspaper could be another way to raise public interest (see 4.11 - Using the local media). You could even arrange materials from your audit for an exhibition if you're feeling creative (see 4.2 - Spreading the word). Or raise funds for something you think you could do for smaller sums of money (see 4.23 - Show me the money - basic guide to fundraising)

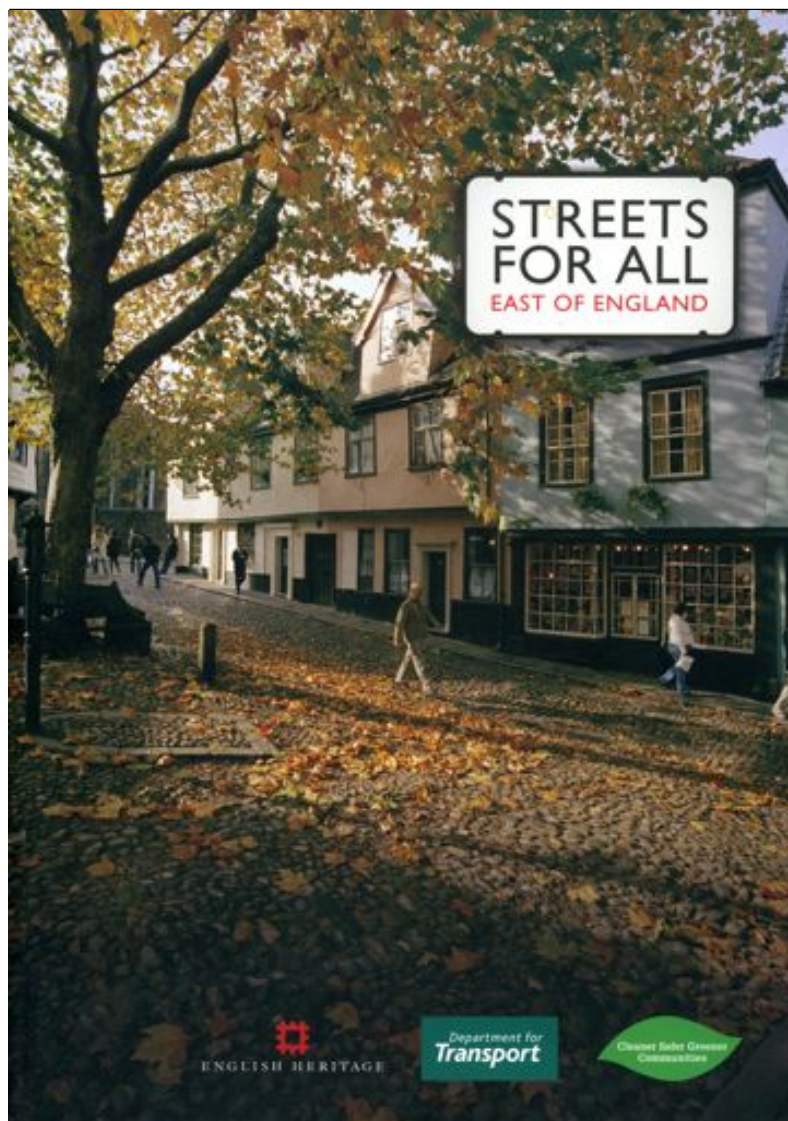
Some top tips for carrying out a successful street audit:

- Make sure you involve key individuals (such as Councillors and residents) from an early stage.
- Try and have some informal discussions about the area with businesses and residents before the audit date.
- Gather feedback whilst publicising the event.
- Present your findings to a wide range of people.
- Aim to get some 'quick wins' within a month.
- Make sure you combine your efforts with other groups and organisations that have similar aims to yours.
- Be aware of any plans for the area and if your recommendations could feed into them.

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GROUND SURFACES

02 Ground Surfaces General Principles

Paving and surface materials define the platform of the built environment. They form the plinth on which buildings are set. The East of England has a rich tradition of paving materials and methods that, if well understood and deployed, can continue to meet the practical and aesthetic requirements of streets and public spaces.



01 Care must be taken to ensure new surfaces are not lost amongst contemporary materials.

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STREET FURNITURE

03 Street Furniture General Principles

A successful public realm comprises a coherent network of streets and spaces, without the need for excessive signs, road markings and physical barriers.



01 Minimal street clutter lets the buildings speak for themselves

NEW EQUIPMENT

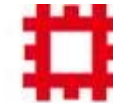
04 New Equipment General Principles

The appearance of streets is constantly changing as new street equipment is required to answer the practical needs of commerce, traffic or safety. A street or public space can be thought of as an 'outdoor room' enclosed by buildings. Its street furniture should be chosen and placed with the same care as the objects in an indoor space.



01 Simple yet robust, low-cost benches that blend in

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TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

05 Traffic Management

General Principles

Traffic calming measures should be fitted sensitively into the street scene as though they were part of the original design of the area. Local highway and planning authorities are encouraged to integrate their activities to minimise the impact of traffic management on the historic environment.




01 This wonderfully successful scheme incorporates traffic calming devices without disrupting the overall beauty of street.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS

06 Environmental Improvements

General Principles

Environmental improvements should enhance the qualities that make a place special and enjoyable to its users. Even small improvements can reinforce local distinctiveness and encourage greater public use.



01 The reintegration of traditional and modern use of ground surfaces creates a modern, dignified scheme.

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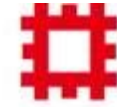
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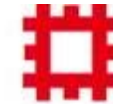
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- www.english-heritage.org.uk/save-our-streets/
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