

PERS: Pedestrian Environment Review System

Policy

Policy 4L.1: The Mayor, through Transport for London and the London boroughs and working with other relevant organisations, will aim to create and promote a connected, safe, convenient, and attractive environment that encourages people to walk and enriches their experience of being out and about, making London one of the most walking friendly cities for pedestrians by 2015.

Definition

'A systematic process to assess the pedestrian environment within a framework that promotes objectivity'

Background

The Street and Social Space Reference group was established by TfL in 2002 to bring together practitioners and street users involved in a range of road user audits. The objective of the group was to develop an audit tool that could be used to assess the pedestrian environment throughout London.

The group considered two systems; the Street and Social Space Audit (SSSA) developed by Living Streets and the Pedestrian Environmental Review System (PERS) developed by TRL in conjunction with the London Borough of Bromley.

Although the functionality and simplicity of PERS was attractive (particularly the presentation of results) there was some concern that PERS was more aligned to road safety and routes only (links, paths and junctions) and less about places and areas.

The group concluded that a second iteration of the PERS software should be developed which would incorporate a number of elements from the SSSA methodology in order provide a more comprehensive review tool for assessing pedestrian routes and public spaces in London. PERS v2 enables the assessment of the quality of public space and walking links and how routes relate to pedestrian desire lines.

Benefits

- Evidence-based targeting of improvements
- Rapid to use
- Cross-departmental significance
- Easily interpretable outputs
- Resource efficiency

Outputs

- Assist with strategic planning and the accurate targeting of resources
- Establish the relative quality of different pedestrian routes within a framework that promotes objectivity
- Provide an opportunity to review at a detailed level the opportunities for improving individual links and crossings

Application

PERS will allow for better direction of resources under SMS Area Team budgets and Project Development's budgets for TLRN walking and accessibility/DDA schemes. Initial trials have focused on Farringdon Street and Great Portland Street with positive results arising from the audit process. The results and experience of the trial are being used to promote the adoption of PERS as a working tool across the Area Teams.