

The Methleys Home Zone Evaluation Report Published

TRL Limited has recently published the Methleys Home Zone Scheme evaluation report (TRL 586). The report is the first of its kind to evaluate one of nine such schemes that form part of a pilot programme set up by the Department for Transport (DfT). The programme was established with the aim of evaluating the potential benefits of shared road space in a variety of Home Zones across England and Wales.

The Methleys Home Zone is to the north of Leeds City Centre and employed such measures as gateway treatments, Home Zone signing, shared road space, traffic calming and hard and soft landscaping.

In order to assess the effectiveness of these measures, a programme of 'before' and 'after' monitoring was undertaken. This included household interview surveys with adults and children, collection of traffic flow, speed and accident data, video recording to observe residents behaviour in the shared space, air quality and noise monitoring.

The interviews revealed that the majority of residents supported the Home Zone scheme and felt it had had a positive impact, whilst half of the adults surveyed thought that motorists were now more considerate to children playing in the street. From the children came a list of the most popular outdoor activities including riding bikes, playing football, chatting and 'hanging around' with friends.

Notably, mean traffic speeds were reduced by 6 mph and traffic flows fell by 10 per cent.

The question of on-street car parking spaces and the desire to park close to home to reduce the risk of crime was an area of main concern raised by the residents during the consultation process. On-street parking spaces were reduced by 16% but generally in areas not directly overlooked by houses.

The Home Zone measures had little impact on modal shift or how often people walked, cycled or drove. Similarly, they had little impact on noise levels and kerbside concentrations of benzene and nitrogen oxides.

This first evaluation report demonstrates the value of robust monitoring both 'before' and 'after' the introduction of Home Zone Schemes and provides quality information for town planners to call upon when considering such schemes in the future.

Printed copies of the report are available from TRL priced £10.00.