



From the Parliamentary
Under Secretary of State

Department for **Transport**

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Dear Colleague

SMARTER TRAVEL CHOICES, INDIVIDUALISED TRAVEL MARKETING AND SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL TOWNS

I am writing to let you know of some very exciting results showing falls in traffic of over 10% and similar double-digit increases in public transport, cycling and walking in just over two years.

These results are from the three local authorities - Darlington, Peterborough and Worcester - that are the Sustainable Travel Towns project. Department for Transport set up the Sustainable Travel Towns project to give places the chance to look at what a sustained programme of smarter choices measures can achieve.

All three places chose individualised travel marketing (ITM) as a key component of their programmes and is being increasingly used in local authorities across the country. ITM is one example of smarter travel choices. Other measures include workplace and school travel planning, car sharing schemes, increased walking and cycling, improved public transport provision and marketing.

The results are startling:

Town	Research date	Mode	Impact since Sep - Nov 04
Darlington	Nov - Dec 05	Public transport trips	+14%
Peterborough	Feb - Apr 06	Public transport trips	+13%
Worcester	Mar - Apr 06	Public transport trips	+22%
Darlington	Sep - Nov 06	Walking trips	+29%
Peterborough	Feb - Apr 06	Walking trips	+21%
Worcester	Mar - Apr 06	Walking trips	+17%
Darlington	Sep - Nov 06	Cycling trips	+79%
Peterborough	Feb - Apr 06	Cycling trips	+25%
Worcester	Mar - Apr 06	Cycling trips	+36%
Darlington	Sep - Nov 06	Car trips	- 11%
Peterborough	Feb - Apr 06	Car trips	-13%
Worcester	Mar - Apr 06	Car trips	-12%

You might like to consider whether these changes in public transport, cycling, walking and car traffic would be attractive to your area, especially as it is based largely upon marketing.

Some authorities are already carrying out smarter choices to a greater or lesser extent. However, I wanted to disseminate these results on smarter choices more widely. I hope that you and your authority will agree that smarter choices can bring substantial benefits on improving the environment and health as well as reducing congestion. It may, therefore, be a strong consideration when your authority sets future budgets.

A summary of each town's work is at Annex A together with a case study from each town in Annex B. The DfT put in £2m per year between the three local authorities. Each local authority is, at the same time, improving existing facilities and infrastructure where needed.

A further opportunity to hear first hand how the towns achieved their success will be available at the Sustainable Travel Town Conference to be held at Worcester Cathedral on 23/24 May where I will be making the opening address. I urge all those who wish to reduce car use to attend to see how these measures may help your local authority. If you require further information on the Conference please contact Nicky Luff either by e-mail at nluff@worcestershire.gov.uk or Tel 01905 766810.

If you or any of your officers require more detailed information on the towns' success or wish to see the full reports, you can contact the project managers directly at:

Darlington, Owen Wilson by e-mail at owen.wilson@darlington.gov.uk or Tel 01325 388444;

Peterborough, Beth Hiblin by e-mail at beth.hiblin@peterborough.gov.uk or Tel 01733 317476;

Worcester, Mark Leyland by e-mail at MLeyland@worcestershire.gov.uk or Tel 01905 768328.

If you require more information on ITM and other smarter choices, including how it can work in your area, please see our website on 'making smarter choices work' at: www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/sustainable/smarterchoices/makingwork/

The results in the above table are from the interim two-year survey evidence on the target area population and incorporates Darlington's most recent results announced on 16 March. The programme runs 2004-09. The initial targets were to reduce traffic by between 7.5% and 10% over the five years with many of the journeys transferring to foot or bike. The local authorities are therefore on track to achieve this aim.

I hope you will agree these results are extremely encouraging. Please share them widely in your authority and beyond. I would urge you to consider their implications for transport in your area.

Yours sincerely
Gillian Merron
GILLIAN MERRON

Darlington - Darlington has developed a clear understanding of why and how their residents travel; the real life potential for achieving travel behaviour change; and the more effective strategies for delivering that change. Using this knowledge they have concentrated their programme on the provision of high quality travel information, education and training and a marketing strategy focused on generating a 'call to action', inspiring their citizens to change the way they travel. Coupled with smarter choices initiatives, Darlington's capital programme of transport investment is focusing on high quality infrastructure for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users.

Young people are integral to realising long term changes in travel behaviour. Darlington's Local Area Agreement, which focuses on young people, includes school travel plans and cycling and concessionary fares. Schools and school children have been the 'early adopters' with 50% of Darlington's schools' having an active travel plan.

Darlington is engaging with residents through an ambitious programme of individualised travel marketing (ITM), with a team of travel advisers visiting every household in the town offering bespoke travel information and collecting comments from residents on how their experience of local travel could be improved. The most recent results from the end of 2006 show that even in the non targeted population area, but which have been exposed to the general marketing, car driver trips have decreased by 6.6% and walking and cycling trips increased by 8.3% and 54% respectively.

In April 2006 Darlington launched the 'Local Motion' campaign and supporters club. 4,000 residents have signed up as 'Local Motion' supporters and as members are entitled to regularly updated information on local travel, discounts from local retailers and on 'Local Motion' events. Inspiration, information, and facilitation are the key elements of Darlington's approach to changing travel behaviour.

Peterborough - Central to their status as a Sustainable Travel Town is their *My Travelchoice* ITM programme, conducted in the north-east of Peterborough between September and December 2005. Around 12,000 households received personalised travel information packs.

Residents are motivated to consider their daily travel choices through telephone calls, letters and personal visits. After an initial discussion, households can order travel information, such as bus timetables and cycle maps, to suit their needs. This package is then hand delivered along with incentives to help residents try out walking, cycling, bus and car sharing. Results show a significant growth in use of all sustainable travel modes and indicate the changes in mode choice can be attributed to the ITM programme. Analysis of the interim survey data also showed that:

- The reductions in car use were concentrated during peak times in the morning (before 09:00) and the afternoon (between 15:00 and 19:00)
- There was a 15 per cent reduction in distances travelled by car for day-to-day trips – a total annual saving of around 5.5 million miles that will generate a substantial cut in CO2 emissions
- The increases in walking, cycling and public transport use resulted in an 18 per cent increase in daily time spent using physical active forms of travel

People can therefore be encouraged to switch from car use to walking, cycling and public transport with better travel information, marketing and traditional local transport programmes – helping to tackle traffic congestion and climate change.

Worcester - Following research into travel behaviour in 2004, households were contacted and invited to participate in the ITM programme. Following a discussion around their travel choices, each household was classified as either 'Interested' in using sustainable travel modes, 'Regular' users, or 'Not Interested'. The 'Interested' were offered a selection of information and motivational gifts directly relevant to them and offered the opportunity to receive personal advice and support from a cycling, walking or public transport advisor. Additionally, 'Regular' users were offered a reward gift. The 'Not Interested' were sent information on responsible car use by post.

An interim evaluation was undertaken and compared the results of the initial behaviour research with current travel behaviour of households who participated in the ITM programme. The results indicated that households that participated altered their travel choices significantly when compared to average behaviour. One significant increase was in public transport use, which is likely to be due, in part, to the highly promoted launch of a new bus service, linking an existing Park and Ride site, the city centre and the target area. The results also suggest that the modal shift achieved can be directly attributable to the provision of free, tailored, high quality information.

This programme of direct contact is being combined with ongoing citywide promotion of sustainable travel choices such as the introduction of printed bus timetable information available on the Internet or by telephone. The information offered during the next phases now includes leaflets on the health benefits of active travel. These are already proving popular suggesting that motivating behaviour change is more effective when individuals can see "What's in it for me?" rather than because they are made to feel guilty. The Worcester City and local travel maps have proved very successful with high demand from all sectors. The maps are being continually improved, with local services and amenities added to help households reduce the distance they travel and to identify facilities for more sustainable lifestyles.

Case Study 1 - Darlington and the Argos Regional Distribution Depot

In 2003 Argos approached Darlington BC with a proposal to develop a regional distribution centre employing 700 people at Faverdale Industrial Estate. The site located 3 miles to the North West of the town centre has good vehicular access to the A68 and onto the A1 (M). Early in 2004 Argos submitted an outline planning application including a preliminary travel plan, and was granted outline permission to develop 19 hectare of land for a regional distribution depot, incorporating a call centre and vehicle maintenance unit. Full planning permission was granted later that year. Transport Planning Officers were involved throughout the planning process and, working with colleagues in development control were able to specify that the developer fund appropriate travel plan measures. These included:

- Requirement for a site based travel plan;
- Secure cycle and motorcycle parking shelters;
- Segregated cycle and pedestrian route into site and provision of improved off site links through Faverdale Grange Park residential area and links to cycle route network in Darlington, partly at developer's expense;
- Provision of new bus stops with raised platforms, flags and timetables immediately outside the site with direct footpath links into site;
- Appointment of an on site Travel Coordinator;
- Provision of priority parking spaces for staff car sharing.

The site has been operating on a 24-hour basis since summer 2005 and all of the above has been implemented with the following additional measures:

- Car sharing and disabled parking bays have been provided and are situated close to the main entrance;
- On site Travel Coordinator appointed to promote the Travel Plan measures and monitor targets;
- Participated in Local Motion activities, including the 2006 Employers National Bike Week Challenge.

Argos completed their first staff travel survey in May 2006. At that time the number of employees at the distribution centre was up to about 40% of the eventual total. A survey on the main mode of travel to work shows that already 24% of employees are car sharing with 9% walking and cycling. A repeat survey will take place in spring 2007.

Case Study 2 - Peterborough and Royal Haskoning

Royal Haskoning, an international firm of engineers, architects and consultants, implemented their travel plan as a result of a planning application to demolish the existing office block and replace it with a new one. The new development does not involve any additional parking; in fact the size of the building (and therefore the number of staff) is increasing whilst the number of parking spaces will remain at 140. Alongside corporate responsibility and requirements within the planning conditions, the change in building capacity is a further positive pressure to develop a successful travel plan. In addition, a large amount (50%) of the original parking would be lost during the construction process, hence the need for a comprehensive travel plan. The travel plan was launched in December 2005 and, as well as having a number of initiatives in place at the launch, more have been unveiled since.

For example, car sharing is heavily promoted as an alternative for those living too far away to walk/cycle and not on a convenient public transport route. Numbered car sharing spaces are allocated to up to 30 registered car share teams that enjoy reserved hassle free parking throughout the construction period and beyond. Employees signed up to the Peterborough 'Liftshare' matching service to identify compatible shares. A car park management system was developed. All employees were encouraged to register on the Peterborough 'share-it' website where Royal Haskoning was set up as a destination. Employees could find matches, register with the Travel plan Coordinator and receive a numbered car sticker which corresponded to a reserved car parking space. Sharers are eligible for a guaranteed space if they car share 4+ times a week. Additional travel plan measures include:

- 20p a mile cycle mileage to reduce single occupancy vehicle (SOV) business travel offered;
- Waterproof jackets/umbrellas are offered free of charge to cyclists/pedestrians;
- Developed an ongoing marketing campaign. The travel plan was branded with the corporate identity and has a slogan – *Consider a different way to work*;
- Improved security on existing cycle shed;
- Participation in national sustainable travel incentives (e.g. In Town Without My Car Day);
- Puncture repair kits available at reception;
- Notice boards displaying public transport timetables, maps and local sustainable travel news have been set up.

Results so far show single occupancy vehicle rate in October 2005 of 70% was reduced to 46% in May 2006, 30 regular car share duos and cycling increased by 9% over the past 6 months. As a result of the success at the office, Royal Haskoning now aim to set up travel plans in all their offices and integrate them i.e. travel between offices and increased use of video conferencing.

Case Study 3 - Worcester and Teachers on Bikes

Following School Travel Plan (STP) work with schools across the city – currently well over half the city's schools have a STP - ideas to involve school staff was considered to complement the work done with children. A cycle loan scheme was created, and suitable bicycles sourced and purchased using funds from the Sustainable Travel Town grant.

In February 2006, 10 pool bikes were offered to schools across Worcester for teachers and other school staff to use on their journey to and from work. The bikes were offered to schools with a School Travel Plan. Bikes were offered on a 3 month loan basis, and included panniers, multi-tool, safety jacket and mini pump. Due to the popularity of the scheme, and waiting list on the original 10 bikes, 6 more bikes were ordered.

The scheme has proved to be very popular, with all the bikes on loan being well used. From February to the end the school year in July, the bikes have been used for a total of 3,721 miles during this period. All of the users were previously driving to school. A total of 1,196 car journeys have been saved as a result of using a bike for the journey to and from school.

Cranham Primary School reported that "Three of the bikes are used daily and some other staff are now riding regularly in their spare time on their own bikes. One of the teachers at Gorse Hill Primary School, who has a bike on loan, has since sold his car as he no longer needs it to get to work. The numerous benefits of the scheme include:

- Leading by example – school children and other staff see their own teachers / colleagues cycling to school and are more inclined to 'give it a go';
- 'Health benefits – for those using one of the bikes;
- Cost saving – of using a bike over using the car for the school journey;
- Less congestion in the school car park, with fewer staff driving to school.

All bikes have been reliable and virtually maintenance free, which was always the intention, to make cycling to school as attractive as possible. Many users have decided to buy their own bikes.

Having established interest from schools in the rest of the County, and also generated interest from a local recycling charity 'Motov8', a plan to create a quality fleet of recycled bikes is being developed, which will further emphasise the whole sustainable living agenda.