

NATIONAL CYCLING FORUM

Cycling Works!

How employers can benefit from increased cycling

Introduction

The National Cycling Forum has published this leaflet to show employers how they can benefit from making it easier for their employees to cycle. It explains how businesses can work with their local authority to develop successful cycling schemes. The leaflet also summarises what central and local government and the Forum itself are doing to encourage cycling.



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PHOTO: DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL



PHOTO: DEVON COUNTY COUNCIL

The benefits of cycling to employers

Cycling is advantageous in three key areas: as a sustainable alternative to the car; as low-cost transport; and as a means of encouraging physical activity in our increasingly sedentary society. In particular, the benefits to employers are:

Reduced car parking demand and peak time congestion leads to reduced costs and less time lost

Improved environmental image

Improved health and fitness of the workforce leads to better performance

Greater potential for securing planning permissions

Greater transport choice enables staff to arrive on time and gives greater access to the workforce

There are more than 20 million bicycles in the United Kingdom, and more people now own a bicycle than ever before.

Recent statistics show that the steady decline in cycling witnessed in the United Kingdom since the 1950s appears to have been halted and there is growing interest in cycling for everyday journeys, in particular to work. We know from experience in other countries, and several of our own cities, that given the right conditions and support more people will choose to travel by bicycle, bringing benefits to society, to themselves and to their employers.

It is important to note that many people cycle as a lifestyle choice, e.g. to keep fit, and will value an employer that supports them in this choice. By making it easier to cycle to work, an employer gains increased access to a larger pool of potential employees.

Government policy supports cycling

The 1998 White Paper, *A New Deal for Transport: Better for Everyone*, recognises that cycling can play an important part in a national integrated transport system - it is a flexible, relatively cheap, environmentally friendly and healthy way to travel.

The Government has also published *Transport 2010: The 10 Year Plan*. This is an investment plan to modernise Britain's transport system through increased public and private funding over the next ten years. Cycling is an integrated element of the plan.

Saving Lives: Our Healthier Nation - the strategy for health - sets out the importance of routine physical activity in people's daily lives. In particular, cycling is recognised as being beneficial for increasing fitness, lowering the risk of heart disease, shedding excess weight and reducing stress.

The Government provides guidance and support to help large employers to prepare Travel Plans to reduce car dependency for commuter and business travel.

Local authorities are now expected to establish a local strategy for cycling, and to consider the role of Travel Plans in support of traffic reduction and safety objectives, as part of their *Local Transport Plans* (LTPs).

The draft revision of PPG 13: Transport places increased emphasis on access to development by a choice of transport modes. It also ensures that the access arrangements of major schemes will need to be demonstrated in Transport Assessments, submitted alongside planning applications. This will encourage both planning authorities and developers to provide improved cycle access in new developments.



The business case for promoting cycling

Cycling and staff Travel Plans

Many organisations promote cycling as part of a wider Travel Plan. This is a package of measures to reduce car dependency for commuter and business travel. It might include car sharing, improved public transport, and better pedestrian routes, as well as measures to encourage cycling. Promoting cycling as part of a wider Travel Plan will take advantage of opportunities for combined journeys, for example, with public transport. A formal Travel Plan is more likely to deliver significant improvements than a number of ad-hoc schemes.

Tackling parking problems

Works and office car parks are often over-crowded or nearing capacity. Even if space is available, it might be expensive to expand, or planning permission might not be granted. A Travel Plan incorporating measures to promote cycling can reduce the demand for parking.

The cost of providing a car park is often high. Taking account of maintenance, drainage, lighting and security on access roads as well as for the car park itself, the annual running cost of a single parking space can be several hundred pounds. This does not take account of the value of land used for parking, which could be considerable. By comparison, a rack for two bicycles uses far less land, has an initial capital outlay of approximately £50 - £100, and carries virtually no running costs.

Reducing staff demand for car parking could free up more spaces for customers, thus encouraging customer visits (some by bike) and increasing potential profits.

Reduced congestion

Many employment sites experience congestion both on-site and on local roads, particularly during the peak travel periods. This congestion has economic costs in terms of fuel consumption, the time spent in traffic queues and the cost of missed delivery schedules. Staff can often arrive stressed and late for work, and congestion can also spark concerns about pollution and road safety. It can also lead to complaints from nearby sites and residential areas. Cycling to work provides an alternative that enables staff to predict their journey times.

Improving environmental image

With increasing awareness of environmental issues, businesses may wish to improve public relations by showing they are a conscientious, environmentally-aware employer. Promoting sustainable modes of transport and developing a Travel Plan can demonstrate a commitment to reducing the travel impact of their activities. Environmental accreditation initiatives (via ISO 14001 or EMAS) can also be important, and a Travel Plan will contribute to these initiatives.

Improving staff health and fitness

The link between regular exercise and good health has been well established in research studies throughout the world. People living in affluent countries who maintain a sedentary lifestyle have been shown to be more at risk from conditions such as coronary heart disease, stroke, obesity, cancer of the colon and depression. Cycling or walking regularly can have positive fitness and health benefits for a workforce, and can reduce the number of days lost through absenteeism.

Many cyclists find that when they cycle to work they arrive more alert and refreshed than their sedentary colleagues. Staff may also wish to improve their fitness and will value the opportunity to undertake exercise as part of their daily routine.

A research study of people who had taken little or no exercise and then committed to cycling a short distance regularly has shown that even a small amount of cycling can lead to significant fitness gains. Traffic Advisory Leaflet 12/99, Cycling for Better Health, provides more detail.

Planning conditions

Where clearly justified and in accordance with DETR circular 11/95, conditions attached to planning permissions may be used to require on-site transport measures and facilities to be provided. These may include cycle and pedestrian facilities, limits on the number of parking spaces, and provision of facilities for public transport.

Access to the labour force

Organisations may experience recruitment difficulties, with potential employees deterred by the traffic problems and lack of alternative modes of transport. By giving employees greater travel choice, the employer increases the number of potential workers who can readily get to the site, thus making it easier to attract and retain staff.



Pfizer site at Sandwich

MILTON PARK, OXFORDSHIRE

Milton Park is a large business park two miles outside Didcot, Oxfordshire. The site is managed by property developers MEPC. It has more than 100 employers and over 7000 employees. Milton Park is developing a comprehensive Travel Plan to improve travel choice. Promotion and encouragement of cycling forms an integral part of this plan.

During the last two years, new cycle routes have been built linking the park to the nearby National Cycle Network. This has encouraged employees to cycle to work from a wide area, in particular from Abingdon, Didcot and Oxford. Both segregated and shared cycleways can be found in the park, following the main cycle route desire lines.

Regular cycle to work events are held, including monthly "cycle maintenance" days where employees can get free maintenance advice from a local cycle shop. Milton Park organises free cycle loans for those employees wishing to try out cycling to work. Currently there are 7 bicycles available for use. If users wish to convert to cycling, then Milton Park organises a discounted purchase from local suppliers.

Glanville Consultants are responsible for managing travel issues for all of the MEPC Business Parks. Transport co-ordinator Cullan Riley describes the Travel Plan as an "operational requirement for a successful business park" and adds "It can be difficult to reach a balance between providing for cyclists and running a busy business park with numerous heavy goods vehicles. However, despite these difficulties we have achieved a considerable increase in the proportion of staff cycling to work." A recent staff travel survey indicated an overall 7% mode share for employees cycling to work, compared with only 2% two years ago before the opening of the new cycle routes.

ASDA'S TRAVEL PLAN

In October 2000, in a move to reduce car dependence and promote pedal power, ASDA unveiled plans to give all 100,000 of their employees the chance to buy a bike at cost price.

Bikes are being made available on a profit-free basis to all staff in early 2001. ASDA points out that if the take-up were to mirror the national average for numbers of work trips made by bike, it could mean at least 3,000 of their employees ditching a daily drive to work.

In addition, ASDA also unveiled Britain's first ever "supermarket cycle-pool" at its brand new store in Long Eaton. A pool of fifteen cycles is available to any employee who lives locally and wants to try pedal-power rather than petrol-power.

The move is also a demonstration of ASDA's commitment to creating a Travel Plan for each of its 240 stores. The plans, drawn up by store personnel, will become a blueprint for cutting down car usage.

What do cyclists need in order to cycle to work?

The basic requirements are:

a welcoming attitude from management;

secure cycle parking, preferably covered, conveniently located;

changing, shower and storage facilities;

access to the site via routes that are direct, safe, convenient and attractive to use; and

information on routes and the location of facilities.

Cycle parking is much cheaper than car parking, but it is important to avoid products that do not meet cyclists' needs. To be secure, bicycles need to be locked by their frames, not just by a wheel. Furthermore, racks that hold bicycles by the wheel can lead to damage, and are often unusable by mountain bikes with large tyres.

When planning routes on a company site, it is essential to consider how they link with access from the surrounding public roads. It is often worth contacting the local highway authority to discuss the matter. There may also be scope for linking into the National Cycle Network, a project that is creating 10,000 miles of relatively traffic-free cycle routes throughout the UK.

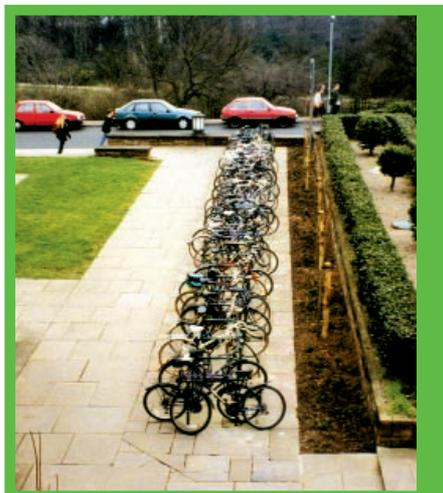
Getting started

A list of useful publications is given at the end of this leaflet. In particular the following free Travel Plan guides are recommended:

A Travel Plan resource pack for employers; available from the Government's Energy Efficiency Best Practice Programme. This is an essential guide to developing, implementing and monitoring a travel management strategy for businesses. Copies are available from the Environment and Energy Helpline, 0800 585 794, which can also provide access to a panel of consultants able to advise on Travel Plans.

The benefits of green transport plans; available for DETR Free Literature on 0870 1226 236, provides further information on the benefits of setting up a Travel Plan.

Latest information on DETR support for Travel Plans can be obtained from the DETR web site: www.local-transport.detr.gov.uk/travelplans.



Convenient Cycle Parking at Nottingham University

Working with Local Authorities

Who to talk to

The local authority, which needs to be involved in any plans for cycle route improvements, can usually advise on the development of a Travel Plan. Many authorities now have a **Cycling Officer** and a **Travel-to-Work** or **Travelwise Officer**. Contact should be made with these officers.

Local Transport Plans and Cycling Strategies

The principal mechanism for progressing cycle schemes is the local highway authority's Local Transport Plan (LTP). LTPs have to be produced every five years for all highway authorities in England, except in London where the Mayor is responsible for transport strategy. Separate arrangements apply in Scotland and Wales. The Government assesses each LTP and allocates funding according to its quality and how well it meets its objectives.

LTPs are strategy documents devised at local level in partnership with the community. They do not require comprehensive coverage of individual schemes, but there will be sufficient information to indicate how they translate into action. There will also be opportunities for people to comment on progress in implementing the LTP.

Local highway authorities are expected to produce a local cycling strategy as part of their LTP. They need to ensure that all relevant aspects of their LTP (including road safety, traffic reduction, planning and social policies) support the promotion of cycling.

The LTP should also set out how the authority will encourage widespread adoption of Travel Plans by major employers, through partnerships with business and the wider community. It should consider the scope for Travel Plans at sites where a large number of people commute daily.

Getting involved

By working closely with local highway authorities employers can take maximum advantage of opportunities to develop new cycle routes and facilities over a wide area. Highway authorities benefit from being able to plan routes capable of attracting significant numbers of cyclists.

Ask to see your authority's Local Transport Plan and Cycling Strategy and:

look for proposed cycling and road safety schemes in your area - are there any that could help your site?

look for any other road schemes that might affect cyclists travelling to your site - it may be necessary to ask for changes to ensure the needs of cyclists are properly considered.

find out about public transport proposals - there may be opportunities to encourage combined journeys involving buses and trains.

make sure the relevant officer has good information on the preferred cycle routes to your site and any plans you may have.

Bicycle User Groups (BUGs)

Your organisation may also consider encouraging staff to form a Bicycle Users Group (BUG). These can be an effective way of providing a co-ordinated voice within organisations and can assist with consultation on routes and facilities. They can act as a driving force for change, and can also encourage others to think about cycling.

The National Cycling Strategy

The National Cycling Strategy was launched in July 1996. It aims to establish a culture favourable to the increased use of bicycles for all age groups; to develop sound policies and good practice; and seek out effective and innovative means of fostering accessibility by bike.

The central target is to quadruple the number of cycle trips on 1996 figures by 2012.

As well as setting a central target for cycle trips, the National Cycling Strategy encourages local authorities and others to establish local targets for increased cycle use.

The Strategy can be viewed on the website of the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions at www.local-transport.detr.gov.uk/ncs/ncs.htm

The National Cycling Forum

Implementation of the National Cycling Strategy is being co-ordinated by the National Cycling Forum. The Forum comprises representatives from central and local Government, business and the voluntary sector.

The National Cycling Forum recommends policies, advises local and national government and suggests research and publicity that can further the aims of the Strategy. Through working groups, it has been involved in the production of a range of useful guidance for professionals, local authorities, employers, developers, cycling groups and the individual bicycle user.

Cycling Works!

Information in this leaflet has been assembled by a working group established by the National Cycling Forum. Contributors were

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References and additional reading

Cycling to work, Travel Plans

Traffic Advisory Leaflet 11/97 -
Cycling to Work. DETR. 1997

Travel Plan Resource Pack for Employers.
ETSU. 1999 (available from Environmental
and Energy Helpline 0800 585 794)

General Information Report 74 - Travel Plans -
New Business Opportunities for Service
Providers to Cyclists and Walkers.
DETR. 1999 (0800 585 794)

A safer journey to school
(DfEE Free Literature - 0845 602 2260)

Healthy transport toolkit and Changing
journeys to work - an employers guide to
green commuter plans (Transport 2000 -
020 7613 0743)

Cycling and health

Traffic Advisory Leaflet 12/99 -
Cycling for Better Health. DETR. 1999

Saving Lives: Our Healthier Nation.
The Stationery Office. July 1999.
ISBN 0-10-143862-1 £15

Promoting cycling: Improving health.
NCF Secretariat. 1999

Transport and Health: a briefing for health
professionals and Local Authorities.
Health Education Authority. 1998

Good practice in providing infrastructure and facilities

Issues for public transport planners and
operators. NCF Secretariat. 1998

Issues for traffic engineers and transport
planners. NCF Secretariat. 1998

Traffic Advisory Leaflet 6/99 - Cycle Parking -
Examples of Good Practice. DETR. 1999

Traffic Advisory Leaflet 10/99 -
Cycle Initiatives Register. DETR. 1999

Traffic Advisory Leaflet 3/00 -
Walking Bibliography. DETR. 2000

Traffic Advisory Leaflet 5/00 -
Traffic Calming Bibliography. DETR. 2000

Cycle Friendly Infrastructure. Institution of
Highways & Transportation. 1996. £15

Safety

Tomorrow's roads: safer for everyone
The Government's road safety strategy
and casualty reduction targets for 2010.
DETR. 2000

Safety framework for cycling.
NCF Secretariat. 1999

Planning and development

Planning Policy Guidance Note 13 -
Transport (DETR [under revision])

Issues for town planners.
NCF Secretariat. 1998

Monitoring and assessing progress

Traffic Advisory Leaflet 7/97 - Supply and
demand for cycle parking. DETR. 1997

Traffic Advisory Leaflet 5/98 -
Cycle Audit and Review. DETR. 1998

Traffic Advisory Leaflet 1/99 - Monitoring
Local Cycle Use. DETR. 1999

Transport Strategy

A New Deal for Transport: Better for
Everyone. The Government's White Paper on
the Future of Transport. The Stationery
Office. July 1998. ISBN 0-10-139502-7 £16.50

Transport 2010: The 10 Year Plan. DETR.
2000. ISBN 1-851124-13-6 £15

Guidance on Full Local Transport Plans.
DETR. 2000

A Good Practice Guide for the
Development of Local Transport Plans.
DETR. 2000

National Cycling Strategy.
NCF Secretariat. 1996

National Cycling Strategy: Second Report.
NCF Secretariat. 1999

A fuller list of titles is contained in Traffic
Advisory Leaflet 4/00 - Cycling
Bibliography, free from the DETR.

Traffic Advisory Leaflets and National
Cycling Forum leaflets are issued free.
Both series of leaflets are available from
DETR on 020 7944 2979

Most DETR publications can also be
obtained from www.detr.gov.uk under the
Roads and Local Transport indexes.

The National Cycling Strategy website
lists all National Cycling Forum
publications, as well as additional links,
references and information at:
www.nationalcyclingstrategy.org.uk

Useful addresses

National Cycling Forum Secretariat,
Zone 3/23, Great Minster House,
76 Marsham Street, London SW1P 4DR
020 7944 2977

Sustrans/National Cycle Network,
35 King Street, Bristol, BS1 4DZ
0117 929 0888

www.nationalcyclenetwork.org.uk
CTC, 69, Meadrow, Godalming,
Surrey, GU7 3HS. www.ctc.org.uk
01483 417 217

Government Regional Offices

East Midlands - GOEM,
The Belgrave Centre, Stanley Place,
Talbot Street,
Nottingham NG1 5GG

East of England - GOE, Heron House,
49-53 Goldington Road,
Bedford MK40 3LL

North East - GONE, Wellbar House,
Gallowgate, Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 4TD

North West - GONW, Sunley Tower,
Piccadilly Plaza, Manchester M1 4BE

South East - GOSE, Bridge House,
1 Walnut Tree Close, Guildford,
Surrey, GU1 4GA

South West - GOSW, The Pithay,
Bristol BS1 2PB

West Midlands - GOWM,
77 Paradise Circus, Queensway,
Birmingham B1 2DT

Yorkshire and Humberside - GOYH,
City House, New Station Street, Leeds

Greater London Authority

Romney House, 43 Marsham Street,
London SW1P 3PY