

## CYCLING AND PROMOTION

This briefing looks at the role of promotion, in varying forms, in encouraging cycling. It looks at four key stages of promotion:

- Introductory concepts and issues when considering promotional campaigns;
- Planning a cycling campaign;
- Implementing a cycling campaign;
- Monitoring a cycling campaign.

### INTRODUCTION:

Considerable potential exists to attract people to cycle, and promotion projects on varying scales (e.g. national level and city-wide) can have real impact in increasing cycling levels. A strong marketing campaign combined with the necessary facilities can help promote cycling as an everyday, convenient vehicle for short urban trips (Collins in Davies *et al.*, 1998).

- Evidence indicates that well thought out programmes can achieve increases in cycling.

Successful schemes to increase cycle use in European cities

City	Population	% of journeys by cycle (city centre)	Increase in cycle use (over time)	Main traffic measures
Basel	172 000	16	8-16% (1970-90)	- tram priority - traffic restraint - cycle network (city-wide)
Graz	240 000	14	7-14% (1979-91)	- pedestrian measures - parking reduction - traffic calming - cycle parking and cycling
Hannover	550 000	16	9-16%	- land use - traffic calming - cycle routes (450km) - car parking control
Münster	280 000	43	29-43% (1981-92)	- quality cycle routes - links to public transport - traffic calming
Delft	80 000	43	40-43% (1982-85)	- compact land use - traffic cells - complete cycle network

Source: Cyclists' Touring Club (1995)



- There are 2 elements involved in promoting cycling:
  1. Through 'hard' measures, e.g. the provision of physical infrastructure, special facilities for cyclists and land-use planning; and
  2. Through 'soft' measures, e.g. information provision, public relations and promotional campaigns (McClintock, 2002). The first of these is dealt in the planning briefing. The second forms the subject of this.
- There has been an increasing realisation that successful cycling promotion must include a wide range of approaches, simultaneously encompassing both 'soft' and 'hard', physical, measures.
- 'Soft' measures can boost the effectiveness of 'hard' measures. A series of ad-hoc measures, either 'soft' or 'hard, is unlikely to be successful. Instead an encompassing strategy is required.
- The prevailing 'car culture', in which the car is the dominant mode of transport, is a significant barrier to encouraging cycling and walking. In order to promote alternative modes of travel, there is a need to break down entrenched attitudes whilst simultaneously improving the physical environment which is often discouraging to walking and cycling (Oja and Vuori, 2000).
- Cycling is often dismissed as a mode of transport due to concerns based on safety, image and, in some locations, inconvenience of weather. This shows the need for encouragement which goes beyond the provision of cycle routes and instead which focuses on understanding and allaying such perceptions and increasing awareness. (McClintock, 2002; CTC, 1995).
- The creation of a "pro-walking and cycling culture" is paramount to promoting and encouraging cycle use. Cycling and walking must be recognised and accepted as desirable transport modes among the public, professionals and transport providers if they are to be encouraged. Communication programmes, incentives and regulatory and legal measures are vital in creating such a pro-cycling culture. (CTC, 1995)
- To promote cycling there should be a balance between 'push' (discouraging car use) and 'pull' (promoting cycling) measures. At a basic level, the majority of individuals are likely only to shift over to cycling when it appears to be a practical and convenient means of transport, not because it is essentially 'good'.
- The Dutch Bicycle Master Plan (Ministry of Transport, Public Works and Water Management, Directorate-General for Passenger Transport, 1999) outlines an example framework of a strategy aimed at increasing levels of cycling:
  1. Target measures at the source, e.g. limit vehicle access to urban areas, limit land use for infrastructure and ensure use of clean, efficient vehicles.
  2. Reduce and manage mobility, e.g. encourage shorter distances between the places where people work, live and shop and increase the price of mobility.



3. Promote alternatives to the car, e.g. promote the bicycle, public transport and car pooling.
  4. Ensure selective accessibility by mode, e.g. ensure that all places are not be totally accessible to all modes of transport.
  5. Ensure a strong base, e.g. build up communications, government and political cooperation, financial strength, enforcement and research.
- On a similar basis, although identifying different priorities and concerns, the Cyclists' Touring Club (CTC, 1995) suggests a framework of key aims:
    1. Increase bicycle availability by:
      - Providing cycle hire at stations.
      - Providing office bikes for employees.
      - Ensuring provision of safe, sheltered long and short-term parking at destinations.
    2. Ensure convenient, easy, safe access by:
      - Providing a network of cycle facilities, including cycle paths and routes, over/under-passes, cycle-friendly infrastructure and cycle-priority measures.
      - Ensuring provision of directional signing and guidance for cyclists.
      - Implementing and enforcing speed limits (e.g. 30kph) on all minor roads without segregated cycle facilities.
    3. Integrate use of bicycle and public transport by:
      - Providing safe, sheltered cycle parking at stations.
      - Enabling the carriage of cycles on public transport.
      - Ensuring there is easy access routes to public transport interchanges and facilities.
    4. Improve attitudes to cycling and provoke a favourable bicycle climate by:
      - Consulting cyclists with regards to planning and policy decisions.
      - Promoting campaigns of key personalities using bicycles and highly-publicised events.
      - Educating motorists to be aware of cyclists' needs and rights.
    5. Improve implementation of schemes by:
      - Establishing short-, medium- and long-term-focusing bicycle promotion schemes.
      - Recognising cyclists' needs within organisations, e.g. through the creation of working groups and dedicated cycling officers.
  - Promotion of cycling is unlikely to be successful without simultaneous provision of the appropriate physical environment (Oja and Vuori, 2000). The following technical measures are important in creating a desirable cycling environment:
    - Land use and transport planning, including parking restrictions, in which urban development design can be shaped so as to encourage cycling.
    - Traffic calming, restrictions and diversions and speed reduction.



- Highway design and transport engineering with cycling facilities – e.g. cycle networks/routes and priority measures.
  - Linking public transport to cycling and walking.
  - The provision of secure, safe cycle parking and storage facilities at destinations and interchanges.
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- Ensuring appropriate urban design is vital in creating an environment which favours sustainable modes of transport. A reduction in car use and increase in cycle use could be achieved by enforcing the idea of local accessibility through appropriate land use planning and urban design. Promotion through planning is vital (Oja and Vuori, 2000).
  - Secure cycling parking is often lacking; providing basic cycle parking, at workplaces, shopping centres, public transport stops and interchanges and places of leisure and entertainment, in particular, can be a very important practical and symbolic way of promoting cycling.
  - Cycling promotion is not just about getting people to abandon using cars in favour of bikes but more encouraging people to be more selective in using cars and more prepared to use bikes for trips where the bicycle is particularly suitable, for example short trips.
  - For longer trips use of the bicycle can be combined through a series of measures with use of public transport.
  - Even to replace some car trips with bike trips can be a worthwhile achievement for bicycle promotion, and help to reduce traffic volumes and associated problems of congestion, air and noise pollution, etc. as well as individual and public health benefits.
  - The ECF (1993) suggests that there are 9 key elements of a bicycle promotion policy:
    1. “creation of a bicycle network;
    2. provision of safe bicycle parking at major origins and destinations...
    3. integration of bicycle in all road schemes;
    4. the same status as public transport in planning and funding;
    5. urban renewal plans to minimise car use and maximise cycling;
    6. specific goals for the competitiveness of the bicycle...;
    7. fixed planning requirements for bicycle parking...;
    8. bathing facilities available at all major places of work;
    9. taxation incentives for environmentally friendly modes rather than cars.”



## 1. PLANNING THE CAMPAIGN:

- The type of promotional strategy adopted depends upon the specific aim – for example, whether it is to increase cyclist trips or increase cyclists numbers (Davies *et al.*, 2001).
- Marketing and promotion will fail if the product is not good and does not appeal to the audience.
- Davies *et al.* (1997) notes that promotion of cycling thus far has tended to assume that by simply promoting and advertising the personal and environmental benefits of cycling, people will cycle more, assuming over-simplistically that knowledge affects attitudes and then behaviour. Recent developments have indicated that behaviour change is a staged process, and that attempting to provoke behaviour change is most effective if based upon an awareness of the profile of existing and potential cyclists, their need and perceptions and the factors that would motivate behaviour change (Davies *et al.*, 1997). Campaigns thus need to appeal to the feelings and interests of the target groups. There is a need therefore to understand how, why and when car users might be willing to alter their travel habits and to be then able to respond to this (Oja and Vuori, 2000).
- Changes in attitudes towards cycling will not occur overnight (ECF, 1993). Promotional activity must be planned over the medium- and long-term period, with linked events. Short-term, one-off activities with no sustained follow-up are ineffective.
- Whilst the overall aim must be to “promote bicycle use while simultaneously increasing bicycle safety and appeal” (Ministry of Transport, Public Works and Water Management, Directorate-General for Passenger Transport, 1999), specific target-setting is vital in identifying and achieving reachable, precise, well-directed goals (CTC, 1995). The Dutch Bicycle Master Plan (Ministry of Transport, Public Works and Water Management, Directorate-General for Passenger Transport, 1999) outlined several key targets and areas for special attention as follows:
  - To shift users from the car to bicycle;
  - To shift users from the car to public transport and bicycle;
  - To improve cyclist safety;
  - To improve bicycle parking facilities and theft prevention.

### Considering specific needs:

- Promotion should aim to target specific types of journeys and users. Shorter journeys in particular have greater potential for modal shift.



*Utility cycling:*

- Utility cycling is a functional activity and cycling needs to be positioned as part of the solution to transport problems. Cycling's practical advantages should be emphasised.

*Leisure cycling:*

- Encouraging leisure cycling is important since it is both a prelude to utility cycling and a means of retaining existing cyclists. However, leisure cycling facilities and events need to be carefully linked to utility cycling as there is no automatic progression.
- People who do not cycle for utility purposes, might still consider leisure cycling if conditions are appropriate.
- Methods to encourage leisure cycling could include:
  - Installing traffic calming measures so as to provide attractive, leisure cycle routes.
  - Allowing bicycles on public transport, encouraging longer leisure trips.
  - Organising and publicising organised cycle rides/events.
  - Publishing maps and guides aiming to encourage people to undertake independent leisure cycling.
  - Providing reliable, up-to-date information and well-signed routes.
- (McClintock, 2002).
- Large public bicycle rides in America and Chicago have proven to be a popular and effective soft measure in promoting cycling. Similar success might be expected in Europe (Steely-White, 2002).

*Cycling to facilities and services:*

- Major trip generators such as hospitals should consider responding to the travel use they provoke and develop site-specific travel plans.
- Shoppers are a significant target sector for increased cycle use. It has been shown that commercial enterprises are not dependent on their accessibility by car, as often assumed (I-ce, 2000). The number of customers who actually arrive by bike/foot is significantly underestimated. Around 25% of motorists leave a shop with two or more bags. As a result, the remaining 75% could potentially use another form of transport – they do not need the car to transport their goods (European Commission, 1999).

*Cycling to work:*

- In the UK, cycling to work accounts for 40% of cycle journeys, making work the single most important journey purpose (McClintock, 2002).
- Methods to encourage work-based cycling could include:
  - Targeting workplaces with 'commuter plans' or company 'green travel plans', and involving employers in a 'cycle-friendly employers' concept, aiming to promote sustainable travel to work by offering realistic alternative transport choices to the car. Such plans operate as a form of 'carrot' incentive to reduce travel by car and manage mobility, focusing particularly on the journey to work. Both employers and staff can benefit from such plans: Employers can improve their environmental image, reduce staff car parking costs and reduce work site traffic congestion. Staff benefit from improved health/fitness, wider travel choices and equitable access in which all have access opportunities, not just those with cars.



- Providing essential facilities, such as lockers and showers, and services, such as cyclist training, simple bicycle repair and reduced cost bikes and accessories at workplaces.
- Incentives are important instruments in influencing travel behaviour and increasing cycling by making it more competitive compared with car use. Organisations and corporations should provide incentives for cyclists and, in turn, corporations need incentives provided by public institutions to introduce incentives (Hydén *et al.*, 1998). Three EU countries; the Netherlands, Belgium and the UK, have now introduced tax breaks for employees who travel to work without using their own car (ECF, 2000).
- Forming bicycle user groups and cycling-focused events such as 'Bike to Work' Days. (McClintock, 2002).
- In Copenhagen, 30% of journeys to work are by cycle (CTC, 1995).

#### *Cycling to school:*

- Cycling to school can be promoted through a range activities, including:
  - Undertaking projects such as 'Safe Routes to School', as in the UK. Fears of parents are a key obstacle for cycling by children and parents must be hence reassured that it is safe for their child to cycle (McClintock, 2002).
  - Introducing cycle rides as a school activity (Cleary, 2002).
  - Providing facilities, such as lockers and storage, reduced cost bikes and accessories and cycle training at schools.

#### *Additional initiatives:*

- Existing cyclists need encouragement to remain regular cyclists.
- Timing of the distribution of publicity material is critical, as in many places cycling levels according to seasonal changes. Promotion of specific seasonal forms of cycling such as 'winter cycling', which has particular potential in northern countries, might be beneficial.
- Bicycle advice centres offering maintenance checks and sessions teaching cycling skills and maintenance.
- Training for novices or unconfident, infrequent cyclists.
- Using different approaches to target different market segments: e.g. those who already cycle, those who need persuading, those who wish to cycle for fitness, those who wish to cycle for work etc.
- Developing partnerships for action, including health, education, commercial and voluntary bodies.
- Linking cycling with wide initiatives and working in conjunction with health, environmental and safety campaigns in promoting cycling.
- Improving the image and status of cycling – making cycling 'sexy'.
- Helping users with issues such as luggage, protection and children when travelling (CTC, 1995).



## 2. IMPLEMENTING THE PROMOTIONAL CAMPAIGN:

- Promotional campaigns can involve the collaboration of multiple different organisations, perhaps, for example, developing partnerships with user groups or involving employers. In doing so, they can benefit from the diversity that the involvement of different groups can bring. However, flexible and regular communication is required between all parties if promotion exercise is to be successful (DTLR, 2001).
- International cycling networks or alliances could be set up to ensure consistency across nations and enable the widespread dissemination of cycling principles.
- The Dutch Bicycle Master Plan engaged in indirect communication through intermediate target groups as a form of promotion. Such intermediate target groups often have better access to the public and may often have more credibility.
- Advertising the presence and benefits of cycling facilities is necessary, as in many cases people are simply unaware of what is available. (DTLR, 2001).
- Communication (e.g. information, campaigns, advertising) is a key part of any promotional campaign. A variety of media (newspapers/internet) will be needed to reach target audiences (Hydén *et al.*, 1998 and Davies *et al.*, 2001).
- The internet can be a useful promotion tool in publicising comprehensive information on and services for cycling. One approach is to incorporate cycle networks into a multi-modal planner that provides door-to-door solutions – [www.travelbristol.org](http://www.travelbristol.org) for example, provides both direct and advisory (safer, but longer) route searching for cyclists in Bristol.
- The internet is also proving an effective means for promoting cycling with young people, as the Young TransNet project has shown (<http://www.youngtransnet.org.uk>).
- National, local and workplace-specific events, such as 'bike week' or 'green transport week' for example, can help raise the profile of cycling.

## 3. MONITORING AND EVALUATING THE PROMOTIONAL CAMPAIGN:

- Evaluation of promotional activity and strategies is important for future campaigns. Monitoring identifies which activities have been successful/unsuccessful so that lessons can be learnt and best practice identified.

Promotion is multi-faceted and includes many different, yet supporting, elements. In order to be successful, sustained campaigns are needed across a range of activities.



**Other Relevant Briefings:**

- Cycling and Planning
- Cycling and Leisure and Tourism

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