

Cycling City and Towns Programme Overview

March 2010



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Introduction

There is growing recognition that cycling can help tackle some of the biggest challenges facing the country today – and the first results from the original six Cycling Demonstration Towns have provided robust evidence to support this.

This report briefly sets out those encouraging findings, before providing background information on the wider programme, along with core data about population, funding allocation and cycling levels in all 18 locations. It also includes a snapshot of key activities in each Cycling City or Town.

Cycling Demonstration Towns – investment paying off

Cycling England was formed in 2005 with a responsibility to increase short urban trips by bike through the delivery of projects for the Department for Transport. At launch we implemented two flagship programmes: Bikeability training for schoolchildren, and the development of Cycling Demonstration Towns, where towns across England invested in their local cycling programmes at a level equivalent to that of successful European cycle towns, with the aim of achieving an increase in everyday cycling trips.

Cycling England helps local authorities deliver programmes of work designed and implemented locally, working with those who are seeking to increase the numbers of cyclists in their towns and cities.

In October 2005, the Cycling Towns programme started by establishing six Cycling Demonstration Towns. Cycling England invited bids from towns with a population of about 100,000 and the towns were selected from applications by 31 local authorities, on the basis of three principal characteristics:

- The ambition of their programme to increase short urban trips by bike
- The commitment and involvement of senior members and officers
- The commitment by the local authority to match-fund the Cycling England central grant.

Each town developed its own programme of activities, designed to take best advantage of local opportunities, but supported by some high quality ready-made packages funded or developed by Cycling England, such as Bikeability, Bike It and Go Ride.

For the past three years, we have been gathering data from the Cycling Demonstration Towns - Aylesbury, Brighton and Hove, Darlington, Derby, Exeter and Lancaster with Morecambe - in order to measure progress. In November 2009 we announced the first results. These are very positive - with cycling increasing by 27 per cent on average across all towns, demonstrating a decisive break from the downward trend in cycling levels in the UK, outside London, over the last 30 years.

There has also been a significant increase in physical activity levels in the Cycling Demonstration Towns – so cycling is contributing to improvements in general health – and cycling to school is also up. Not only this, but the research has also shown the programme to provide a good return on the investment - for each £1 spent, the increase in cycling levels has generated benefits valued at around £3 (www.dft.gov.uk/cyclingengland/cycling-cities-towns/results).

So for the first time in the UK outside London, we have achieved 'lift off' for cycling. The results of the six Cycling Demonstration Towns show that specific and targeted measures can have a significant impact in increasing cycling levels. We have learnt much during the first three years of the Cycling Towns programme. Crucially, to increase cycling requires a comprehensive and well integrated plan, focussed on the understanding of three things: people – who could be persuaded to take up cycling; place – where they want to go; and purpose – why they make these journeys. All this gives us great confidence that the specific cycling strategies implemented by the towns can make a real difference to the travel culture of the UK.

This approach is being followed in England's first Cycling City – greater Bristol – and the 11 new Cycling Towns established in 2008 following Government funding of £140 million to Cycling England for the following three years. As in the previous round of funding, local authorities up and down the country had to compete for the chance to become Cycling Towns. Half the highway authorities in England submitted bids, demonstrating the growing levels of political support for cycling, and ensuring that the successful proposals were fully backed by the local communities they would affect.

Much has been achieved since the expansion of the programme and the continued funding until 2011 will help to ensure that initial successes are translated into sustained behaviour change. It will take time to create successful cycling cities and towns, and this is only the beginning for focused investment in cycling, but we are confident that their cycling levels will continue to increase.

Evaluating the impacts of the Cycling City and Towns Programme

A comprehensive monitoring and evaluation programme has been put in place to look at the impact of the expanded Cycling City and Towns programme. The findings of this evaluation will aim to help, inspire and encourage other towns and cities to plan and implement programmes that get more people on their bikes.

The evaluation will provide robust data to answer some of the key questions that need to be answered when planning a cycling initiative - 'which groups of people can be encouraged to cycle/ride their bikes more often', 'what triggered behaviour change', 'what are the wider and longer term effects of cycling interventions on health, the environment, quality of life etc?'.

Sustrans, University of Bolton and Cavill Associates are responsible for monitoring the changes in cycling levels in all 18 cities and towns. This includes the development of a monitoring plan for each city/town, and collection of data from traffic counters, manual counts and route-user surveys. A summary of this information will be regularly reported throughout the Cycling City and Towns Programme and this monitoring data will also feed into the wider evaluation.

Sustrans, University of Bolton and Cavill Associates are also responsible for assessing changes in cycling behaviour and physical activity in the original six Cycling Demonstration Towns. This involved a before and after telephone survey with 1,500 individuals in each of the towns, conducted by ICM in 2006 and 2009. Another follow-up survey will be conducted in 2012.

Additionally, consultants AECOM, University of the West of England and the Tavistock Institute are undertaking a programme of work to evaluate investment in the 12 new Cycling City and Towns, as well as the Cycling England Schools and Young People programme. This work will endeavour to understand what has changed in each town, why these changes have occurred, and the specific context for change.

The evaluation also includes a before and after survey - around 1,250 households in each town were contacted in 2009 and this will be repeated at a later stage to measure changes in attitudes, cycling and travel behaviour, and overall physical activity amongst the population.

As well as this, the evaluation will include in-depth interviews and case study research, to understand the implementation and effects of specific interventions such as those targeted at journeys to work, and journeys to the station.

Cycling City and Towns programmes

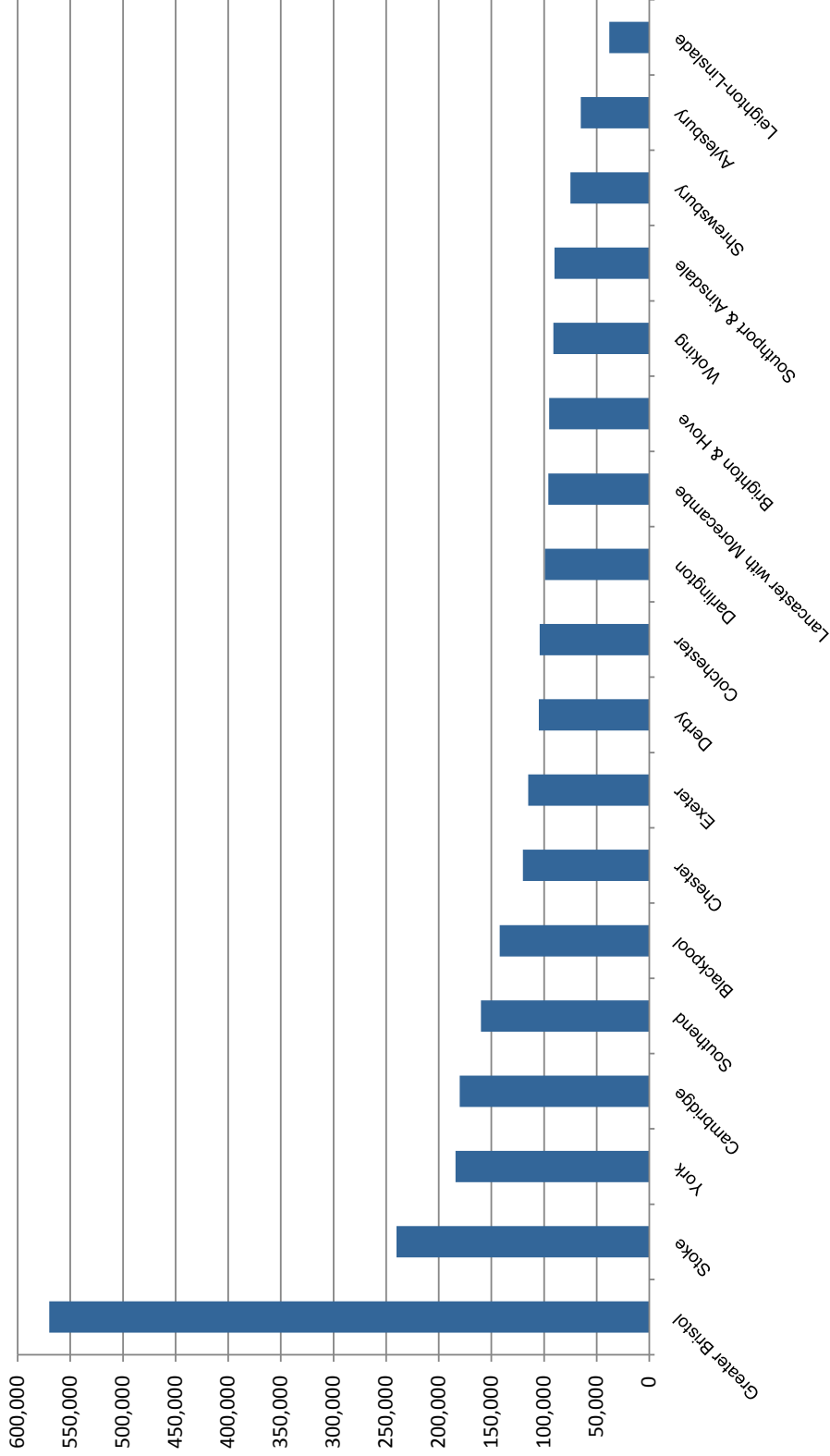
A summary of each town or city's activities can be found on pages 8-23. Many of the towns' programmes share a number of common ingredients, such as: improving, extending or building cycle routes; working with employers; offering Bikeability cycle training and other cycling promotional programmes in schools; implementing a tailored cycle hire scheme; introducing 20mph zones; implementing cycle signs with times (rather than distance); working closely with Primary Care Trusts; improving cycle parking facilities in schools, at stations, and other key destinations; and updating cycle maps.

The Cycling City and Towns play a key role in delivering Bikeability cycle training, which nationwide will reach an estimated 350,000 children in 2010/11.

Project officers implementing these programmes from the 18 towns and city meet regularly, hosted by different places in the programme, to share good practice and learn from one another. Wherever possible, good practice is also documented and shared with a wider audience through the Cycling England website.

Ultimately, Cycling England's aim through the Cycling City and Towns programme is to help other local authorities who are seeking to increase the numbers of people choosing to cycle. We provide a central hub of technical advice and expertise and, thanks to the Cycling Demonstration Towns, a growing evidence base that cycling is both inexpensive to fund and offers high return in terms of benefit to cost ratio. There now exists more evidence than ever before to help make the case for cycling.

Population of Cycling City and Towns



- 1 Population figures based on 410,000 for Bristol City Council and 160,000 covering part of South Gloucestershire
- 2 The population of Derby is 245,000, but the programme is focused on working with a targeted under 25s population of 105,000
- 3 Population of Brighton's Cycling Town area - West Brighton and Hove

Levels of cycling for Cycling City and Towns

Figures below show comparative levels of cycling in the 18 Cycling City and Towns.

Please note that the 2001 census journey to work data for:

- **Leighton-Linslade** relates to the wards All Saints, Grovebury, Linslade, Planets, Plantation, Southcott (NB these wards do not exist after the 2004 boundary changes)
- **Southport & Ainsdale** relates to the wards Ainsdale, Birkdale, Cambridge, Dukes, Kew, Meols, Norwood
- **Aylesbury** relates to the wards Aylesbury Central, Bedgrove, Elmhurst and Watermead, Gatehouse, Mandeville and Elm Farm, Oakfield, Quarrendon, Southcourt, Walton Court and Hawkslade.

Please also note that the cycle to school data shown for the following towns/cities are for corresponding larger council areas, as follows:

- Cambridge – Cambridgeshire
- Shrewsbury – Shropshire
- Colchester – Essex
- Southport and Ainsdale – Sefton
- Chester – Cheshire
- Woking – Surrey
- Leighton-Linslade – Bedfordshire.

City/Town	2001 census percentage cycling to work	Cycle to primary school figures (PLASC 2008 data)	Cycle to secondary school figures (PLASC 2008 data)	Approximate mode share for cycling (as quoted in towns/city workplans)
Cambridge	28.32%	6.6%	12.2%	18%
York	13.02%	4.8%	11.6%	10%
Shrewsbury	5.66%	1.6%	3.4%	3 – 3.5%
Greater Bristol	4.92%	1.3%	3.7%	3 - 4%
Exeter	4.82%	2.1%	8.1%	4%
Derby	4.78%	1.0%	3.1%	3%
Colchester	4.71%	1.4%	4.4%	3%
Lancaster with Morecambe	4.27%	2.6%	7.6%	4%
Southport & Ainsdale	4.06%	1.3%	4.3%	2 - 3%
Chester	3.70%	0.8%	2.6%	4%
Blackpool	3.55%	0.3%	3.2%	1.5%
Aylesbury	3.30%	1.4%	2.4%	2%
Southend	2.97%	1.8%	5.1%	2%
Brighton	2.96%	1.8%	1.7%	3%
Woking	2.92%	2.2%	5.0%	4%
Leighton – Linslade	2.88%	0.7%	3.1%	1.5%
Darlington	2.41%	1.9%	4.0%	2%
Stoke-on-Trent	1.67%	0.2%	0.9%	2%

Cycling England budget

Local authorities are required to match fund their Cycling England investment, so over the entire programme the investment will reach over £120 million. This equates to nearly £15 per head of population across all 18 cities and towns for 2008-11.

Figures listed below for 2005-09 represent the amounts paid by the Department for Transport (on behalf of Cycling England) to the respective Cycling City and Towns.

Figures for 2009/10 show the negotiated amount the Department for Transport (on behalf of Cycling England) has agreed to pay each Cycling City/Town for this financial year. Figures for 2010/11 show what remains for each city or town's funding agreement with the Department for Transport.

Place	2005-08 (1/11/05 -31/03/08)	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	Total
City					
Greater Bristol	--	1,208,000	5,285,000	5,085,000	11,578,000
Towns					
Stoke-on-Trent	--	880,000	2,576,000	1,564,000	5,020,000
Exeter	1,559,500	751,000	958,500	785,500	4,054,500
York	--	535,000	1,620,000	1,655,000	3,810,000
Cambridge	--	500,000	1,695,000	1,615,000	3,810,000
Blackpool	--	400,000	2,540,000	775,000	3,715,000
Southend-on-Sea	--	400,000	2,025,000	1,055,000	3,480,000
Brighton & Hove	1,389,500	416,000	925,000	535,000	3,265,500
Derby	1,300,000	596,000	675,000	500,000	3,071,000
Lancaster with Morecambe	1,309,200	500,000	752,000	448,000	3,009,200
Darlington	1,148,710	502,000	570,000	500,000	2,720,710
Chester	--	242,000	1,233,000	1,065,000	2,540,000
Aylesbury	765,000	461,000	842,000	300,000	2,368,000
Colchester	--	350,000	975,000	990,000	2,315,000
Southport	--	300,000	1,075,000	840,000	2,215,000
Woking	--	366,000	1,145,500	639,500	2,151,000
Shrewsbury	--	600,000	800,000	665,000	2,065,000
Leighton-Linslade	--	567,000	723,500	355,100	1,645,600
Total	7,471,910	9,574,000	26,415,500	19,372,100	62,833,510

Summaries of Cycling City and Towns' activity

Aylesbury

The initial three years of Aylesbury's Cycling Town programme focused on using 'soft measures' such as route signing and promotions to encourage people to get on their bikes. The team has expanded, named and coloured eight main cycle routes after gemstones to make them easily identifiable to the public (the Gemstone Cycleways), and pioneered a radical new approach to signage, obtaining Department for Transport permission to count down to destinations in minutes rather than miles. A town-wide promotional campaign, including a local radio partnership with a jingle and route-specific guides, was also launched to spur residents to action.

Following renewed funding in 2008, Aylesbury prioritised infrastructure measures and improvements. All Gemstone routes have had red surfacing installed on side road junctions to help ensure motorists look out for cyclists, and more signs have been put up to direct cyclists to the town centre. This has improved access for major employment centres and has been supported by the installation of additional cycle parking spaces.

The newest Gemstone Cycleway, the Jet Way, was completed in April 2009, providing a direct link from the town centre to Stoke Mandeville hospital. At the same time the Bourg Walk, a new 200 metre long shared use pedestrian/cycle bridge, was opened - providing easy access across the railway line, connecting the south side of Aylesbury to the town centre and linking the existing Pebble, Emerald and new Jet Way routes.

Aylesbury has benefited from a number of improvements to make it easier for people cycling to access the town centre. An element of this work is the introduction of a contraflow cycle lane (due to be complete by April 2010). A close working relationship with the District Council has continued to ensure that cycling provision is an automatic consideration for all proposed housing developments.

To reflect all of the infrastructure improvements, the existing Gemstone route maps have had a facelift and a new Jet Way map has also been produced. Aylesbury has continued to support all infrastructure developments through promotional activity, most recently through the appointment of a promotions officer and a targeted advertising campaign encouraging commuters to cycle to work using the Gemstone Cycleways network.

Cycle Aylesbury works with 15 local businesses to promote cycling – accessing 11,000 employees. These workplaces can take advantage of a pool of 20 loan bikes, Dr Bike sessions, and cycle parking grants. The team also runs an annual 'Business Bike Challenge' – an inter-workplace competition between teams participating in the Tour de Vale bike ride. This has proven to be a good way of finding people who are enthusiastic about cycling, whom Cycle Aylesbury can then work with to promote cycling to these workplaces.

As well as encouraging commuters onto their bikes, the team continues to promote family cycling - where children and parents learn together - and cycling in local schools, working alongside the Bike It Officer. Events to support this have included Dr Bike sessions and activities for Bike to School Week, for example 'Recycle a Bike Day' where unwanted bikes were repaired and donated to schools for their pupils to learn to cycle. Over 100 people swapped bikes, giving many children the chance to get hold of better fitting bikes, and there are plans to repeat this activity at other schools in 2010.

Bike Week 2009 was celebrated with the annual Tour De Vale cycle ride, daily bike breakfasts at schools and businesses, a joint ride with neighbouring Cycle Town, Leighton Linlade, and the 'on 2 wheels' town centre event which promoted cycling.

Infrastructure improvements will continue to be the focus in 2010, with plans to install raised crossings on the Pebble and Ruby Ways - aimed at giving cyclists a degree of priority; extensions to the Emerald Way; and the introduction of the ninth Gemstone route, the Topaz Way. These improvements will bring about further advantages for people choosing to cycle in Aylesbury, and ensure that more residents have access to a dedicated cycle route.

These infrastructure improvements will be supported by continued investment in targeted marketing activity. This will include tailored events, business and family cycle training and the launch of the bicycle project in April 2010 - a personalised cycle planning scheme providing expert advice, training, equipment and incentives aimed at all age groups to increase the numbers of people cycling in the town.

Visit www.cycleaylesbury.co.uk for more information.

Blackpool

Blackpool's economy is dominated by tourism: with a population of 142,000, it receives 10 million visitors each year, and 32 per cent of its employment is within hotels and restaurants and the distribution industry. With ambitious regeneration plans in place to transform the popular seaside town into a world-class resort, the Cycling Town programme aims to help Blackpool meet the challenge of the modern leisure market's needs, by making cycling an essential part of its tourism offer.

Blackpool currently has some of the lowest levels of adult participation in sport and physical activity in the country, with concentrations of extreme socio-economic deprivation; it is now the 12th most deprived authority in England. Car ownership is low: 37 per cent of all households have no car compared with an average of 27 per cent for England and Wales. Blackpool's terrain is largely flat, and its urban layout means that most local trips can be achieved by a short bike ride.

Historically, Blackpool's transport infrastructure has been geared to accommodate large volumes of tourism traffic. The Seafront Movement Strategy will transform the seafront area from a heavily trafficked distributor road into a pleasant walking and cycling environment, providing prime leisure cycling areas. In addition, four 'signature routes' will be created, providing links to many key destinations and enabling visitors and local people alike to choose to travel by bike for short trips.

Since the start of the programme, Blackpool has made headway on several infrastructure projects, including creating and extending cycle paths, re-modelling roundabouts, scoping out new routes to schools, the creation of a shared off-road track in Stanley Park, and the development of a BMX track.

The biggest project implemented to date is the launch of the country's first large-scale cycle-hire scheme. Jointly funded by Cycling England, Blackpool NHS and the local council, it allows residents and tourists to hire bikes from automated stands located across the town - including the Promenade, Pleasure Beach and local parks.

Sixty bikes are currently available to hire from nine hubs across Blackpool and the scheme provides residents and tourists with a cheap, convenient and healthy way of getting around. Already over 4,600 miles have been cycled by new riders since the launch, a figure set to soar when the number of cycles available on the scheme increases to over 400 bikes by May 2010.

Blackpool has also run a huge range of cycle events and promotions, including hosting the Tour of Britain, Tour Series, Nocturne Series, Bike Week, the 'Ride the Lights' bike ride which offers a preview of the famous Blackpool Illuminations, and a Cycle Festival. In 2010, the town will be hosting the Grand Depart for the Tour of Britain.

A further initiative from Cycle Blackpool is the 'Wheels for All' centre in Stanley Park, which has a large range of adapted bikes to allow people with disabilities to take up cycling. Weekly 'try-it' sessions have been available from February 2010.

Numerous health projects around cycling, delivered in partnership by the Council's Healthy Futures team and co-funded by the Blackpool NHS, have also been introduced within the community. An example of these is 'Cycling on Referral', which takes place weekly in Stanley Park for those undergoing rehabilitation following serious illness. This has been very popular, as a way of providing useful exercise as well as helping promote cycling as a safe and sociable activity.

Visit www.cycleblackpool.co.uk for more information.

Brighton & Hove

Despite being hilly in parts, several characteristics of Brighton showed its potential for cycling; for example 49 per cent of residents live within five kilometres of their workplace. This is higher than the national average and presents a great opportunity to encourage commuters to get on their bike.

The first three years of the Cycling Town programme in Brighton & Hove focused on four main priorities: a Cycle Freeway Network, a large-scale Personalised Travel Planning programme, Bikeability training for 1,300 pupils annually, and a range of infrastructure improvements, including the radical redesign of certain streets. For example, New Road, which runs alongside the Royal Pavilion Gardens and theatre district, has been redesigned to maintain two-way travel for cyclists. Since its opening, New Road has recorded a 93 per cent drop in motorised vehicles, with a 22 per cent increase in the number of bicycles using this route.

A key focus for cycling infrastructure in 2009 was the refurbishment of the Seafront Cycle Route and its extension from the Pier to the Marina. To create easier cycling access to the station, the team are working with Southern Railway and developing a full station travel plan to improve cycle access and facilities at Brighton Station. This will include developing a landmark cycle centre and may involve the reopening of the Trafalgar Street Undercroft entrance to the station, where a cycle contra-flow was recently installed. This would create much improved access to the station for people cycling.

Working closely with employers in the area has been another key focus, and this has led to cycle shelters and parking being installed at Brighton's Primary Care Trust (PCT) Headquarters, four new cycle shelters at Hove Police Station, and the recent opening of extensive cycle parking and shower facilities at Brighton Police Station. Since early 2007 the team has promoted cycling to work by helping 35 organisations implement travel plans – reaching over 24,000 employees through these workplace hubs.

Sheltered, secure cycle parking has also been installed at 17 of the city's Bike It schools - designed to accommodate at least 10 per cent of the student population. The Brighton & Hove team is continuing with a comprehensive programme of cycle shelter installations at Bike It schools throughout 2010.

Brighton & Hove recently received accreditation to run Level 3 Bikeability and training continues to be rolled out across the city. Bookings have been made for nine Bike It schools to receive Levels 1, 2 and 3 Bikeability cycle training and family cycle training days.

The Personalised Travel Planning programme has been expanded, with a total of 30,000 households reached since 2006 through a dedicated team of trained travel advisers. The focus has been on the health benefits of cycling and all activity has been supported by events such as guided bike rides, coffee mornings, Brighton's Bike Week and Car Free Day. Further roll out of the Personalised Travel Planning programme will be supported by a new social media and community participation approach, with an aim to reach a further 15,000 households in the city.

The UK's first interactive cycle counter display unit will be installed in 2010. Such counters can be seen in European cycling cities such as Copenhagen. These units display cycle count information throughout the day to give people information about the number of people using bikes to travel around the city. Infrastructure work will also continue on the National Cycle Network route 2 on the seafront to upgrade and enhance a facility which carries over 2,000 cyclists a day.

Brighton & Hove's Local Transport Plan and involvement in the European Civitas+ partnership for sustainable transport measures provides continued funding for active travel measures throughout the city. Civitas programmes see groups of European cities working together to share best practice experience and skills across the European Community. The project will provide £2.5 million for Brighton & Hove during the same timeframe as the second phase of the Cycling Town programme (2008-11), to be directed to a range of sustainable transport initiatives including cycle priority measures such as a cycle 'Greenwave' due for completion in March 2011.

Visit www.journeyon.co.uk for more information.

Greater Bristol

Greater Bristol is England's first Cycling City and the recipient of nearly a quarter of the overall funds for the Cycling City and Towns Programme during 2008-11. With a substantial number of short car journeys in Greater Bristol – 45,000 daily car trips to work are less than three miles in length, representing 50 per cent of total trips – there is considerable potential for behaviour change.

Greater Bristol's Cycling City strategy is being delivered by a partnership of Bristol City Council and South Gloucestershire Council. The cycling strategy consists of a series of major infrastructure initiatives and a programme of 'Smarter Choices' measures, designed to offer people the information, motivation and training they need to take up cycling.

In terms of infrastructure, Bristol City Council will have built/improved 19 new paths and junctions by April 2010. South Gloucestershire Council will also have completed a similar number of projects by that date.

There are several projects in development at the moment, such as Hartcliffe Way and the Connect 2 Cycling City route that links the Create Centre (an environment and learning centre) to the University of West of England's Bower Ashton Campus. This will be a largely traffic-free route giving families, leisure-seekers, commuters and students a safer and more direct way to travel by bike to and from the historic

Ashton Court park estate and one of the key University campuses. The paths that have already been built are being well used - St Werburgh's bike path sees over 5,800 cycle journeys each month, an increase of around 2,000 journeys (56 per cent) compared with before the improved route was built.

Work has started on additional infrastructure design and development, including a safe cycle route on the A38 – one of the busiest and most congested traffic routes in the area – to make cycling between the main places of employment, education, shopping and housing easier and safer for residents. By March 2011, work will have been completed on almost 50 roads or cycle paths.

New cycle parking has been provided at over 20 sites, including Bristol Parkway station, with over 900 on-street bicycle parking stands installed across the city providing space for 1,800 bicycles. A pilot bike hire scheme has also been launched with 40 hire bikes available at eight locations in and around Bristol. In addition to this the council has 100 loan bikes available for businesses in central Bristol.

The Cycling City team is also making headway on two large 20mph speed limit pilot areas proposed within Bristol. Working closely with the Primary Care Trust (PCT) the areas have been selected to ensure they tackle health deprivation concerns and casualty numbers at the same time as increasing cycling. The project will focus particular attention on communities identified through social research, which identifies people who are most likely to take up cycling. Work is forecast to start in April 2010, with an expected completion date of July 2010.

A business engagement programme, including Personalised Travel Planning, is currently being rolled out in Bristol, based on initial conversations with 30 employers and trade bodies. This includes surveys of businesses to assess potential demand for cycling. A number of high profile companies, such as the Ministry of Defence, Rolls Royce, Burgess Salmon, DAS and the Highways Agency have signed up to the Cycling City's workplace programme – 'Gear Up.'

In 2009 Cycling City was involved with 50 events that helped to promote cycling and healthy living. The biggest success was Bristol's Biggest Bike Ride which saw 7,000 people taking part – a 40 per cent increase from 2008.

The team's work with schools and parents in Bristol and South Gloucestershire has also been a success. There are now 55 Bike It schools in the area and over 9,000 children have taken part in Bikeability training. Four Bike It officers have been recruited and 20 Bike It schools have received funding to install cycle parking facilities which are now in place, with three schools already requesting additional parking space due to increased cycling levels.

A new initiative, the Concorde project, has begun in South Gloucestershire with the aim of providing cycle connector routes between secondary schools in the area - allowing pupils to travel to lessons between schools as part of their curriculum. The new routes will be used in conjunction with Bikeability training and Bike It activities in order to familiarise new pupils and parents with the routes and to encourage sustainable modes of travel before the transition to secondary school.

In addition to these initiatives, Bristol Primary Care Trust has launched a five year 'Active Bristol' programme (to run 2008 to 2013). To ensure the cycling programme is well integrated within this, the PCT has funded two Bike It Officers to work on school engagement activity.

Visit www.betterbybike.info for more information.

Cambridge

Cycling already has a great presence in Cambridge: its flat terrain, green urban space and compact city centre - permeable to people cycling - creates ideal conditions for bike travel. Cambridge enjoys the highest levels of cycling not just of all the Cycling City and Towns, but of any town and city in the UK. Levels of cycling are somewhat lower in the surrounding villages and there is great potential in these outlying areas to increase levels of cycling to match those found in the centre of Cambridge.

Cambridge is undergoing a sustained period of growth with 47,000 new homes due to be built, and the population of Cambridge set to rise by 7.9 per cent in the next decade. Many of the people who move to Cambridge will be coming from areas where cycling levels are much closer to the national average, so one of the key aims for Cambridge's programme is to expand its cycling culture, to ensure levels of cycling in new developments and surrounding villages match existing levels in central Cambridge. This surge in population will also put huge strains on current transport infrastructure, so to prevent crippling congestion, the level of trips by sustainable transport options will have to rise significantly.

An ambitious programme of new and improved cycling infrastructure is underway. In the centre of Cambridge, traffic lanes on Hills Road Bridge will be revised to provide wide and continuous cycle lanes. This bridge is currently used by around 5,300 cyclists every day, and the new lanes will help make the journey safer for these existing users as well as attracting more people on bikes to the route. Cycling lanes and facilities will also be improved on key roads around the city and 20mph zones will be introduced in the centre.

Upgraded and new routes will also be established outside the city in the South Cambridgeshire district, for example from Sawston to Abington and Harston to Cambridge. This will help increase the number of village to village journeys that are cycled, as well as improve links to the city. The Cambridgeshire Guided Busway is also currently under construction, and routes will be put in place to ensure cyclists can easily access the off-road cycleway that runs alongside the busway - stretching the 15 miles from St Ives to Cambridge.

There are plans for increased cycle parking facilities in Cambridge, and the Travel for Work Partnership (TfW)* will run a 'Take a Stand' Scheme, with 50 per cent of the costs of cycle parking provided to employers in need of spaces. To further support workplaces, funding will be available for companies to run events such as Dr Bike and cycle breakfasts. The Cycle Cambridge team offers workplace Bicycle User Groups (BUGs) further support through regular visits and guidance.

Cycle parking schemes have also been implemented at several schools. As well as this, Bikeability training levels 1 and 2 continue to be delivered in schools with 75 per cent take up from children in Year 6 so far. Adult cycle training has also been rolled out - with the number of adults trained in 2009 increasing from 49 in 2008 to over 200.

Marketing and promotion will continue to be a key focus for the team in the next year, not least in promoting and publicising the newly built cycle routes. Advertising campaigns on buses have focussed on commuting, families cycling together and young women cycling. Campaigns over the next 18 months will include cycling for fitness/health, the promotion of Bikeweek events and adult cycle training.

* TfW is one of Cycle Cambridge's partners. Established in 1997 the team works with employers on travel initiatives and has a well established network of employers of varying sizes.

Visit www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/cycling for more information.

Chester

A compact town where few urban journeys are over four miles, Chester should be an ideal location for cycling. However, the town has a number of physical barriers to cycling, which have kept cycling levels low. The Roman walls, inner ring road and a number of gaps in the current cycling network all present difficulties for people choosing to cycle, and the Cycle Chester programme aims to make cycling an easier travel choice.

Chester is quite demographically diverse, and Cycle Chester aims to better engage with local communities by establishing focus groups in four key areas of the city - Blacon, Lache, Upton and Hoole. Blacon and Lache have high levels of deprivation and unemployment. In contrast, Upton and Hoole are recognised as more affluent areas in Chester. The different barriers identified in these focus groups will be addressed within Cycle Chester's activities.

Cycle Chester was officially launched at a cycle festival event in April 2009. The promotional campaign is now in full swing, including a Cycle Chester website, relationships with local radio stations and newspapers, and branded leaflets and flyers. As well as this, Cycle Chester has partnered with 'Britain in Bloom' and a complementary bike scheme called 'Petal Power' has been launched to promote cycling.

In year one, Cycle Chester made a start on its ambitious cycling infrastructure programme. This included extending a major greenway, which created a cycle route to the village of Mickle Trafford (situated just outside Chester). In year two a link between the Riverside canal and retail and city centre areas is being established - providing access for commuters and recreational cyclists. This scheme will also create a commuter route from Chester's ever expanding University - helping cyclists reach the different educational centres across Chester.

Another important part of Cycle Chester's infrastructure programme is the city centre permeability masterplan. This addresses the physical barriers to cycling in Chester, providing recommendations for cycling improvements that will encourage more people to get on their bikes. Schemes range from

minor road improvements to major infrastructure schemes, but the flagship infrastructure project is the construction of a pedestrian and cycle-bridge over the River Dee. This bridge is due to be completed by 2013.

Underpinning these infrastructure developments, Cycle Chester has run community cycle schemes, including establishing a bike loan initiative. Cycle Chester provides bicycles to people who don't usually cycle, in return for a record of the bike's use.

A cycle training programme has also begun, with Bikeability levels 1 and 2 being delivered in every primary school in Chester. In addition to this, Community Safety Wardens have been trained as cycling instructors. Dr Bike and cycle maintenance courses are run regularly for children and adults in Chester, and the team has delivered cycle awareness training to car drivers in partnership with local driver training companies. In 2010 and 2011 the team will develop and deliver cycle awareness schemes for organisations with employees who drive large vehicles, with a view to rolling this out to other businesses in Chester.

Visit www.cyclechester.com for more information.

Colchester

Colchester is a large self-contained town with a rural hinterland of villages. The majority (68 per cent) of residents work in Colchester, but for those working further afield, there are three railway stations across the town. Although Colchester had an existing cycle network of on-road facilities, quiet streets and dedicated paths, it was incomplete, with some barriers to the town centre and other destinations.

The aim of Colchester's Cycling Town programme is to create an improved town with cycling at its heart and facilities of European quality. Priorities for cycle accessibility improvements include the town's railway stations (Colchester North Station, Colchester Town Centre and The Hythe) and the town centre, as well as other key destinations such as the University, Colchester Institute, regeneration areas and the General Hospital.

During year one, infrastructure improvements concentrated on upgrading and refurbishing existing routes in northern Colchester - rejuvenating routes between Highwoods, the town centre and North Station - allowing uninterrupted journeys by bike for the first time. Highwoods is a substantial residential area to the north of Colchester with a number of inhabitants who regularly commute to Colchester's main station and the town centre by bike. Throughout year two of Cycle Colchester, the routes have been completed and extensively marketed and promoted to demonstrate what can be achieved elsewhere in the town.

Cycling-tailored Personalised Travel Planning has also been delivered to residents in the Highwoods area, following the route upgrade. The aim of this element of work was to provide guidance and advice on cycling to the 4,200 properties to encourage people to cycle more often. A team of cycling advisers were recruited to visit residents over a six week period throughout October and November 2009 to provide information and advice. Personal Travel Planning was well received with 42 per cent of residents participating. A further survey of residents is to be carried out during 2010 to assess whether residents have changed their mode of travel for shorter journeys.

The 2009 programme of events focussed on a 'Summer of Cycling'. This aimed to encourage people to give travelling by bike a try. A family audience was specifically targeted through a range of activities in town, including advertising/marketing, events, Dr Bike sessions and partnership opportunities. The local radio station, Heart FM, supported the Summer of Cycling on air, and there were 'Heart Angels' appearances at the Cycling Festival and High Woods route launch.

To help increase numbers of children cycling to school, Essex County Council became accredited to deliver Bikeability Level 2, enabling the Council to deliver training directly and convert all existing primary school training to Bikeability. A Parent Plus package, for parents of pupils who have received Bikeability training at school, has been developed and launched. This encourages parents to learn to cycle, or regain their confidence riding a bike, at the same time as their children receive Bikeability training.

In addition to this, the Colchester team is building and maintaining strong relationships with schools in the area through the development of Cycling Town partner schools. The aim is to encourage full participation in training, events and other initiatives – with the ultimate ambition of 11 schools being awarded Partner Schools Status by the end of 2010. To achieve Partner School status the schools will

be required to develop Travel Plans with a cycling component and an up-to-date Road Safety Policy, and offer Bikeability training to students. In return, the schools will receive financial support for cycle infrastructure, such as parking and improved or new access routes.

Future planned infrastructure developments include increasing the number and quality of cycle parking places at Colchester North station and improving access routes and signs into and from the station. A number of new cycle routes will also be constructed, including commuter routes connecting the town centre with Greenstead and Hythe Station.

Training packages for secondary schools, colleges and University of Essex students and staff will be developed and will include Bikeability Level 3 training, as well as activities such as Dr Bike and cycle maintenance training. Adult and parent training packages will continue to be developed and delivered.

A marketing and promotion campaign will begin with the implementation of the Cycle Stars project which will recruit and follow families who are new to cycling and provide support to them in a fun way to encourage them to travel by bike. This will start in spring 2010, running through to summer 2010 and resulting in a short film which will premiere at an event in the town centre cinema to promote cycling in Colchester.

Visit www.cyclecolchester.org.uk for more information.

Darlington

Darlington was the only town selected to be both a Cycling Demonstration Town and a Sustainable Travel Demonstration Town during 2005-08. Despite being compact and flat, Darlington had relatively low levels of cycling in 2005. Darlington's goals were to build major improvements to existing cycle infrastructure, including a new crossing over the busy A66, and links into the main railway station and the town centre; to install high quality, secure cycle parking at key locations; and to implement a sustained programme of marketing, cycle training, events and travel plans.

Darlington has completed several infrastructure projects, including upgrades to the town's radial routes which have created easier access to the town centre and improved cycling conditions. The result is 22 kilometres of additional cycle routes, doubling Darlington's network to 41 kilometres.

New access points have also been created to major cycle routes, such as a link to the cycle path alongside the Eastern Transport Corridor which has received much praise from local residents and ward councillors. Work has been completed on a new access point to route 14 of the National Cycle Network which connects Darlington to Stockton and also links Middleton St George to Darlington town centre. An extended trial to allow cycling through the pedestrianised area of Darlington's town centre was a success and, following a consultation in February 2009, it was decided that access for cyclists can continue on a permanent basis.

During 2008 and 2009, over 250 additional cycle parking spaces were installed in Darlington's schools, taking the total number to over 1,250. This means there are now cycle parking facilities in 32 of the 38 schools in the borough. As well as this, Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College is providing a secure covered shelter which will accommodate 80 cycles.

Alongside these infrastructure improvements, Darlington has been encouraging cycling through a number of promotional events and initiatives. Working in partnership with the Council events team, the Leukaemia Research Big Bikeathon saw more than 100 children take part and the Cycling Festival attracted over 1,000 visitors. Darlington also received extensive local media coverage, including regional BBC and ITV stations, when it hosted stage 6 of the Tour of Britain and used the opportunity to promote the town's Medal Motion campaign (aimed at children). This involved asking primary school pupils to complete and submit travel diaries covering two school weeks. Over 3,800 diaries were returned – a 67 per cent increase on the previous campaign.

Additional activity includes the implementation of an innovative project to encourage teenage girls to cycle. This project was run by Darlington Media Group, with support from Darlington Borough Council, and involved establishing partner groups with teenage girls in Bremen in Germany - a town with a strong teenage cycling culture. The project resulted in a DVD and book being produced. The group have also applied for additional funding to extend the pool of bikes that the girls have been using.

The Darlington Cycle Map has also been updated and a pack of self-guided ride leaflets published, containing short self-guided ride descriptions and maps which are aimed at new or less confident cyclists. The routes are designed to take no longer than 35 minutes. Seven new pocket-sized route maps are planned to be added during 2010 – these will show the radial routes into the town centre.

The priority for the next phase of the infrastructure programme is to ensure that all seven radial routes are complete. Major events planned in 2010 include a workplace cycling challenge, the Darlington Cycling Festival, and a series of guided rides covering a number of routes. The Darlington Cycling Festival has been an annual event for five years and is increasing in popularity and size each year. The 2010 festival will have a health theme.

Visit www.dothelocalmotion.co.uk for more information.

Derby

As a housing 'Growth Point' area, 6,100 new homes are planned for Derby before 2011. Such growth makes sustainable transport improvements essential to prevent traffic congestion problems.

Cycle Derby's initial focus was on the town's 100,000 under-25s, embedding cycling into the school day through Bikeability training, curricular and extra curricular clubs and the provision of secure cycle storage.

In July 2008, Derby opened the doors to its new National Standard BMX track designed to host national events, and a smaller track to help develop the skills of younger riders, encouraging participation through regular club events.

Children of all ages have also been reached through promotional campaigns including the annual 'Big Cycle Weekend' parent and child school days, family bike rides, holiday cycle clubs and Learn to Ride sessions, cycle try-outs, and Dr Bike cycle repair and maintenance sessions - cheered on by the 'Shift and Sprocket' cartoon characters invented by the Cycle Derby team.

Cycle Derby has gained accreditation to be a National Standard Instructor Training Provider and the team has developed 'Scootability', a scheme which targets nursery age children through to Year 3 and promotes the basic skills required to begin their lifelong learning on two wheels. The pilot scheme has been so successful that now every child in the city has been offered the course.

In 2008/9 Derby reached the goal of having every school in the area benefiting from an after-school club, and the town's Bike to School Challenge was a huge success with 37 schools taking part. This resulted in over 10,000 cycle journeys over a week-long period, with one school seeing 76 per cent of its pupils cycling in every day.

During the course of the project, Derby has consolidated and expanded its programme, continuing to focus on the existing target group of young people under 25, through a mixture of education, training, promotions, marketing, events, rides and clubs.

The local university and college have benefited from popular campaigns such as the 'Quicker by Bike' promotion. Students were given leaflets detailing the number of minutes by bike from their campus to places of interest in the city centre. At the new college campus, the college travel planner consulted with the Cycle Derby team and the result was the provision of 200 cycle parking spaces, shower and locker facilities plus the free use of hair dryers and straighteners. This immediately increased the number of staff cycling to work from less than one per cent to nine per cent, and over 80 students now cycling in daily. To ensure continued support, Cycle Derby has provided information for the college travel hub and offered guided rides and adult cycle training.

In 2008 Derby was selected as one of the 24 stations in a national pilot programme of Rail Station Travel Plans. The national launch was hosted in Derby and was attended by the Secretary of State for Transport. The station travel plan will help to market and promote sustainable travel modes to and from the station.

Visit www.cyclederby.co.uk for more information.

Exeter

Devon is a natural playground and Exeter sits at its heart, surrounded by estuaries, coasts, forests and moorland. Exeter already had a network of around 50 kilometres of cycle routes when it became a Cycling Demonstration Town in 2005, but Devon County Council created a further 16 kilometres in its first 18 months as a Cycling Town. With routes progressing well, the town has been encouraging cycling take-up among children, students and workers.

The 2008-11 programme has extended the project boundaries into the Exeter sub-region, to create links

to outlying communities and take advantage of the leisure opportunities that exist within Exeter's rural hinterland.

Since 2008, Exeter has put in place a number of infrastructure improvements, including new links to schools, a new stretch of shared-use path to improve access to the city centre, and new paths and crossings to create links to West Exe College and local business parks.

Not forgetting the health benefits that cycling brings, the team introduced 'Cycle to Your Heart's Content' – a group adult cycling course – in Exeter and Exmouth, with support from the Devon Primary Care Trust (PCT). The course emphasises the fitness and health benefits of getting back on your bike, and is aimed at those who live, work or study in the Exeter or Exe Estuary area. 'Strictly Come Cycling' is a follow up activity to 'Cycle to your Heart's Content' and these guided leisure rides around Exeter are aimed at graduates of 'Cycle to Your Heart's Content.'

In 2009 Cycle Exeter, in partnership with Devon County Council, was accredited as an Instructor Training Centre and has trained nearly a hundred people to deliver Bikeability throughout Devon and the South West. Since the start of the Cycle Exeter project almost 5,000 children have received Bikeability training. In 2009 Bikeability training was rolled out to schools along the Exe Estuary, and a new partnership with Exeter School Sports Partnership now ensures more children are trained in the Exeter region. This has contributed to 20 per cent of children now regularly cycling to school.

In addition to running Bikeability courses, cycling continues to be promoted within Exeter's schools, predominantly through the Bike It programme. In line with the extension of the project's boundaries, Bike It now also operates in Exmouth, initially targeting Year 7 students at Exmouth Community College where there are nearly 2,500 students in total. The five secondary schools in Exeter, a focal point of the original project targets, continue to receive close support from Cycle Exeter to maintain the momentum for cycling. Excellent links have been made with the School Sports Partnership, to incorporate cycling wherever possible through the curriculum.

Exeter University students have the highest car ownership of any University town in the country and, as such, Cycle Exeter has put an increased focus on promoting and supporting cycling to and around the campuses, by developing a Cycling Strategy for the University of Exeter. This comprehensive report has been endorsed by the University at a senior level and excellent progress has been made to implement the measures within it.

Cycle Exeter has also implemented cycle parking facilities across the city. Sites include schools (where the capacity for parked bikes has doubled at three secondary schools to cope with greater demand as a result of the increase in children cycling), the University of Exeter, The Royal Devon and Exeter Hospital, numerous workplaces, two health centres, and a church, which had its new shelter blessed.

Progress is continuing with the Exe Estuary Trail, which will provide a traffic-free walking and cycling route from Exeter along both sides of the estuary to Dawlish and Exmouth. Other infrastructure priorities include creating a link between the villages of Lypstone and Exton on the Exe Estuary Trail and the completion of a safe cycle crossing over the M5 to link a major employment site and the village of Clyst St Mary to the Exeter Cycle Network. In order to link two major hubs of employment in Exeter, work will also be carried out on the Rydon Lane cycle route at the Middlemoor roundabout – aiming to create a continuous off-road route, parallel to Exeter's outer ring road.

A new promotional strategy was launched during summer 2009, creating a brand and identity for the Cycle Exeter project. The 'Freedom of Your City' campaign includes a pledge aimed at getting both individuals and companies to sign up. An award scheme will also be offered to workplaces who adopt measures from the Bicycle User Group workplace toolkits created and hosted online by Cycle Exeter.

To serve commuters and tourists, station enhancement schemes for Exeter St Davids and Exeter central stations are planned in 2010, with cycling fully integrated into these schemes. Meanwhile, completion of a shared use link parallel to the strategic corridor of Bonhay Road will improve linkages between the City Centre and Exeter St David's station.

Visit www.cycleexeter.org.uk for more information.

Lancaster with Morecambe

Prior to the start of the Cycling Demonstration Town project, Lancaster City Council's cycling focus had been on investment in infrastructure. With Lancaster and Morecambe being only five kilometres apart and the greenway off-road cycle route joining them, the geography is well suited to cycling.

The main focus of the Lancaster with Morecambe Cycling Town programme is the journey to work and school, although more broadly the aim is to encourage all cycle trips. The first three years of the programme concentrated on expanding the district's cycle route network, including a link between Morecambe Promenade and the Canal Towpath at Hest Bank, providing an additional 20 kilometres of cycle routes.

A number of infrastructure improvements have been made since the start of the second phase of the programme. The Salt Ayre race circuit improvement project (funded by Sport England with a contribution from Cycling England) was successfully completed in spring 2008, and is now operational. The race circuit is 1.3 kilometres and is used for a variety of races, time-trials and Go Ride events. The track was widened and resurfaced with improved signage, and saw the addition of a new cycle skills area so cycle training can be carried out in a safe traffic free environment. A number of footpaths have been converted to shared use, bringing key destinations such as Lancaster & Morecambe College onto the cycle network.

Other completed infrastructure work includes implementation of advance stop lines on the A6 in Lancaster and over 700 new cycle parking spaces have been installed (including 16 new secure lockers at Lancaster Railway Station). In July 2009 a link connecting Lancaster Canal to the Royal Lancaster Infirmary site was opened on a 12 month trial basis. This has been well received by staff, visitors and the neighbouring school. Further infrastructure improvements, specifically expanding cycling provision within Lancaster city centre, will be a priority in 2010. Plans include upgrades to the gyratory system and the creation of east/west and north/south links into and across the town centre.

Work with schools remains a priority for the Lancaster team, and the programme continues to support Bike It by providing funds for both classroom and after-school activities, such as bike maintenance workshops and Bikeability training. In 2009 Bikeability was offered to all local schools and over 1,200 children have taken part in Bikeability training.

Lancaster also pioneered the Round the World scheme initiative - a virtual bike race around the world whereby every time a child cycles to school, their miles are added to their school's virtual 'Journey Round the World.' This continues to be successful at encouraging new young cyclists and the idea has since been rolled out nationally. The team also offers a range of cycling training to all children in the school holidays as part of the Council's Holiday Activity Programme. This includes Cycle Skills, Bikeability and Learn to Cycle courses (for ages four plus).

Getting more women cycling is another of the team's key aims. Since 2007 monthly 'Women on Wheels' rides have been run and the team regularly offers a number of women-only activities, including maintenance training. In summer 2009 Lancaster held a number of women-only cycling activities, kicked off by the publication of the first 'Women on Wheels' newsletter, an eight page guide offering tips and advice. Activities included an introduction to mountain biking, bike rides, maintenance sessions and a two day skills course for beginners.

Lancaster with Morecambe has a dedicated Workplace Cycling Officer whose remit is to get more people cycling to work. The focused work with six of the largest employers in the district ensures there is an ongoing support package delivered. This includes Bicycle User Groups (BUGs), Bike to Work days, guided cycle rides and cycle maintenance courses.

There has been a significant increase in cycling at Lancaster University amongst both staff and students. The proportion of staff cycling to work is one of the highest in the region at over 13 per cent whilst the number of students living off-campus and cycling to University has doubled to over 10 per cent in less than two years. The success is brought about by a number of measures implemented by Lancaster University in conjunction with the Cycling Town project team, including improved routes and signage to campus, secure cycle parking and a range of regular promotional activities. Future initiatives on campus include a fully equipped bike workshop.

The Cycling Town team offers a comprehensive training programme to increase bike confidence, riding skills & cycle maintenance skills for adults, employees and families. This includes bike maintenance courses, bespoke sessions for small groups and individuals, bike buddies and tailored cycle training for employers including the Primary Care Trust (PCT) and Lancashire Police (advanced level 3 training). Since 2006 around 2,100 people have participated in some form of cycle training.

The team carries out a range of activities including events, led rides and roadshows as well as producing a range of different publications. To get more residents and visitors familiar with the local network, around 70,000 copies of the cycle map have been distributed.

May 2009 saw the launch of the 'Quicker, Healthier, Cheaper' campaign with ads on the back of local buses, promoting the benefits of travelling by bike. This theme will be continued throughout 2010. Other promotional activities will also continue in 2010, including a regular Friday cycling roadshow in Market Square, publication of new maps, an events guide, 'Breakfast on the Bridge' for commuters, and the annual Bike Film Festival.

Visit www.celebratingcycling.org for more information.

Leighton-Linslade

The smallest of all the Cycling Towns, Leighton-Linslade includes the two neighbouring towns Leighton Buzzard and Linslade, as well as the nearby village of Heath and Reach. The largest town, Leighton Buzzard, is an historic market town with a small shopping area in the centre. As such, the town faces issues with local traffic and town centre congestion, leading to a potential loss of retail diversity and vitality. It is hoped that the success of Leighton-Linslade as a Cycling Town will show that other market towns can help reinvigorate themselves and sustain their town centres by increasing cycling levels.

Leighton-Linslade's radial road pattern concentrates journeys into the town centre and across the one bridge over the canal and river, acting as a natural traffic restraint. The geography is compact, making it ideally suited for cycling, with many local journeys serving the town centre and railway station, which is also used by almost 1.5 million commuters a year.

In the first year of the programme there was a focus on infrastructure and establishing Leighton-Linslade as a Cycling Town. Significant progress has already been made in these areas, for example cycle parking has been installed in all 18 schools, footpaths across parks have also been upgraded, and popular cycle play facilities provided in several parks, including Danes Field and Vandyke Playing Field.

Level 1 and 2 Bikeability has been offered to every school alongside Dr Bike clinics. Evening bike maintenance courses have been established at a local Youth Club, and Wheelie Wednesday cycle rides were initiated – these lunchtime rides are now happening every month.

Activity in the second year of the programme focussed on further promoting cycling initiatives and routes. This included events and marketing to raise awareness of 'GoCycle' (the Leighton-Linslade Cycle Town brand), using a range of media. This includes an email update the team sends to a database of would-be cyclists. This monthly update is sent to over 3,000 people, which accounts for around 15% of households in the area, and provides residents with details of upcoming activities, events and promotions.

In 2010 the team will launch a workplace cycling programme, engaging with local employers such as Tesco and MontBlanc. Initiatives include free cycle training, a bike buddy scheme, route planning assistance, a free bike check and security marking. Individual businesses will be offered a package of led cycle rides, support for a cycle champion, subsidised cycle parking and help to introduce a cycle to work scheme.

GoCycle are also keen to continue to encourage commuters to cycle to the train station and there are plans for a cycle 'hub' at Leighton Buzzard station, which would offer secure cycle parking for around 100 bikes. In February 2010 the team won an award for the work they have already done in this area, with Leighton Buzzard winning the Best Local Government Contribution at the National Cycle Rail Awards. The team impressed judges with their multi-partnership approach with local councils, rail operators and local bike and community groups, which has led to a doubling of capacity at the station.

Achievements that led to the award include the creation of 75 new cycle parking spaces at the station over the last two years, a scheme to recycle abandoned bikes (which are loaned to commuters) and a same-day repair service. There has been an increase of more than 30 per cent in the number of cycles parked at the station since the new parking was installed. Efforts to promote cycling at the busy station were also commended. This includes bikers breakfasts and a cycle security event that offered free bike engraving and free immobilising tags and stickers that significantly reduce the risk of theft.

A range of additions and enhancements to the town's cycle network will be designed and implemented during 2010. These will include new cycle path links, improvements to existing links, the design of cycle contraflows on Hockliffe Street, Church Road and Hartwell Grove as well as various footpath upgrades to cycleway standard. There are plans to add new cycle sport/play facilities, giving the town an innovative sports 'circuit' similar to a trim trail (a community exercise circuit).

GoCycle also plan to hold a Sports and Cycling Festival in July 2010, with the aim of attracting people that may be involved in other sporting activities but could be inspired to cycle. The Schools Sports Partnership and local community clubs will be involved in the event.

The GoCycle team will also be working with schools to establish their own cycling clubs. Each new club will offer children the opportunity to have fun while developing their cycling skills and confidence. Alongside this the team will promote 'GoCycle to School days', a number of days each term when children will be actively encouraged to cycle to school. This will coincide with the launch of the 'GoCycle Bank of Free Wheeling' - a cheque book which children can get stamped each time they cycle to school or other designated destinations. Each time they collect three stamps they receive a cycling related prize.

Visit www.gocycleeightonlinlade.org for more information.

Shrewsbury

Picturesque and compact, with a popular riverside traffic-free route and some fairly flat terrain, Shrewsbury's cycling levels are already well above the national average. The Cycling Town programme aims to significantly increase overall cycling levels by 2011, making cycling an attractive day-to-day travel option for more residents. Almost two thirds of commuter journeys are less than five kilometres. However, the centre of town has a one-way system and some moderate hills, while the Shrewsbury bypass makes cycling into or out of the town difficult.

Shrewsbury's strategy is to create a positive cycling culture, enabling and motivating more people to cycle, and encouraging those who currently cycle to do so more often. The area covered by the project includes Shrewsbury Town, Bayston Hill and the rural area within approximately five kilometres of the town. Shrewsbury has been designated as a growth point, and a new single authority, Shropshire Council, was established in April 2009.

Infrastructure development is a key element of the Shrewsbury Cycling Town programme, including the expansion of the cycle network by over a third with 15 kilometres of new routes - providing links to workplaces, schools and through the town centre. The programme's supporters include Shrewsbury Town Football Club, the Shrewsbury School Sports Partnership, and two local train companies - Wrexham and Shropshire railway, and Arriva Trains Wales.

Headway has been made on a number of infrastructure projects, including the construction of a major scheme on Telford Way, the main river crossing to the north of the town centre. This scheme has provided new cycle tracks, footways and a toucan crossing. Other infrastructure works in the first year included design work for cycle links to the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital and resurfacing of a well-used pedestrian and cycle bridge in north Shrewsbury. The existing network has been reviewed, signage needs identified, and locations for new crossings prioritised.

Shrewsbury also benefits from the Sustrans Connect2 programme, which is funding major infrastructure improvements in the town centre, completing the traffic-free riverside path through the town. Sections of the scheme in north Shrewsbury have been completed, including a new traffic-free path to Greenfields School, and a link provided by Barratts Homes as part of a new housing development. Work in the town centre is expected to start in spring 2010.

Cycle parking facilities have been installed at four secondary and seven primary schools, as well as the town's large special school. A full-time Bike It officer started work in September 2009 and 12 of the town's 17 primary schools have joined the Bike It programme, with a busy programme of events planned for 2010. Cycle training has been extended to Bikeability Level 3 and adult cycle training is also offered.

Cycle Shrewsbury has developed a new website, www.cycleshrewsbury.co.uk, and launched its membership scheme, which is free and open to anyone. Members of Cycle Shrewsbury sign up via the website and receive a discount card to use in local bike shops, plus access to member-only competitions and regular newsletters and progress updates.

Another major part of the Cycle Shrewsbury programme involves engaging with workplaces. The team currently works with 12 employers, reaching nearly 5,000 employees. At the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital - the largest single-site employer in the town - 100 new bike parking spaces were installed early in 2010 for staff and visitors. Existing cycle shelters will also be refurbished, with the help of a grant from Cycle Shrewsbury.

The team has created a workplace pack available to employers interested in increasing cycling levels. This includes advice and practical help such as a cycle survey template. The team also offers grants to employers who need to improve their infrastructure.

Visit www.cycleshrewsbury.co.uk for more information.

Southend-on-Sea

Southend-on-Sea is one of the most popular day resorts in the UK. With a population of only 160,000, the town has over 5.5 million visitors per year – so both tourists and residents are considered important audiences by Cycle Southend. The Southend programme has three key areas of focus - improving the cycling infrastructure, promoting cycling to schools and workplaces, and engaging the wider community through cycle training and education.

Construction is now underway on fourteen engineering schemes, including major improvements to existing infrastructure as well as new additions to the cycle network across a range of different routes. These schemes include off-road cycle tracks on busier roads, and reallocation of road space using cycle lanes and advance stop lines.

Two big infrastructure projects currently planned are the Prittle Brook Greenway and the Cinder Path National Cycle Network link. The Prittle Brook Greenway project, due to get underway in 2010, will involve upgrading an existing public footpath to a cycle route. The Cinder Path National Cycle Network link between Chalkwell and Leigh will also be widened and improved – with the aim of having an upgraded and continuous cycle route from Shoeburyness to Canvey Island and Benfleet in time for the 2012 Olympic Games. The Olympic BMX site is situated just outside Southend, but parking will be minimal so driving to the site will be discouraged. The new continuous cycle route will allow people coming into the nearest train station, Leigh-on-Sea, to ride to the venue quickly and easily – making it an important link for the BMX events.

Another key focus for Southend is cycle parking. The team has completed the installation of cycle shelters at 15 local primary schools and a further 10 schools will have new shelters by April 2010 – creating an additional 1,374 parking spaces. Improved cycle parking will also be installed at 11 of the borough's 12 secondary schools.

Public surveys are being conducted to understand the type of cycle parking commuters would be willing to pay for at railway stations, and implementation will then take place in partnership with C2C and First Eastern at the five stations in the borough. This will include options of secure cycle parking, two tier parking at centralised sites and traditional cycle parking.

Other sites targeted for improved cycle parking include key organisations and large employers, such as Southend Primary Care Trust (PCT) and the local Community Centres. There is a continuing programme to install cycle parking in the borough's parks and so far 87 spaces have been installed.

To support cycling to school, Southend has recruited ten new Bikeability Officers and training is now taking place in all of Southend's primary schools and three of the 12 secondary schools. Southend has three Bike Squad Officers who deal with all aspects of cycle promotion including events, adult cycle training and group rides.

Go Ride clubs are currently being established throughout the borough and there are already five fully qualified casual Go Ride coaches and one full time coach. A full time Bike It Officer works with 10 schools every year to promote cycling to school to pupils, staff and parents.

To reach the wider community, bike tagging events are regularly held by the Cycle Southend team - helping to discourage theft and encourage cycling - and Southend now has a Bike Recycle Centre, where residents can purchase a recycled bike at a low-cost.

The team is also trying to raise awareness of the dangers motorists pose to cyclists. Cruz Control is a new educational initiative for young drivers run by Southend Road Safety team and 14,000 year 11 and sixth form students have attended an event that aims to educate inexperienced motorists and emphasise the threat of dangerous driving.

Visit www.cyclesouthend.co.uk for more information.

Southport

With a population of just 90,000, Southport is a popular coastal resort and shopping centre that attracts 4.5 million visitors per year. Its compact and largely flat topography makes Southport ideal for cycling, and the number of people commuting by bike is much higher than other parts of Merseyside.

Southport's programme priorities lie in three areas - encouraging tourism and leisure cycling, creating opportunities for regeneration in the area, and significantly increasing cycling to school.

Since the start of the programme, Southport has refreshed existing cycling infrastructure, built new cycle tracks, and developed the seafront and lakeside leisure routes. Southport has also improved signage on routes, as well as access for pupils cycling to school. The town's Eco Centre has installed bike storage and 40 cycle stands thanks to support from the Southport Cycle Town team.

To help boost the amount of leisure trips taken by bike, improving the town's seafront routes and facilities was a priority early on. This includes a circular route around the seafront area and a link to the town centre. All leisure routes are now clearly signposted, including the Seafront Loop, which will form the focal point for a number of signed leisure routes to the north and south noting key destinations and journey times. More cycle stands are being installed across the seafront area, district centres, shopping area, libraries, health centres, and schools.

In May 2009 the Southport team launched an innovative cycle hire scheme. This involves a partnership with local hotels, tourist agencies and the Eco Centre Park-and-Ride, making over 100 bikes available to visitors for day trips. Visitors are able to borrow bikes from these sites and then discover Southport's scenic coastal trails - getting a taste for cycling in the resort that sits at the start of the Trans Pennine Trail. Through this scheme the team hope to introduce leisure cycling to families who may not previously have considered it. The scheme will be expanded in May 2010 with the introduction of a Cycle Hub at Southport train station – giving people the opportunity to hire a bike as soon as they arrive in the area.

As part of its regeneration focus, in 2008 and 2009 Southport's infrastructure priorities concentrated on creating an East to West cycle link to better connect the town centre and seafront areas to the development areas to the east of the town. The team also plans to improve cycle access along Wennington Road, a 2.7 kilometre route linking highly populated residential areas to the schools, college, hospital and employment sites at Kew. Work on these routes aims to be completed in 2010.

Bikeability level 2 has been provided to a total of 630 children in Southport, and Bikeability level 3 has been expanded into secondary schools. The schemes now cover all primary and secondary schools in Southport. Adult cycle training courses at Level 1 and 2 ran throughout the summer months in 2009 and Bike It and Bike Club will operate in all five secondary schools and a number of their linked primaries. All high schools were also invited to take part in a Go Ride programme which culminated in a series of inter-school races as part of the Tour Series event when a Cycle Festival was also held.

Visit www.southportcycletown.gov.uk for more information.

Stoke-on-Trent

With a population of 240,000, Stoke-on-Trent is benefiting from significant investment from Cycling England. Stoke-on-Trent already has over 152 kilometres of newly surfaced cycle routes, 80 kilometres of which is off-road on greenways, canal towpaths and river paths. Despite residents' proximity to the expanding network, Stoke-on-Trent had the lowest levels of cycling to work and school across the programme.

Stoke-on-Trent's cycling programme has identified three key barriers to cycling - poor perception of cycling, lack of opportunities to cycle (whether by not having access to a roadworthy bike or not knowing a safe route to ride it), and physical barriers to cycling.

In year one of the programme, Cycle Stoke concentrated on expanding the cycle route network, building four more greenways as well as the Whitfield greenway cycle path, which provides a valuable link between the National Cycle Network Route 5 and the community of Little Chell. A safe route to Packmoor Primary School has also been completed, and funds have contributed towards an enhanced Safer Routes to School cluster bid which will provide off-road links between Packmoor Primary School, James Brindley High School and Primary Schools in North Stoke.

Other infrastructure projects have included providing cycle shelters for nine schools, creating 180 additional cycle parking spaces. Four more schools received shelters early in 2010 bringing the total

to 270 spaces. 2009 saw another exciting development for young cyclists at Burnwood Community School, a 'cycling flagship school', with the installation of a BMX track.

To help raise the profile of cycling in the area, the Cycle Stoke team launched an initiative to encourage key figures in the community to be seen carrying out their duties on two wheels. Police Officers, Area Implementation Teams and Community Sports Network Officers were provided with bikes for this purpose. The initiative has been a success - giving Police Officers higher visibility and enabling them to cover far greater and out-of-reach areas such as canal towpaths. The bikes are used on a daily basis and are now regarded as an indispensable commodity and this initiative will be rolled out to other neighbourhood policing units.

Through a bike loan system, the Community Sports Network has helped the long-term unemployed who can't afford bikes to find a cheap and effective way of commuting to work or enjoying leisure cycling. Another community project is the Blurton Dad's Group, a voluntary group of dads who provide cycle training and activities in the local community. The group has around 30 cycles and these are loaned to the Cycle Stoke team for events.

Older people are benefiting too, with a partnership project set up in April 2009 by Cycle Stoke and Age Concern that encourages residents at two retirement villages (Bradeley Village and Berryhill Village) to take up cycling as part of a healthy lifestyle. High quality cycle parking has been provided, along with bikes, safety equipment and cycle training. Age Concern staff promote and encourage cycling by organising bike rides, events and activities. As a result of the project over 20 residents are cycling on a weekly basis, including people who haven't ridden for 20 or 30 years.

The team is working to develop a Staffordshire University Travel Plan for staff and students, with a strong focus on cycling. This partnership will include publicising cycle routes throughout the year using University networks and a promotional campaign during Freshers' Week 2010. Cycle Stoke also plans to introduce cycle maintenance training and buddy rides for staff and students in 2010.

Visit www.cyclestoke.co.uk for more information.

Woking

Woking's compact size and the proximity of its outlying residential areas make it an attractive place to invest in cycling. Woking Borough stretches from Brookwood in the west to Byfleet in the east, a total distance of about eight miles, with Woking town centre approximately in the middle. Modern Woking grew up around its railway station, which is now one of the busiest in Surrey with almost eight million passengers passing through it in 2008/09.

Providing safe and convenient cycle routes, like spokes radiating out from the hub of the town centre and station, along with improved cycle facilities, is an important part of Woking's plans to provide attractive alternatives to the car. A wide range of marketing and communications tactics have been employed to promote new and upgraded routes and attract people to cycling. For example the cycle paths have been given a 'Planets' theme based on War of the Worlds by HG Wells, who was a resident of Woking during the late 1800s.

One of the team's biggest achievements so far is reversing the ban on cycling within the town centre. This has made it easier and more attractive for residents to travel by bike. Following this decision, CCTV has been extended to cover existing and new cycle parking facilities within the town centre to ensure greater security for residents who choose to cycle.

Cycle Woking has completed work on a number of infrastructure schemes, including improving almost 12 kilometres of the towpath along the Basingstoke Canal, the Parley Drive off-road link from Lockfield Drive and the Brookwood Country Park link to the Basingstoke Canal - used by cyclists and walkers. Work on key cycle routes will continue into 2010 with an aim to improve and create links to local neighbourhoods and schools.

The team is currently working on the design of three potential bridges and a boardwalk, with construction planned for 2010. These structures will allow for a continuous off-road walking and cycle facility at Chobham Road Bridge, Kiln Bridge and a canal crossing facility west of Hermitage Road Bridge, improving access where the canal towpath changes sides - making it safer for cyclists using this route.

A substantial increase in the number of cycle parking facilities was achieved during autumn 2009, with almost 200 new spaces created in the covered and lit area of Peacock Walk in the centre of town

and 80 spaces provided at Commercial Way. Both of these areas are close to Woking railway station and will help those who would like to travel to the station by bike. Plans are being developed by Cycle Woking and South West Trains to substantially increase the cycle parking facilities at the railway station, which should enable the construction of a 'bike building' during 2010.

New cycle parking facilities have also recently been installed in parks and playgrounds within Woking. Many of these areas are located adjacent to, or close to, one of the designated cycle routes. Continuing provision will also be made for community cycle parking facilities at doctors, dentists, local health centres and schools - with facilities at five local schools completed during 2009. The aim is to provide parking for a minimum of 10 per cent of students at each school.

A bike recycling 'hub' was created during the summer of 2009, using the Local Community Centre at Lakeview, located in a deprived area of Woking. This is a community based project allowing local people to recycle/repair bikes, so they can take up cycling, or get back on their bikes.

Visit www.cyclewoking.org.uk for more information.

York

Thanks to many successful cycling initiatives over the past decade, York's cycling levels are amongst the highest across the programme. To ensure cycling continues to increase in the area, York is introducing new initiatives to help cycling appeal to a wider population.

A citywide consultation was undertaken in year one of the Cycling Town programme. This helped prioritise and shape the programme for years two and three, with a focus on encouraging cycling to school and workplaces, working with all schools and major employers in the city.

The team has engaged with some of the city's biggest employers – supporting the implementation of cycle to work schemes in organisations such as Nestle, Portakabin and York Hospital. At Nestle, there has already been an increase in people cycling as a result of the company's Get Cycling programme, which was launched to staff with an event fronted by Olympic cyclist, Victoria Pendleton.

York has made good progress on infrastructure improvements, including the creation of two new cycle routes and improving on-road cycling facilities. Substantial cycle route improvements have also been completed on the Moor Lane Bridge and the Beckfield Lane to Manor School track, and by April 2010 work along the Fulford Road radial route will be complete.

Other infrastructure improvements include the Clifton Bridge works, where there are new cycling facilities from Salisbury road to Clifton Green. This makes up a large section of the orbital route, which is one of York's flagship projects. The orbital route will build upon existing infrastructure, creating a track that circumvents the city centre and allows people to 'hop on and hop off' as needed. The plans for this were designed in response to feedback from residents who wanted to avoid main radial routes.

Events were a major focus for the York team in 2009. A 'Biking Vikings' event took place in April 2009, involving 70 school children from four schools dressing as Vikings and riding into the town centre for a Viking show and various competitions. Other events included Bike Week, a two-day 'Festival of Cycling', which had almost 10,000 attendees, the Tour of Britain, York Car Free day and 'Save My Bike Day', which allowed children who had completed their Bikeability training to learn how to carry out bike maintenance.

In 2010, improving cycling access at the train station will be a priority. The current proposals include providing a ramped access into the station car park and creating additional cycle parking and better access from Scarborough Bridge.

Visit www.york.gov.uk/cycling for more information.

For more information about Cycling England, please visit www.dft.gov.uk/cyclingengland

For more information about Bikeability, please visit www.bikeability.org.uk