

Worcester – Sustainable Travel Demonstration Town

Reducing traffic congestion and the environmental impact of personal travel.

Summary

The 5 year Sustainable Travel Demonstration Towns project, funded by the Department for Transport, aims to demonstrate the effect a sustained package of 'Smarter Choice' measures can have on modal shift when coupled with infrastructure and passenger transport service improvements. Darlington, Peterborough and Worcester were selected from more than 50 local authorities in England who expressed an interest in becoming 'showcase' demonstration towns. The 3 towns share £10m of revenue funding during the project.

The project in Worcester, branded as '**Choose how you move**', aims to tackle traffic congestion and reduce the environmental impact of personal travel by developing a package of measures to promote walking, cycling, public transport and car sharing. A baseline of travel behaviour was established in Autumn 2004, including telephone surveys and more in depth travel diary surveys with 4000 households in the city. The researchers enquired about residents current travel behaviour, their knowledge of alternative methods of transport, why they do/or do not currently use these alternatives, and their attitudes to the different transport modes. This was followed by 400 face-to-face interviews with respondents.

A marketing campaign was developed following a series of focus groups with different target audiences. Choose how you move has implemented a programme of Individualised Travel Marketing (ITM) campaign over three years, targeting 60% of households within the city. ITM is an innovative approach that encourages people to make greater use of alternatives to the car by offering personalised travel information, advice and incentives to try out new ways of getting about.

The Choose how you move team worked with different target audiences to tailor make services/ information to meet their different needs:

Schools -The majority of schools in Worcester have active School Travel Plans, with work continuing with one remaining High School and with the city's Special Schools and PRU's as well as private schools.

Residents – Over the 3 phases of the ITM programme, almost 21,000 households were contacted with, on average, 50% of households Interested in participating, 26% already Regular Users of sustainable travel modes and 24% Not Interested in participating. Over 10,000 information packs were hand-delivered to households, and approximately 3000 eco-driving packs were posted to households where this was deemed appropriate.

Employers -Employer Travel Plans provide a package of measures designed to encourage staff to consider alternatives to single-occupancy car use. Worcestershire County Council's own County Hall Travel Plan has to date achieved a reduction in sole occupancy car use from 77% modal share to 72%, and an increase in cycling to work of 165%, from 2% modal share to 3.3%.

Marketing – all this work is supported with a citywide marketing campaign, which includes media (both paid and through targeted stories), events (including supporting other organisations in their events), information (maps, leaflets, website) and advertising (direct mail, billboards, press, radio, bus backs and sides, banners) as well as giveaways, incentives and rewards.

Primary Audience

Individuals living or working in Worcester.

Behavioural Goals

Modal shift in transport use:

1. Reduce the number of car as driver journeys by 10%.
2. Reduce the number of car passenger trips by 8%.
3. Increase the number of residents walking by 10%.
4. Increase the number of residents cycling by 100%.
5. Increase the number of residents using public transport by 20%.

Behavioural outcome

Behaviour research conducted after the first phase of the ITM programme found that, compared to residents who weren't involved in the programme, walking had increased by 17%, cycling had increased by 36%, public transport had increased by 22% and car as driver (single occupancy) had decreased by 12%. Research conducted after the second phase found similar results with some variations possibly due to the specific demographics of the different areas targeted. A repeat of the baseline behavioural research is scheduled for September – November 2008 to provide the overall outcomes for the project.

Baseline behaviour

Baseline to obtain information on how people in Worcester travel and the reasons for their mode choice were established from September to November 2004. The first part of the research was a postal survey of household and personal travel behaviour on a random sample of 4,125 people (net) drawn from the population of Worcester. This research found that in 2004 45% of all trips were by car as driver, 21% by car as passenger, 25% by walking, 3% by bicycle and 6% by public transport. The potential for mode shift (defined as those journeys where there was only a "subjective" reason for using the car) was 30%.

Secondary audience

Employers, Schools, Stakeholders (councillors, health sector, police, cycle shops, bus and rail operators).

Delivery partnerships

Schools and major employers.

Key stakeholders

DfT, Worcester City Council, First , PCT.

Transferable learning

An Individualised Marketing programme, offering households targeted and localised information backed up with general 'above the line' marketing campaigns, can achieve significant levels of modal shift. Marketing messages on sustainable transport need to be clear, concise and directive.

Sustainable learning

Measurable behavioural goal allows measurement of progress.

Intervention marketing mix

The marketing approach taken by the Choose how you move project combines a mixture of above and below the line techniques, targeting the whole population of Worcester through various target audience groups, households, employers and schools. Using a focus group tested branding and messaging style, the marketing approach used divides activities into four main sub-categories: -to motivate – including ITM, school and employer Travel Plans, media and events -to support – including clear and concise information leaflets, cycle training or free ticket promotions -to facilitate – including travel information systems, website information and improved infrastructure such as bus shelters or cycle parking -celebrate – promoting successes, offering reward for behaviour change.

Cost benefit

This data will be available in 2009 following the end of project behaviour research.

Contact:

Cat Ainsworth
01905 768331
cainsworth@worcestershireshire.gov.uk

<http://www.worcestershireshire.gov.uk/chym/>