



Active Travel Milton Keynes Project

Sport England 20040715

September 2007 – August 2008

Introduction

The Lakes Estate at Water Eaton is on the southern edge of Milton Keynes. Geographically it is isolated from both central Bletchley and Central Milton Keynes it has had a poor press with problems of a high proportion of poverty, obesity levels etc.

Active Travel Milton Keynes started in September 2005 with revenue funding linked to capital funding from Sport England for the improvement and extension of National Cycle Network Route 6 along the Grand Union Canal from Water Eaton to Leighton Buzzard. The Lakes Estate runs alongside the canal.



LOTTERY FUNDED

Programme of Activities September 2007 – August 2008

Bike Loan Scheme

The bike loan scheme was originally set up with a selection of bikes bought with capital funding to enable groups and families to participate in cycling as regular transport, through a community cycle and equipment hire scheme. The outputs were: increased regular use of bicycles; improved levels of health/fitness; acquisition of basic maintenance skills; young people would be encouraged to join one of the cycling clubs and increased ownership and use of cycles & family friendly accessories such as trailers. Unfortunately, the scheme ran in to difficulties as it was abused, with several of the cycles being either stolen or trashed.

In early 2007 the scheme was re launched for adults only, with a tighter administration and closer attention paid to contact with its customers. In the spring of this year the scheme gained interest from Milton Keynes Youth Offending Team (MKYOT) who had been involved in a one off project sending refurbished bicycles to Kenya. Over the following months MKAT established a partnership with MKYOT working with one or two young people and a Positive Action for Young People (PAYP) worker, for a couple of hours each week. It soon became apparent that this scheme was very popular with young people who were willing to return each week as part of their reparation orders. It also became apparent that our collective skills at bike maintenance were insufficient and health and safety priorities dictated that the scheme needed an experienced cycle mechanic to help support the partnership.



In May 2007, Bletchley Bike Loan Scheme began working with a local bike recycling company Re-buy-cycle, originally to provide ready to ride bikes for the scheme, but later as an integral part of the partnership. Re-buy-cycle enabled the scheme to work across the whole of Milton Keynes, ensuring that bikes were in ready to ride condition, working with young vulnerable people, and providing suitable transport for picking up and delivering donated bikes. This also gave the scheme a hook for engaging schools and providing cycles for guided rides (see below).

Bletchley Bike Loan Scheme received a fair amount of publicity. Leaflets were distributed at events and the scheme advertised locally. It also featured on BBC Look East and BBC Three Counties Radio as well as local newspaper articles. The scheme now features in Milton Keynes Council Recycling Guide. Over the last twelve months the scheme has expanded from its Bletchley site which was unsuitable as a workshop space. The scheme now works out of a former storage depot at Oldbrook, provided by Campbell Parish Council; sadly there were several initial delays due to the premises being vandalised and there have been a further two break-ins since. MKYOT also went through some structural re-organisation during this time which caused further delays, but eventually the new workshop was underway and has been open one day a week providing participatory opportunities for three to five young people. It is hoped that this will be expanded once the Sport England funding has finished with MKYOT taking the lead.

Bike repair days

Leon School and Sports College were not able to accommodate the scheme this year due to building works on their site; however pupils, especially those who are excluded, have engaged in the project through interaction at Spotlight on Bletchley, the Youth service and Community Mobiliser.

Build-a-bike Project

This activity is integral with the work carried out with the Youth Offending Team. It is a six week programme (2 hours per week) which enables a young person to learn how to strip a bike down, understanding the different components and then building the bike back up.



Cycling skills

The scheme has worked with Milton Keynes Council to try and implement some initial cycle training for adults; however after such a long absence in the city, there has been a dearth of trainers and this has proved difficult. As part of the bike loan scheme, the project has offered guided bike rides for adults and children and has tried to develop skills through riding experience and

practice. Rides with children have been problematic due to the need to cross a busy highway, requiring a high staff to child ratio. This year has been particularly difficult due to the poor weather conditions and flooding on the route during the holiday period.

Walking Bus/ cycle trains

Active Travel Milton Keynes worked with two primary schools, to help set up walking buses. The more successful of the two now has a substantial group of regular walkers with a team of parents helping.



Girls Bike Ride

A sponsored bike ride was arranged with the Youth Service to enable a group of girls aged 14 – 18 yrs to raise money for a girls football team. Sadly all the girls pulled out partly due to the youth worker being continually absent from work due to ill health.

Girls Bike Repair Day

There was no interest in this scheme at all on the estate.

Health Walks, Ladies Health Walk & Social Walks

The scheme attempted many ways to encourage people to participate in health walks. Some ladies attended regularly and other joined occasionally. The Lakes Estate in general has low car ownership and many residents walk as part of daily routine through lack of choice. It was therefore difficult to engage some residents in leisure walking. Older residents tended to be more regular participants but were less likely to attend in poor weather conditions. Due to the low numbers and inconsistency of attendance, the walks were never able to gain the momentum required to consider transport to expand the walk into a roaming health walk. Several established walks exist in other

areas which use Waterhall Park on a rota basis and it was felt that it would be more productive to advertise and join these walks as and when rather than continuing the Bletchley Health Walk.

Disability

ATMK worked with Community Health Advisers to provide bikes & rides for people with cerebral palsy. Two men have been actively engaged in the scheme, the first providing help with maintenance and the second uses a tricycle provided by the bike loan scheme as his main source of transport. The project also advised on a new scheme funded and administered by Milton Keynes Council and Milton Keynes Primary Care Trust providing twice weekly cycle rides for adults with learning disabilities with specially adapted bikes.

Mental health

Milton Keynes Council is now engaged in working with the mental health team and engaging clients with cycling and walking.

Targets set for September 2007 – August 2008

Activity	Outputs	01/09/07 to 31/08/08
Bletchley Bike Loan Scheme	20- 30 regular participants 100 – 150 annual participants	39 regular participants 22 occasional participants & guided bike rides
Bike Repair Days	10 – 15 children per session	10
Build-a-Bike Project	5-7 participants per project	14
Cycling Skills	5 – 10 participants linked to other activities	Counted with Bletchley bike Loan scheme
Walking Bus/ cycle trains	Increased activity led by individual schools	
Girls Bike Ride	5 – 10 participants	2
Girls Bike Repair Day	5 – 10 participants	0
Health Walks, Ladies Health Walk & Social Walks	5 – 10 monthly participants	10
Disability & Mental health	1-5 participants	Redway Riders run by MK PCT 5 – 10 riders twice weekly 2 ATMK participants