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Traffic-free drive to get people in Stockton more active

What: Stockton-on-Tees Mayor Paul Kirton and Elizabeth Shassere, Locality Director of Public Health at the Primary Care Trust, will celebrate with Stockton people who are set to benefit from a Lottery funded project to boost their health.

When: Tuesday June 16, 12.30pm

Where: Infinity Bridge, Stockton on Tees

Inactive people in Stockton will be encouraged to walk and cycle their way to a healthier lifestyle with a range of new activities.

Stockton Active Travel will set up walking groups, bike rides and cycle skills training for the communities of Mandale and Victoria, Norton, Portrack and Tillery, Newtown and Parkfield.

A workplace fitness programme at Teesdale Business Park will also be established to create a healthier workforce and reduce sick leave. This will include free cycling skills and bike maintenance training, a free bike loan scheme and free travel information including maps.

The Lottery funded project has been set up by sustainable transport charity Sustrans with support from Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council and NHS Stockton-on-Tees. It will be officially launched by Stockton Mayor Paul Kirton and Elisabeth Shassere, Locality Director of Public Health at the Primary Care Trust, at the new traffic-free Infinity Bridge on June 16.

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Project coordinator Paul Morrison said: “The new Infinity Bridge is a brilliant piece of infrastructure to encourage everyone to get around in healthy and more environmentally friendly ways. But to get people using the bridge and other traffic-free links you also need to give them the confidence to get on their bikes and the incentive to walk more often.

“These new programmes of cycle training, group walks and bike rides will show people that it is easy to build exercise into their daily routines.”

Among the project’s activities will be a series of Sunday family bike rides this summer to destinations including the Transporter Bridge, Thorpe Thewels, Ingleby Barwick and Billingham Beck Country Park.

For more information on *Stockton Active Travel* visit www.sustrans.org.uk/activetravel or email paul.morrison@sustrans.org.uk

Further information about Sustrans, including other news releases and detailed online route mapping, is available through our website: www.sustrans.org.uk

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Notes to Editors

- *Stockton Active Travel* is part of a portfolio of projects being delivered by a Consortium of the leading walking cycling and health organisations and funded through the Big Lottery Fund's Wellbeing Programme. The Programme provides funding to support the development of healthier lifestyles and to improve Wellbeing.
- The Consortium is led by Sustrans and includes British Cycling, CTC, Cycling England, Living Streets, London Cycling Campaign, the National Heart Forum, the National Obesity Forum, the Ramblers' Association, Campaign for Better Transport and Walk 21. It is delivering a

portfolio of projects that will enable 2 million people nationwide to become more physically active by walking or cycling as part of their daily lives by 2012.

- The Big Lottery Fund, the largest of the National Lottery good cause distributors, has been rolling out grants to health, education, environment and charitable causes across the UK since its inception in June 2004.
- In March, *StreetTread* published the second in a series of walking and cycling maps for Southampton, covering the Weston and Woolston areas. The first covers Thornhill.
- Sustrans is the UK's leading sustainable transport charity. Its vision is a world in which people choose to travel in ways that benefit their health and the environment. It is achieving this through innovative but practical solutions to the UK's transport challenges.
- Sustrans' flagship project, the National Cycle Network, is now around 12,000 miles and runs within one mile of 55 per cent of the UK population. During 2007 over 354 million trips were made on the Network. There are around 2,500 rangers helping to look after the National Cycle Network.
- Throughout 2009 Sustrans is encouraging more women to cycle. Our website www.bikebelles.org.uk has advice for women on what to wear, where to go, how to get started and a specially recruited women's panel are sharing ideas and experiences. Sustrans will also be organising female-friendly cycle rides in the summer. The thoughts and concerns of women, gathered throughout the year, will be used to inform our approach to UK governments with proposals on how to help more women get out and about on bikes, to the benefit of their health, the environment and our economy.