

Project Review **2008**



A young boy in a school uniform and helmet is riding a bicycle. He is wearing a dark blue blazer, a white shirt, and a blue and yellow striped tie. In the background, another boy in a similar uniform and helmet is also riding a bicycle. The scene is outdoors with trees and a fence visible.

The **Cycle** industry

I am thrilled that Bike It is changing lives, bringing healthy, environmentally friendly and independent travel to our children. It is a great success story in which the cycle industry can rightly take great pride. Our contribution helped the project find its feet and has been pivotal in attracting much more funding.

Now, in the middle of the project's fourth academic year, it is great to see that Sustrans employs 30 committed individuals supporting over 300 schools.

When the Bike Hub first funded Bike It back in 2004/05, there were just four officers working in 40 schools. But you can't keep a good idea from flourishing, and Sustrans is to be applauded for seeking funding wherever it can to take Bike It forward.

In 2007 Sustrans successfully led a consortium of leading walking, cycling and health organisations to receive funding from the Big Lottery Fund for active travel. Some of this pays for nine Bike It officers working with schools in some of the more deprived areas of the country. In addition the Department for Transport and Department of Health in England have recently announced an increase in funding for Cycling England to the tune of £140 million over three years. I very much look forward to seeing the impact that both of these injections of money will have on enabling many more children to cycle to school.

And no wonder there is such wide interest in Bike It. The project continues to buck all the trends for cycling to school. Whilst many children want to cycle to school, on average in the UK only 2% do. In Bike It schools this figure is five times greater and in some schools even higher. As you read through this report you will see how this is being achieved in different schools in different towns and cities using different approaches and initiatives. The one thing that unites all these success stories is Bike It officers.

There is something special about these people – they have the ability to go into schools and make cycling possible for children and young people. Yes, they are working with the willing, but they are overcoming significant barriers to bring about what is a massive change in behaviour.

Their methods are not rocket science or highly technical. Bike It officers work with pupils to help them to overcome whatever it is that is preventing them from cycling to school. This hands-on, people centred approach is succeeding in a way that none of us could have anticipated.

If any of you get a chance to see a Bike It officer in action, take it. I guarantee that it will be a lesson in inspiring and motivating change, not just in young people but also their parents and teachers. What I hope you will also see is that Bike Hub money is being well spent in creating a better future for us all. I, and I hope all of you who support the bike levy that funds Bike Hub, look forward to seeing even greater success for Sustrans in taking Bike It to even more schools and pupils over the coming months.

Philip Taylor
President, Bicycle Association



Sustrans

At Sustrans we pride ourselves on our innovation and practicality. All our work seeks to challenge the widely held belief that a change in travel behaviour is difficult to achieve. Bike It, like everything else we do, gives the lie to this.



As you will see on the following pages, change is possible if you know how to engage people. If you understand the barriers and seek to overcome these in ways that are relevant to people, then great shifts in attitude and behaviour happen. We are lucky at Sustrans – everyone we employ is passionate about addressing these barriers and enabling people to do things differently, and our Bike It officers are no exception.

Take Emma Osborne, Sustrans' Bike It officer in Exeter. She found that teenage girls weren't keen on cycling because of their concerns of the perceived impact on their hair and looks, two things that are crucial to their self-esteem at this age. So she formed a partnership with the Body Shop in Exeter and devised a practical programme called Beauty and the Bike that addressed these girls' concerns, showing it was possible to feel beautiful and cycle. Lateral thinking at its best.

Our solutions are not high tech, but they work. And the reason that they work is because they engage and interest people. In the absence of a legislative framework requiring that every child has a safe route to school (as they have in Denmark) it is up to organisations like Sustrans to inspire and motivate people to change.

And, with the support of the Bike Hub and now many other funders, this is precisely what Bike It does. Success like this is crucial not just because cycling to school is fun and gives children a great sense of freedom, independence and self-reliance, but because cycling (and walking) are active and sustainable ways of getting around.

There are many initiatives on sustainability. Very few of them seek to address the key problem of transport and our expectation

that we can go on travelling further and faster. The school journey is a case in point – since 1995 the average distance travelled to school has risen from 2.9 to 3.3 miles. Unsurprisingly there has been a corresponding increase in the number of children being driven to school, and as much as a quarter of traffic on the roads at 8.50 am is making the school run. That's a lot of greenhouse gas emissions, a lot of traffic, a lot of potential danger reducing further the ability of children to travel under their own steam.

And, of course, we also have ever rising levels of obesity in children too, with the lack of everyday physical activity heavily implicated. Last year Foresight reported that obesity could be costing the NHS as much as £6.5 billion every year by 2050, and the wider economy a staggering £50 billion. This is about £833 for every man, woman and child in the UK today. By contrast, 1,000 Bike It officers, working with 10,000 schools each year and many millions of children, would cost £60 million, or £1 for every man, woman and child in the UK.

We have the people and know how, we have economics and common sense on our side, and we have the policy initiatives, not least the National Institute of Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) guidance on physical activity and the environment. What we really need is a massive investment in cycling and walking sustained over many years, prioritised on the basis that it's better for people, better for our economy, and better for our environment.



John Grimshaw, MBE
Founder and Chief Executive, Sustrans



What is Bike It?

Bike It works directly with schools who want to increase levels of cycling. We do this by helping schools to make the case for cycling in their school travel plans; we support cycling champions in schools and demonstrate that cycling is a popular choice amongst children and their parents. Our aim is to create a pro-cycling culture in the school which continues long after the Bike It officer has left.

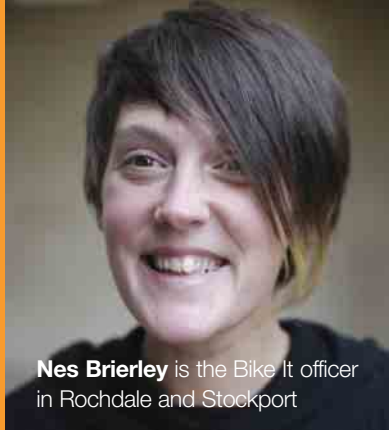
The project also adds to local investment in cycle routes, bike sheds and cycle training by involving pupils, teachers and parents and enabling them to take the small steps which are necessary to make a real difference.

Bike It Officers work with schools by:

- explaining the benefits of cycling
- contributing to classroom work
- addressing concerns about safety and liability with the help of the local authority and other partners
- sharing good practice with school management teams
- organising practical cycling activities; and
- generating positive publicity.

Where possible, we work with clusters of enthusiastic schools in areas which are particularly suited to cycling and where we can link the efforts of secondary schools and their feeder primary schools. Each Bike It officer works with 12 schools over the course of an academic year. Some schools stay in the programme for a second year if they are not quite ready to go it alone or still have potential to increase cycling levels further.

Every one of our staff has unique skills and come from a variety of backgrounds including the cycle trade, teaching, theatre, conservation work and industry. The project team meets regularly to share ideas, swap skills and play to their strengths when working with schools. This helps keep our message fresh and interesting, and ensures that a scattered project team works with a common and creative purpose. We provide staff with full training in first aid, risk assessment, cycle safety instruction, outdoor activities and child protection.



Nes Brierley is the Bike It officer in Rochdale and Stockport

Before joining the Bike It team I worked as a cycling instructor, teaching children and adults cycling skills and developing their confidence and abilities to ride on the road. I also worked in environmental education and the Youth Service and have a BA (Hons) in Youth and Community Work.

My life revolves around cycling. In my spare time I organise loads of bike events and festivals and I have also set up a bicycle dance troupe that seeks to promote cycling specifically to women and girls.

I'm really excited about my new role as a Bike It officer because bicycles have always been my great passion. We know that children really want to cycle to school and I am passionate about helping them do something that is good for the environment, fun and, importantly for young people, so beneficial for their health.

I'm currently setting up Bike It groups of pupils interested in cycling in each school that I'm working with. This means I can work with the pupils to organise fun activities that they want to do. This way the children feel ownership of the Bike It activities in their school. I'm looking forward to working in this way, sharing lots of amazingly different ideas with young people.

My youth work background and passion for cycling means that being a Bike It officer is my perfect job!

Who do we work with?

Bike It is a partnership project and we work closely with schools, parents and local authorities. But there are many other organisations that play their part and the Bike It officer frequently co-ordinates much of this work within the school. Examples of several successful partnerships are listed opposite.



British Cycling wishes to encourage more young people to take up cycling as a sport. Their staff have delivered basic 'Go-Ride' cycle skills training and helped run after-school cycling clubs at several schools. One example is Icknield High School in Luton where according to local cyclist Richard Noon "British Cycling, Sustrans, Luton Council and my club, Icknield Racing Club, are working very effectively together to promote riding to school, cycling in PE and developing children's interest in the sport."

Whilst Bike It staff do not deliver cycle training to pupils, we work closely with **local authority road safety teams** and private training providers. We promote **Bikeability** (accredited on-road cycle training) in schools and encourage local authorities to sign up to the national scheme. In several cases, Bike It schools have been used as test beds for new cycle training arrangements.

Schools sports co-ordinators have been helpful in creating cycling resources linked to the curriculum and have helped with funding to establish after-school cycling clubs.

On top of the financial contribution made by the Bike Hub, local **cycle retailers** have supported Bike It schools by offering prizes and discounts to local pupils; running cycle maintenance sessions; and promoting the benefits of cycling to school to their customers.

Two such bike shops in Surrey have found that working with Bike It has been a really positive experience. As **Chris Finch of Finch Cycles in Reigate** explains, "If we can help promote safe cycling to school and our business at the same time through Bike It, that is good for both parties." **Damien Pittock is the owner of C&N Cycles in Redhill** who have run a number of bike maintenance sessions with Gayle Rowson (the Bike It officer in the area), "Doing Dr. Bike sessions at schools is getting our faces known and is good for business. It is great to see so many kids making the effort to ride to school, thanks to Bike It."

Active travel to school is a regular and inexpensive way of boosting fitness and reducing obesity. **Healthy Schools officers** are recognising the benefits of promoting cycling at schools seeking Healthy Schools status. With the help of local authority **School Travel Advisers**, we ensure that schools make progress with their travel plans and share good practice with other schools.

Cycle parking manufacturers, including Urban Engineering and Lock It Safe, have offered generous discounts to schools purchasing their products, as well as prizes linked to cycling incentive schemes.

We also work closely with our regional Sustrans colleagues and **local authority transport officers** to ensure that we work with schools where new cycle routes have been constructed. We also influence the planning of new cycle routes and traffic calming to ensure that these schemes benefit the schools we work with.



Bike It is working with over 30 schools across a range of London Boroughs, proving that cycling to school is not just an option in the leafy suburbs and market towns. Edith Neville Primary School in Camden is one example of a school which is rising to the challenge of its inner city location near Kings Cross Station. At the start of the project, the prospects facing Bike It officer Marina Littek seemed daunting; only one third of pupils owned a bike (nationally the figure is around 90%), the school had no secure cycle storage, most pupils were unable to store a bike safely at home, and few pupils cycled to school.

Since then, Bike It and Transport for London (TfL) have joined together to fund secure cycle storage and Marina has worked hard to present cycling as a realistic transport option. She has supported a teaching assistant at the school, who now plans to train as a Bikeability cycle training instructor. He runs two cycle clubs before and after school, and with the aid of 25 pool bikes purchased by the school's

governing body, many of the school's diverse ethnic population are now cycling for the first time.

The London Bike It team has worked closely with TfL to promote a schools' Tour de France competition which rewards those schools which collect the most cycle miles. Over 50 pupils at the school took part and together with staff and parents, they made over 300 cycle journeys during the challenge. Over 13% of pupils are now cycling at least once a week, a figure which has trebled since the start of the project.

The next step for the school is to promote on-road cycle training with pupils and for the local community to find a creative solution to the need for cycle parking in the area's many flats and estates.

"The school has taken up the Bike It Tour de France competition with great enthusiasm... the improvement in health and fitness of some of the children is clearly visible" (Graham Bird, Teaching Assistant)



Schools can play a huge role in educating children about the steps that families can take to reduce their carbon footprint. Bike It officer Simon Wallis works with schools in Liverpool and the Wirral and has used some of his experience of theatre and conservation volunteering to promote cycling as an important part of the Eco Schools message. Bike It meets lots of targets for Healthy Schools, Eco Schools, Sustainable Schools, Extended Schools, School Travel Plans and Every Child Matters.

Practical sessions at **Black Horse Hill Junior School** in Wirral have included Learning to Cycle in an Hour for Complete Beginners, a whole school Carbon Footprint One Day Challenge and a Calm Down Will Yer initiative to reduce traffic speeds to 20mph outside the school. Using School Travel Plan money, new cycle storage for 30 bikes has been installed alongside an eco-planting scheme. Simon has appointed several older pupils as an enthusiastic Bike It Crew who help him monitor the project and raise awareness of cycling amongst their peers.

Since the start of the project, 75% of pupils have expressed an interest in cycling to school and in some Bike It

Schools over a quarter of the pupils have cycled to a Bike It Breakfast.

Of course, more safety improvements are still needed around schools, but Simon is confident that when parents experience cycling to school with their children on the quieter roads and negotiate the trickier bits on foot, then their fears are dramatically reduced and a cycling culture rapidly establishes itself.

A 10 minute walking distance to school takes just 3 minute by bike. Parents are cycling to school and home again in less than 10 minutes and are still on time for their journey to work or other commitments.

The Headteacher of Black Horse Hill Junior School, Harry Kennedy, is delighted at how well Bike It has tied in with the school's activities, "The Bike It Breakfast, safer routes plan and learning to ride in a one hour session have really helped us with our Eco and Healthy Schools projects and the implementation of our School Travel Plan. The scheme has been a tremendous success and enabled us to raise the profile of cycling as a safe, sustainable and healthier form of transport."

The Benefits

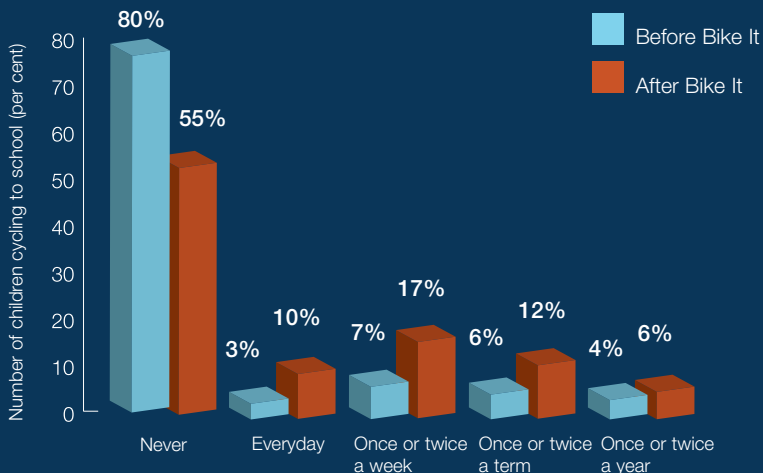
In line with previous years, we have seen a **trebling of cycling** levels at the schools we work with. We have used hands-up surveys of children's travel habits, in addition to cycle shed counts, to give us a clearer picture of how often children cycle to school. At the start of the last school year we surveyed a sample of roughly 11,000 pupils at 52 schools. Nearly half (47%) of pupils expressed a desire to cycle to school, 3% of them already cycled to school every day and by the summer of 2007, this figure had increased to 10%. On top of this, the number of pupils cycling at least once a week had increased from 10% to 27%. It is encouraging too that the number of pupils who never cycle fell from 80% to 55%, representing a marked increase in the number of new cyclists.

In London, results have echoed trends seen in the rest of the country. The number of pupils cycling every day has trebled from

3% to 9% of school journeys whilst the number of pupils cycling at least once a week increased from 11% to 20%. The number of pupils who never cycle fell from 81% to 68%. Encouraging too was the increase in preference for cycling, up from 34% to 44%, and a greater number of children who owned a bike, up from 70% to 77% of pupils over the course of the year.

The Bike It cycling data demonstrates the importance of counting less regular cyclists. National travel surveys tend to ask questions about 'usual modes of travel' which effectively ignores children who only walk or cycle once or twice a week. According to the National Travel Survey (2006), just 2% of children cycle to school and yet, even before Bike It officers start work, roughly one in ten children claim to cycle regularly - at least once or twice a week.

Increase in frequency of cycling at Bike It schools: 2006-07



Cycling to School in the Cycling Demonstration Towns

% pupils cycling to school	at schools with travel plans (Autumn 06)	at Bike It Schools (Sept 06)	at Bike It Schools (July 07)
Aylesbury	2%	3%	12%
Exeter	4%	7%	13%
Brighton & Hove	2%	3%	10%
Lancaster	2%	4%	7%
Derby	2%	5%	11%
Darlington	3%	incomplete data	incomplete data

Note: A full description of these findings including source data and small variations between survey methodology is contained within a technical survey report at www.sustrans.org.uk/bikeit

We also know that Bike It adds value to the work of local authorities. In the cycling demonstration towns, we have been able to compare travel patterns at Bike It schools with non Bike It schools using national school census data. Cycling levels appear to be three to five times higher in schools where Bike It has operated.

In Aylesbury, we compared the views of parents at a Bike It school with a school which had not been involved in the project. At **Bearbrook Primary School** twice the number of parents reported a change in their child's travel behaviour in the previous six months than did parents at the 'control' school and more parents were already allowing, or contemplating allowing their children, to cycle.

At individual schools bike counts vary enormously depending on several factors such as terrain, size of catchment area and the amount of cycle storage. The counts consistently reveal a huge appetite for change and represent the start of significant shifts in travel behaviour.

- In **Exeter**, 450 new cyclists were counted at the city's 10 Bike It schools
- In Swindon, 54% of pupils arrived at **Chiseldon Primary School's** summer Bike picnic

- In Ashford, **Norton Knatchbull Grammar School's** new 130 place cycle shed cannot cope with demand
- In Coventry, over 120 bikes were counted at **Holy Family RC Primary School's** Bike It Fun Day
- At **Cinammon Brow Primary** in Warrington 23% of pupils are cycling every day, up from 2% at the start of the project
- In Gateshead, over 200 pupils at **Ryton Comprehensive School** attended individual Bike It tutorial sessions
- In **London**, in just 3 weeks, 650 pupils and their parents at 9 schools cycled over 3,000 journeys as part of the Tour de France Challenge

Over the last twelve months, Sustrans' Bike It staff have received national recognition for their work. David Clasby (Derby) was specially commended in the National Transport Awards, Emma Osborne (Exeter) won the international Shimano Cycling Concept Award for her Beauty and the Bike Project, and Andy Gott (Bury) was the Outstanding Individual in Groundwork's local environmental awards. The Bike It project has also been shortlisted for a Guardian Public Service Award.

A **sustained** cycling culture

An important aim of the Bike It programme is to embed a cycling culture in a school long after our staff move on.



We do this by ensuring that ambitious cycling targets are included in the school's travel plan, we offer our cycling champions ongoing information and support in the form of termly newsletters and handbook materials, and try to leave a visual marker of the school's achievements; be it a message on the cycle shed, a Bike It noticeboard, a related artwork or a framed certificate.

One school which is now recognised as a national role model for its work in promoting cycling, and which benefited from Bike It in its pilot year, is **Bradley Stoke Community School**, a new-build secondary near Bristol. Bike It officer Katherine Rooney worked closely with the headteacher and local authority to help shape the school's travel policies and persuaded pupils to take a lead in planning cycling activities.

The resulting increase in cycling is of Dutch-style proportions. Around half the students cycle to school and its 300 covered cycle parking spaces are regularly filled. Every pupil is offered level 2 and 3 cycle training run by South Gloucestershire Council during the school day, the latter includes tuition along pupils' individual routes to school. Pupils are encouraged to bring bikes into school for security marking

and a safety check in advance of their training and are offered discounted cycle helmets and high visibility clothing. In addition each pupil is allocated a locker in which to store helmets and clothing.

The school prospectus leaves parents in no doubt about the school's desire to promote cycling as part of its Healthy Schools and Sportsmark status. Secure cycle storage is listed next to the all-weather pitch in the extensive list of outdoor facilities.

School inspectors have recognised the role of cycling in the school's success saying "High levels of participation in sport and physical activities, along with very sensible attitudes to walking and cycling to school, are indications of a strong awareness among students of the importance of healthy living." (Ofsted, Oct 2006)

Sustrans' knowledge of the school meant that we were able to put it forward as a case study in national guidance on the design of sustainable schools. With the school set to expand to around 1,000 pupils within the next two years, securing funding to extend the cycle storage further is the next challenge.

Going forward

In 2008 Bike It will work in the following locations.



This year, further funding from Cycling England, the cycle industry, the Big Lottery, the National Assembly for Wales and local authorities enabled us to expand our team to 29 staff, each supported by a regional supervisor/trainer and Mike Madin, the national manager. We now work with 300 schools in 44 local authorities and estimate that we are giving a positive cycling experience to 60,000 children.

As part of their anti-obesity strategies, we are now in discussion with several Primary Care Trusts who wish to see Bike It in their areas. New funding from Cycling England will establish a further 10 cycle demonstration towns, each supported by a Bike It officer. The National Assembly in Wales is funding two pilot Bike It projects. Our next goal is to establish a network of around 70 to 80 staff across England and Wales, enabling every local authority to join the project.

In addition a Public Service Agreement target 'halting the year-on-year rise in obesity among children aged under 11 by 2010' is a target shared by the Department of Health, the Department of Culture Media and Sport and the Department for Education and Skills.

Bike It is also habit-forming. Evidence from other countries in Europe shows that where children cycle, they go on to cycle as adults. Young people today are going to rely more on low energy forms of transport as we move towards a low carbon economy. Giving children the skills they need to cycle helps prepare them for a very different future.

Sustrans' vision is a world in which people choose to travel in ways that benefit their health and the environment. Bike It is achieving just this, and we look forward to the day when every school has access to a Bike It officer and the third of children who want to cycle to school are able to do so.

Bike It will continue to grow because it helps support so many key government objectives (in England).

- every school to be a Healthy School by 2009
- every school to have a travel plan by 2010
- every school to become a sustainable school (acting as a model of sustainable travel) by 2020
- every local authority to report progress with reducing car use on school journeys
- every local authority encouraged to deliver national standard cycle training in schools (Bikeability).



Want to **get involved?**

Schools

If you would like a Bike It officer to work with your school then visit

www.sustrans.org.uk/askforbikeit and complete the on-line survey. It's only by registering your interest that we can make the case for more funding! Encourage your local authority School Travel Adviser to approach Sustrans and register their interest too.

Parents, teachers or school governors

If you would like Bike It to work with your child's school then contact a member of staff at the school and ask them to complete the survey listed above. If you would like to become a champion for walking or cycling at your school please contact the Sustrans School Travel Team at www.saferoutestoschools.org.uk or call 0117 915 0100.

Local Authority

If you want Bike It to work with schools in your area, then write to Sustrans to register your interest. Please encourage enthusiastic schools to complete the on-line survey too.

Primary Care Trust

If you want Bike It to help you deliver your local physical activity and child obesity strategies, please discuss this with your local authority School Travel Adviser and write to Sustrans.

Bicycle Trade

If you have contributed to the Bike Hub levy, thank you for your support. If you want to see the project extended, please contact the Bicycle Association or Association of Cycle Traders. If your business is located where Bike It is already active, please contact the local Bike It officer to see how you can get involved. Their details can be found at www.sustrans.org.uk/bikeit



Sustrans is the UK's leading sustainable transport charity. Our vision is a world in which people choose to travel in ways that benefit their health and the environment. We work on practical, innovative solutions to the transport challenges facing us all. Sustrans is the charity behind the award winning National Cycle Network, Safe Routes to Schools, Bike It, TravelSmart, Active Travel, Connect2 and Liveable Neighbourhoods, all projects that are changing our world one mile at a time.

To find out more visit or call:
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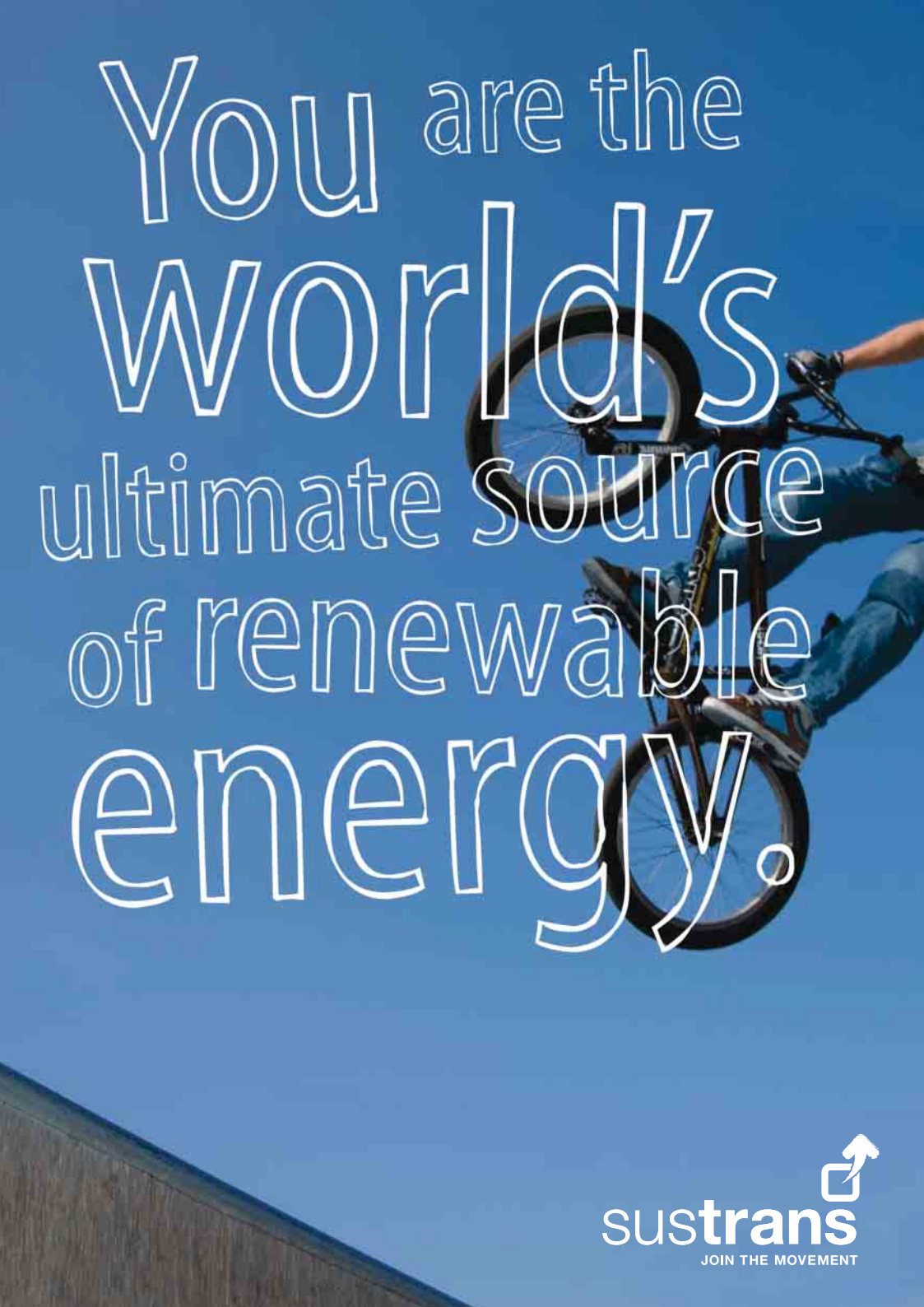
**Transport
for London**

and many local authorities.

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You are the
world's
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A person is riding a bicycle against a clear blue sky. The person is wearing blue jeans and a dark jacket. The bicycle is in the foreground, and the rider is positioned on the right side of the frame. The text is overlaid on the image, with 'You are the' at the top, 'world's' in the middle, and 'ultimate source of renewable energy.' at the bottom. The text is in a white, outlined font.