

The National Cycle Network

Route User Monitoring Report
To end of **2006**

Welcome

Welcome to Sustrans' report on usage of the National Cycle Network in 2006, the seventh successive year of continued growth in usage over and above the Network's increase in length.

The report shows another very significant rise in the headline usage numbers, and also outlines how the Network serves a wide variety of communities, including those most at need, and addresses all sectors of society, offering quite exceptional value for money compared to other transport initiatives.

By the end of 2006 the Network extended to 11,300 miles, and as we have improved local access, usage has grown rapidly. During 2006 across the whole Network there were over 338 million walking and cycling trips.

This is 106 million more trips than we reported for 2005. Our monitoring methodology is constantly evolving and improving, and this is the first report in which we have been able to include estimates of very short journeys on the Network derived by including data from the smaller lengths of route that link people to and from the Network, giving much better local access. In our next report, on 2007 usage, we will apply the upgraded methodology used in 2006 to previous years' figures, so as to give more accurate year-on-year data since 2000.

Our focus on expanding and improving local access has enabled many more people to make more use of the Network from and within their communities. This has directly helped the most deprived communities, served people suffering from health inequalities, and massively enhanced the impact of the Network on climate change and obesity, two of the main drivers of our work.

It is worth pointing out that the National Cycle Network has evolved in a different way from the road network, which first developed at local level and to which a hierarchy was applied thereafter.

With the Network we focused initially on the strategic, long-distance national routes before moving on to ever better links to and within local communities, ensuring ever greater access.

More recently we have received Department for Transport funding in England specifically aimed at enabling children to walk and cycle to school. Schools are often at the heart of communities, and many of these new local routes therefore benefit the whole community. This work is continuing in England, and with support from the Scottish Executive and the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development in Northern Ireland, is underway in other parts of the UK.

In the coming years we will continue to focus on local access and creating local networks, bringing the National Cycle Network closer to many more people, and so making it accessible for ever more journeys. This will become the public space which will enable many more people to walk and cycle within their local community: where parents will feel confident to let their children play and travel, where those new to or returning to cycling will be able to build confidence, and where older people will feel able to walk, free from the fear of traffic.

This has always been at the heart of all Sustrans' work. We exist to create the public space that will enable all of those who today feel unable to walk and cycle to do so. We, and our many partners, are changing UK transport culture by putting want-to-be pedestrians and cyclists first. This is what achieving healthier, more sustainable ways of travelling requires.



John Grimshaw, MBE
Founder and Chief Executive

During 2006 over 338 million trips were made on the National Cycle Network



The National Cycle Network is continuing to act as a catalyst for changing travel behaviour, and is encouraging many more people to walk and cycle.

During 2006 the National Cycle Network carried more than 338 million trips. There has been a 5.3% increase on the routes open the previous year, and we have been able to take into account numerous short trips previously omitted as a result of our analysis of local links.

This equates to over 900,000 trips a day during 2006, close to a third of all journeys made on the UK's rail network each day.

This is the seventh consecutive year that the number of trips made across the National Cycle Network has increased, and takes the total number of journeys since 2000 to over 1.2 billion.

During 2006 168 million trips were by bike and 171 million trips by foot. Usage by both pedestrians and cyclists on the National Cycle Network has grown over and above increased usage associated with new routes every year since Sustrans began monitoring in 2000. By contrast, the National Travel Survey (NTS) for Great Britain has, in recent years, shown no growth in cycling and a decline and then flattening off in walking trips.

One of the reasons for this is the high number of trips being made on traffic-free routes across the Network – the NTS does not adequately record trips being made on these routes. Over a third of the National Cycle Network is traffic-free, and these sections carried 281 million trips during 2006. Urban traffic free sections are particularly important for usage, accounting for 19% of routes of the Network but carrying 80% of all journeys made.



Changing the way people move

The National Cycle Network is enabling people to walk and cycle more all over the UK.

- usage increased on the National Cycle Network in every country in the UK, with nearly 31 million trips in Wales, over 35 million in Scotland, nearly 9 million in Northern Ireland and over 263 million in England
- 42% of users of the Network say they are planning to walk and cycle more in future
- traffic-free routes of the Network are encouraging people to return to or start cycling. On these sections 14% of trips are by people new to or returning to cycling, as opposed to 2% on road adjacent routes
- women in particular are benefiting – 27% of cycling trips during 2006 were made by women who are new to or returning to cycling, the overwhelming majority on traffic-free sections
- the Network is enabling children to be outside, active and independent - they made 52 million trips on the Network in 2006, over 12 million to school, and the rest for leisure and play.



“As a society we are in a real quandary when it comes to our children; on the one hand we want to give them freedom, but on the other we are becoming increasingly frightened to let them out. For our children’s wellbeing and development it is crucial that we resolve this contradiction. I am delighted that the National Cycle Network is providing valuable leadership in helping children and their families explore the outdoors by foot and bike.”

Bob Reitemeier, Chief Executive, The Children’s Society



Reducing congestion and CO₂ emissions

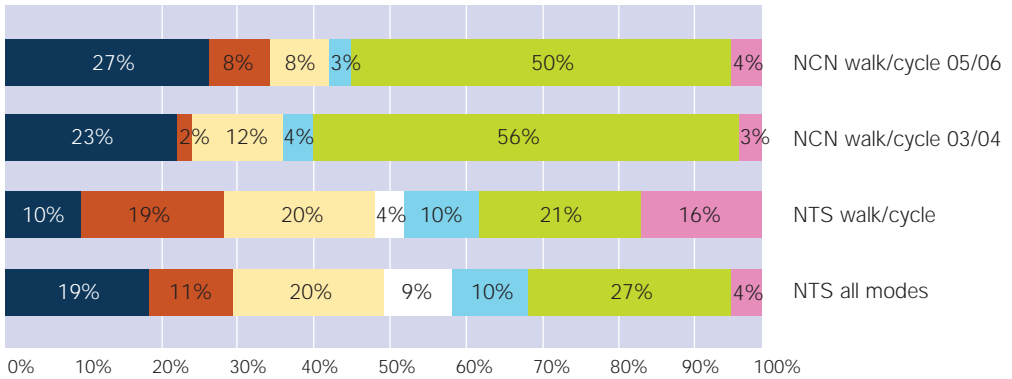
Photo © Nick Turner

During 2006 27% of trips were made by people who could have used a car but chose not to - 91 million trips that replaced a car trip. All 338 million trips made on the National Cycle Network represent a potential saving of 437,000 tonnes of CO₂

- typically over the past 4 years, over 30% of all trips made on the Network have replaced a car trip
- a quarter of all trips on the Network in 2006 were for commuting and business purposes
- the percentage of commuting and business trips has grown steadily on the National Cycle Network, increasing from 23% of all trips during 03/04 to 27% of all Network trips in 05/06
- on urban traffic-free sections of the Network the average cycle commute is 4.0 miles, and on rural traffic-free sections 6.9 miles
- by contrast the NTS shows the average trip length on road by bike is 2.4 miles. Nearly two thirds of car journeys are under 5 miles
- over 12 million trips are being made to school on the National Cycle Network – the majority (59%) by bike, particularly in urban areas. Nearly a quarter of traffic on the roads at 8.50 am is taking children to school
- the potential carbon dioxide saving of all journeys made on the Network during 2006 is equivalent to the emissions of over 180,000 new cars during a year.

Percentage of trips by purpose:

National Cycle Network 03/04 and 05/06 compared to National Travel Survey 2005



- commuting/business
- education/escort education*
- shopping
- other escort
- personal business
- leisure
- other

*Whilst we calculate overall how many trips on the Network are made by children going to school, specific data relies on face-to-face surveys. We do not interview children. Therefore education and escort education trips recorded here and in case studies are made by adults.

“There is a need for a radical rethink on the provision of transport infrastructure to cope with new demands and to lessen environmental impacts. The Commission has recommended statutory targets for a reduction in urban traffic, and achieving this will rely on creating good quality public space so that people can walk and cycle much more. The National Cycle Network is leading the way, and showing how traffic-free routes, particularly in urban areas, are enabling people to leave their cars behind.”

Professor Sir John Lawton, CBE FRS

Chairman of the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution

"Our recently published Women's Manifesto on Climate Change shows that women want to take action to reduce their environmental impact. We found that women want safe and comprehensive cycling and walking options, including car-free school runs for women and children. Traffic-free sections of the National Cycle Network are already serving women and children well, but we need more. I look forward to the day when every woman, and child, has a car-free route for all the local journeys they make."

Fay Mansell – National Federation of Women's Institutes Chair

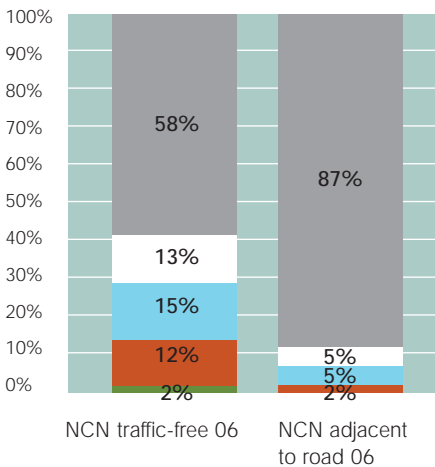
Improving access for all

The National Cycle Network passes within a mile of 50% of the population.

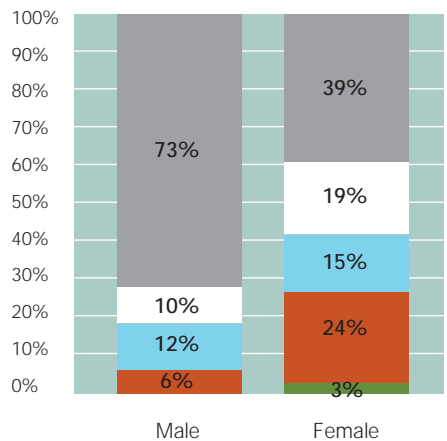
- comparing data from 03/04 with 05/06, there has been an increase in usage amongst those living in a household with no car, from 21% to 26%
- in 2006 32% of users had no access to a car on the day of the survey, increasing to 39% amongst women users, and to 44% amongst female pedestrians
- women made 30% of all trips on the National Cycle Network during 2006, and are twice as likely to be pedestrians than cyclists
- traffic-free routes are particularly important for encouraging women to cycle, and a fifth of all cycling trips on these routes are by women
- nearly three-quarters of women cite pleasant surroundings as being important to enabling them to walk and cycle compared to 59% of men
- when it comes to cycling, nearly two thirds of women identify safety on the route as being very important to them, compared to 37% of female pedestrians
- the number of trips made by users identifying themselves as Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) has also increased, from 4% in 03/04 to over 6% in 05/06
- during 2006 8% of walking trips were made by men identifying themselves as BME
- 3% of trips on the National Cycle Network during 2006 were made by disabled people
- over 10% of users of the Network are over the age of 60, with traffic-free routes being most popular with this age group.



Cycling experience: NCN traffic-free sections encourage new and returning cyclists



NCN cycling experience by gender 2006



- Experienced, regular cyclist
- Experienced, occasional cyclist
- Occasional cyclist
- Starting to cycle again
- New to cycling



Encouraging active travel and addressing health inequalities

78% of users on the National Cycle Network report that the Network has helped them to increase the amount of physical activity they take.

- the National Cycle Network is very effectively focused on health inequalities. At the end of 2006 almost 60% of the people living in the 25% most deprived areas in the UK were served by at least one route within a mile of their home - that's over 8.5 million of the people most at need
- the Network is within a mile of almost exactly 50% of the total UK population and continues to grow, but we will maintain the focus on the most deprived, who benefit least from motor traffic and suffer most from its consequences
- 40% of users report that they are walking and cycling more than they were a year

ago, and 42% are planning to walk and cycle more in the future

- the Network is encouraging people to travel actively for everyday journeys – comparing data from 03/04 with 05/06, there is a marked increase in commuting trips from 23% to 27%, and a decline in journeys that are just for walking and cycling, from 45% to 35%
- 54% of men and 57% of women say that personal fitness is one of the reasons they are using the Network, and 80% of women say that the presence of the Network has enabled them to increase their level of everyday physical activity
- both men and women rate pleasant surroundings as the most important reason for using the Network, and this appears to be important to encouraging active travel



- of the 52 million trips on the Network made by children during 2006, almost 83% took place on traffic-free sections, enabling many more children to be physically active in their everyday lives
- cycling is more popular than walking amongst children using the Network; 59% of trips to school on the Network are by cycle, and 41% are made on foot.

“Good health and well-being is not only right for individuals, it is also crucial for the success of business, for a strong economy and a strong society. The National Cycle Network is enabling many more people to be active in their everyday lives. Whether travelling to work, to school, or to see friends, walking and cycling is one of the best ways of incorporating physical activity into people’s busy lives.”

Dame Carol Black DBE FRCP FMedSci, National Director for Health and Work

As the National Cycle Network has developed, so have local links and networks along its length, ensuring that routes serve many different communities, acting as both a local and national resource, enabling people to be active in their everyday life, whilst also being a destination in its own right.

During 2006 Sustrans conducted surveys at many sites throughout the UK, and the data collected demonstrates how the Network works for different people and the kinds of trips being made depending on location, the level of access and the number of routes linking communities to the Network.

On the following pages there are a selection of case studies in different locations. There are, however, some consistent and recurring themes within the data:

- pleasant surroundings are important to encouraging more people to travel actively, whether for leisure or commuting
- people who are new to and returning to cycling prefer safe and pleasant surroundings, and traffic-free sections of Network help them to gain experience away from the fear of traffic
- having experienced cycling on the Network, the majority of cyclists are planning to use their bikes more in the future
- as routes are linked into communities the usage changes, with increases in everyday active travel, including trips to work, college and the shops
- the Network acts as a linear playground – children use traffic-free routes for play and leisure as well as getting to and from school.

National Cycle Network National Route 9 in Northern Ireland connects Lisburn and Jordanstown, and travels North - South through Belfast. Sustrans conducted counts and surveys on the main route, and on a link that connects communities east of the River Lagan via Ormeau Park to schools and other local amenities. Sustrans surveyed both sites in 2004 and 2006. Between the surveys several businesses in the area began participating in the Government backed salary sacrifice scheme that enables staff to purchase a bike through their employer. Belfast's population also increased as a result of the EU's expansion.

Waterfront Hall, Belfast

Just south of the Queen's Bridge, this area was much improved with investment from the Lagside Corporation since 2000. Since 2004 there have been the following changes.

- 149% increase in annual usage, from 293,000 trips to 730,000
- cycling has increased more than walking – by 328% to 180,000 trips, compared to walking that has increased 117% to 546,000 trips a year
- the number of women using the route has increased by 175%, to 283,000 trips
- 85% of trips by cyclists are for commuting purposes, compared to 31% for pedestrians



- the number of trips made by children has increased from 37,000 to 120,000, an increase of 224%, accounting for 16% of all usage
- 36% of users could use a car to make their journey, but choose not to
- 66% of cyclists use the route daily in spring and summer, declining slightly to 59% in autumn and winter
- 10% of users identify as being of mixed or BME background
- 90% of users feel safe using the route in terms of exposure to traffic and 97% feel safe in terms of personal security when using the route alone.
- 94% increase in annual usage to 296,000 trips a year
- cycling trips increased 93% to 79,000 and pedestrian trips by 90% to 207,000
- 43% of users could have used a car to make their trip, but chose not to
- trips by women increased 105% to 125,000
- usage by children has increased by 82% to 51,000 trips a year, accounting for 17% of all trips
- 41% of journeys are for commuting, with 44% of trips by bike being made by commuters
- 80% of users say that the route has helped them to increase their levels of everyday physical activity
- 30% of cyclists intend to cycle more in the future.

Ormeau Park, Belfast

This survey was conducted on a link to the National Cycle Network, crossing Ormeau Park, and connecting to a bridge that takes pedestrians and cyclists across the River Lagan to National Route 9. The following changes were recorded:

National Route 4 and 47 of the National Cycle Network (the Celtic Trail) crosses Wales at its widest point. From Chepstow it passes north of Cardiff, through Swansea and Llanelli, and on to Fishguard. Along its length the Network is serving different communities in a variety of ways.

Blackpill, Swansea

Surveys and counts were conducted halfway along the main coastal promenade between Swansea and the Mumbles. The traffic-free route links the University, Singleton Hospital and the Marina, passes close to a lido popular with families, and links the Mumbles, a tourist destination as well as a busy community, to Swansea. Since 2004 the following changes have occurred:

- the number of trips has increased from 273,000 to 379,000 annually
- trips by women have increased by 37%
- usage by children has risen from 30,000 to 52,000 trips a year, an increase of 73%
- the number of cyclists who are new to, returning to or occasional cyclists cycling has increased dramatically, from 32% to 66%
- the percentage of trips being made for commuting has risen from 10% to 13%, rising to 17% amongst cyclists
- shopping trips have increased from 1% to 3%

- pleasant surroundings and personal fitness are the two main reasons people cite for using the National Cycle Network at this point.

Quakers Yard

The same route was surveyed further east, north of Cardiff at its junction with another National Cycle Network route from Merthyr Tydfil. National Route 4 is traffic-free at this point, linking several communities along its length, crossing several major rivers and roads, offering people continuous walking and cycling routes to local amenities. Usage is over 23,000 trips a year. Since 2004 the data shows:

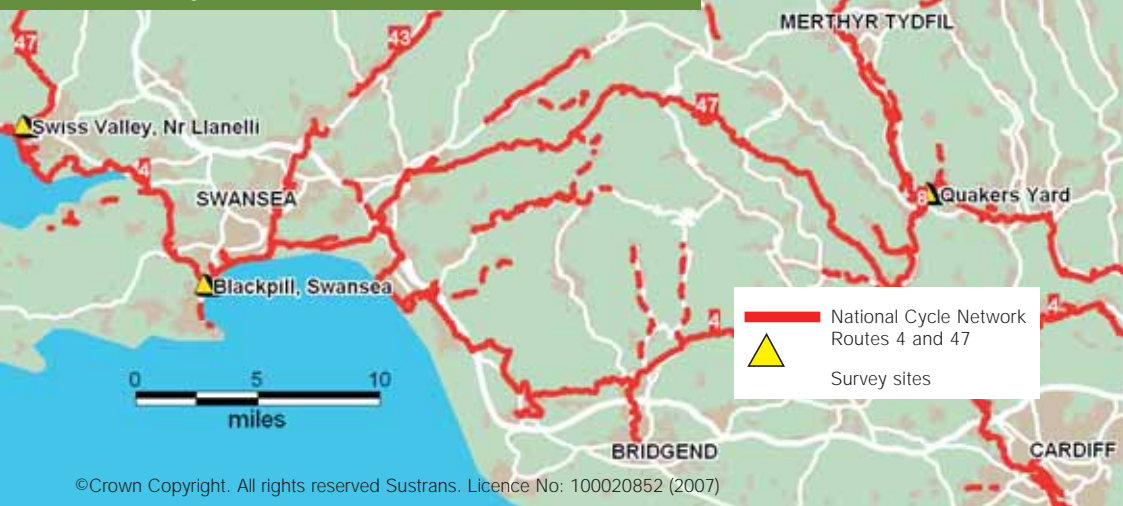
- a 63% increase in cycling trips, with 13% of cycling trips being made by commuters
- a 58% increase in usage by children, and a 19% increase in trips by women
- 88% of users believe the presence of the Network has helped them to increase the amount of regular physical activity they take.

Swiss Valley, near Llanelli

West of Swansea, National Route 4 passes through Llanelli, and beyond through the Millennium Coastal Park, reclaimed from industrial decline and transformed into a leisure destination including the National Wildfowl and Wetlands Centre and Pembrey Country Park.

This survey was conducted on a traffic-free section of a disused railway line between Llanelli and the Millennium

National Cycle Network Route 4 and 47 in South Wales



Coastal Park. Many of the trips are leisure trips, but the route is enabling the majority of people to visit the Park without having to use their car. It is also encouraging people who are new to or returning to cycling, with the number of cyclists describing themselves in this way declining in the last few years, with a corresponding rise in those describing themselves as experienced. Over the same period usage of the route for shopping and commuting has begun to increase.

- usage at this point is over 41,500 trips a year
- 95% of users use no other mode of transport to make their trip
- cycling trips account for 63% of trips, with 13% of these being made by people who are new to or returning to cycling and occasional cyclists
- while leisure trips are the most common, commuting and shopping account for 11% and 2% of trips respectively, and are increasing
- 41% of trips are made by women, over a third by children, and 16% by people over the age of 60.

The Scottish Executive has increased funding to enable Sustrans to improve and extend the National Cycle Network throughout Scotland as part of the Executive's key commitment to delivering more sustainable travel. Over the coming years we will monitor and report the impact of this investment. Below we highlight how the Network serves three different communities within Scotland.

Slateford, Edinburgh

National Cycle Network Route 75 in Edinburgh acts as a radial route, taking people into the heart of the City from the outlying suburbs of Wester Hailes, Currie and Balerno. At Slateford the route uses a canal towpath, passing through a residential community, which is also home to a hospital, two university campuses and a further education college.

- usage on the route is 271,000 trips annually, with 38% of trips being made by cyclists
- over 10% of all trips are for commuting, rising to 22% amongst cyclists
- 10% of walking trips are to university or college
- women make 39% of all journeys, and the most commonly cited reason for using the route is pleasant surroundings
- 73% of users say that the presence of the Network has enabled them to

increase the amount of physical activity they are taking

- for 74% of cyclists using a car was not an available option, and nearly 70% say they will cycle more in future
- 39% of cyclists describe themselves as new to, returning to, or occasional cyclists.

Dyce, Aberdeen

Dyce, on the outskirts of Aberdeen, is a mixed area of suburban housing, with industrial estates, large hotels, a railway station and Aberdeen Airport close by. The survey site was at the beginning of the old railway track just north of Dyce, with Newmachar, a 'dormitory town', lying 4 miles further on. The route surface was upgraded a couple of years ago to enable more people to make use of the route.

Much of the usage on this route is for commuting, with many cyclists saying they are choosing to use their bikes rather than their car, helping to reduce congestion.

- 31,000 trips are made annually on this section of Network
- children account for nearly a quarter of all journeys
- convenience and safety on the route are the most commonly cited reasons for people using it
- 37% of trips are for commuting, rising to 61% amongst cyclists



- 63% of cyclists could have used a car to make their journey, but chose not to
- 77% of pedestrians say that the presence of the Network has enabled them to increase their levels of physical activity
- 42% of cyclists intend to cycle more in future, and 60% of pedestrians intend to walk more.

Alloway, Ayr

By contrast, the survey on Alloway Railway in Ayr was conducted when the route was a rough, informal path on an old railway embankment. The track has since been upgraded to a fully-sealed shared use traffic-

free route. We will conduct a further survey when the path has become established to assess the impact of the upgrade. Total annual usage is currently 4,900 trips.

- 61% of trips are being made by pedestrians
- children account for nearly 20% of all journeys
- 15% of users are over the age of 60
- pleasant surroundings and safety are the two main reasons why people say they are using the route.

National Cycle Network route 66 passes through different areas of Kirklees. Usage along its routes and the local links into neighbourhoods, varies between communities. As you would expect, usage is highest where the number of access points is greatest and where routes pass through residential areas. As we know from our own research, the overwhelming majority of trips begin and end at home (see page 24).

Liversedge, Spen Valley Greenway, Kirklees

At this section of route the survey was conducted in the heart of the local residential area which has good access and community links to the National Cycle Network. The route serves a junior school and just over half a mile north a new housing estate has direct access onto the greenway. Since 2004 the data reveals:

- a 23% increase in usage to 202,000 trips
- a bigger increase in cycling levels (30%) than walking levels (11%)
- an increase in usage by women in particular – a rise from 56,000 trips to 73,000, a 31% increase
- usage by children has increased by 31% to 50,000 trips a year
- 85% of users say that the presence of the Network has enabled them to increase the amount of physical activity they take

- 12% of cyclists say they are returning to cycling, and 4% are new to cycling.

Birkby-Bradley Greenway, Kirklees

Serving communities along its route, but with fewer access points for cyclists, this section of route sees less usage, but a much greater variety of trips, particularly utility journeys to work, college and the shops.

Total usage at this site is 46,000 trips a year, less than a quarter of the trips seen on the previous site where access is greater.

- 12% of trips are for commuting, rising to 27% of trips being made by bike
- 11% of trips are for getting to college, 20% for shopping
- 99% of users use no other mode of transport to make their trip
- pedestrians account for nearly 90% of usage, with women comprising 39% of those walking
- children account for over a quarter of all trips.

Calder Valley Greenway, Kirklees

The survey site is at Thornhill about 1km from Dewsbury ring road along this riverside section of the Calder Valley Greenway, which when complete will extend to Huddersfield via Mirfield. The site is between an urban fringe residential area and industrial area to the south-west of Dewsbury town centre. There are no schools in close proximity to the route.



- usage is 51,000 trips a year, and varied, with trips for commuting and shopping particularly prominent
- cyclists account for 31% of all trips, and of these trips 44% are to work
- children make 27% of all journeys
- nearly 80% of cyclists say that the presence of the route has helped them to increase the amount of physical activity they take
- 34% of cyclists say that they are new to or returning to cycling or occasional cyclists
- cyclists are not using any other mode of transport to make their journey.

The National Cycle Network passes through and around Leicester, and below we detail surveys and counts reflecting its usage within different communities as it passes. We have no comparative data showing how much usage has increased or declined, but the data shows how the Network is serving different people in different ways.

Allington Street Link, Leicester

Allington Street Link path forms part of the Belgrave way route north of the city centre, forming part of a quiet road and traffic-free path along the Belgrave Corridor. The route links to a high profile community centre that opened in 2006, and over the next couple of years the surrounding schools will be rebuilt and expanded. This section of local network gives direct access to the pedestrianised city centre where cycling is also allowed. We know continuity on a route is important for pedestrians and cyclists and encourages higher levels of usage.

The counts and face-to-face surveys reveal:

- 484,000 trips being made annually on this route
- pedestrians make 86% of all trips
- children account for 16% of all journeys, people over the age of 60 for 11%, and women for nearly half of all journeys
- 55% of trips are being made for shopping, 21% for commuting and 6% for education

- 59% of users have no access to a car within their household, well above the national average
- 54% of users identify as Asian or Asian/British.

Rally Park, Soar Lane, Leicester

This site is at a predominantly traffic-free junction of two National Cycle Network routes, and a local route linking cross-city routes using the towpath of the Grand Union Canal. A significant regeneration project is planned in the area soon. This route gives good access to the city centre where pedestrians and cyclists are welcome.

- 642,000 thousand trips are made annually
- 93% of users use no other mode of transport to make their trips
- trips by pedestrians account for 72% of journeys
- 12% of trips are made by children, and 33% by women who are most likely to be pedestrians
- 44% of trips are for commuting, and over 10% for shopping
- over 64% of trips by cyclists are for commuting, while shopping trips are mainly made by pedestrians
- 5% of respondents identify themselves as Asian/Asian British, and 3% as Black British.

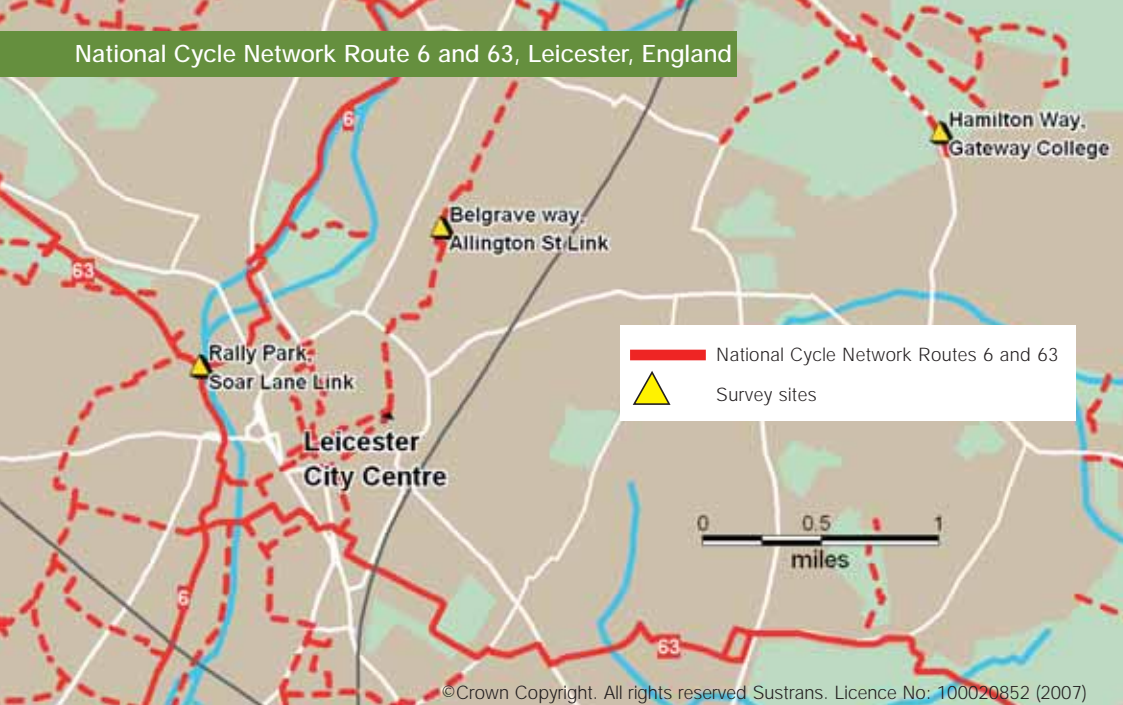


Photo ©Julia Bayne

Hamilton Way, Gateway College, Leicester

The site is a traffic-free junction on the eastern side of the city, and forms part of an orbital route linking communities to shops, hospitals, workplaces, and schools as well as a sports centre that opened a couple of years ago. The presence of the route enables pedestrians and cyclists to avoid busy roads.

- 14% of trips are for commuting, and 52% for shopping
- 78% of users cite the safety of the route as their main reason for using it
- over a third of users are female, rising to 39% of pedestrians
- 20% of users identify themselves as Asian/Asian British, rising to 23% of pedestrians.

Increasing levels of cycling

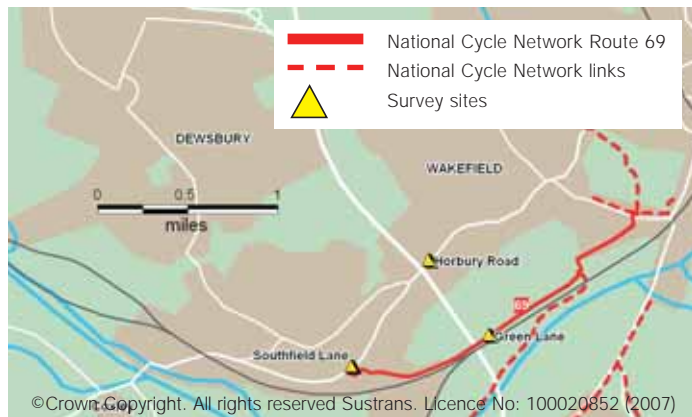
A good evidence base is crucial to Sustrans' success. We recognise that it is not enough to talk about the benefits of our projects – we need to demonstrate their impact through good research and monitoring. On the following pages we highlight key areas where the evidence demonstrates how Sustrans is increasing levels of cycling and walking, the cost benefits of this work, and the real potential for change to more sustainable modes of travelling.

Does building a traffic-free route parallel to a road encourage more people to walk and cycle, or does it simply mean cyclists and walkers abandon the road and pavement they were using before?

This is a fundamental question, and one we are often asked. During 2006 we were able to survey three sites in Wakefield, West Yorkshire, and compare data with the same sites in 2002, shortly after a new walking and cycling route, much of it traffic-free, had been opened parallel to but away from an on-road route.

The map below shows that the road and traffic-free route diverge at the Southfield Lane survey site. The Horbury Road site is measuring trips on the on-road route, and Green Lane the mainly traffic-free walking and cycling route opened in 2002.

If users had simply been displaced from the road you would expect the Horbury Road figures to have declined for all usage between the two surveys. As can be seen from the figures below, while pedestrian levels have declined at Horbury Road, cycling trips have increased, and at Green Lane cycling trips have increased significantly. It would appear that pedestrians move to a more attractive route, but in terms of cycling levels, the new route seems to have actually increased the overall level of cycling.



	Horbury Road		Southfield Lane		Green Lane	
	2002	2006	2002	2006	2002	2006
All users	88,825	78,695	46,621	67,817	11,546	35,296
Cyclists	30,693	32,228	11,394	46,042	5,419	16,280
Pedestrians	56,969	46,468	34,646	21,775	6,008	17,648

The cost benefit of everyday active travel



During 2006 Sustrans published a cost benefit analysis of 3 recently built traffic-free routes linking schools to their communities under the Department for Transport funded Links to Schools programme in England. Using guidance developed by Sustrans, the Institute for Transport Studies at Leeds University, and the University of Bolton, for the economic appraisal of cycling and walking schemes on behalf of the Department for Transport, the analysis found:

- the 3 schemes had high net present values of benefits in relation to costs, and presented extremely favourable cost benefit ratios of between 14.9 and 32.5 – on average 20:1
- benefit to cost ratios were far higher than those typically returned for road schemes and public transport schemes – it is rare for the benefit to cost ratios for these to approach 10:1, and they are usually less than 5:1
- as much as half of the net present value of the routes may be realised in terms of savings to the health services
- the combined net present value of the three schemes presented as case studies was £33,417,297, at a cost of £1,733,532
- figures suggest that the net present value of the whole 2004-05 Links to Schools programme in England exceeds £1.5 billion.

The value of the benefits associated with the programme may still be underestimated, as a number of costs and valuable benefits are still not included, such as the cost of childhood illness associated with obesity, or the environmental benefits of cycling and walking. Sustrans continues to work with the DfT to refine and improve the guidance.

	Case study 1	Case study 2	Case study 3
Present value of benefits	£12,601,051	£5,766,824	£16,782,954
Present value of costs	£430,294	£177,224	£1,126,014
Net present value	£12,170,757	£5,589,600	£15,656,940
Benefit to cost ratio	29.3	32.5	14.9

The potential for change

How many car journeys could really be shifted to walking, cycling and public transport in the UK? This is another question that Sustrans is often asked. Is it really possible to attain the levels achieved in continental Europe – could every town and city in the UK be an Amsterdam, Copenhagen or Freiburg, or is the UK so different that this is just pie-in-the-sky?

Sustrans, with partners Socialdata, collected baseline data from residents of the three Sustainable Travel Demonstration Towns (STDT), Peterborough, Worcester and Darlington during 2004, comparing this to data collected by Socialdata from towns and cities worldwide. What becomes clear is that we in the UK are not unique – our day-to-day travel patterns are very similar to those in Europe, Australia and the US.

So what is the potential for walking, cycling and using public transport in the UK?

In the STDT's:

- 35% of trips are already made by foot, bike and public transport
- for 36% of trips there is no viable alternative
- for 29% of journeys the only reason why they could not be walked, cycled or made using public transport is people's perceptions of and attitudes to the alternatives, or a lack of information.

Based on this we believe that with easily manageable levels of investment in new infrastructure, some traffic-restraint, and better information on accessing walking, cycling and public transport, it should be possible to achieve 75% of trips by sustainable types of transport in a typical UK town. This is similar to what a thriving and wealthy city like Basel in Switzerland experiences every day.

Travel behaviour is consistent in cities across the world

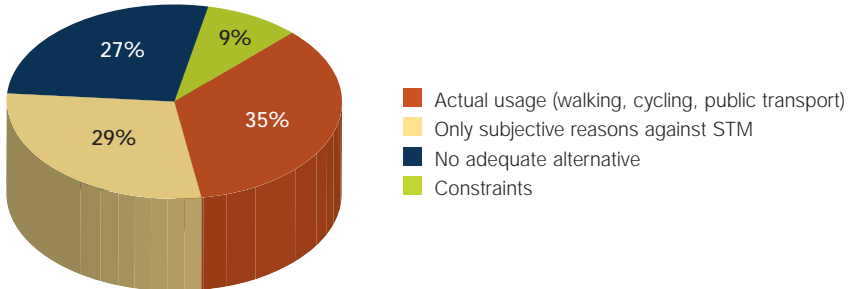
Daily mobility	On average people make three trips a day, spending one hour travelling
Activities	Only one in five trips is work-related
Spatial orientation	Five out of six trips begin or end at home
Car trips	10% are within 1 km, 30% are within 3 km, and 50% are within 5 km



An average day in Basel, Switzerland where 75% of trips are made by foot, bike and public transport

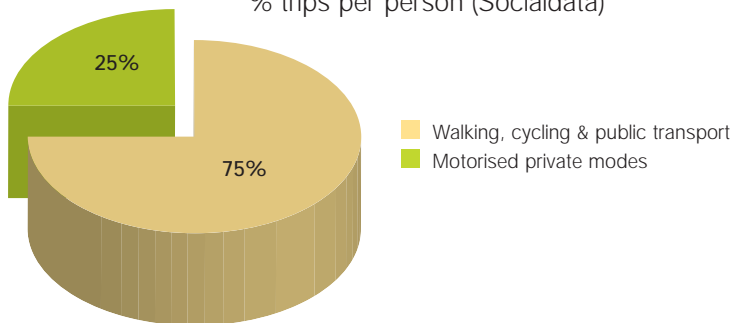
Potential for sustainable travel modes

% trips per person: Sustainable Travel Demonstration Towns



Mode choice in Basel, Switzerland

% trips per person (Socialdata)



Methodology

This report is derived from a range of data sources. These include continuous cycle counters, route user surveys, manual user counts, other user surveys, and central government data sources. Sustrans would like to take this opportunity to thank all partners that have contributed to the National Cycle Network monitoring programme. Those requiring more information on any part of this report, or wishing to become involved in the programme should contact Sustrans' Research and Monitoring Unit.

Measuring changes in the levels of cycling

Sustrans has been collating data from local authority networks of automated continuous cycle counters throughout the UK for several years. This data is the basis for expressions of the changing levels of cycle use. A sample of over 300 counters formed the basis for this years' change measurement. An independent review of analytical techniques employed is currently underway.

Estimating total National Cycle Network use

A complex model is used to generate estimates of National Cycle Network usage. Figures for usage on different types of routes, combined with the figures describing changes in levels of cycling, form the basis for national level aggregation. The process used this year is consistent with that used in 2005. Pedestrian use of road adjacent routes is not assigned as Network use. An independent review of the model is currently underway.

Profiling the use of the Network

Profiles of National Cycle Network usage are derived from route user surveys. A further 38

of these were conducted in 2006. Sustrans holds a database of over 35,000 face-to-face interviews with route users collected over the past seven years. Survey response data is weighted on the basis of concurrent local user counts and national Network usage estimates, in-line with the recommendations of an independent review of the survey process.

Case studies

The case studies presented are derived from count and survey data collected by Sustrans and partners.

Future reporting

We are always seeking to improve our methodology for interpreting the data we collect. Over the next few years we particularly wish to:

1. Improve the sophistication of cycle usage estimation based on better modelling of count data
2. Generate better 'levels of change' data for cycling activity
3. Enhance our understanding of pedestrian activity on road-adjacent routes.

Further information

A technical report accompanies this document, and is available from Sustrans' Research and Monitoring Unit:

Sustrans' Research and Monitoring Unit,
37 Side, Quayside, Newcastle, NE1 3JE
Tel: 0191 261 6160
Email: monitoring@sustrans.org.uk

National Cycle Network Centre,
2 Cathedral Square, College Green,
Bristol, BS1 5DD
Tel: 0117 926 8893
Email: info@sustrans.org.uk
Website: www.sustrans.org.uk

About Sustrans

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, and every day we are working on practical and imaginative solutions to the transport challenges affecting us all.

The National Cycle Network is one of these solutions. Working in partnership with hundreds of local authorities, and many other organisations and funders, 11,300 miles of routes and links were completed by December 2006.

This Route User Monitoring Report describes usage of the National Cycle Network during 2006. It is full of facts and figures showing how people all over the UK use the Network.

We can only publish a selection of the mass of data we collect. For fuller and more detailed information, visit the Research and Monitoring section of our website at www.sustrans.org.uk to see other data as it becomes available.

For more copies of this report please visit www.sustrans.org.uk to download a PDF or e-mail monitoring@sustrans.org.uk

Sustrans is also the charity behind Safe Routes to Schools, TravelSmart, Bike It and Links to Schools and Active Travel, all helping people to get out more on their feet and bikes.

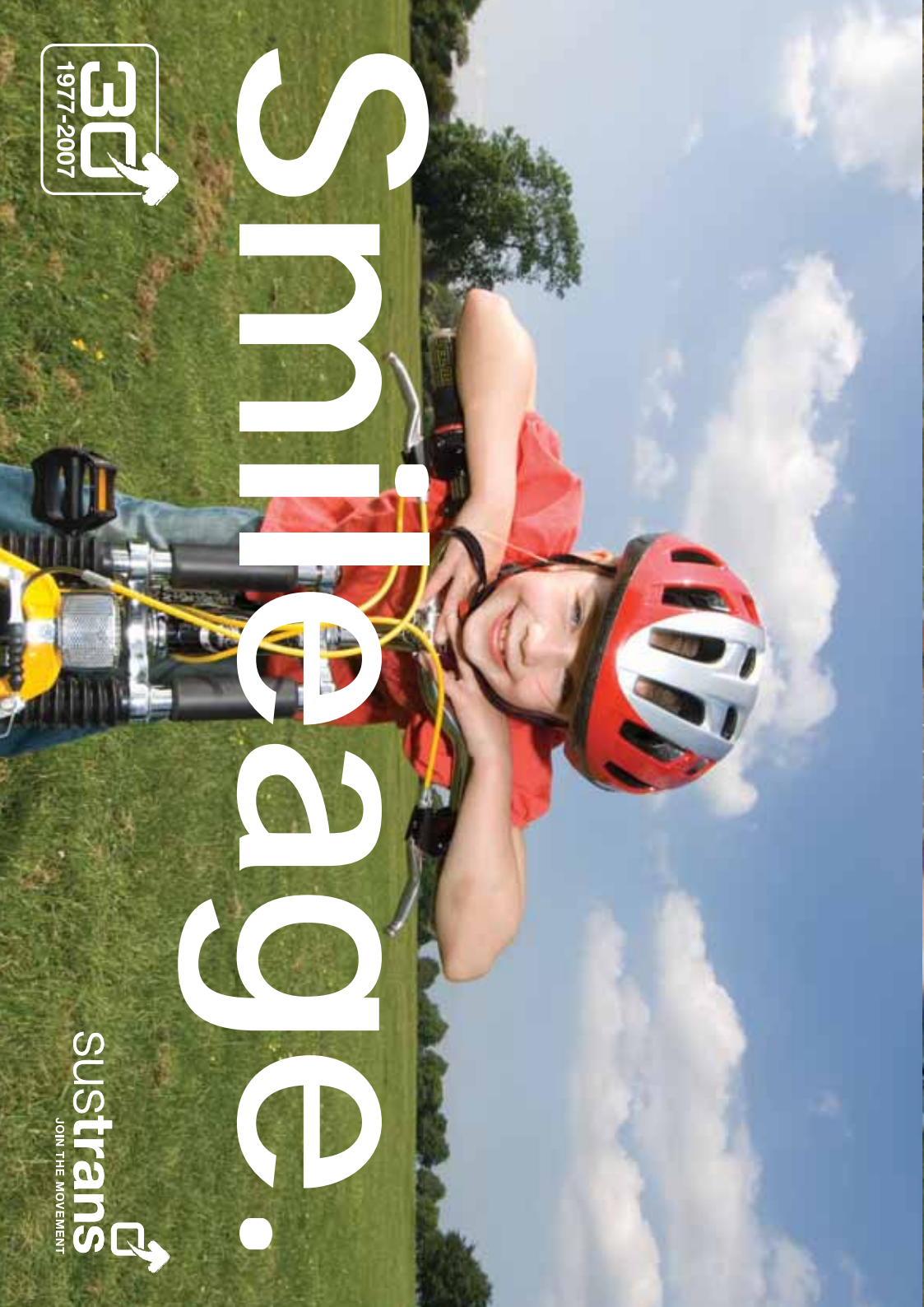
We are the charity making a difference today so everyone can live better tomorrow.

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