

Outcomes of the Cycling City and Towns programme: monitoring project report

Introduction

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1 Introduction

The Cycling England / Department for Transport Cycling City and Towns (CCT) programme ran from October 2008 to March 2011, in parallel with the second phase of the Cycling Demonstration Towns (CDT) programme which is described separately.

As with the CDT programme, the towns involved in the CCT programme were selected following a competition for funding, which was open to towns and cities of all sizes. The competition attracted substantial interest, with 74 local authorities submitting bids to join the programme. This high interest reflected the profile and success of phase 1 of the CDT programme. Towns were chosen on the basis of three principal characteristics: the ambition of their proposed programme to increase short urban trips by bike; the commitment and involvement of senior members and officers; and the commitment by the local authority to match-fund a Cycling England / DfT grant.

The towns and cities selected for the CCT programme were as follows:

- One large city, Greater Bristol
- Ten medium-sized towns: Blackpool, Cambridge, Chester, Colchester, Shrewsbury, Southend, Southport, Stoke-on-Trent, Woking and York
- One smaller town, Leighton Linlade.

Taken together, the 12 CCT towns and cities have a population of just under two million people.

The programmes implemented in the CCTs involved a comprehensive mixture of improvements in cycle infrastructure; development of town-wide signed networks of cycle routes; branding and marketing of those routes; work with employers, universities, schools and other organisations to help them encourage cycling and improve facilities for cycling at their premises; development of cycle hire schemes; and other activities.

All 12 towns and cities were actively supported by Cycling England, through strategic advice on the appropriate focus and emphasis for their cycling programmes; high-level engagement with council members and senior officers to ensure their programmes received strong internal political support; and specialist technical advice on cycling infrastructure, travel behaviour change and other matters. The towns also worked closely together, with regular opportunities to exchange experience through visits, skill-share events and 'cluster' meetings with other CCTs, and opportunities to learn from the earlier experience of the CDTs, which had been implementing programmes to increase cycling since 2005¹. In a number of respects, the collective effort of the CCTs and CDTs with Cycling England to explore how best to encourage cycling led to the development of new types of behaviour change intervention, such as bike hire schemes, workplace cycle challenges, and school-based cycling programmes, as well as development of good practice in the design and signage of cycle routes and other cycle infrastructure.

This detailed technical report on the monitoring of the CCT programme presents the evidence from a number of data-gathering exercises which took place during the CCT programme, led by Sustrans Research and Monitoring Unit.

The work undertaken to monitor cycling activity in the CCTs was able to build upon experience gained during the first phase of the CDT programme between 2005 and 2008. Taken together, these two programmes have been instrumental in helping to define suitable approaches to monitoring cycling at the town and city-wide level. This report and its companion volume for the Cycling Demonstration Towns represent the most complete and comprehensive assemblage of data on changes in cycling activity over time in a number of towns and cities across the UK. It is, however, important to note that there remain some evidence gaps which are not answered by monitoring data

¹ The 12 CCTs and six CDTs were divided into two geographical 'clusters' ('northern' and 'southern'), each of nine towns, which met on a regular basis to exchange experience. Some combined 'all town' meetings also took place.

such as this. For example, longitudinal data on travel behaviours and physical activity levels is required for robust assessment of the mode shift and physical activity impacts resulting from increased cycling; and counterfactual analysis is required to support claims of causality.

As well as providing evidence on the outcomes of the interventions in the CCTs, it is hoped that this report will provide a valuable point of reference for local authorities wishing to adopt good practice in the monitoring of cycling investment and activity.