

# Outcomes of the Cycling Demonstration Towns programme: monitoring project report

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## Introduction

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# 1 Introduction

The Cycling England / Department for Transport Cycling Demonstration Towns (CDT) programme ran from October 2005 to March 2011, in two phases (October 2005 to October 2008 and November 2008 to March 2011). The second phase of the CDT programme ran concurrently with the Cycling City and Towns Programme, which is described separately.

The towns involved in the CDT programme were selected following a competition for funding, which invited bids from medium-sized towns with a population of around 100,000. Thirty-one local authorities applied to join the programme, and 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 six towns selected for the (CDT) programme were Aylesbury, Brighton and Hove, Darlington, Derby, Exeter and Lancaster with Morecambe. These are all medium-sized towns with populations of between 65,000 and 250,000 people and, taken together, they have a population of 874,000 people. While most of the local authorities involved in the programme sought to encourage cycling on a town-wide basis, two towns, Brighton and Hove and Derby, focussed on just part of their population. In the case of Brighton and Hove the focus was on the western half of the city, while the focus in Derby was on children and young people.

The programmes implemented in the CDTs 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; and other activities.

All six towns 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 towns<sup>1</sup>. During the second phase of the CDT programme, the CDTs were able to share their own experience with the second wave of Cycling City and Towns. In a number of respects, the collective effort of the 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. A report on the principal outputs of the first phase of the CDT programme (*'Making a Cycling Town: a compilation of practitioners/ experiences from the Cycling Demonstration Towns programme'*) was published by Cycling England and the Department for Transport at the end of the first phase of the programme.

This detailed technical report on the monitoring of the CDT programme presents the evidence from a number of data-gathering exercises which took place during both phases of the CDT programme. It builds on evidence which was reported at the end of the first phase of the CDT programme (*'Cycling Demonstration Towns: Monitoring project report 2006 to 2009'*, and *'Cycling Demonstration Towns: Surveys of cycling and physical activity 2006 to 2009'*).

As noted in the *'Monitoring project report'* published at the end of phase 1 of the CDT programme, the work undertaken to monitor cycling activity in the Cycling Demonstration Towns has been

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<sup>1</sup> In the first phase of the CDT programme, all six CDTs were involved in a regular programme of site visits and meetings to exchange experience. During the second phase of the CDT programme, the CDTs joined with the 12 Cycling City and Towns to form two 'clusters' ('northern' and 'southern'), each of nine towns, which met on a regular basis, with some combined 'all town' meetings also taking place.

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 City and 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 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 CDTs, 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.