

Poster Presentation: A Plus in Quality of Life

2c: Promoting Cycling in the City of Cambridge, England

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Introduction

There is an existing strong cycling culture in Cambridge. Cycling levels are the highest in Britain, with 26% of residents cycling to work in the City compared to the national average of 3%. It might appear, therefore, that the promotion of cycling is not needed, but this is far from the case.

To minimise demand for car use, particularly in the historic core of the City there is a continuing need to encourage as much cycling as possible. Whilst physical measures to provide safe and convenient routes are important it is recognised that softer measures are also vital to:

- Promote the existing network
- Encourage and enable non-cyclists to try cycling
- Encourage and enable cyclists to make more of their journeys by bicycle

To share and take forward ideas on how to achieve these softer measures the Cycling and Walking Promotion group was set up 5 years ago consisting of Cambridge City and Cambridgeshire County Council officers, representatives from the Cambridge Cycling Campaign, the local police, Living Streets and the Travel for Work Partnership. Meetings occur around three times a year.

Cambridge is faced with a greater challenge due to the planned massive expansion of the city, largely around its periphery. This is likely to lead to a 40% increase in population in the Cambridge area by 2021, all of whom (with sufficient encouragement) are potential cyclists.

A transport strategy is being developed to deal with the projected growth. This is based on maximising the role of sustainable modes, including cycling. To achieve the objectives of the strategy, a doubling of current cycling numbers is required. This will be achieved partly by appropriate planning of development and the provision of new high quality cycling infrastructure. However as outlined above physical planning needs to be supported by the strong promotion of cycling, presently and into the future, to maintain the current "cycle city" culture.

This paper outlines some of the main promotional activities that Cambridge City Council has undertaken which aims to persuade more people to cycle, and to give support to those who chose to do so.

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1. Signing the Cambridge Cycle Network and producing a new cycle map

The city cycle network was last sign posted in the late 1980's using blue signs to direct cyclists to a set of destinations avoiding accident hotspots. Since then the cycle network has grown and continues to grow with new routes and links. Many of the original signs were dilapidated or had simply disappeared.

A Steering Group was set up to take forward a project to re-sign the city network and produce a new city cycle map. The Steering group was made up with officers from the City and County Councils and representatives from the Cambridge Cycling Campaign. The project progressed in three stages:

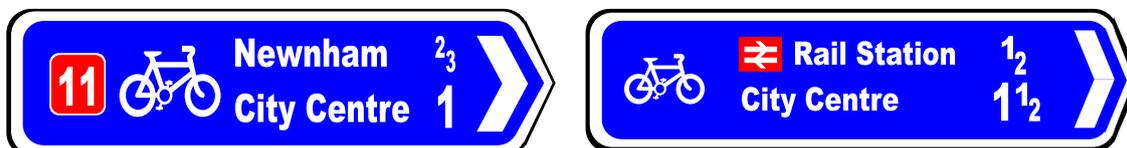
Stage 1

A set of principles were drawn up adopting a hierarchical system of signage with three strands:

- The National Cycle Network
- The primary network made up of strategic city-wide routes connecting the different areas/regions of the city
- Local links signing local destinations, highlighting useful cut-throughs and routes avoiding busy traffic and junctions, and filling in the gaps of the wider network

The group agreed a set of 13 destination points around the city identified by a familiar area name or particular focal point such as the Hospital or Railway Station. To ensure a comprehensive and continuous system of signage the principle was agreed that all primary network destinations should be signed from each destination point, unless the route was via the city centre.

The primary network signs have a blue background with distances shown in miles and the National Cycle Network number indicated where applicable.



Local link signs have a black background and show both the pedestrian and cycle symbols. Black signs have not been used elsewhere to depict cycle routes but it was felt that this would be a good way to both distinguish between local links and primary network and also promote these useful links to pedestrians.



Stage 2

The group then spent a great deal of time deciding which routes should be signed as the primary network. Directness, convenience and safety were felt to be the most important factors. Some of these routes were not of good quality but it was felt that these were the best routes between destinations and including the routes within the primary network would give them the necessary high priority for improvement. Local members were keen to reduce sign clutter so the long list of local links was reduced using the most useful links, such as to local community schools and hidden short cuts, which are often not know about by newcomers to the area.

Stage 3

The most recent city cycle map was designed in the early nineties and although it showed many useful routes, had poor colour contrasts, did not cover the whole city or surrounding villages and did not sufficiently

highlight a coherent network. The steering group agreed a set of design requirements and a consultant was employed to undertake the design work.

The new map:

- Illustrates the newly signed primary network with each destination point clearly marked
- Covers a wider geographical area, including the areas of proposed urban expansion
- Shows routes from the city out to the surrounding villages on the back of the city map
- Includes all the useful local links both signed and un-signed
- Clearly distinguishes between on and off-road routes
- Labels all roads and shows all open green spaces available to the public
- Marks the location of bike shops, large retail centres, secondary schools, colleges and main university buildings

The cycle map is free and an initial run of 10,000 was distributed to university colleges, bike shops, council offices and the Visitor Information Centre. The map was also advertised in local journals, in the Cambridge Cycle Campaign newsletter and on the Cambridge City Council web site where people can order the map for postal delivery. Cambridge City Council cycling officers also attended local public events to distribute and discuss the new cycle map with local people. People were also invited to make comments on the map, to inform on errors or omissions, which were rectified for a following print run of 25,000 maps. The map will be re-printed every one or two years and revised to reflect any changes to the network.

The response to the final version of the map has been very positive, as it has proved to be comprehensive, concise and user-friendly and can be viewed from the Cambridge City Council web site www.cambridge.gov.uk/cycling

2. The Cycle Trailer Tryout Scheme

As many people may give up cycling when they have young children the aim of the 'Cycle Trailer Tryout Scheme' is to give parents the opportunity to try out a cycle trailer for free before committing to the expense of buying their own trailer. The scheme encourages parents to purchase their own trailer increasing cycling levels and helping to tackle car congestion during the 'school run'.

How does it work?

Parents are encouraged to borrow a trailer for one week via participating Playgroups and Nurseries who join the scheme over a four-week period. Staffs are shown how to easily fix the trailers to a bike and are familiarised with the trailers before going through this process with each parent who borrows a trailer. Each time the trailers are returned staffs run through a checklist to ensure that they are still in a good working condition.

Parents borrowing a trailer are provided with a 'parent pack' containing a trailer manual, the Cambridge cycle map, safety information, a feedback form, and general cycling information.

The scheme has been running for two years and has had a very positive response from parents and staff. Feedback forms have been very positive as over half of the parents that used the scheme have or would consider purchasing their own trailer. This has included people that usually travel by car who have stated they would use the trailer for school and shopping trips on a regular basis.



3. The Pushchair Scheme

Increasingly more and more parents find it convenient to cycle into Cambridge City centre with their young children using child seats and trailers. However without a pushchair walking around can be quite difficult. In response to this need, Cambridge City Council has initiated the Pushchair Scheme. This scheme enables parents with young children to borrow a pushchair for free thereby helping them continue their journey once they have parked their cycles.

There are presently four pushchairs and each are available to borrow between 10am to 4pm seven days a week from Park Street indoor cycle park. Park Street Cycle Park is Britain's biggest free indoor cycle park providing space for over 200 cycles with CCTV coverage and attendants on duty all day until 8pm. Conveniently situated near the river, shops and the historic centre of Cambridge

The scheme is being promoted through local media including radio and journals, leaflets, posters that have been sent to local nurseries, cycle shops, libraries and displayed around the city of Cambridge. The scheme is also promoted on Cambridge City Council web site and on the local community web site 'we are all neighbours'.

The scheme has been running for seven months. Usage is increasing steadily and is currently about 4 times a week. Users of the scheme have all been very positive and the scheme has also generated good publicity for cycling in general and for the cycle park itself.

The feedback form question; 'Are you likely to cycle into town more often as a result of using the pushchair scheme'? Received the following positive responses:

- Yes! I am very happy to have this valuable and much needed service. It is a brilliant idea and very effective thus far.
- Thank you so much for thinking about mothers that try to cycle rather than drive. My daughter and I will be coming to town more often now.
- Definitely! It's a super idea. Its not being able to carry a pushchair on the bike that stopped me from doing so before.
- Definitely! Thank you, it is such a progressive scheme!
- Yes, I am more likely to cycle more into town (as an alternative to walking or bus)

These responses are very encouraging and with ongoing advertising for the scheme and with the scheme profile being highlighted by word of mouth it is anticipated the many more people will be encouraged to travel into Cambridge City centre with their children.



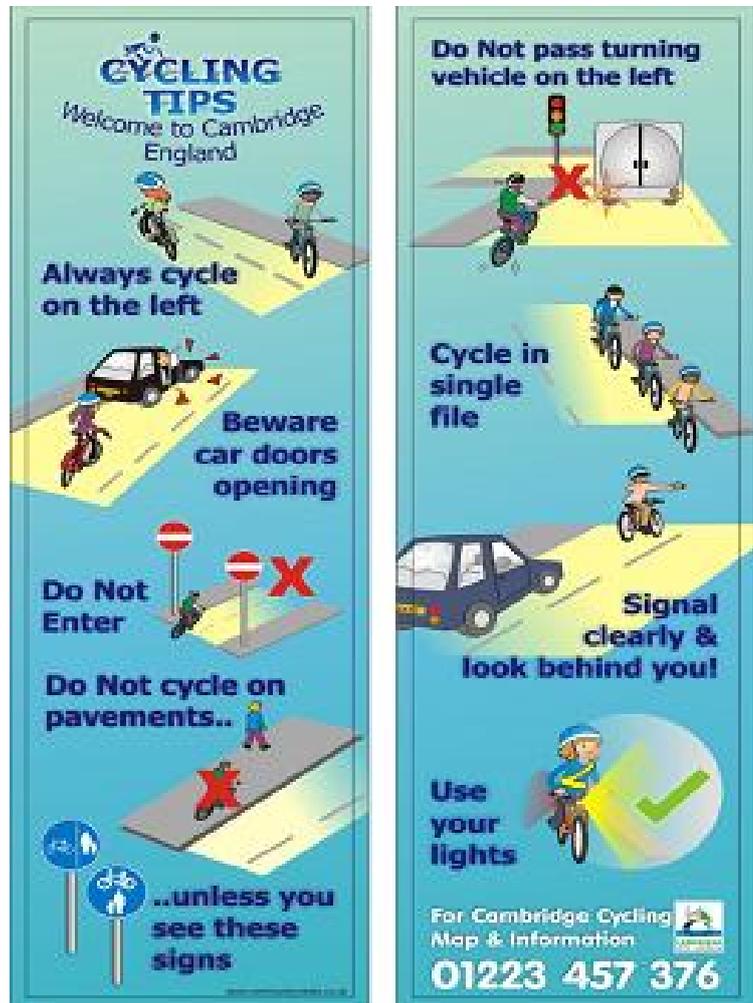
4. The 'Foreign Student Bookmark'

Around 20,000 foreign language students come to study in the city every year. Most soon realise that the easiest way of getting around the city is by bike and they often hire or sometimes buy a bicycle for the duration of their stay.

Many of these students have little experience of cycling in England and no understanding of many of the traffic signs they encounter. A police lead initiative delivers safety messages to students at many of the language schools but it was felt that something more specific and longer lasting was needed to promote and raise awareness of highway rules and safe cycling techniques.

It was decided that the best way to relay information was by incorporating cycling tips onto a bookmark that would be distributed to language students. It was felt that the bookmark would be a useful item to keep whereas a leaflet could easily be discarded. The information was designed to be more pictorial so that people with a less advanced knowledge of English could still interpret the information.

The bookmark has been distributed for free to the many language schools in Cambridge who have distributed the bookmark to their students who visit Cambridge from all over the world to study English. It was also distributed to the many cycle hire shops in Cambridge. The scheme is ongoing year by year and a new version of the bookmark is currently being adapted to target school children and will be distributed to local schools in Cambridge.



5. Adult Cycle Training

The Adult Cycle training scheme aims to give people the confidence and skills they need to cycle safely in traffic.

The scheme was originally set up in 2000, initiated through the Travel for Work Partnership (supported by Local Authorities, Local Primary Care Trusts, Cambridge University, Cambridge Cycling Campaign and the Chamber of Commerce) and is now run through Cambridgeshire County Council's Road Safety Team.

The scheme is aimed specifically at adults, aged 16 years and over. Training is offered on a 'one-to-one' basis, or in small groups, according to client requirements and follows national





cycle standards. Each session is tailored to individual needs and clients vary from complete beginners to those who feel a bit nervous about cycling in busy traffic and want to boost their confidence.

ACT trainers are experienced cyclists, who are used to cycling regularly, on the streets of Cambridge city. Each trainer is trained over four days to national standards by [Cycle training UK](#)

This scheme is particularly important when considering the number of new residents who will be coming to Cambridge as potential new cyclists. The aspiration is for future residential travel plans to include provision of free or discounted Adult Cycle Training funded through developer contributions.

6. Conclusion

A range of promotional measures, such as those outlined above are important in order to maintain the high level of cycling in Cambridge and encourage more people to take more trips by bicycle. It is vital that the new residents, who will be coming to live in the major urban expansions around the city, become part of the strong cycling culture of Cambridge. We will use the planning process as much as possible to fund the expansion of some of these schemes and ensure that everyone receives maps and information about all that is available to help them get on their bikes.