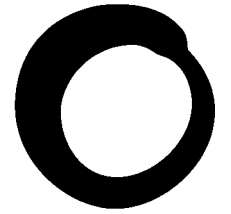


November 2011



**Friends of  
the Earth**

# Briefing

# Smarter Travel Choices

## Introduction

Local Transport Authorities recently published their Local Transport Plans (LTPs). It is a challenging time to be formulating long term local transport strategies.

Government Budget Cuts have hit many areas of Local Authority spending, including transport. It is clear that many big schemes designed to provide more transport capacity will be unaffordable for the foreseeable future.

What's needed are low cost, high value schemes that make best use of existing infrastructure, cut congestion and deliver health, community and environmental benefits.

Smarter Travel Choices (STC) programmes are cost-effective and successful methods of encouraging behaviour change towards low-carbon, healthier travel. By giving people access to good quality information and offering attractive travel alternatives, Smarter Travel Choices give people control over transport decisions that are better for themselves and for the environment.

However funding support for STCs in the Local Transport Plans published in April 2011 was poor.

This briefing shows why Smarter Travel Choices (STC) schemes must be a high priority for future Local Transport Plan funding. It looks at the success, benefits and exceptional value for money of the pilot schemes.

It also recommends next steps for Local Transport Authorities and the Government.

---

**Friends of the Earth inspires solutions to environmental problems, which make life better for people.**

**Friends of the Earth is:**

- the UK's most influential national environmental campaigning organisation**
- the most extensive environmental network in the world, with almost one million supporters across five continents and over 60 national organisations worldwide**
- a unique network of campaigning local groups, working in over 200 communities throughout England, Wales and Northern Ireland**
- dependent on individuals for over 90 per cent of its income.**

**To join or make a donation call us on 0800 581 051**

**Friends of the Earth, 26-28 Underwood Street, London N1 7JQ  
Tel: 020 7490 1555 Fax: 020 7490 0881 Website: [www.foe.co.uk](http://www.foe.co.uk)**

Friends of the Earth Limited company number 1012357

♻️ Printed on paper made from 100 per cent post-consumer waste

## 1. About Smarter Travel Choices

Smarter Travel Choices<sup>1</sup> (STC) is a generic term used for 'soft' measures to cut car traffic not involving the building of 'hard' new transport infrastructure. These measures largely involve education and promotion of existing alternatives to the car, however, targeted complementary infrastructure (like cycle lanes) can enhance and help 'lock in' the benefits.

Smarter Travel Choices measures include:

- School and workplace travel plans that encourage the use of 'greener' transport modes like walking, cycling and buses
- Personalised travel planning which engages with people at home to improve awareness of their travel options through tailored advice, information and incentives
- Cycle training
- Car clubs and car sharing schemes
- Tele-working, teleconferencing and home shopping

## 2. Smarter Choices programmes are effective

In the UK, the Department for Transport piloted Smarter Travel Choices in three 'Sustainable Travel Demonstration Towns' (STDT) Darlington, Peterborough and Worcester, between 2004-5 and 2008-9.<sup>2</sup> The results showed significant reductions in car trips and increases in green alternatives. See table below showing the scale of the shift.

Town	Darlington	Peterborough	Worcester
Cut in car driver trips	9%	9%	7%
Cycling Increase	113%	12%	19%
Walking Increase	14%	14%	12%

A successful pilot has also recently been completed in the London Borough of Sutton.<sup>3</sup>

## 3. Low cost and Value for Money

The five year duration STDT pilots cost £15million, £10million of which was provided by the DfT. The funding was split approximately 50% revenue and 50% capital. This equates to approximately £11 per resident per year. The cost per car km removed was approximately 4p. This represents exceptional value for money, a Benefit Cost ratio (BCR) of 4.5 for congestion only which would likely be doubled if health, consumer benefit and environmental benefits were also taken into account.<sup>4</sup>

## 4. Community, Environmental, Health and Business benefits

Smarter Travel Choices programmes have economic, social, and health benefits and help cut carbon.

- **Good for business:** Smarter Travel Choices help clear roads of unnecessary car trips. This is good for UK businesses, which lose £20 billion a year due to congestion.<sup>5</sup>
- **Better quality of life:** Quieter roads mean more pleasant neighbourhoods, with less air pollution, less time spent travelling and more social interaction. Residents on busy streets have less than one quarter the number of local friends compared to those living on quieter streets.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/sustainable/smarterchoices/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/sustainable/tp3planning/travelguide/sttresults/stt-table>

<sup>3</sup> See <http://www.smartertravelsutton.org/home>

<sup>4</sup> See page 8: <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/sustainable/smarterchoices/smarterchoiceprogrammes/pdf/summaryreport.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/sustainit/commuting-the-end-of-the-road-1605547.html>

<sup>6</sup> Living Streets, 'New Research shows that friendships on busy streets are cut by more than 75 per cent'  
: <http://www.livingstreets.org.uk/-/driven-to-excess>

- **Health benefits:** In addition to better air quality, health is directly affected by the increase in walking and cycling. In the Peterborough trial, there was an increase of 18 per cent of daily time spent in physically active forms of travel.<sup>7</sup>
- **Reducing carbon Emissions:** Road transport accounts for more than 50% of carbon emissions in some Local Council areas<sup>8</sup>. Friends of the Earth together and others are campaigning for Local Carbon Budgets to be introduced that will require all Local Councils to cut carbon emissions in their areas<sup>9</sup>. The Committee on Climate Change estimates that a national roll out of Smarter Travel Choices would save approximately 2.9MTCO<sub>2</sub> per annum. This is more than would be saved than if all UK domestic flights were stopped<sup>10</sup>.

## 5. Support for Smarter Travel Choices

**The Department for Transport**, Transport Minister Norman Baker said in the forward to the January 2011 Local Transport White Paper<sup>11</sup> *"It is the short distance trip where the biggest opportunity exists for people to make sustainable travel choices. Around two out of every 3 trips we make are less than 5 miles..., many of which could be easily cycled, walked or undertaken by public transport."*

The DfT has also published guidance and advice for Local Authorities to implement STC schemes<sup>12</sup> and, following campaigning by Friends of the Earth and others, introduced the £560million Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) to *"support packages of interventions that support economic growth & reduce carbon emissions.. as well as delivering cleaner environments, improved air quality, enhanced safety & reduced congestion"*

**The Conservatives**, Transport Minister Theresa Villiers said (while in opposition): *"I also recognise that greener cars and greener driving, on their own, aren't enough to deliver the carbon emission reductions we need which is why I believe so strongly in promoting the smarter choices agenda - to give people realistic and attractive alternatives to some of the many hours so many of us currently spend behind the wheel of a car."*<sup>13</sup>

**Labour**, Shadow Secretary of State for Transport Minister Maria Eagle in a statement to Friends of the Earth about the Sustainable Travel Town pilots said: *"The reality is that without sustained investment and the rolling out of these projects across the whole country, while continuing to support new greener car technologies, we will fail in the urgent task of tackling the contribution to climate change from transport."*

**The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence**, public health guidance on the prevention of cardiovascular disease: *"(Local Authorities Should) Apportion part of the local transport plan (LTP) block allocation to promote walking, cycling and other forms of travel that involve physical activity..."*<sup>14</sup>

**The Committee on Climate Change**, recommended a wider roll out of Smarter Travel Choices in its October 2009 report.<sup>15</sup> In January 2010, Chief Executive David Kennedy said: *"The Government should implement a phased national roll out of Smarter Travel Choices schemes across the UK"*

**The King Report to the Treasury on Low Carbon Cars**, recommended that *"all local authorities should ensure*

<sup>7</sup> Sustrans, 'Leading the way in travel behavior change' [http://www.sustrans.org.uk/assets/files/travelsmart/behaviour\\_change\\_ff36.pdf](http://www.sustrans.org.uk/assets/files/travelsmart/behaviour_change_ff36.pdf)

<sup>8</sup> See DECC breakdown by sector: [http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/statistics/climate\\_change/data/data.aspx](http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/statistics/climate_change/data/data.aspx)

<sup>9</sup> See: [http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefings/local\\_carbon\\_budgets.pdf](http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/briefings/local_carbon_budgets.pdf)

<sup>10</sup> CCC "Meeting Carbon Budgets ,July 2010" (page109 )

[http://downloads.theccc.org.uk/0610/pr\\_meeting\\_carbon\\_budgets\\_chapter4\\_progress\\_cutting\\_surface\\_transport\\_emissions.pdf](http://downloads.theccc.org.uk/0610/pr_meeting_carbon_budgets_chapter4_progress_cutting_surface_transport_emissions.pdf)

Domestic Aviation emissions were 2.2MTCO<sub>2</sub>eq in 2008, see:

[http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/statistics/climate\\_change/gg\\_emissions/uk\\_emissions/2008\\_final/2008\\_final.aspx](http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/statistics/climate_change/gg_emissions/uk_emissions/2008_final/2008_final.aspx)

<sup>11</sup> 'Creating Growth, Cutting carbon' Jan2011 <http://www2.dft.gov.uk/pgr/regional/sustainabletransport/pdf/whitepaper.pdf>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/sustainable/guidelocalauth/pdf/lowcarbontravel.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> Speech at IBM 9<sup>th</sup> February 2009

<sup>14</sup> Page 30 <http://www.nice.org.uk/nicemedia/live/13024/49273/49273.pdf>

<sup>15</sup> Committee on Climate Change, 'Meeting Carbon Budgets' Oct09, p227

<http://downloads.theccc.org.uk/docs/21667%20CCC%20Report%20Chapter%20to%20the%20end.pdf>

*that smarter choices are a priority in their local transport strategy*<sup>16</sup>

Smarter Travel Choices trials have proven popular with residents. Most people are concerned about traffic growth and support policies favouring public transport, walking and cycling above car travel.<sup>17</sup> Smarter Travel Choices empowers people to overcome a lack of information about alternatives to car travel and motivation to try them out, which are key barriers to change.<sup>18</sup> An evaluation of the London Borough of Sutton Smarter Travel scheme found that 81 per cent of people believed it was an appropriate investment for Sutton<sup>19</sup>, and that it was “popular and well received.”<sup>20</sup>

## 6. Progress in Rolling Out Smarter Travel Choices in Local Transport Plan 3s

Local Transport Plans were published by all LTAs in England (outside London) in April 2011. LTPs are the strategy documents where the roll out of Smarter Travel Choices schemes should have been confirmed. Unfortunately despite warm words about STCs in draft LTP3 documents<sup>21</sup>, levels of committed funding for these schemes in the final plans was extremely low. Recent analysis of a sample of the final LTPs by Halcrow for Friends of the Earth and Sustrans<sup>22</sup> found that LTAs were spending just 12% of the amount spent in the Sustainable Travel Towns pilot projects. Whilst the Local Sustainable Travel Fund (LSTF) is welcome and will help fill the gap by supporting some worthwhile Smarter Travel Choices initiatives, the Halcrow research shows it will in no way ensure the national roll out of these schemes that is needed.

## 7. Smarter Travel Choices: Next Steps for LTAs and the Government

Despite the failure of the LTP3 process to deliver a roll out of Smarter Travel Choices. LTAs still have the opportunity to prioritise funding for these schemes when they update their LTP implementation plans. The Government must also do much more to support and incentivise this roll out.

Friends of the Earth believes LTAs should, in the process of reviewing their LTP Local Implementation Plans:

- Prioritise funding for Smarter Travel Choice schemes
- Seek out appropriate partnership opportunities with business, statutory agencies like Health trusts and the third sector to help deliver STC packages in LTPs
- Ensure that LTPs contain appropriate complementary small capital schemes like 20mph speed limits, cycle parking and cycle priority that will further enhance the benefits of STC packages.

...and that the Government should:

- Double the LSTF to at least £1bn for the CSR period up to March 2015
- Work with the Committee on Climate Change to ensure that LTAs have the necessary resources, guidance and incentives to roll out STC schemes

## 8. Contact details

Richard Dyer, Friends of the Earth transport campaigner,  
Direct: 0113 389 9960, Mobile: 07940 850328,  
E-mail: [Richard.Dyer@foe.co.uk](mailto:Richard.Dyer@foe.co.uk)

<sup>16</sup> Pages 75-79 [http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/bud08\\_king\\_1080.pdf](http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/d/bud08_king_1080.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> Sustrans, 'Leading the way in travel behavior change' [http://www.sustrans.org.uk/assets/files/travelsmart/behaviour\\_change\\_ff36.pdf](http://www.sustrans.org.uk/assets/files/travelsmart/behaviour_change_ff36.pdf)

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Smarter Travel Sutton, 'Third Annual Report' 2010

[http://www.smartertravelsutton.org/uploads/documents/STS\\_thirdANNUALREPORT2010\\_V07.pdf](http://www.smartertravelsutton.org/uploads/documents/STS_thirdANNUALREPORT2010_V07.pdf)

<sup>20</sup> Smarter Travel Sutton 'Lessons Learned' Nov 2009, p10

<http://www.smartertravelsutton.org/uploads/documents/1STSLessonsLearnedFinal.pdf>

<sup>21</sup> FOE analysis of drafts, see 'STC Policies in LTP?': [http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/action\\_guides/ltp\\_spreadsheet.xls](http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/action_guides/ltp_spreadsheet.xls)

<sup>22</sup> [http://www.foe.co.uk/news/green\\_transport\\_32104.html](http://www.foe.co.uk/news/green_transport_32104.html)