

**West of England Partnership  
Joint Transport Executive Committee  
2 July 2010**

## **Cycling City**

### **Purpose of Report**

1. To report progress with the Cycling City project and some initial thinking about what next.

### **Background**

2. In June 2008 "Greater Bristol" was awarded status of Cycling City by Cycling England – a non-departmental body set up by DfT. Greater Bristol covers Bristol City Council and the area of South Gloucestershire bounded by the M4 and M5.
3. At £8 per head of population per year the total award to March 2011 is £11.4M matched by the two councils (and other local agencies) to create a total budget of £22.8M.
4. The Programme has been working on projects themed across three wide areas:
  - Engineering: Building new cycle paths and other infrastructure
  - Education: Working with schools and young people
  - Encouragement: Added incentives to get people cycling
5. These projects have combined to see the rate of growth in numbers cycling increase from 6.5% to 8.4% per year - or a 30% increase. More headline statistics follow.

### **Activity**

#### **Engineering**

6. Twenty-five cycle paths and routes have been built or upgraded in Bristol and South Gloucestershire.

In **Bristol** these routes have been designed to provide people with safe routes into the city centre.

In the south and west of the city these include:

- the Connect 2 Ashton sidings route (connecting the Ashton Court and the Bower Ashton campus with the Create Centre)
- Hartcliffe Way (providing links to the new developments at Hengrove Park and the Malago Greenway)
- the Whitchurch link, connecting Whitchurch with Brislington

In the north and east of the city these include:

- Improvements along three areas of the Bristol to Bath Railway Path
- Improving cycle access through Eastville Park

- Resurfacing and widening a formerly rough track from St Werburghs to Muller Road (North Bristol phases 1 and 2), which will eventually connect to Bristol Parkway station

On-road improvements also include a large areas of Inner Bristol's residential streets being designated as 20mph speed limit areas, and improvements for cyclists on the Greater Bristol Bus Network (GBBN) radial routes.

South Gloucestershire Council's completed cycling routes have focused on connecting major hubs in **South Gloucestershire**, such as the University of the West of England (UWE), Bristol Parkway Station, Filton Abbey Wood and Bradley Stoke.

Two routes from the north and east of UWE have been completed, helping up to 20,000 students make more journeys by bike.

Further routes have been built from Bradley Stoke to connect with Bristol Parkway, and Parkway to connect Filton Abbey Wood. This route will eventually connect with Bristol's North Bristol phase 3 route.

In addition, in both areas hundreds more public bicycle parking stands have been installed to give people safe places to park their bicycles.

A joint signing strategy has been developed.

### **Education: Working with schools and young people**

7. Projects in schools have shown some big successes, helping double the numbers of people cycling to school.

Over 10,000 children have received Bikeability training, providing children with the cycling skills they need to cycle safely and confidently on the roads. The Bike It project, in association with Sustrans, and Cycling England's Bike Club project are bringing added value to after-school cycling activities in 54 schools.

Also British Cycling's Go-Ride programme is giving school children in Bristol the chance to get into the sport of competitive cycling and CTC's Bike Club is looking at how to tackle disadvantaged young people using cycling as an engagement method.

### **Encouragement: Added incentives to get people cycling**

8. The Cycling City project has set up a number of projects to work with specific groups or overcome specific barriers.
  - Bike Back - a bicycle recycling project, in association with HMP Bristol, Life Cycle UK and the Sofa Project. This project will officially launch in September, although bikes will begin rolling out in August.
  - All Abilities cycling project - providing adapted bicycles and a safe 'playground' so disabled adults and children can learn, or re-learn to cycle. Bikes will be available by Summer 2010.

- Reducing accidents: Through a promotion campaign, joint work with the NHS and free promotional items we're helping cyclists make themselves seen and helping them to reduce accidents with others, including both motorists and pedestrians.
- Improving security: More new parking stands in well-lit, busy places, decoy bikes and sting operations (in association with the police), free security chips and a Bike Passport are all helping to combat bike theft.
- Cycle training: Heavily discounted training courses encourage non-cyclists to realise that our roads are safe places to ride and how they can get minimise the risks of having an accident.
- Business grants and roadshows: Getting more people cycling to work will be one of areas where we are seeing significant results. Funding to help businesses install bike parking and changing rooms and lunchtime cycle roadshows are all helping employees realise that cycling to work in Bristol and South Gloucestershire is so much more rewarding, not to mention cheaper and in many cases faster than driving. Loan bikes and free bike maintenance are also available through our roadshow team.
- Citywide events: As well as Bristol's Biggest Bike Ride we're also sponsoring the Watershed's Cyclescreen Film Festival and Bristol Cycle Festival and Carnival, plus we'll have a presence at hundreds more public and private events during 2010, talking to people about why they should take up cycling.
- Communicating news about all these projects, plus the great reasons to start cycling are central to our advertising and promotion campaigns. We're advertising in places across the city, plus we're talking daily with thousands of viewers through our website - [www.betterbybike.info](http://www.betterbybike.info) - and associated Facebook and Twitter accounts.
- Website has had 47,000 visits in the six months after its launch in November with 27,000 unique users. In the 12 months to May 2010 awareness of Cycling City grew from 7% to 22% of local residents.

## Achievements

9. This year thousands of people are realising that it really is Better By Bike. Some of the headline results we've seen in the last three months include:
  - The number of people cycling to work in Bristol has risen by 35%, from 6.5% in 2007 to 8.8% in 2009. Employers in Bristol's Green Commuter Club show 12% of people cycling - close to our 2020 target of 15% of people commuting by bike.
  - Over the two years since Cycling City started we have achieved 17% growth, which is a 30% increase in the growth rate compared with the previous 5 years' trend.
  - Over 17% of people cycle to work in Bristol's Ashley, Bishopston, Easton, Redland and Southville wards. *The fastest growing wards are Southville, Hillfields, Frome Vale, Cotham, Redland and Lockleaze.*

- Several key road bridges in the centre of Bristol saw 44% more cyclists during 2009.
- Recent cycle parking surveys in schools show that cycling numbers have already doubled in primary schools and are on track to double in all schools by 2011.
- Bristol: winner of the Cycling Plus award for the UK's best cycling city. [Cycling Plus magazine.
- "The UK holds up Bristol as a shining example when it comes to the numbers of riders, bike shops, traffic-free routes and low pollution levels" Cycling Plus editor Rob Spedding.

## Next Steps

10. There is a need to consider how to keep the momentum going - Cycling England research from the first 6 demonstration sites shows that overall cycling is affordable with good benefit/cost ratio. The key points from their evaluations to date are:

- The investment does make a difference - the 6 towns saw a reversal of the national downward trend
- More people were cycling, not just more trips by existing cyclists
- Surveys showed that physically inactive people were taking it up too, improving health (not just "brand switch" by active people)
- Investment in schools worked - Bikeability is making a difference especially when combined with a Bike it officer (more than doubling those who cycled at least once a week)
- Results not found in comparable towns
- The growth rate matched that in London where sustained investment is being made
- Investment pays back 3:1 based on DfT methods, and more if benefits are sustained (i.e. people keep cycling for 30 years they are 5 or 6:1). This is a conservative figure and does not include all the programme benefits

11. As a demonstration City we need to disseminate the learning and good practice across the West of England area and beyond.

12. Cycling City commissioned Arup to produce a vision by, with and from the Stakeholder Advisory Panel in order to enable a pro-active response to JTL3 consultation processes. Key initial messages from the Advisory Panel are:

- Continue to invest in Cycling over the next 15 years and at a suggested rate of £3 per head across the area
- focus a greater level of resources in 3-5 year phases on implementing an integrated approach in specific target areas to ensure returns that are greater than

the sum of the parts. Recommended level of resource would be similar to Cycling City's per capita allocation.

- select target areas based on obesity (as a health indicator), irregular cycling (ie wards where a high proportion of people cycle but only rarely)
- Total investment on the Cycling City area based on this approach is estimated at £3.5M per annum

13. An officer group from both Councils in the Cycling City area was tasked to produce a vision for the future with the key themes being:

- Developing a comprehensive **network of well signed** routes joining up the existing network, often through the use of "on quiet road routes" as an affordable approach
- **Links to other major transport initiatives**, e.g. work to remodel the City Centre through Rapid Transit, ongoing work with GBBN to improve conditions for cyclists, more use of 20mph limits and changes to the streetscape to "lock in" the benefits of slower speeds
- **Localised marketing** based in neighbourhoods where people will receive information and services targeted at their local area
- **Focus on life transitions** when people are most likely to set or break habits (for example when moving house, job or between educational establishments)
- **Develop a cycling culture** by further partnership work with Police (to promote a Respect for all road users approach), the Bristol Partnership (to build on the 20:20 vision) employers (to achieve active promotion of cycling in travel planning) and the NHS (to promote Active Travel and health referral pathways)
- **Ensure that JLTP3** is informed by the successes of Cycling City and can integrate cycling as part of an integrated transport system across the West of England area

## Recommendation

14. That Members note the progress made with the Cycling City project and give their views.

Officer presenting the report:

Ed Plowden, Cycling City Project Manager – joint appointment of Bristol City and South Gloucestershire Councils