

# **Celebrating Cycling: Lancaster and Morecambe Cycling Town**

## **1. Introduction**

The Lancaster and Morecambe Cycling Town project was primarily concerned with utility cycling, targeting the journey to work and school. Cycling England funding was split approximately 70:30 between infrastructure and smarter measures.

Our infrastructure programme has been concerned with 'filling in the missing links' to create a well connected, well signed, safe and user friendly network around the urban core of our district. A particular emphasis has been to improve accessibility and permeability of Lancaster City Centre and its notorious gyratory system.

The smarter measures programme has sought to work with key employers and schools to change travel behaviour. As well as offering a comprehensive training programme to equip beginners and enthusiasts alike with the right skills and confidence to cycle in the district. We have also carried out a comprehensive awareness raising programme to ensure that people think about cycling.

Our overall aim was that the bicycle becomes a normal, viable mode of transport for all journeys.

## **2. Programme delivery summary**

### **2.1 Infrastructure schemes**

The priority of the 2008/11 infrastructure programme was the city centre of Lancaster. Schemes were developed to overcome the barrier presented to cyclists by the gyratory system around the core area and to improve permeability and access into and across the pedestrian zone. Works completed includes 4 Contra flow cycle lanes, 3 Toucan crossings on cross town routes, 7 on road Cycle Lanes new or improved.

The commercial core of the city centre is pedestrianised with severe traffic restrictions, cycling has however now been introduced into approximately a third of the pedestrianised areas with cycling permitted at all times in both directions.

Perhaps the biggest intervention within the city centre, however, was the improvements to the Penny Street Bridge junction, the 'gateway' to the city approaching from the south. The project included 4 crossings upgraded to toucans, numerous cycle lanes with 3 advanced stop lines. It also added a number of new cycle links to the adjacent canal towpath cycle routes east and west, northbound links via Penny Street into the pedestrian zone and a link to the south into Ashton Road to take southbound cyclists away from the major traffic routes.

Completing missing links has been a further priority throughout the Cycling Town project and have been provided on St Georges Quay, Lancaster (2 schemes on NCN route 6), Church Walk, Morecambe (linking a High school to Morecambe town centre) and Morecambe Promenade to Hest Bank. The latter included a new Toucan crossing. Providing Toucan crossings has been a common theme throughout the project either by upgrading existing crossings or adding new at 12 further locations.

Providing new cycle routes or links into our key employment sites has continued to support the work being done by the Workplace Cycling Co-ordinator. Links have been provided at Lancaster University, The University of Cumbria and the Royal Lancaster Infirmary. Bike It Officers have also helped identify new routes to schools including Lancaster & Morecambe College of Further Education and Our Lady's Sports College, Lancaster.

Extending the on road cycle lane facilities and improving them by adding advanced stop lines has also been a common intervention with a further 18 ASL's being installed at major junctions in both Morecambe and Lancaster.

In total 5.4 km of new or improved cycle lanes have been provided throughout the district and almost 5 km of off road routes have been constructed.

### **2.2 Signage and cycle parking**

At the start of this programme, signage was limited and sporadic, and not particularly user friendly. Funding had previously been concentrated on providing new routes and links at the sacrifice of coherent meaningful

signage. The Cycling Town project has gone a long way to address this by providing bespoke, clear signage, with appropriate distances, at all key access points on and along the districts principal off road routes. These included the Lancaster to Morecambe Greenway (part NCN 69 - 5.25km), Canal Towpath (7km), River Lune Millennium Park (part NCN 69 - 8.3km) and Morecambe Promenade (7.3km) routes. In all 93 locations now have bespoke direction signs, these are complemented with standard direction signs to/from the nearby highway network.

The new coast to coast long distance cycle route (NCN 69) opened in September 2011; this is fully signed from the start point on Morecambe sea front promenade to the Lancashire/Yorkshire county boundary. This amounts to a further 19.6km of comprehensive directional signage.

New routes now include directional signage to compliment the existing cycle route network.

Between July 2008 and March 2011, a total of 1176 cycle parking spaces have been installed throughout Lancaster and Morecambe. This represents a 51% increase in the availability of cycle parking. The new spaces have been installed at schools (714 new spaces - courtesy of very successful Bike It officers), workplaces (60 new spaces), Universities (110 new spaces), Lancaster & Morecambe railway stations (32 new spaces), Lancaster city centre / pedestrian precinct (80 new spaces) and at numerous other private/public locations as and when requested e.g. Morecambe Football Club, allotments, churches, care homes, local businesses and other charitable organisations (180 new spaces).

### **2.3 Workplace engagement programmes**

Between July 2008 and March 2011, Lancaster with Morecambe Cycling Town engaged with 6 major employers in the District. All of the employers were public sector organisations reflecting the high level of public sector employment in the area. The workplace programme has been a key element of the Cycling Town programme and, following consultation with Cycling England, work was focused on a limited number of the largest employers in the District.

The workplaces were chosen based on number of employees, location on the existing and proposed cycle network, existing commitment to encouraging more people to cycle to work and support for a combined programme of cycle promotion from both senior management and a dedicated key contact. The workplaces where a dedicated individual has the responsibility for travel have without question enjoyed the benefits of the Cycling Town project to its full extent.

Since 2008 the key workplace programme in Lancaster and Morecambe has engaged with over 7,500 people, or 15% of the total District workforce. In addition to this focused work the project has also engaged with smaller workplaces through an annual workplace cycle challenge in 2009 and 2010 and ad-hoc support for cycle to work days. Since 2009 we have held three 'Breakfast on the Bridge' events on the Millennium Bridge in Lancaster, offering free breakfast to cycle commuters. Each event was themed, for example in September 2010 we gave away free lights and in March 2011 we helped Lancashire Police launch Operation Chainguard, an innovative project to reduce cycle crime in the District.

The workplace cycle challenge engaged with 34 businesses and 95 participants in 2009 whilst in 2010 this increased to 64 engaged businesses and 200 participants. The workplace cycle challenge was run on a budget of less than £500 in each year, making best use of free social media tools and a small number of high-value prizes, many of which were donated by local businesses.

Our key workplace programme has consisted of a range of support activities for the major employers including grants for cycle parking, maintenance workshops, employer-specific maps, bike breakfasts, bike loan scheme, cycle training, setting up of Bicycle User Groups, subsidising cycle equipment (locks and lights) and providing best practice advice, e.g. on implementation of Cycle to Work Scheme. On average we have worked with the employers to deliver 4 bike to work days per year as a minimum level of engagement.

Highlights of the workplace programme include assisting Lancaster University to launch Green Lancaster which is a volunteer organisation overseeing many of the Universities environmental projects. Green Lancaster sells new and reconditioned bikes (sourced from a local bike recycling charity) to both staff and students, a service which has proved incredibly popular. Their 'hub' on campus also sells essential cycle accessories at a significant discount and distributes advice and maps. The Cycling Town project assisted in purchasing high-viz vests for Green Lancaster in addition to paying for training for a number of volunteers. This work has been supported by a joint initiative between Lancaster University and the Cycling Town project to open a fully equipped cycle workshop on-site where cyclists can repair their own cycles.

The Cycling Town project started to work with University of Cumbria in 2009 with a very low level of cycling. Following a series of BUG's and Cycle to Work Days we quickly ascertained that there was a need for secure cycle parking and safer route into campus from staff and a lack of availability of affordable bikes for students.

Working closely with UoC and their Students' Union, the Cycling Town project increased secure cycle parking significantly on campus which saw an immediate and obvious rise in the number of cyclists on campus. UoC contributed towards a new cycle route into campus which has been well received whilst Vélocampus Cumbria has launched with 50 bikes available to hire for £35 per year.

Other initiatives with key workplaces include the opening of a Cycle Maintenance Workshop, new changing/shower facilities and the delivery of a dedicated cycle map for Lancaster and Morecambe College. Lancaster City Council purchased 12 pool bikes for staff to use for business and leisure use whilst the addition of three new secure cycle sheds at Lancaster and Morecambe Town Halls and White Lund Depot have helped to make commuting for business between the sites more attractive to staff.

The Cycling Town project provided a grant to Royal Lancaster Infirmary for secure cycle parking which was lacking prior to 2008 whilst a new cycle route into the rear of the hospital site has proved popular with both staff and school children cycling to a nearby school. The impact of the Cycle to Work bike purchase scheme should not be underestimated in increasing the number of people cycling to work, it has played a significant role in encouraging people to purchase a good quality cycle for commuting.

## **2.4 Events & Promotion**

Between July 2008 and March 2011 we organised a wide range of events designed to enhance awareness of cycling as well as activities for people to take part in, plus a number of promotional activities including:

- General awareness raising events included Party on the Prom (annually from 2007), Friday city centre roadshows, annual Bike Week activities, Bike Film Festival with local independent cinema (every March/April 2006 – 2010). We estimate that approximately 25,000 people have come into contact with the Celebrating Cycling project as a result of all the events we have organised.
- Women on Wheels rides: we ran 25 rides and a total of 252 women attended.
- Bus back advertising in the spring/summer 2009
- General promotional activities include the creation of stand alone website (Feb 2006) and an email bulletin which has c.1500 subscribers. Between July 2008 and December 2010 our website had over 254,600 individual visits (not hits) – with an average of c.9,800 per month.
- We produced 3 Celebrating Cycling supplements in the Council's magazine which is delivered to all households in the district (c.60,000).
- Other publications: New - City Coast & Countryside guide, Family Cycling guide and Cycling for All 2 route guide. Plus an annual events guide and updated cycling maps.

## **2.5 Cycle Training**

Cycle training has been a key element of our project. Equipping people of all ages, with the right skills, knowledge and confidence to get out on their bikes is key to getting more people cycling.

We have carried out a range of training for all ages and abilities. Child specific training is reported in the next section. Between July 2008 and March 2011 we carried out the following training:

- 429 people have attended a free bike maintenance course (including 124 at women only courses and 41 at local workplaces).
- 78 skills sessions at level 2 or 3 (including 55 level 3 sessions with Lancashire Police)
- 44 women only cycle skills sessions, 106 1-2-1 sessions and 3 Bike Buddy

## **2.7 Schools and young people**

From September 2008 1720 children have taken part in Bikeability training to level 2.

596 covered and 118 uncovered cycle spaces have been installed at Bike It schools; funding has been from the CDT project, from the schools Travel Plan grants and from Sustrans. Before Bike It there were 179 spaces in place in these schools of which only 32 were covered.

29 schools in total have engaged with Bike It and have benefitted from a varied programme of activities, tailored to meet the needs of each school. Most Primary schools have participated in cycle skills, Dr Bike, bike rides (for families and Bikeability pupils), Learn to Cycle (learning to ride without stabilisers), Wheely

Wednesdays, Action days, Cycle to school days with bike breakfasts, annual virtual bike races and maintenance and puncture repair classes. Individual projects that have worked well in selected (mostly Secondary) schools include bike loan schemes, a bike breakfast card, after school clubs, and self esteem sessions and rides for girls.

Bike Club was successfully established in Lancaster and Morecambe in September 2009 and has gone from strength. It has targeted hard to reach groups such as the economically disadvantaged, transient groups and young people with a disability.

At the time of writing, there are eleven Bike Clubs offering a wide range of activities to young people. These range from after school bike rides at Skerton High School to an innovative media based project at Ridge Community Centre, with Loyne School purchasing some adapted bikes for their disabled pupils and Bowerham Primary and Ryelands setting up clubs for their key stage 2 pupils. Ripley St Thomas has purchased a fleet of mountain bikes for their Duke of Edinburgh group. Morecambe Youth and Community Centre and Carnforth Youth Services both have exciting cycling projects planned for the summer.

We have also run holiday programmes for children, which have proved to be extremely popular. 670 children and young people have attended courses in Bikeability, Cycle Skills, Learn to Cycle and Bike Maintenance. With over 400 of these attending a Learn to Cycle course.

We have also run a number of children focused bike sessions alongside some of our events such as the Bike Film Festival and the 'On your Bike' cycling exhibition at the City Museum, where children could learn about bike maintenance and take part in arts and crafts. At a number of other open events (Party on the Prom, Bike It Picnic) we ran similar sessions such as dustcap and handlebar tassel making.

We have also supported our local Go Ride club 'Salt Ayre Cog Set' which meets every Saturday morning between March - October. There are regularly 70-80 children ages 6-18 turning up to improve their skills and make the most of the Salt Ayre cycling facilities. The group often organises trips such as mountain biking, bmx-ing and riding at the Manchester velodrome.

### 3. Expenditure

	DfT funding July 08 – March 11	Match Funding	TOTAL	Other Match
Capital	£1,200,319	£1,555,000	£2,755,319	£458,708
Revenue	£438,579	£140,497	£579,076	£36,600

### 4. Reflection

Reflections...

With regards the infrastructure programme the 'wish list' was always larger than the funding/time available therefore if schemes could not progress for whatever reason then there were always others that could be brought forward. Specific problems were encountered for instance with regards cycle routes on private land. In one example, at the Royal Lancaster Infirmary, negotiations to run a route through the site took over 3 years; however the route was finally completed in 2009 and has been deemed a success by all concerned. A similar route nearby through a private housing estate (Haverbreaks) has never been completed due to objections from a handful of residents following 3 or 4 years of negotiation, alternative routes have since been identified and implemented.

The most successful element of the programme has been having a co-ordinated capital and smarter measures project. Previously any network improvements were accompanied by little or no marketing and other activities such as training. The CDT project has allowed us to move away from the 'build it and they will come' model to one that means new cyclists can be encouraged to use infrastructure such as on road cycle lanes and ASLs by offering training, providing route maps and working with schools and employers to promote cycling.

Another successful element of the programme was providing support, staff time and funding, to the Bike It officers, this contributed to the installation of a substantial number of new secure cycle parking spaces (596 covered and 118 uncovered) to numerous schools around the district

The Workplace Cycling Co-ordinator was tasked with working with 5 or 6 key employers, the majority of these fully embraced the support, help and advice offered. Good examples include the Cycle Hire Scheme at the University of Cumbria now run by the Students Union and Lancaster University embracing and delivering on

its Travel Plan. On the other hand other employers were tougher nuts to crack, Lancaster City Council and Lancashire County Council in particular, it was assumed 'getting our own house in order' would be easy, it proved to be the contrary, however even the tough nuts can be cracked, some success has still been achieved within the City Council where provision of substantial (30 cycle) secure covered cycle parking shelters, although initially having little impact, but when combined with the newly introduced 'cycle to work scheme' (tax incentivised) is proving to be a considerable success, judging by the increasing number of staff bikes in the shelters.

It became clear quite early in the project that previous investment in cycling had delivered the easy, quick wins. Implementation of the 08/11 programme included cycle routes or interventions which were more difficult to not only obtain approval for but also more challenging to construct, for example working within the city centre on the busy gyratory system.

Insights...

Had we known in 2005 that the project would go beyond its original 3 years then we would have looked more seriously at creating a bigger cycling projects delivery team, particularly on the engineering/construction side of the project. It seems a common theme that cycling Towns have relied on a small number of dedicated officers.

Develop a robust workplan from community/stakeholder involvement early in the programme, ideally before award, to minimise lost time during the delivery phase where time is precious and consider the benefit of infrastructure interventions in relation to intended potential users to get the most out of the funding and follow up with targeted marketing to either geographical area or specific target audience.

Shout VERY LOUDLY about the project and in particular successful interventions or events whether it is in your own organisation or more widely in local press or media - the message cannot be hammered home or repeated enough. We still found that after 3 years of the Cycling Town project there were still people within our own organisation who were unaware of what we were doing.

Future...

With regards future funding we would continue to develop our cycling network as we believe there is still much more that could be done to make cycling safer and more visible and continue with the majority of the marketing and/or promotional activity. Identifying the right target market is important in this respect continuity of Bike It and Bikeability is crucial, maybe expanding this to secondary schools and higher education establishments would be beneficial.

## **5. Lessons learnt – case studies**

See attached three case studies of aspects of your programme where we have learnt a lot and would like to share with other local authorities.

- Vélocampus Cumbria
- Women On Wheels
- Morecambe promenade

## **Accompanying spreadsheet**

See attached spreadsheet template providing numerical information to accompany this report.

## **Accompanying map**

- See attached maps of the Lancaster & Morecambe District and the city centre which show:
- the infrastructure that was already in place at the start of this programme
- the infrastructure which you have provided or 'refreshed' (with both Cycling England funding and match sources) as a result of this programme
- the main routes and feeder routes that have been signed since June 2008
- significant landmarks which help to understand the end of programme report
- Key employers (UoC, LCC, RLI, PCT, LU, LMC), schools with improvements, Salt Ayre, city centre

## CASE STUDY ONE:

# vélocampuscumbria

## Vélocampus Cumbria

Vélocampus Cumbria is the all-encompassing name for a range of cycling interventions introduced at University of Cumbria's Lancaster Campus through a joint initiative with Lancaster and Morecambe Cycling Town (CT), University of Cumbria (UoC) and University of Cumbria Students' Union (UCSU). The main component of Vélocampus Cumbria is the student bike hire scheme introduced in March 2010. Other initiatives include provision of secure cycle parking, new signed routes through campus and regular promotional events.

Following a series of Bike to Campus days, feedback from students showed a lack of access to an affordable bike on campus was a problem in encouraging them to swap the car for a bike. UoC prioritised reducing car use due to parking issues on campus and in the immediate residential area around campus.

In late 2009 additional funding from Cycling England was allocated to the Vélocampus Cumbria project enabling the purchase of 50 new Trek urban bikes and a range of bike parking solutions. A significant discount was secured with a local bike shop to supply the cycles which were delivered for launch in March 2010. It was determined that as UoC did not have a permanent resource in Lancaster to administer the scheme that UCSU would operate the Scheme on a day-to-day basis.

The CT team and UoC representative travelled to Leeds University to look at their successful Vélocampus operation and decided to set up the Vélocampus Cumbria with only a few minor tweaks (based on a much smaller operation). We found this to be a very useful trip which helped to avoid some minor, but not immediately obvious, mistakes in setting up a bike hire scheme. Leeds University also helped us put together the documentation for this scheme.

In 2010 UoC were reportedly in financial difficulty resulting in redundancies which also affected UCSU, amongst other departments within the University. Morale on campus was low and cycling was not a priority for any of the parties involved. The CT team increased the support they could offer at this difficult time to launch the bike hire scheme and we were pleased to see over 25 of the bikes hired out in the first year.

Getting the branding right for the scheme was a key element of the project, from the style of bike through to bike shelter branding and social media promotion. The CT team were conscious not to allocate the entire budget to purchasing the bikes and have no resources to market the scheme intensively.

The bikes cost £35 per year to hire with a £100 refundable deposit, depending on the condition in which the bike is returned. Feedback from students suggests that the £100 deposit makes the scheme unattractive; this is currently under review by UCSU. As the cost of attending University increases in coming years we anticipate the level at which the refundable deposit is set to be a major factor in the ongoing success of the scheme.

Bike Hire Costs (excl. VAT):

50 x Trek 7.0FX plus mudguards – £11,500

Accessories (lights/locks/pumps/etc) - £1,300

Leaflet Printing - £200

Internal/External Banners/Shelter branding - £1,400

The future of Vélocampus Cumbria looks bright, it is likely that the refundable deposit will be lowered in the near future and UCSU support for the project has increased with an individual given sole responsibility for admin and promotion.

The bike hire scheme was complimented by highly visible additional secure cycle parking outside the main UoC building and student halls of residence, and new signed routes through campus.

## CASE STUDY TWO:



### Women on Wheels

The Women on Wheels (WoW) project aims to increase the number of women cycling in our district.

According to the 2001 census only 1.8% of women in the Lancaster District regularly cycle to work as opposed to 5.6% of men.

There are numerous reasons why fewer women than men choose to cycle therefore we undertook two surveys to try and find out about specific local barriers. We also organised a range of activities to encourage women at all levels to 'give it a go' in a friendly, supportive environment.

- In 2007 we started running monthly rides under the Women on Wheels banner. From July 2008 to March 2011 we ran 25 WoW rides and a total of 252 women attended.
- A survey carried out in 2008 showed that women are interested in cycling more:
  - Over a third classed themselves as not confident or unable to cycle
  - 79% had a bicycle
  - 40% cycled at least once a week, while 8% never cycled at all
  - 2% regularly take their children to school by bike and a further 9% would consider doing so
  - Almost 83% expressed an interest in cycling more
- As part of this project we have also offered the following activities:
  - Regular women only bike maintenance courses at beginner, intermediate and advanced levels
  - Skills training course for complete beginners and new cyclists as well as a follow on on-road course
  - Women's introduction to mountain biking courses (5 sessions with 35 women attending)
- We send out a regular WoW e-bulletin and in early 2009 produced a WoW newsletter, full of useful tips and information.

The success of the project has been partly down to just giving local women the opportunity to meet each other and take part in activities with other like minded women, without having to feel worried about just turning up.

## CASE STUDY THREE:



### Morecambe Promenade

The Prom was officially opened to cyclists in April 2007 with the repeal of a bylaw. The previous byelaws, which dated back to 1907, included no beating of carpets or provoking dogs to bark.

The Prom provides 8km of traffic free cycling with fantastic views across Morecambe Bay to the Lakeland Fells. The Morecambe Promenade Cycle Route won the Cycling Improvements category at the 2009 National Transport Awards.

Cycle flows have certainly increased along the prom. June 2008 saw an average of 291 cyclists a day, increasing to 376 in 2009 and 477 in 2010. Over the same period, monthly peak flow rose from 706 to 726 to 750 cyclists in one day. June to August 2010 saw over 37,000 trips recorded. This data refers to just one of the two counters.

The Prom is an important part of our cycle network. It is directly linked to the Lancaster – Morecambe Greenway, to the village of Heysham and since 2009, to the Lancaster Canal at Hest Bank – providing a 17 km circular off road route linking Lancaster, Morecambe and Hest Bank.

As well as being an important utility cycle route the Prom also offers cyclists and pedestrians a high quality environment. As part of the Tern Project there are artworks celebrating the area's birdlife and natural history and a statue of Eric Morecambe (see above left). The route also passes the Midland Hotel, a 1930s art deco hotel, recently reopened as the centrepiece of a major regeneration project – see right.

The Prom is now the starting point for the newest coast to coast route – the 170 mile Way of the Roses from Morecambe to Bridlington, which opened in September 2010.

#### Costs

Link from Hest Bank canal to Prom link (including toucan crossing) - £133,000

Works on Prom (statutory signage and link to Knowllys Road) - £87,500

Bespoke direction signage - £15,000