



**OFFICER REPORT TO LOCAL COMMITTEE
(WOKING)**

CYCLE WOKING - END OF PROGRAMME REPORT

12 OCTOBER 2011

SUMMARY

This report provides a summary of the Cycle Woking Project (July 2008 to March 2011). The full report can be viewed on line at <http://www.cyclewoking.org.uk/aboutus/projectreport>

1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Cycling England awarded Cycling Town status to Woking in July 2008 following a partnership bid by Surrey County Council and Woking Borough Council in March 2008.
- 1.2 The sustainable cycling town project has been delivered within Woking during the period July 2008 to March 2011, with the emphasis on connecting people with places, such as where they live to their place of work, school, shopping, leisure etc using sustainable modes of travel in walking and cycling and connecting to public transport for longer journeys.
- 1.3 The solution to increasing cycling (and walking) was utilising the areas compact size and proximity to its outlying residential areas that made it an attractive area to invest over the past two and half years.
- 1.4 The town centre and main railway station have provided the 'hub' to this project with the creation of safe, direct and convenient routes that have enabled many shorter journey's to be made by walking and cycling modes of travel.

2 ANALYSIS

- 2.1 26.31km of new off road cycle network has been constructed since the July 2008, with 12.9km along the Basingstoke Canal (*Saturn Trail*), this route being the 'jewel in the crown' of the rebranded network. This provided a 60% increase in dedicated cycle facilities since July 2008.
- 2.2 Although only 0.01km on new marked cycle lanes were installed, 12.34km of on road (signed only) routes were added, mainly on quiet roads.
- 2.3 The main emphasis for infrastructure of the Cycle Woking project was to join up and improve a fragmented 'Woking Cycle Network' and connect this with the residential and business areas using the most direct and convenient routes possible and to the town centre and to the busy Woking railway station, making this the 'hub' of the project. In addition, the creation of a good quality 'off road' east to west route making connections to the adjacent neighbourhoods and business areas along the way using the then narrow and dilapidated canal towpath.
- 2.4 Five new or improved signalised cycle crossing were added, allowing improved access across busy roads and joining up the network, four of these were in the town centre area. Three Advanced stop lines were also added.

Signage

- 2.5 The original fragmented Woking Cycle Network was numbered routes 1 to 10a and the Cycling Town project provided an opportunity to rebrand

an improved and extended network adopting the *Plant Trails* theme after H G Wells War of the Worlds, written and based in Woking. By the end of the programme 39.77km of routes had been signed, named after nine planets with key links to these named after the planets moons, such as *Mars and Phobos* (see map in Annex A for more details).

- 2.6 Times were used instead of distance on these signs based on a cycling speed of 9mph. This allowed for easy conversion for walkers who travel around 3mph, providing a time of 6 minutes for cyclists and 18 minutes for walkers. They also acted as a good promotion to drivers/passengers stuck in traffic queues, advertising the ease of access and time to places.

Cycle Parking

- 2.7 1155 new cycle spaces have been created across the town since July 2008, with 286 at schools, 237 at railway stations, 200 at workplaces and 166 in the town centre.
- 2.8 10 Lockers were installed at Woking High School for the staff, and a drying cabinet was installed benefitting around 40 cyclists and at Intec a shower was installed, again benefitting around 40 cyclists. This is an increase of 74% compared to the original pre-July 2008 cycle spaces town wide.

Workplace engagement programmes

- 2.9 Between 2008 and 2010 over 100 businesses across Surrey were engaged, of these 40 were based in Woking. Many of the workplaces within Woking were easily accessible from the major new and upgraded cycle infrastructure, and had received grants for upgrading their own facilities.

Neighbourhood engagement programmes

- 2.10 A joint project using social marketing techniques was undertaken with Change4Life in order to find out what families with young children felt about increasing their activity levels, primarily through cycling. The locally deprived area of Sheerwater was selected as the target area as it was known that residents here suffered many problems resulting from a number of factors including lack of exercise.
- 2.11 A project team was set up that included key individuals from Woking, in particular Sheerwater. A number of interviews took place with people from the local community together with two focus groups with local residents. The results of this and other research were drawn together within a scoping report that included a number of recommendations. The Go-Ride club and Sheerwater Youth Centre bike club form part of the recommendations.

- 2.12 Part of this project included running a pilot cycle training course for local Asian women. This provided useful insights on how training could be provided in the future, as this was another one of the recommendations included within the report.

Sheerwater Youth Centre Bike Club

- 2.13 Support was given to the local youth service in the setting up of a bike club for teenagers in the Sheerwater area that is now meeting on Thursday evenings. Storage containers were provided for bicycles and equipment and two Watt bikes purchased for indoor cycling events. Voluntary youth staff have attended cycle maintenance workshops and the CTC Bike Club is providing assistance as well as BMX bikes and equipment.

Sheerwater BMX/Skate Park

- 2.14 Woking Borough Council was able to construct a BMX/skate park within Sheerwater Recreation Ground. This provides ramps and platforms that people can practice their BMX skills and tricks. It opened November 2010 and is floodlit for evening use, especially during the winter months.

Events

- 2.15 Cycle Woking was 'launched' on the 22 September 2008, to coincide with European Car Free Day with an exhibition of the planned programme of works. At the same time the completion of the first phase of the Basingstoke Canal *Saturn Trail* was celebrated. It is estimated that over 500 people attended the 'launch' with widespread publicity on the local radio and in the local media.
- 2.16 As the cycle network was developed, evening led cycle rides were arranged allowing residents to choose around a 60 or 90-minute cycle rides that showed off the rebranded network. However, although the participating numbers were encouraging at the start the final ride was disappointing and being resource hungry these style of rides were transferred to the local Woking Cycle Users Group (Sunday rides).

Bike Breakfasts

- 2.17 Following the lifting of the ban on cycling within the town centre in April 2009, monthly Bike Breakfasts (7am to 9am) were arranged for the last Friday in every month (January to November 2010). These were very encouraging with the number of visitors to the stand peaking at 115 in May and November. A similar number of people cycled in but did not stop. In total 1,100 people attended the 11 bike breakfast events.
- 2.18 The Tour Series town centre cycle race series was held in Woking during June in 2009 and 2010. Attracting between 10,000 and 15,000 spectators each year many who walked or cycled to the event from around the area using the new network of routes.

2.19 Local people were involved in this event competing as teams in the schools or business races, including a race for disabled students.

Increasing Bike Availability

2.20 Cycle Woking was able to support this local enterprise close to Goldsworth Park that has been meeting once or twice a week. Local residents, especially older teenagers, are able to help with recycling and selling of bicycles as well as maintenance of their own bikes. A sum of money was put aside from the Cycle Woking budget in order to provide a permanent base with much needed storage space so that the scheme could expand its activities and have a more sustainable future. However, this was unable to proceed within the time frame of Cycle Woking.

Go-Ride

2.21 The Go-Ride coach has been providing regular coaching for 6 schools in Woking and continued to do so until July 2011. The coach has set up a Woking Go-Ride club that meets every two weeks at the Parkview Centre in Sheerwater and currently has a membership of between 20 and 30 children. The children take part in club events as well as competitions with other Go-Ride clubs in the area. A local cycling club, the Charlotteville Cycling Club, has recently taken over running of the Woking Go-Ride club that will hopefully ensure its long-term future. A permanent mountain bike course was constructed at one of the participating schools.

Railway Stations

2.22 The cycling town has four railway stations, Brookwood, Woking and West Byfleet on the Weymouth to London (Waterloo) main line and Worplesdon on the Portsmouth to London (Waterloo) line via Woking. All of these stations have benefited from cycle parking facilities during the project.

2.23 Brookwood has seen an increase of 20 covered spaces on the northside of the station and 40 uncovered spaces all on the 'up' platform. Brookwood can be reached by the *Saturn/Atlas Trails* and serves the western end of the district, including nearby villages within Surrey Heath and Guildford boroughs. All cycling parking facilities are covered by CCTV and lighting.

2.24 Woking railway station is very busy with 7.5 million passenger journeys per annum (2009). 50 covered spaces and 42 uncovered were installed on the south side (Oriental Road). The north side (town centre) has restricted space but cycle parking increases within the town of 166 spaces has benefited people using the station. A multi-storey 1,200 space 'Bike Hub' was planned at the railway station late in 2010/11, but technicalities prevented this installation. It is hoped that any future redevelopment proposals at the station will incorporate a similar scheme.

- 2.25 Woking station/town centre acts as the 'hub' of the walking and cycling network with many of the *trails* joining or passing through including, *Mars, Pluto, and Saturn*. The station serves the central part of the area.
- 2.26 Worplesdon station is located in a semi rural area to the south of Woking borough. Although this station is situated on a future planned route *Earth and Moon trails*, cycle parking was increased to cater for the growing needs of local commuters. It is likely that further increases at this station will be required as the *Earth trail* is constructed as part of the Hoe Valley residential development.

3 FINANCIAL

- 3.1 A total of £4,342,492 has been invested into cycling related activities within the area since July 2008 (note £846,000 of this total is being invested during 2011/12 as part of the match funding work). The original grant allocation was £1,8200,000 based on the Woking population of 91,000. However, this increased to £2,171,068 by March 2011 as a result of approved additional schemes.
- 3.2 'Match' funding has been obtained through a variety of sources, including County Council Local Transport Plan funding, Section 106 and S278 development related funding and new housing development infrastructure.

4 EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are none arising from this report.

5 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are none arising from this report.

6 CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The original cycle network was too disjointed to encourage a serious increase in cycling and although there had been a slow but steady increase the impact was minimal. The focused funding and learning from the six Cycle Demonstration Towns and with political backing enabled the project to move quickly ahead with infrastructure improvements, rebranding, soft measures including marketing / promotional work.
- 6.2 The completion of the Basingstoke Canal towpath saw a dramatic increase in cycling (between 75% and 213%) as well as walking (89%), enabling people to use these sustainable modes of travel for short journeys. This route connected to the places where people lived to the town centre and business centres.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT ITEM 4

- 6.3 Increasing cycle parking around the town and at railway stations has enabled people to cycle short journeys and lock their bike somewhere relatively safe, and coupled with the improved/new routes provides for the satisfactory whole journey effect.
- 6.4 Opening up the town centre to allow cycling, was a major step forward in connecting the network into and through the 'hub' of the town centre/ railway station.
- 6.5 Overall the programme was implemented as intended with a few exceptions.
- 6.6 A key disappointment was the lack of secondary schools reaching the target set of 15%. Whilst the reasons are now known for this, based on inaccurate hands up base survey data, the numbers of students riding to secondary school have not increased over the period. This could be due to that Bikeability Level 3 has a low uptake and is not taught until secondary school. A solution may be to train at level 3 in the summer term of the students' last non-secondary school year so that they ride the route to their chosen school.
- 6.7 **Three Key Insights**
- The creation and joining up of a good quality cycle network, avoiding busy / fast roads has assisted in the increase of cycling (and walking).
 - A well-signed network indicating how easy and quick it is to travel from place to place.
 - Good quality cycle parking at the destination.

7 WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

- 7.1 Subject agreement by this Local Committee, further funding for sustainable transport measures including walking and cycling will be implemented during 2011/12 to 2014/15.

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