

11 Cycling to Shops

Key Principle

A package of measures including infrastructure improvements (such as cycle parking) and marketing and information about local shopping facilities could be used to encourage cycling to the shops. Developers may wish to offer deals with local suppliers to encourage travel plan participants to use local shops. Home delivery offers retailers the opportunity to attract customers without cars to purchase items which can then be delivered later. This can also offer retailers the opportunity to hold bulk stock at a warehouse to minimise the town centre space they need to rent for retail premises.

Background

Travel to the shops and for personal business makes up nearly a third of all trips. Most of these trips are quite short, with an average distance of well under five miles. This suggests that there might be the potential for significant increases in cycling to be achieved through interventions that encouraged people to use their bikes for shopping trips (especially short trips to local shops for 'top-up' shopping) and trips to the hairdresser, post office and other personal business destinations. It is likely that a high proportion of traffic in many small towns and suburban areas consists of many short linked trips such as school-run, clinic, shops, etc, that could potentially transfer to the bicycle. Policies such as PPS1 Sustainable Development, and PPG 13 Transport, support the concept of mixed land-use to enable short trips by sustainable modes between residential development and retail and healthcare facilities (as well as education and employment).

Compared to the effort put into encouraging cycling to school and to work, little attention has as yet been focussed on how to encourage cycling to shops. Cycling England would like to encourage local authorities, town centre managers, retailers and others to develop pilot projects in this area.

Actions to encouraging cycling to the shops

Cycling to local shops and businesses might potentially be encouraged by:

- Signing of cycle routes to local shopping centres.
- Provision of cycle parking at the front entrance to stores.
- Clusters of cycle parking at regular intervals.
- Information about local shopping destinations that are easy to reach by bike. For example, brochures about 'Shops in your local area' are often offered to households as part of personalised travel planning programmes.
- Information to households about solutions to the problem of carrying shopping on a bike – for example, advice about panniers, cycle baskets and cycle trailers – as part of personalised travel planning programmes.
- Campaigns to encourage people to 'shop local' – as part of wider initiatives to support the local economy, for example.

- Drop-off points or lockers, so that shoppers can leave their purchases in a convenient location and pick them up by bike when they have finished shopping.
- Home delivery services which 'follow me home' – that is, allow you to choose the goods that you want and have them delivered to your home later.

These actions could be thought of as forming a 'local shopping centre travel plan' or a 'town centre travel plan' rather like school and workplace travel plans. Like all travel plans, they would require a strong champion in order to succeed.

Initiatives of this type will need to be 'sold' to local retailers, who commonly over-estimate the proportion of their trade that comes by car. A survey of how people travel to local shops could help to demonstrate that more shoppers already arrive by non-car modes than is assumed.

We would be interested to hear about interventions which have set out to encourage people to cycle for shopping and personal business trips.

Case Studies

Wheely Good Communities Trolley Dash

Using funding from the Lancaster Cycling Demonstration Town, this project aims to encourage people to get together to cycle to the shops as a social activity, a chance to meet for coffee at the same time as doing the shopping by bike. It is being trialled in South Lakeland in smaller villages on the Lancashire / Cumbria border and publicised via community newspapers, newsletters, notice boards and [websites](#) alongside other cycling and sustainable travel initiatives.