

Leicester City Council

# Bike Park Management Model

Final Report



November 2007

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## 1 Introduction

This report was prepared on behalf of the Cycling England Local Authority Professional Support Team by Alex Sully of Transport Initiatives. It follows a request from Leicester Council (LCC) for assistance in achieving;

- 🚲 Review and refurbish plan for existing Town Hall Bike Park
- 🚲 Partnership plan to develop De Montfort University & Train Bike Parks
- 🚲 Strategy to co-ordinate, manage & operate
- 🚲 Monitoring strategy
- 🚲 Identify additional match-funding

### 1.1 Background

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The Leicester Bike Park was opened in 1997. It was a DfT Cycle Challenge funded project and was created through the efforts of three partners: Leicester City Council, Environ (now Groundwork) and Alex Webster (now trading as Webster's Trading Ltd). Environ submitted the bid to DfT. The funding to match that provided by the DfT was assembled in the form of the City Council making available the premises and accepting a rent which was less than the market rate, Environ managing the project and Alex Webster contracting to paying rent for five years and undertaking the actual parking of the bicycles. The commercial operation was not the subject of any competitive procedure at the time of setting up the Bike Park.

Since the expiry of the initial five-year contract the lease has been renewed on a six monthly basis. The rent currently represents significantly less than the typical cost of renting a typical shop with similar floor space in the city centre. The City Council does not directly receive the income from the rent. This goes to Groundwork in return for the management and day to day maintenance of the Bike Park. Groundwork are also partners with the City Council in other cycle-related activities including a bicycle recycling project, so this should be viewed as supporting a broad range of activities rather than a loss of income. It is also likely that the improvement of the premises to a point where they would attract a full commercial rent would probably cost far more than upgrading them to enable the Bike Park to function more effectively.

The bike shop and workshop, cycle parking and associated separate male and female showers/changing rooms and lockers occupy a number of small rooms within the basement of the Grade II listed Leicester Town Hall. These are accessed by means of a door on the front of the building. This opens onto a short corridor. At the end of the corridor visitors are required to turn a right angled corner and proceed down a ramp to enter the shop which in turn leads on to the other rooms. The premises are cramped, appear awkward to use and some rooms suffer from damp.

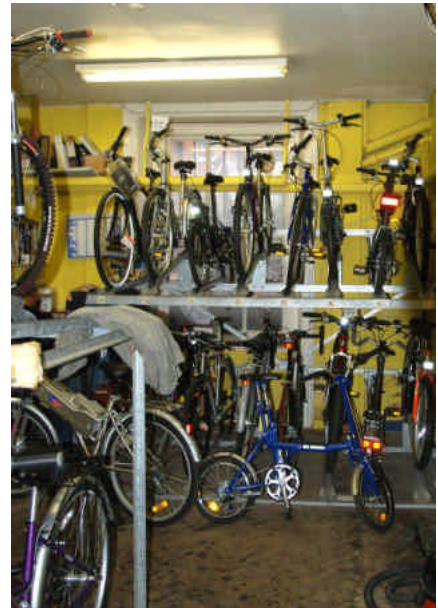


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The manner of the storage of bicycles and spare parts within the corridors and communal areas are unlikely to stand close scrutiny in terms of health and safety. Cycle repairs are currently being undertaken in the widest part of the corridor leading to the showers and lockers. This practice does, however, provide security as staff repairing bikes can see most of the premises from this point.

Despite being brightly painted, the décor and overall style of the operation may be acceptable to those happy to patronise it at present but they cannot be described as particularly attractive or conducive to the general promotion of cycling. Nevertheless there appears to be a regular turnover of customers for both the cycle shop and the cycle parking.

The number of parking spaces available is nominally 140; however, some of the parking spaces appear to be occupied by bicycles awaiting sale or repair. Parked bicycles are stored on two-level racks which require each bike stored on the upper level to be lifted bodily into place by shop's staff. Every customer for the parking facility is given a card with a number on it which corresponds to the parking space their bike occupies. This is handed back to shop staff when the bike is returned. Customers are not permitted to place or retrieve their own bikes.

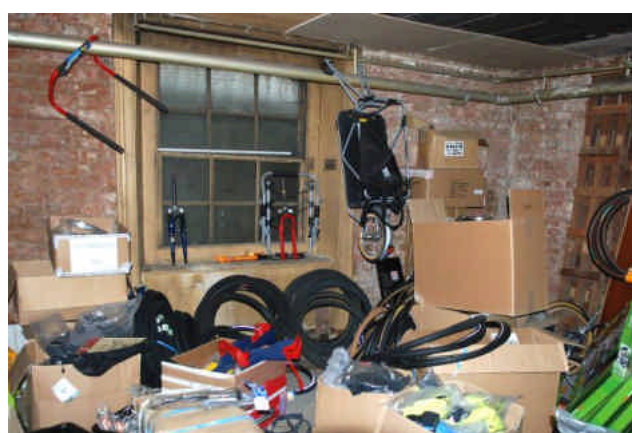


The lockers are sited in the corridor outside the shower rooms on the opposite side of the corridor. One of the rooms used to park/store bikes also contains a small amount of office space and a sink. Emergency exits are available in the form of connecting doors which lead to the remainder of the ground floor of the Town hall. These exits are not available to Bike Park Staff (usually 2-3) or customers at other times.





Rooms at the end of the corridor are currently used for general storage for the shop although it is understood that this is not their proper purpose. These rooms suffer particularly from damp coming through the basement walls and floors and much of the parquet flooring is loose. The ceilings also display evident signs of past water damage which has been the subject of rudimentary patched repairs and exposed pipework hangs from the walls just below the ceiling.



Work is in hand by the City Council to identify cost-effective solutions to these problems.

The bike park is open from 8:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Monday to Friday and 8:30am to 6:00pm on Saturday. It is understood that in the region of fifty bikes a day are stored at a rate of £1 per day (use of showers is free). This number can rise as high as 100 when the weather and other conditions are conducive to cycling however, it is felt that the numbers have fallen in recent months due to the major roadworks being undertaken in the city centre.

Apart from the till records there is no monitoring either of levels of parking or the length of time over which bikes are left. The same applies to details of those who leave their bikes, the frequency with which they use the facilities including use of the showers and lockers. For this reason no accurate picture of the success or otherwise of the parking operation and its profitability can be determined.

It is worth noting that Town Hall staff receive a 50% discount on the costs of parking but again, because of the lack of meaningful records, no evidence is available to test the attractiveness of this benefit.

It is also understood that when it first opened it was established that the Bike Park was more attractive to shoppers than commuters. The reason for this is believed to be because of the need to walk to the place of work rather than taking advantage of the door-door mobility that the bicycle offers: shoppers are not perceived to have such reservations, perhaps because they naturally visit more than one location having parked their bikes. Again the absence of monitoring means that it cannot be readily established that this is still the case.

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The above description should not be viewed as negative: what this picture does not do is adequately reflect the support that the Bike Park provides for those who cycle into the city centre. Of particular value is the level of service delivered by the shop which aims to repair bikes within a day so that cyclists may drop off their bikes in the morning and take them away suitably repaired in the evening: no other bicycle shop in the city aims to achieve this.

### Strengths and Weaknesses

A review of the Bike Park by the city Council revealed the following strengths and weaknesses:

Strengths	Comment
History	The bike park is perceived to be a success because of its longevity compared to others but the lack of adequate monitoring means that the financial case is not fully proven nor is the contribution that it makes to the encouragement of cycling adequately demonstrated.
Operational	The continued existence of the Bike park and the service it provides (both in terms of parking and the repair-during-stay approach) serves as an example to others
Approximately 50 bikes parked each day	<p>The income generation from this helps to contribute to the profitability of the shop and serves as a reminder that the encouragement of increased parking brings benefits to all partners.</p> <p>This figure is understood to be considerably lower than has been experienced in the past when the parking was at or close to capacity.</p> <p>The absence of accessible records means that this figure cannot be readily substantiated. This also applies to the suggestion that levels are falling off (due to the on-going major city centre roadworks). Records, in the form of till records for each £1 taken, are held but not made available to the City Council on a regular basis</p>
Location	The Bike park is certainly well located but the absence of records of users means that it cannot be established to whom the location is most attractive both in terms of shoppers or commuters and in relation to the direction they have come.
Partnership	<p>The Bike Park stands as on-going example of partnership working: Websters manages to day-to-day parking of the bicycles, Environ manages and maintains the Bike Park and the City Council supports it financially.</p> <p>The effectiveness of the partnership cannot, however, be readily assessed without 'open-book' accounting to demonstrate the relative value, and value for money, of each contribution.</p>

Weaknesses	Comment
Out of lease	It appears timely to draw up a new lease with suitable requirements covering such things as opening hours, monitoring of use etc
No monitoring	Monitoring is essential to understand the nature of the use and the value of further support by the City Council
Limited opening hours	See reference to new lease above – extending hours may have an adverse impact on profitability i.e. staff costs verses likely income generated
Not integrated with bike promotions	A clear way to increase patronage: targeting the right audience depends upon understanding who it is most attractive to and why – another reason for monitoring use
Not clear to users what it is	<p>It appears well 'branded' but its purpose may not be clear to all.</p> <p>Obvious links to need for improved marketing backed up by direction signs that lead potential users to the facility.</p>
Awkward lay out – Grade II listed building	<p>The layout places constraints on both use and security. Better use could be made of rooms currently employed as storage areas but issues arise concerning users parking their own bikes, the ability to remove someone else's bike or components and health and safety problems resulting from the need to lift bikes onto the racks.</p> <p>If shop staff continue to park the bikes, this potentially limits the use of smart cards or similar as a way of monitoring use unless example from Middlesbrough is followed with users joining a club and being issued with a smart card that is 'swiped' every time their bike is parked. One solution could be the use of a 'dub' with the incentive of discounted parking for members – this does not address the issue of 'drop-ins'.</p> <p>Websters are looking into suggestions about how best to revise layout.</p>
Damp	Investigations are underway to find cost effective solutions
Ugly decor	The current décor is some way short of a normal smart shop front but raising the standard will require funding.
No on-going management	A serious shortcoming if a case is to be made for further investment and needs to be tied in with monitoring and evolving a suitable model for transfer to other sites in the City.
Need for clear value for money	Not achievable, or at least not demonstrable, without transparent monitoring, management, and accounting procedures.
Non-transparent finances	Need for 'open-book' accounting by partners – this should not be seen as a threat to shop operator as limited company finances are already available to the public.

## 2 Recommendations

The following recommendations are made in response to the items identified at the beginning of the Introduction:

### 2.1 Review and refurbish plan for existing Town Hall Bike Park

The Bike Park could clearly do with a 'makeover'. Key to this is first determining how best to make the most effective use of the space available and hence those rooms that need to be the subject of damp treatment, repainting etc. Using the currently poorly used store rooms for cycle parking and for more effective storage of stock would add clear benefits but these need to be determined in the context of:

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🚲 Improving the ramp access</li> </ul>  | <p>Any changes to the ramp will have an impact on the shop area</p>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🚲 Potential security issues when bikes are parked by shop staff,</li> </ul>   | <p>These could be addressed by the introduction of CCTV (place monitors near parking), introducing a practice of always having two members of staff present at all times and when this is not possible using, as far as possible, the parking spaces that do allow the shop to be overlooked. Given that some of the existing parking spaces are already out of sight of the shop this may not be a significant problem.</p>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🚲 The possibility of introducing customer-parking with smart card recording of coming and going plus the desire to achieve a cost effective monitoring regimes based on smart cards or similar</li> </ul> | <p>This may be difficult to achieve with the current layout. The use of 'club' membership with discounted parking for those who sign up with the card as proof of membership. This could be 'swiped every time a bike is parked and so keep a more robust record of who is using the parking, for how long and their likely trip origin. Any difficulties with the need to comply with the Data Protection Act can probably be overcome by getting those joining the 'club' to agree that the records may be used in a non-attributable way to analyse the nature of use (c.f. using post codes to identify travel to school catchments and travel patterns).</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🚲 Difficulties of manoeuvring bikes into place</li> </ul>   | <p>These fears should be tested in practice, including those concerning the need to wheel bikes past the showers/lockers. The removal of partition walls and some doors (where not required for fire safety purposes) may help as would a practice of keeping the corridors free of shop stock and other obstructions.</p>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🚲 The need to wheel bikes past the changing/showers and locker areas.</li> </ul>  | <p>This is not seen as a major issue since bike and other materials appear to be regularly stored in this corridor and their removal would both remove much of the potential for conflict and the attendant health and safety hazard.</p>   |

It is considered that the majority of the above issues that relate to the manoeuvring of bikes are best addressed by testing on site. It is acknowledged that there may be difficulties in accommodating the likes of tandems or buggies but based on the current



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layout it is not evident how these are accommodated at present. It may, however, be possible to make space in those rooms used for parking closest to the shop area which have minimum access challenges.

In support of the intended refurbishment it is recommended that a programme of publicity be used to draw attention to the Bike Park and if appropriate (i.e. not already in existence), road signs be erected to direct potential users to the facility.

## 2.2 Partnership plan to develop De Montfort University & Station Bike Parks

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### University

In the absence of past monitoring which would allow the building of a business case for additional bike parks it is recommended that the university be supported in its proposal to cover its existing cycle parking throughout the campus. This simple act should encourage more students to cycle as their bikes will be protected from the elements. As the number of cyclists grows, this should make the future provision of a bike park on the campus more viable.

It is understood that the provision of managed secure cycle parking will be a condition of future developments within the campus. It is recommended that in the time between now and when this is built, a management plan be drawn up in the light of the experience of running the Bike Park. This management plan should be influenced by an 'open book' accounting process and full monitoring procedures (see below).

### Railway Station

Proposed commercial and residential development in the vicinity of the railway station will provide opportunities for the provision of a managed secure bicycle parking facility. This could take the form of premises provided as part of the development or contributions to cycle parking provided by others in the vicinity.

As an alternative, in exploring options it is recommended that the use of the existing pedestrian underpass be considered after it has become redundant once surface crossings for pedestrians are provided at this point. This approach could create a useful facility on land within the control of the City Council as Highway Authority which is not dependant on space being made available by developers.

It might also be helpful in this respect to examine the possibility of following the example of a new project recently opened in Russell Square, London and entering into a contract with a cycle parking provider that can provide a package to install parking equipment, operate it and maintain it. This scheme uses the same electronically controlled parking equipment as that used at Finsbury Park (see page 13) details as follows:

- Investment returned in three years (capital recovery plus labour, IT requirements, BT lines etc.)
- The developer was already providing cycle security within a car park but just Sheffield stands. The introduction of the new system brought a lot of extra customers and revenue.
- The actual car park is already manned 24 hours so operators have accounted for 10% of 2 attendant's time for the first 3 to 6 months and after that the percentage will be reduced to somewhere between 3% to 5%.

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- There are 42 electronically controlled parking stands installed and operators have already pre-sold 35 for a year. There are also regular daily users.
- This location is a proven success.

More information may be had from Sekura-Byk at <http://www.sekura-byk.co.uk/pls.htm>

## 2.3 Strategy to co-ordinate, manage & operate

### Management Plan

It is regretted that no models for the running of a managed secure bicycle parking facility have been found within the UK. It is nevertheless recommended that the renewal of the lease of the existing Bike Park should be conditional on the drawing up of a management plan to cover:

Elements	Comment
'Open book' accounts of the operation of the bike shop to include details of the income generated by the cycle parking operation and amounts of third party grants	There is bound to be some sensitivity to this element but handled correctly commercially sensitive information should not become available to others. Much of this information would in any event be available by inspection of the end of year accounts submitted to Companies House in the case of a limited company. If a fixed rent is agreed for the term of the lease (if necessary with clauses that allow for increases linked to inflation etc.) then any reluctance to reveal this information would be offset by the security provided by the fixed terms of the lease.  It is not suggested that this information enter the public realm but that it be available to the City Council in order to understand the business case for future.
Partners' contributions and responsibilities	This would aid transparency e.g. who is responsible for day to day maintenance of the shop and facilities, likewise the structural condition of the premises
Frequency of management meetings and reporting responsibilities	Self explanatory
On-going programme seeking partners and additional funding	The ability of partners to contribute can fluctuate so it would be beneficial to continually seek to identify potential partners to cover eventuality of existing ones not being able to continue in current form
Timetable for improvements such as upgrading of showers, revision of ramp, remedial measures to tackle damp, introduction of cycle hire etc	Self explanatory
Service level agreements regarding opening hours, use of premises, monitoring procedures, reporting of levels of use, maintenance of facilities, health and safety etc	These need not be onerous requirements merely a recording of what is expected

Marketing plan to include relationship to other cycle-related activities in the City	Self explanatory
Statement of intention regarding expanding social inclusion activities such as training and other social inclusion projects	Self explanatory
Liaison with other authorities seeking to promote similar cycle parking projects	E.g. Bristol and Cambridge City Councils
Monitoring Strategy and responsibilities for collecting information	See below
Roles of Travel Plan Coordinator and Management body	A clear statement of the roles and responsibilities of all parties will aid management from the outset. Note travel plan coordinators may be appointed as part of individual projects and management bodies may include local (travel plan) trusts or residents management committees etc.

## 2.4 Monitoring strategy

The monitoring strategy should seek to collect and analyse data in respect of the following:

- 🚲 Trip origin of users;
- 🚲 Purpose of trip;
- 🚲 Times of arrival and departure;
- 🚲 Length of stay;
- 🚲 Overall levels of occupancy by weekday, week, month and year;
- 🚲 Use of showers and lockers by the same parameters;
- 🚲 Levels of income by the same parameters;
- 🚲 Levels of user satisfaction; and
- 🚲 Trends for the above

The monitoring strategy should also set out the means by which this information should be collected e.g. ‘club’ membership using smart cards swiped each time facility used plus another means for ‘drop-ins’ and other non-regular users: collection to also include interview surveys or questionnaires to gauge levels of satisfaction.

## 2.5 Identify additional match-funding

Potential sources of match funding include:

- 🚲 Premises rental
- 🚲 Parking income
- 🚲 Hire of bicycles

## Professional Support Service

- 🚲 Activities such as coffee shop
- 🚲 Shop mobility funding (assumes bike park also provides service)
- 🚲 Social inclusion projects
- 🚲 Section 106 agreements resulting from development proposals
- 🚲 Lottery grant aid
- 🚲 For others see Cycle Projects Funding Spreadsheet at <http://www.cyclingengland.co.uk/engineering.php>

## 2.6 Local policy documents

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“A robust policy framework is important in supporting negotiations to secure residential travel plans” *Making Residential travel Plans Work* DfT 2005. Although advice was not sought on how to address the issue of more bike parks within local policies it is recommended that the Cycling Strategy and, if necessary, the Local Plan and emerging Local Development Framework should reflect this as a firm intention. In this way it can be more readily demonstrated that seeking contributions towards this goal are ‘reasonable’ if challenged by developers.

It is further recommended that every effort is made to ensure the Leicester Regeneration Company also supports this intention.

## 2.7 Valuation of the existing Bike Park premises

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In the section on ‘Background’ earlier in this document it was stated that the rent of the existing Bike Park does not currently match that likely to be available if compared with other city centre premises. However, it is considered likely that the listed building status of the premises, the limited ‘shop window’ availability in the corner of the building and the potential for disability discrimination access difficulties may well limit the potential for alterations. This in turn could have an adverse impact on the ability to introduce other commercial activities and hence reduce the potential value. It is therefore suggested that if achieving a market rate for the rent of the premises becomes an issue then a business case be drawn up to consider these issues so that a more robust valuation can be established. This business case could also consider the costs of physically improving the premises to a suitable standard to enable normal city-centre commercial activity.

### 3 Other cycle centres (past and present)

In order to advise on the creation of a successful model that could be introduced to achieve the creation of other bike parks throughout the city the operation of other similar facilities was investigated. Much of what follows is largely anecdotal evidence and cannot, therefore, be relied on as being wholly accurate; it nevertheless gives an impression of how similar projects have fared in the past. Other bike parks may be in operation - see also Traffic Advisory leaflet 5/98 *Cycle Centres*, DfT 1998.

#### 3.1 A review of other bike parks elsewhere in England

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##### Hull

Pop group The Beautiful South (from Hull) set up a bike park in Hull. They leased a property in a good location in the city centre with a high commercial rent and employed some of their friends to run it. They were adamant they wanted to run it as a commercial concern (i.e. no charitable status), but this meant that the Council were not able to offer any concessions, rate relief etc. They are understood to have invested a lot of money in it. Apparently, they used to all bike into Hull on a Saturday when they were young, and thought it would be great to put something back into the city in the form of a cycle park / shop. They soon found out that the revenue from parking bikes was not going to cover their costs. Apparently, it started small but the parking element of it grew well, until they were taking about 120 bikes a day and running out of space but it still wasn't paying. They built up the shop part and carried out servicing etc. but after about 3 years it is reported that they were still making a considerable loss so the shop eventually closed and with it the parking. Since the shop/parking was a wholly commercial and private enterprise, there were limits on what the local authority could do to help it along. Because of this, support was confined to signing the cycle park well and promoting it on the cycle map, tourist information etc.

It is also reported that, as part of their attempts to make the shop pay, The Beautiful South tried buying lots of high value bikes as well as more everyday items, but ultimately they couldn't compete with specialist suppliers and the other well established retailers in the city.

##### Liverpool

The Bike Park in Liverpool was set up in the late nineties. The promoter invested a lot of money to create an eco-friendly building renovation and so from the start the business had a lot of debt to service. In addition to the expected features it was accompanied by a café and cycle gymnasium. It is understood that the cycle parking side of the business never really took off as it was too far from the rail station (12 minutes walk) and the core part of the city centre. It is believed to have closed in 1999.

##### Taunton

Like Leicester's Bike Park, Taunton's was part funded by the then DETR's 'Cycle Challenge' programme and created through a partnership between a local cycle group and the local district council (not the highway authority) with match funding coming in the form of the district council creating a purpose built bike park on land it already owned. It opened in 1997. Sited a little too far from the town centre to attract a high level of use, from the outset it was reliant on the presence of a commercial shop operating on the premises and providing the labour to park the bicycles. Once this no longer proved to be an attractive commercial proposition it closed.

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### Middlesbrough

The Middlesbrough Cycle Centre is operated by a registered charity Middlesbrough Environment City with funding from a variety of sources including Sport England, Middlesbrough Council, Seed Programme (part of the New Opportunities Lottery Fund), Northern Rock Foundation and the Neighbourhood Renewal fund. There is provision for parking up to 54 bicycle indoors and a further 24 outdoors. The latter are covered by CCTV. 70 – 80 bikes are parked each week and parking is free to members (also free) who are issued with a smart card that gives access to the parking, shower and locker facilities. The Centre also serves as a cycling information centre and as a base for training courses in bicycle maintenance and safety as part of the Open College Network.

See: [www.middlesbroughcyclecentre.co.uk](http://www.middlesbroughcyclecentre.co.uk)

### Bristol

Benefiting from Cycle Challenge funding, the Mud Dock at Bristol combines a café, bike sales and workshop and cycle parking (the Bike Shed). Up to 50 bicycles can be parked and opening hours are 7:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Monday to Friday and 8:30 to 6:00 on Saturday. The range of cost options for parking, showers and locker use, together with more details, can be found on the web site at: [www.mud-dock.co.uk](http://www.mud-dock.co.uk)



Bristol City Council is currently actively pursuing the provision of a 'Cycle Resource Centre' combining Shop Mobility facilities and a retail bike shop (to include maintenance) with cycle parking and showers as part of the re-development of the Broadmead shopping centre. The business case benefits from the fact that the City Council owns the site and a condition of development includes the requirement to provide the Shop Mobility service.

### Cambridge (Cambridge City Council)

The park Street Cycle Park is described as being "Britain's biggest free indoor cycle park". Located close to the centre of Cambridge on the ground floor of a multi-storey car park, in addition to providing secure covered parking spaces for over 200 cycles, it features lockers, CCTV coverage and attendants on site all day until 8p.m. The lockers can be hired for monthly period for £10 but also includes the opportunity for visiting/touring cyclists to park for just one day in a number of coin operated lockers. This is considered to be valuable as it affords the opportunity to leave a bike and belongings while the city is explored on foot. It is also understood to be unique in that it also includes a free pushchair loan scheme for parents who have cycled to the bike park with young children.



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Lessons learned from this project include the need for publicity (the bike park is on the edge of the city centre's main core) and that usage can take some time to pick up (a lot of on-street parking is available throughout the city).

Cambridge City Council is currently pursuing the provision of two further, managed, bike parks delivered through developer funding as the result of new retail development.

See: [www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/content/lape/park-street-cycle-park.en](http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/content/lape/park-street-cycle-park.en)

## Cambridge – Cambridge Station Cycles

As the name suggests, Cambridge Station Cycles operates a bike shop at the railway station in Cambridge. There are high levels of cycling within the city and a great many bikes are regularly parked in the public spaces in front of the station entrance. The business runs a large shop offering a range of bicycle types, including Dutch 'sit up and beg' styles. Roughly 100 bikes are parked each day with the number depending on the time of year.

The same applies to the bike hire operation (3-400 bikes). The latter benefits from an influx of foreign language students during the summer months so the numbers do not fall off dramatically during the school/college holiday periods. Bicycles may be parked on a daily basis or stored securely for longer periods. At the time of writing the rates are as follows:



Daily		Long term	
1 day	£1.50	1 week	£2.50
7 days	£6.00	2 weeks	£4.50
90 days	£80.00	1 month	£8.50
1 year	82 per day*	2 months	£14.50

Opening hours are:

Monday to Friday 08:00 - 19:00

Saturday 09:00 – 17:00

Sunday 10:00 – 16:00

## Professional Support Service

### London, Finsbury Park

Transport for London opened a new, covered, staffed, cycle park comprising of 125 automated lockable cycle racks, operated by a smart card system opened at Finsbury Park Interchange in 2006.



The facility boasts 24 hour access to holders of smart cards. In addition, staff are in attendance during the following hours in order to issue smart cards, top up credit on the cards and help with any queries:

- Monday to Friday 06:00-10:00 and 16:00-20:00
- Saturdays and Sunday 08:00-18:00

Cyclists are charged 50 pence for each 24 hours parked.

Once users have registered (this includes the provision of a digital photograph for added security and allows staff on site to verify users in the event of a lost card) the system is operated as follows:

1. The card is swiped against the door reader (this activates the doors).
2. Once inside the bike park, the card is inserted into one of the four coloured consoles.
3. This process allocates a vacant stand.
4. The bike is then placed in the stand allocated, and the steel locking pin is then pushed through the bike frame which locks the bike to the stand.
5. On exit, the door sensors open the doors automatically.
6. On return to the cycle park, the card is again swiped against the outside door reader.
7. The card is then inserted into the correct console and the cost of parking is deducted from the credit stored on the card.
8. The lock holding the bike to the stand is then released electronically.
9. The bicycle can then be released by sliding back the locking pin (left open for the next user) and the user then leaves with their bicycle through the automatic doors.

Note: the registration process provides a range of information which can be used (without identifying the individual users) to monitor such things as levels and times of occupancy and post codes to identify where users' journeys start/end. The latter can also be used as a guide to the likely routes taken and, potentially, barriers to use on routes between areas of low/non existent patronage.



See: [www.tfl.gov.uk/roadusers/cycling/978.aspx](http://www.tfl.gov.uk/roadusers/cycling/978.aspx)



### Willingness to pay for parking<sup>1</sup>

“A small survey was carried out at the ‘cyclists’ breakfast’ event at Sheffield Town Hall to investigate the potential of a dedicated ‘Bike Park’ in Sheffield, similar to an existing facility in Leicester. Only a small number of cyclists completed the survey (37), so the data should be treated only as an indication of preference. Nearly all respondents (95%) thought that there should be Bike Park in Sheffield located in the city centre, with the most popular location ‘close to the Town Hall’ (24%). Almost two thirds (61%) of respondents who supported the bike park felt that £1 (the price at Leicester) would be an appropriate charge for a day’s cycle parking.”

## 3.2 Comment on European experience

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### The Netherlands experience

The Dutch report on its ‘Bicycle Master Plan’ (published in 1999) states that a “traditional guarded station storage facility, which needs at least 800 racks for profitable commercial operation”. It goes on to say “The guarded storage facility remains a good solution for storage facilities having more than 800 bicycles”. No mention is made of a model for the funding/running of such facilities.

Recently published guidance<sup>2</sup> also provides an insight into the approach of a nation with high levels of cycling and particular challenges resulting from very large numbers of bikes parked on the streets and at principal attractions such as railway stations:

“The introduction of free, supervised parking is a very effective means ....

This simple measure can lead to an immediate and measurable effect on two of the goals that underlie the parking policy: stimulating the use of the bicycle and reducing bicycle theft”.

### **Dutch Railways**

In the Netherlands there are staffed cycle parking facilities at just over 80 main stations, where the premises are kitted out for franchisees to operate - the basic rates and times are set Nationally but franchisees have the option of opening for longer hours or with added value services (shops catering etc as the station trading agreement allows).

### **Utrecht<sup>3</sup>**

Cycle parking stations (amongst other cycle parking facilities) are partly subsidised by car parking charges.

### **Apeldoorn<sup>4</sup>**

This Dutch city has a similar approach and has five storage facilities that provide free guarded cycle parking for a total of 2,800 bikes.

<sup>1</sup> Extract from: *Can Buildings Encourage Sustainable Transport Choice* Adam Park, Unpublished MArch Dissertation 2007

<sup>2</sup> *Design Manual for Bicycle Traffic* CROW 2007

<sup>3</sup> *Cycling in the Netherlands* Ministry of Works and Water 2007

<sup>4</sup> *Cycling in the Netherlands* Ministry of Works and Water 2007

## Professional Support Service

### Germany

A report produced in the mid nineties, which accompanied a programme to introduce 100 bike parks at railway stations in North Rhine Westphalia, contained the following (a rough translation from the original):

#### *“Operational Issues and Lessons*

Experiences of the Netherlands show that with no services other than the parking of the bicycles 1,000 users per day are needed to avoid losses. This is one of the reasons why the *Entwicklungsagentur* develops, together with the municipalities and operators of the bicycle stations, complete concepts for stations with – in most cases considerably less users. The smaller the planned station the more important are the additional services and the flexible and economical employment and use of staff. There should be a creative solution for even the smallest station. To facilitate this an operating model has been drawn up.

It is recognised that private bicycle dealers, who will probably be more profit-orientated than state employees, may be better able to set up the repair facilities more quickly and profitably. It is also recognised that the choice of personnel employed is very important. These should be customer orientated and continual training is seen as desirable.”

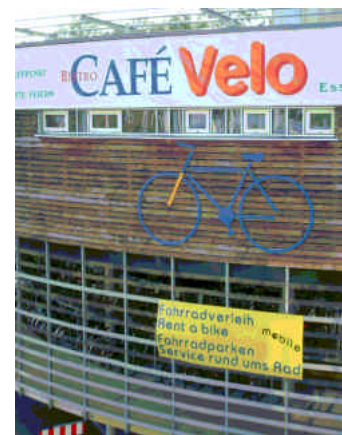
Note: Two important issues emerge here –

1. the benefits of involving private enterprise in the form of bicycle shops in any partnership and
2. the need to ensure that where a bike park provides employment training opportunities for members of the community the latter require training in interpersonal skills if they are to interact with customers.

It is also worth noting that repairs and servicing, along with the selling of spares and accessories required by regular cyclists, are often one of the most profitable elements of any bike shop and these are a natural fit when a bike park is combined with a bike shop.

### **Freiburg**<sup>5</sup>

A purpose-built cycle station close to the main rail station and tramline provides 1,000 bike parking spaces, a coffee shop, bike sales, mobility information and bike hire. The layout of Freiburg train station site is very similar to Leicester Train Station and is a useful example of what could be achieved to improve integrated access and use as part of a considered regeneration project.



Picture: Andy Salkeld

<sup>5</sup> European Study Tour – National Benchmarking Project for Cycling Report to Leicester City Council 28 April 05

## Switzerland

### Basel<sup>6</sup>

In June 2002 a major new underground cycle parking centre at the main railway station was opened. 'Veloparc' accommodates 1350 bikes and houses areas of free parking and paid parking. This is a subsidised facility and remains open and manned throughout the operational time for trains. Peak usage is currently 1200 bikes and includes, bike hire, a shop, bar and basic maintenance facilities. A second cheaper and 'retro-fitted' bike park has also been created at a secondary station.



Retro-fit bike park

Picture: Andy Salkeld

### Bern<sup>7</sup>

Regeneration of the Train Station and Central Square is planned to provide covered and secure cycle parking facilities. A temporary cycle hire facility is provided in the main square in a temporary bike hire paid for from commercial sponsorship and funded as a social enterprise project for Refugee's and Asylum Seekers.

## France

### Strasbourg<sup>8</sup>

Cycle theft has been a major problem in the past. To address this issue the city has adopted a programme of installing cycle parking stands, supporting cycle hire operations and developing bike parks at key locations as a pro-active support for local residents and cycle tourists.

All images: ©Transport Initiatives except where stated.

<sup>6</sup> European Study Tour – National Benchmarking Project for Cycling Report to Leicester City Council 28 April 05

<sup>7</sup> European Study Tour – National Benchmarking Project for Cycling Report to Leicester City Council 28 April 05

<sup>8</sup> European Study Tour – National Benchmarking Project for Cycling Report to Leicester City Council 28 April 05