

7. Public transport information and marketing

7.1 General approach in each town

7.1.1 Overview

Initiatives in public transport information and marketing took place in all the towns, in each case against a background of significant improvements in bus services. However, in Darlington, these changes were implemented at a late stage in the Sustainable Travel Town period, such that, in 2008 at the time of the interview, preparations were underway for promotional activity to launch the new, redesigned network. In Peterborough, there had been significant improvements to both commercial services in the city and the council's own network, from 2004 onwards. In Worcester, Government funding had been secured for two specific projects to improve public transport, both before and during the Sustainable Travel Town period, and there had also been a substantial upgrade in vehicles in 2004 and the launch of new park-and-ride services in 2005.

In each town, the public transport information and marketing initiative involved partnership with a different bus company: Arriva in Darlington¹; Stagecoach in Peterborough; and First in Worcester. Partnership working appeared especially close in Peterborough where the bus company had been involved in the Sustainable Travel Town initiative from its inception and the success of this cooperation was seen as a key strength. In Darlington, competition between Stagecoach and Arriva had made close cooperation difficult during much of the Sustainable Travel Town project, but there were signs that Arriva's takeover of Stagecoach services in 2008 would lead to a more proactive working relationship with the council. In Worcester, First appeared to be less immediately involved in the promotional campaigns for public transport run by the sustainable travel team, though the bus company had worked closely with the county council's passenger transport officers on other major projects and had also been involved in personal travel planning as part of the Sustainable Travel Town initiative.

In all three towns, there were efforts to upgrade the information and facilities available at bus stops, and introduce promotional branding of public transport services (though not necessarily as part of the Smarter Choice Programme). At the time of the interview, Peterborough had introduced real-time bus information on most main bus routes, and Darlington was in the process of doing so. Both Darlington and Peterborough also provided bus information via text to mobile phones. All three towns had produced area bus maps. All three towns had also undertaken major programmes of personalised travel planning (discussed in Chapter 6), which provided a conduit for public transport information resources. Each of the programmes also had its own distinctive elements. In Darlington, there were plans for a telemarketing campaign with incentives to launch the new network. Peterborough had made substantial improvements to a travel advice centre and had also run a 'travel training' scheme for school students and vulnerable adults. Worcester had run a series of promotional campaigns for specific services and bus use in

¹ Both Arriva and Stagecoach operated in Darlington during much of the Sustainable Travel Town project, but Arriva took over Stagecoach's bus services and became the main operator in 2007.

general. In all of the towns, there were some efforts to regularise timetable changes, which could be a barrier to successful promotion.

As observed in section 3.4.1, the towns' baseline surveys showed that at the outset of the programme, residents in Darlington were most satisfied with their public transport services and residents in Worcester least satisfied. The survey² also showed that public transport use was highest in Darlington, accounting for 12% of all trips as against 6% in both Peterborough and Worcester (Socialdata & Sustrans, 2005a). The approach to information and marketing developed in each town is outlined below.

7.1.2 Darlington

In Darlington, at the start of the Sustainable Travel Town project in 2004, there were two dominant bus companies, namely Arriva and Stagecoach, together with a few smaller operators. Although Arriva operated most of the inter-urban bus services, both operators were responsible for services running in the town centre so that there had been significant duplication on some of the urban routes. Looking back on this period, officers said that having two rival operators had created some difficulties since the companies were reluctant to share information and the small size of the town reduced the benefits of competition. In August 2007, however, this situation ended when Arriva took over services from Stagecoach to become the town's sole large operator. In March 2008, some changes to service frequency were made on those routes which had previously experienced the most duplication, but a more comprehensive redesign of the network took place in July 2008. The new network comprised a radial service and made routes more direct to and from the town centre. Each route was individually named and branded, with colour coding and names given to each service to reflect local identities. More bus stops and shelters were being introduced in the town centre and bus drivers were also receiving additional training.

The council had drawn up a Memorandum of Understanding with Arriva, setting out the principles that both sides were trying to adhere to on issues such as ticketing, information, vehicle specification and network stability. The sustainable travel team and the bus company had established a positive working relationship: the team was pleased that Arriva had agreed to take on a completely supported service as a commercial venture, whilst the bus company was appreciative of input from the council's public engagement and consultation, in relation to its re-design of the network. Arriva had put substantial investment into vehicles with 28 low-floor 'midi' buses introduced in 2008 and more being introduced in 2009. The Memorandum stipulated that all buses running in Darlington should be low-floor by 2011. There had also been cooperation on workplace travel: Arriva offered season tickets to employers, which employees could purchase through salary sacrifice schemes, with significant take up from a hospital trust. It had recently been agreed that Arriva would provide a new service to a local business park, whilst the council would promote this to businesses and provide bus stop flags and timetables.

² This part of Socialdata & Sustrans research was a travel behaviour survey, using a self-administered mail-back travel diary technique on a random net sample of more than 4,000 people in each town.

Darlington's Tourist Information Centre, *Darlington Information*, also played an important role in the sustainable travel team's public transport promotion, as a key conduit for disseminating information.

Ticketing initiatives introduced and promoted during the Sustainable Travel Town period, included the following:

- A multi-operator ticket, the *Local Mover*, though this was made largely redundant with the departure of the second main operator;
- Joint promotion, between Darlington and County Durham, via secondary schools, of a £5 'teen card', for under-18s. This commercial product entitled the user to half-fare travel, up to a maximum of 50p per journey for evening, weekend, holiday and bank holiday travel;
- *Plusbus*, an add-on bus ticket for rail travellers, providing onward travel on Arriva buses for train users at low cost;
- A *Half-price Sundays* campaign run by Arriva.

Also during the Sustainable Travel Town period, the following information and marketing initiatives were implemented:

- An area bus map, replacing a timetable booklet;
- Advertising for daily and weekly tickets via moving displays on the buses (or bus blinds). This occurred early in 2006 when Arriva bought 11 newer vehicles and the Smarter Choice Programme paid for the blinds;
- A flier outlining all the tickets available to users;
- Comprehensive improvements to information at bus stops. This involved installation of bus stop flags and timetable cases at every stop, together with *Local Motion* branding. Each stop displayed a number, which could be used to access travel information by text, together with details for contacting Traveline;
- Additional bus information boards in the town centre;
- Real-time bus information. Equipment was in place on one bus route at the time of the interview, with a view to wider introduction. The scheme was being paid for and managed as a project for all North East authorities, with Darlington contributing £300,000 towards the cost, and Arriva paying for installation of transponders on their vehicles.

In Summer 2008, the council and Arriva were together planning a major marketing push, in conjunction with the launch of the new network in July. This was planned to include the following elements:

- Distribution of information to residents living along some of the branded routes;
- A radio advertising campaign;
- A telemarketing campaign, including vouchers with a reduced price four-week ticket for current users and a free week's trial ticket for non-users. The intention was to run two variants of the campaign in different areas of the town and to roll out the most successful of these to a third area;
- Bus promotion events, led by Arriva, but in some cases linking in with those run by the sustainable travel team;

- Scrolling messages along the sides of buses on one of the routes. The intention was to compare the success of this approach with messages on fixed vinyls, in terms of the subsequent growth in patronage.

7.1.3 Peterborough

In Peterborough, the main commercial bus operator was Stagecoach, which ran the 'Citi' bus network. The Citi concept was first introduced to Peterborough at the beginning of the Sustainable Travel Town initiative, in 2004, with four services operated by high quality low-floor vehicles, at 10 or 20-minute frequencies, between the centre of the city and housing estates on its outskirts. Following the initial success of its Citi buses, Stagecoach went on to expand the network further in 2006, when they converted another route, added a new service and improved frequencies. Another Citi service was launched in 2008. At the time of the 2004 improvements, however, a number of cross-town links were lost. Following these changes the council reviewed the subsidised bus network and doubled its budget, leading to significant improvements in its own network within the city, which was branded as 'Local Link'. Besides the Local Link and Citi buses, services provided by a number of other operators extended into Peterborough's surrounding towns and villages. The town had an ongoing programme of bus stop improvements which included new shelters, better lighting and raised kerbs.

Stagecoach was closely involved in the *Travelchoice* project from its inception, and the positive relationship with the operators was seen as a key factor in the success of the team's activities to promote public transport. The company's customer relations officer worked with the sustainable travel team on their personal travel planning project, making home visits and offering free travel tickets to people who were not regular bus users but interested in using buses more. Stagecoach also worked with developers to offer a month's free travel to all new residents in housing developments over a certain size. In relation to workplace travel planning, the public transport operator reported that a recent attempt by the company to engage with employers and offer discounted bus travel to staff had met with little interest. However, the bus company had collaborated successfully, through *Travelchoice*, with a Peterborough hospital, so that health staff were able to buy a weekly bus ticket for £7 instead of £10. A scheme had also been negotiated to allow NHS employees to travel on a £1 ticket between hospital sites: by picking up a pass from the cash office, staff could travel for free on Stagecoach buses and the NHS paid £1 for each trip in place of the standard fare. .

A number of other ticketing initiatives were introduced and promoted during the Sustainable Travel Town period, as follows:

- Stagecoach *Dayrider* and *Megarider* tickets. Introduced in 2004 for daily and weekly travel, these helped to speed up bus boarding;
- A discounted railcard for younger people (i.e. railcards purchased through the city council were 20% cheaper than if purchased at rail stations). This was achieved through the council's bulk buying powers, and extended an earlier discount offer for older and disabled people;
- *PlusBus* add-on bus ticket for rail travellers. Set up in Summer 2007, this gave use of all Stagecoach and Local Link bus services for an additional £2.70;
- On-line ticket purchase with discounts. This was introduced by Stagecoach.

In the interests of improving integration, the council accepted all other operators' tickets on Local Link services, though it received no income for this. About 58% of trips on Local Link were made by non-concessionary fare passengers using Stagecoach *Megariders*.

During the *Travelchoice* project, the following information and marketing initiatives were implemented:

- Extensive use of *Travelchoice* branding. This was applied to all public transport information, the Local Link vehicle fleet, two community dial-a-ride services and a Stagecoach bus service;
- A strategy to ensure comprehensive, clear and clean information at bus stops. This included display cases at main stops to show tube-style bus maps, local area walking route maps (showing walking times) and information about bus services stopping nearby. 'Interchange' posters were displayed at 53 bus stops, which were hubs or close to major destinations;
- A Text & Go service, enabling passengers to receive bus arrival times direct by mobile phone. A unique 7-letter code, displayed on each bus-stop flag and also available via the *Travelchoice* website and local area guides, could be used to access bus-stop specific information. There were also plans to provide real-time bus information using this service;
- Improvements to a travel advice centre. Capital funding from the local transport plan (LTP) and revenue funding from the Smarter Choice Programme were invested in this facility, located in the bus station. The *Travelchoice* team took over the centre from Stagecoach in 2006 and, in August 2008, extended its opening hours to include Saturdays. Enquiries rose from 220 a day to 400. The centre provided information about all bus services, rail, cycling, walking and car sharing as well as selling Stagecoach *Megarider* (weekly) tickets and rail cards and acting as an agent for several coach operators. Sales were significant, at around £5,000 a month on Stagecoach *Megarider* tickets and £18,000 a month on National Express tickets. Commission on sales and a contribution from Stagecoach helped in meeting the centre's running costs;
- An interactive journey planning kiosk. This facility, located in the bus station, initially provided a link to the Peterborough-specific Traveline journey planning website and the *Travelchoice* interactive map. However, because of the expense of updating a Peterborough-specific Traveline database, the kiosk was subsequently linked to the East Midlands Traveline journey planner;
- A school travel training programme. A travel trainer was employed for a year to work with pupils moving on from secondary education and with vulnerable adults. This initiative was designed to help pupils think through their travel options and assist vulnerable adults in travelling independently. Training involved four short classroom based sessions followed by practical sessions on the buses and focussed on issues such as handling cash and reading timetables. Participants received a goody bag at the end of the course, with a *Megarider* ticket, local travel guide and personal alarm. The project came under the umbrella of a Post-16 Transport Partnership, which involved the Learning and Skills Council, the local college, Stagecoach, Children's Services and the Passenger Transport Unit. It was managed by *Travelchoice* and funded by the Learning and Skills Council, who contributed £40,000 and £5,000 respectively;

- Real-time bus information. This was installed on Stagecoach's Citi 1 service in July 2006 and extended to another Citi route in April 2007, a further two Citi routes in March 2008 and to Local Link in August 2008.

In the same period, Stagecoach also undertook other general promotional activities, advertising its services on bus backs and through radio and TV advertising. Since 2004 Stagecoach drivers had received an annual day of training, covering customer care, disability awareness and safe and secure driving.

7.1.4 Worcester

In Worcester, First was the main bus operator though a number of smaller operators ran various rural services, which came into the city. Worcester's bus network underwent some major changes, both during the Smarter Choice Programme, and shortly before it, and these were also accompanied by significant work on information and marketing. The county council's passenger transport unit had its own marketing officer, working in parallel with the sustainable travel team, and First was engaged in a substantial level of promotional work on its own account. Consequently, the information and marketing initiatives introduced through the Sustainable Travel Town funding took place in the context of this wider activity.

With funding from the council, First participated in Worcester's personal travel planning programme, by issuing discounted tickets and by providing travel advisers, who carried out home visits. Other than this, interviewees said the bus company had been 'kept in the loop' about the council's information and marketing activities, implying a somewhat less active level of engagement than was the case in the other two towns. First had, however, work in close partnership with the county council's passenger transport staff on a number of other major initiatives that involved promotional work.

Officers said partnership support for the Smarter Choice Programme had also come from Worcestershire Hub, a customer services portal funded by the county council and the six Worcestershire Districts, which provided a one-stop shop for Worcestershire services through offices around the county, telephone access and a website portal. South Worcestershire Primary Care Trust had provided funding for information on access to health services and there was an unstaffed travel counter at the Worcestershire Royal Hospital, which had been established in 2006 by the sustainable travel team.

The key developments involving service changes together with information, marketing and ticketing initiatives that were *not* instigated by the sustainable travel team, were as follows.

In 2001 Worcestershire County Council successfully bid for Urban Bus Challenge (UBC) funding, which was spent between 2002-2006. This enabled purchase of 12 low-floor easy access vehicles and introduction of two new cross-city services (in 2002) linking areas of social and economic deprivation with the city centre, rail stations, the hospital and areas of employment and leisure. Improvements were supported by 'Easy Link' branding and marketing including door-to-door leaflet drops along the route. An orbital demand responsive flexilink service was also introduced, for those without access to conventional bus services, and new vehicles obtained for community transport. In 2004, the UBC funding was again used to reduce the cost of First's city-wide one-week ticket,

from £11 to £8, when purchased on board the UBC route. The offer, initially introduced on a three-month trial basis, was so successful that it was subsequently extended to all First's Worcester services. In the latter part of the UBC project, bus stops on cross-city services were improved with new bus flags, timetable cases and shelters.

In July 2004, First replaced around 60% of the mini-buses that made up its Worcester fleet, with full-sized low-floor vehicles. At the same time the company created an 'over-ground' bus system with colour-coded branding on services across the city. This coding extended to vehicles, timetables, stops and publicity and the whole scheme was supported by a large marketing campaign. Timetable cases were put on Worcester bus stops and a pack, customised according to location, was widely distributed to most households in Worcester. The initiative was led by First (though the county council were partners in it).

In 2005, the county received Government funding for a *Kickstart* initiative to raise the profile of a bus service between Malvern and Worcester, in partnership with First. The initiative included improvements to marketing and the provision of timetable information, and a full review of bus stop infrastructure on the route. Using demand data from ticket machine analysis, infrastructure was upgraded at those stops with the highest demand - including provision of 10 new shelters with seating and lighting and a new bus lay-by. These were funded by Worcestershire County Council, Worcester City Council and Malvern Hills District Council and helped in making the service a flagship route for the county. There were also improvements in route and frequency.

At the beginning of September 2005 Worcestershire County Council launched *Project Express* – three branded express bus services serving the park-and-ride site in the north of the city. In addition to a 10-minute connection with the city centre there was a 20-minute clockwise and anti-clockwise circular route, which included the hospital. Promotion for the new services included bill-boards, newspaper adverts, posters, a press launch and a leaflet door-dropped to houses in the park-and-ride area. Though the initiative was run by passenger transport staff, some of its materials included the Sustainable Travel Town *Choose how you move* logo. Under-19s and over-60s were offered free travel on these services regardless of where they boarded. There was also a separate promotional free travel offer to encourage passengers to try the bus in the first two weeks of operation. In 2008, the circular routes, which had by then reduced in frequency, were withdrawn from the park-and-ride, and later absorbed into other services and extended across the city. In the same year, the dedicated park-and-ride service passed from First into the operation of the county council and was upgraded with top-of-the-range environmentally-friendly vehicles providing more comfort and leg room, and the vehicles re-branded as *Woosh* buses rather than *Project Express*.

A number of other ticketing initiatives were introduced and promoted during the Sustainable Travel Town period, as follows:

- The *Worcester Plus* ticket. Negotiated by the county with First in September 2005, this could be used to travel to Malvern;
- Free travel for the over-60s. This was introduced throughout Worcestershire in April 2006 in line with the national concessionary fares scheme. Prior to this, in addition to free use of *Project Express* buses, there had been a flat fare scheme operating within the city for the over-60s (30p in 2002, rising subsequently to 50p);

- A flat fare of £1 for Under-19s using *Project Express* buses. This was introduced in September 2006 when free use was withdrawn following complaints about rowdiness;
- A multi-operator bus pass for school students under-19. Launched by the county in September 2007, this was available termly or annually, and offered a flat fee for use of buses in Worcester City on the scheme (Monday-Friday, 7am-7pm) to under-19s not entitled to free school transport or in higher education.

The following marketing initiatives were run as part of (or in conjunction with) the Smarter Choice Programme:

- A walk/cycle/public transport map – *Your guide to getting around Worcester*. This was produced in 2005 for distribution through Worcestershire Hub, the *Choose how you move* website, the city's personal travel planning programme and employers;
- A strategy to improve the presentation and distribution of bus information. In 2006 a review of existing procedures found that timetables were often difficult to read and information sent out in a relatively ad hoc way. The team revised their distribution list, focusing on more proactive outlets and directing the public to the Worcestershire Hub when publicising services, to ensure information was up to date. In the new strategy, timetable changes took place on three well-publicised dates each year. The first change date was heavily promoted, with posters sent across the county and a postcard to every household in Evesham. To improve the look and feel of the timetables, they created a design template. For services with larger ridership they produced promotional leaflet-timetables with photos;
- *Try the bus* marketing campaign. Building on the launch of *Project Express*, this ran in Autumn 2005 for eight weeks, using billboards, newspaper adverts and posters sent to employers, libraries, community centres and Tourism Information Centres;
- *Bingo on the buses* promotion. This took place in Summer 2006 and was carried out by a local radio station. Wyvern FM's 'thunder crew' rode the *Project Express* buses for a few weeks every Saturday. By intercepting the presenter at an advertised bus stop the public could pick up a free weekly ticket – for a prize draw - and a bingo card. Following on from this, the team ran a Christmas radio promotion along similar lines in 2007: *Santa on the buses*;
- Promotion for a subsidised commuter bus service. In September 2006, the county council introduced the 32a, a commuter bus serving St Peters area of the city and nearby major employment sites including the hospital and the county council itself. Promotion for the new service included a postcard with a timetable and a detachable voucher that could be exchanged on the bus for a free one-week ticket. This was advertised in the newspaper, door-dropped in the local area and sent to employers on the route;
- Promotion for Christmas park-and-ride. Run in 2006 and 2007, this involved posters (sent to employers, community centres and libraries) newspaper adverts, billboards and radio advertising, to publicise some temporary additional park-and-ride facilities to cope with an influx of visitors for an annual Victorian fayre;
- Promotion of an evening bus service. Run in December 2007, this used posters, (distributed to employers and other centres); bus back advertising and mini-timetables sent out to pubs and clubs. Focus group research found people were not positive about the poster because they thought it implied buses would be rowdy, but

liked the format of the mini-timetable. The passenger transport department was planning to run the campaign again in 2008.

During the Sustainable Travel Town period, there were a number of other promotional initiatives that were run independently from the programme. In September 2007, First produced a guide to bus services in Worcester city which was distributed free of charge in leaflet dispensers on buses and at the bus station as well as through agents. Around 50,000 were printed over a 12-month period. In March 2008, First selected seven Worcester services for targeted promotion. On these routes, every household within walking distance of a bus stop received a large A5 fold out leaflet and a pocket sized bus 'quick guide' with times of buses from the city centre and outer terminus. Early in 2008, the county council introduced a new 'Bus Charter' for its own services, setting out what passengers could expect in terms of cleanliness of buses and the attitude of the driver.

7.1.5 Targeting

In general, officers in the towns' sustainable travel teams did not see their promotional work for public transport as addressing a specific group. However, in each town there had been some initiatives that were more closely targeted. For example, in Darlington the team was keen to promote new services to a business park and its 'teen card' to rural children. With the introduction of low-floor buses, they also saw opportunities to promote buses to people with disabilities and parents with pushchairs. In Peterborough there had been some specific work to provide public transport information to vulnerable groups, with an 'easy read' guide and a *Transport to Healthcare* guide. In Worcester, there had been promotion of a commuter bus to employees through workplaces.

7.1.6 Ease of implementation

Interviewees said they had faced several barriers in promoting public transport. One of the main difficulties was related to poor quality of infrastructure which made it difficult to 'sell' bus travel. This had been a problem in Darlington before vehicles began to be replaced in 2008. In Worcester, officers saw the lack of bus priority and the fact that buses were considered expensive, as inhibiting factors (see 7.6).

Darlington officers said that having two main operators at the outset of the programme had generated unwelcome complexity, and resulted in too many ticket offers, which users did not fully understand. Putting up bus stop flags at every stop had initially been a slow process before they determined to adopt a 'big bang' approach, upgrading all stops fairly quickly, which had the benefit of making greater impact on the public.

In Peterborough, officers said the main difficulties had been caused by changes in bus service timetables, which did not always take place at consistent times for the different operators. As in Worcester, attempts were being made to minimise this. Another issue for Peterborough was that the council's budget for public transport promotion and information had been cut a few years earlier. At the time, this had been offset by money from the *Travelchoice* project, but with this funding coming to an end, officers saw a risk that this work stream would be under-resourced.

7.2 Scale of public transport promotional activity

Table 7.1 provides an overview of the scale of promotional activity for public transport services in the three towns under four main headings: provision of information; marketing; fares and ticketing; and service quality. In practice, it proved difficult to give a quantitative assessment of the scale of activity. Instead, the key activities are briefly summarised, and the approximate intensity of activity is indicated using between zero (no activity) and four (major activity) bullet points.

It is notable that the scale of promotional activity in Peterborough and Worcester was greater than that in Darlington. It also appears that Peterborough put a particularly high effort into providing good public transport information, while Worcester put a great deal of effort into direct marketing campaigns (both focussed on specific routes and aimed at marketing the whole bus network) and fares incentives.

Table 7.1: Scale of information and marketing activity for public transport

	Darlington		Peterborough		Worcester	
INFORMATION						
Real-time passenger information (RTPI)	•••	Being introduced but not yet fully operational	••••	RTPI introduced on most main (Citi) bus routes and on Local Link services; survey found 59% of users agreed that real-time information screens had improved their experience of using the bus and 27% agreed that the screens had encouraged them to use the bus more often		No real-time information
Bus stop information	••	All bus stops have timetable cases, <i>Local Motion</i> branding, SMS number of the stop, Traveline contact details	••••	Comprehensive interchange information (including tube-style network map, local area map, walking routes, information about connecting buses) at 53 main bus stops	••	Timetable cases and colour-coded branding put on bus stops across city in 2004
Information centre	••	Tourist Information Centre gives out travel information	••••	New <i>Travelchoice</i> information centre at city centre bus station with information about all travel modes, fielding 300-400 enquiries per day in 2008	••	Worcestershire Hub provides website portal; unstaffed travel counter at Worcestershire Royal Hospital
Information materials	••	Area bus map and area-specific timetables; also route-specific timetables after July 2008	••••	5 local travel guides including bus map and service frequencies; route specific timetables; bus stop specific timetables; <i>How to catch a bus</i> guide; other materials	••••	Walk / cycle/ public transport map widely distributed (100,000 copies); leaflet/timetables produced for larger services; First guide to Worcester bus services (50,000 one year initial print run); bus stop specific timetables
Other information			•••	Bus departure times available via text message (Text & Go); enquiries increased from 713 in 2005 (shortly after launch) to 1,996 in April 2008	•	Revised information strategy: created new information design template and regularised timetable changes

MARKETING						
Service 'legibility', branding and simplicity	••	Commercial network revised at late stage in the Sustainable Travel Town initiative - more direct routes, individually named and branded	••••	Commercial network revised in April 2004 to make it easier to understand; more frequent and regular services on main routes; all information branded as <i>Travelchoice</i> , and Local Link vehicle fleet also branded	••••	First introduced 'over-ground' bus system with colour-coded branding on vehicles, timetables, stops and publicity
Direct marketing / advertising campaigns	••	Mainly in context of personal travel planning work	••	Mainly in context of personal travel planning work	••••	Large marketing campaigns to support introduction of 'over-ground' bus system, launch of <i>Project Express</i> and launch of commuter bus; First distributed customised information packs to households on over-ground bus routes; series of network-wide marketing campaigns e.g. <i>Try the Bus</i> ; <i>Bingo on the Buses</i> ; <i>Santa on the Buses</i> ; marketing of evening bus and Christmas park-and-ride
FARES AND TICKETING						
Ticketing integration	•••	Multi-operator ticket developed	•••	Council accepts all other operator tickets on Local Link services	•••	Multi-operator bus pass introduced for under-19s

Fare levels and discounts	••	Season tickets offered via salary sacrifice scheme at Acute Hospital Trust and other employers; half-fare travel for under-18s; <i>half-price on Sundays</i> campaign	••	Railcards sold at a discount and there is a <i>PlusBus</i> add-on ticket for rail travellers; Stagecoach introduced <i>Dayrider</i> and <i>Megarider</i> tickets; hospital staff are offered discounted tickets; tickets for travel to schools were reduced in price	••••	Cost of one-week bus ticket reduced; free travel for under-19s on <i>Project Express</i> for one year, followed by £1 flat fare; free travel for over-60s on <i>Project Express</i> (before concessionary scheme); <i>Worcester Plus</i> ticket introduced; <i>Project Express</i> offer of two weeks travel for the price of one; group ticket introduced for park-and-ride services; promotional discount on small commuter bus service
SERVICE QUALITY						
Service frequency / new services	••	Planned service re-organisation but not fully implemented until after end of Sustainable Travel Town project	••••	Introduction of Citi services led to greater service frequency, and more regular timetable; 10 minute frequency on main routes	••••	Three branded services launched as <i>Project Express</i> in 2005; commuter bus (32a) launched in 2006; six new branded <i>Woosh</i> vehicles in 2007/08; extension of livery to other services 2008/09
Accessibility	•••	Programme to introduce raised kerbs at bus stops (40-50 per year); all buses to be low-floor by 2011	••••	High quality low-floor vehicles introduced on Stagecoach Citi services; infrastructure improvements at bus stops including level boarding	•••	Low-floor vehicles introduced to replace minibuses
Customer service			••	Bus drivers now have one day of training per year (starting with customer care, then disability awareness, then safe and secure driving)	••	2008 Bus Charter introduced for county council services outlining expectations of cleanliness and attitude; bus surgery

7.3 Staffing and budgets for public transport marketing

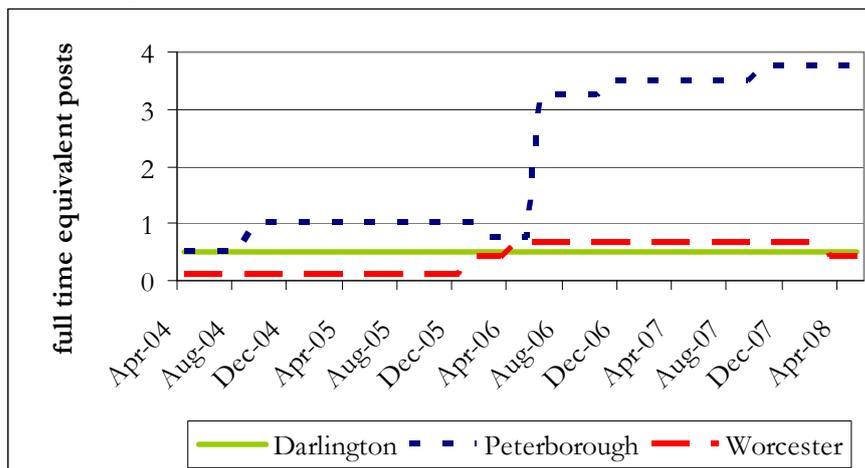
7.3.1 Staffing

Table 7.2 and Figure 7.2 summarise how local authority staff time allocated to public transport information and marketing had changed over the course of the Sustainable Travel Town programme. In summary, Darlington and Worcester had both had rather low levels of staff time allocated to public transport information and marketing, at around 0.5 full-time equivalent (fte) posts or less. In Peterborough, staffing levels had increased from about 1 fte to 3.5 fte halfway through the course of the programme.

Table 7.2: Staff time (fte-posts) allocated to public transport information and marketing

	Darlington	Peterborough	Worcester
Before April 2004	0.3	1	0.1
May 2008	0.5	3.75	0.4

Figure 7.2: Changes in staff time allocated to public transport information and marketing (fte-posts)



In Darlington, the estimate of 0.5 fte was described as an ‘average’ figure, and in practice the amount of public transport promotional work was said to have varied in intensity over the course of the programme.

In Peterborough, there was a public transport development officer (approximately 1 fte) throughout the course of the programme, initially ‘sitting’ within the *Travelchoice* team and later becoming part of the Integrated Passenger Transport Unit. This role was supplemented by travel assistants (2.5 fte) who were employed from June 2006.

In Worcester, very little time was specifically dedicated to public transport information and marketing until nearly two years into the project. At this point, a Marketing Support and Projects Officer began work in the Integrated Passenger Transport Unit (with a proportion of his time allocated to work in Worcester). The proportion of time allocated to public transport information and marketing within the *Choose how you move* team also increased to about 0.5 fte.

7.3.2 Budgets

Tables 7.3 and 7.4 summarise the capital and revenue costs of the public transport information and marketing programme in the three towns, with revenue costs disaggregated in Tables 7.5 and 7.6 into non-staff costs and staff costs. The figures in these tables carry several caveats, detailed below.

Table 7.3: Capital costs

	Darlington (information and other costs)	Peterborough (information)	Peterborough (other capital costs)	Worcester (information)	Worcester (other capital costs)
2004/05	-	£14,000	£303,000	-	£25,000
2005/06	£70,000	£391,000	£69,000	£82,000	-
2006/07	-	£206,000	£366,000	-	£43,000
2007/08	-	£142,000	£439,000	-	£900,000
2008/09	-	£50,000	£309,000	-	£200,000

Note: Investment of £300,000 by Darlington in a North East regional initiative to develop real-time passenger information is not included, as the scheme was not fully operational by the end of the Sustainable Travel Town project.

Table 7.4: Total revenue costs (staff costs and non-staff revenue costs)

	Darlington	Peterborough	Worcester
2004/05	£22,000	£25,000	£3,000
2005/06	£32,000	£42,000	£53,000
2006/07	£32,000	£96,000	£58,000
2007/08	£42,000	£139,000	£51,000
2008/09	£33,000	£127,000	£35,000

Note: Figures in this table are the sum of the figures in Tables 7.5 and 7.6, but may not add exactly due to rounding.

Table 7.5: Non-staff revenue costs

	Darlington	Peterborough	Worcester
2004/05	£10,000	£7,000	£1,000
2005/06	£20,000	£19,000	£49,000
2006/07	£20,000	£41,000	£42,000
2007/08	£30,000	£69,000	£35,000
2008/09	£20,000	£51,000	£25,000

Table 7.6: Local authority staff costs

	Darlington	Peterborough	Worcester
2004/05	£12,000	£18,000	£2,000
2005/06	£12,000	£23,000	£4,000
2006/07	£12,000	£55,000	£16,000
2007/08	£13,000	£70,000	£16,000
2008/09	£13,000	£76,000	£10,000

Note: Staff costs are estimated on an equivalent basis in all three towns, using rounded average salaries.

Capital investment

The towns were asked for details of capital investment in public transport information (e.g. including real-time passenger information, passenger information screens and display units etc), and also details of other public transport capital costs (e.g. relating to bus lanes, bus stop improvements, park-and-ride sites or new buses).

Darlington was only able to provide limited details of capital investment in public transport, and it is possible that there may have been other capital investment (via the LTP) that is not captured in Table 7.3, although this is unlikely to have been major. The investment identified in 2005/06 was for a mixture of information schemes and other schemes (electronic display boards and bus upholstery improvements). Darlington also contributed £300,000 to a North East regional initiative to develop real-time travel information, but this is not included in Table 7.3 because the scheme was not fully operational by the end of the Sustainable Travel Town period.

Peterborough was able to provide comprehensive details of all capital investment, including investment funded from sources other than the Department for Transport Sustainable Travel Town grant. Its capital expenditure on public transport information was largely related to real-time passenger information, with smaller sums for passenger information screens, the Travel Information Centre and interchange information at bus stops. Other public transport capital investment in Peterborough was for a wide range of schemes, including park-and-ride, bus stop improvements and a range of measures on a 'primary public transport corridor'.

Worcester was able to provide details of the majority of their capital spend between April 2004 and April 2009. This included investment in schemes that were funded by Urban Bus Challenge and investment from other sources earmarked for *Project Express/Woosh*, as well as schemes funded by the Sustainable Travel Town grant. Its capital expenditure on public transport information was for information display units. The other public transport capital investment was for park-and-ride, bus stop infrastructure improvements, and new vehicles with the *Woosh* livery.

Although we were unable to obtain comprehensive details of capital expenditure on public transport in Darlington and Worcester, we have no reason to suppose that their LTP capital expenditure is likely to have been significantly different to that in similar local authorities, or that large capital items have been missed.

Non-staff revenue expenditure

The picture with regard to revenue expenditure is somewhat more complete. Table 7.5 gives non-staff revenue costs for each of the towns. The figures here relate specifically to costs incurred by the local authority in promoting and providing information about public transport. Other local authority revenue costs in relation to public transport (e.g. the cost of supported services) are not included.

Staff costs

Staff costs for public transport information and marketing (including on-costs as well as salaries) were not available in a consistent format in the three towns, and there was some variation in salary levels across the towns. Staff costs in Table 7.6 have therefore been estimated, based on the amount of staff time allocated to public transport information and marketing in 'full time person-months' and taking rounded averages for staff costs

for public transport marketing officers of £23,000 in 2004/05, rising by annual increments to £26,000 in 2008/09. In Peterborough, there were also staff costs for travel assistants, and these have been included. Local authority staff costs related to other aspects of public transport (e.g. staff costs to manage investment in public transport infrastructure) are not included.

7.3.3 Costs per head of population

The costs summarised in section 7.3.2 may be used to give an indication of the cost per resident in each of the three towns. These are summarised in Table 7.7. From the table, it is clear that all three towns spent rather similar amounts, of around £2 - £3 per head of population over the course of the five year programme (or, on average, 40 – 70 pence per head of population per year), on revenue-type promotional and marketing activities (including the costs of staff to deliver the activities). Peterborough and Worcester also made substantial investment in public transport infrastructure (i.e. park-and-ride services, bus stop improvements, bus priority measures and new high quality vehicles), and Peterborough made a substantial capital investment in various measures to improve public transport information, including real-time passenger information and development of the new *Travelchoice* centre.

Table 7.7: Local authority costs per resident, 2004/05 – 2008/09

	Darlington	Peterborough	Worcester
Public transport information (capital costs)	£1	£6	£1
Other public transport infrastructure (capital costs)	-	£23	£25
Revenue costs	£2	£3	£2

Notes: Urban population from National Statistics mid-year estimate for June 2004: 83,965 for Darlington; 128,234 for Peterborough; 92,678 for Worcester. Figures are for five-year period, and are rounded to nearest pound.

7.4 Wider benefits of public transport information and marketing

Interviewees were asked about the benefits of their work to promote public transport, and specifically to consider whether there were identifiable benefits for social inclusion, health, road safety, quality of life and the way in which the council or other organisations involved in the initiative were perceived. In response, the most commonly identified benefit was that of social inclusion. As an example, officers in Darlington pointed to their work in putting information into more accessible formats and distributing it through the Tourist Information Centre so that it was not only available electronically. In Peterborough, the *Travelchoice* team and the Passenger Transport Unit had worked closely with the officers responsible for accessibility planning to improve the information about public transport services in targeted areas, and this had led to bus information being displayed in community centres and included in local community newsletters. In Worcester, officers said positive media coverage generated by the initiative was likely to have had a positive effect on perceptions of the council. Officers in Darlington said that the initiative offered some benefits for health in that it was helping to ensure that people could reach key health facilities.

7.5 Synergies between public transport information and marketing and other policies and programmes

As described earlier (see 7.1), the bus network in each of the towns was subject to considerable improvement in the course of the Sustainable Travel Town period, and this was evidently complementary to the work of the sustainable travel teams in promoting public transport services. Officers also mentioned the role of other local transport programmes in setting the context for the initiative.

Interviewees in all the towns considered bus priority to be important in realising the full potential for effective public transport marketing. Such schemes were at their most developed in Darlington, where, in conjunction with pedestrianisation, a dedicated bus route had been introduced in the town centre, with completion in 2007. Dedicated bus lanes had also been implemented in the last few years on part of the ring road and a number of other corridors, though provision was somewhat patchy, and the interviewee said limited road space made the process controversial. There were, however, plans for more bus priority measures at junctions and/or changing signals to improve traffic flow more generally. In Peterborough, where there were few bus lanes, a temporary lane had been introduced in the course of road works over the Town Rail Bridge but had been taken out once these were completed. In Worcester, there was only one bus lane, which ran discontinuously between the park-and-ride site and the city centre, but consultation on a wider scheme was in progress at the time of the interview. In both Peterborough and Worcester, officers cited lack of bus priority as one of the main constraints on the development their public transport promotional work.

In Darlington, officers said that land-use planning and parking policy, and particularly encouraging developers to prioritise measures for sustainable transport over new parking, had been important for public transport promotion and was likely to be critical to the future of the initiative. In Worcester, city car parking charges had been re-structured to discourage long term parking, and had also risen, and this was considered to be complementary to bus promotion. However, the interviewee also said that, because the city council raised revenue through parking charges, the county's campaigns for public transport had not focused on savings in parking charges, and that bus fares were, in any case, considered expensive.

In relation to other smart measures, officers indicated synergies between public transport promotion and travel planning for workplaces, schools, and residential areas as well as personal travel planning and general travel awareness raising. In Peterborough, for example, where a residential travel plan was secured for new development through the planning process, the developer was now obliged to include *Megarider* vouchers in travel packs for residents. Officers also considered that the existence of the *Travelchoice* programme had made it easier to take over the travel advice centre when Stagecoach pulled out of this. In Worcester, officers said that the employers they had worked with (in relation to travel planning) were generally proactive in distributing public transport information sent to them by the council.

7.6 Potential and plans for the future

Interviewees in all three towns saw further potential for their work on public transport promotion, and outlined a series of initiatives that they would like to pursue, funding permitting.

In Darlington, officers felt that their work to date had resulted in a huge step change in information provision, but that the effects had initially been limited because of shortcomings in the network and vehicles. Following the new improvements, they expected to see a significant impact on bus use by 2009. They were keen to gain route specific information that would help in future campaigns. Since the personalised travel planning work had finished, the team were considering other distribution mechanisms to ensure that personal advice and interaction could occur when people were given bus information. They anticipated that under the Memorandum of Understanding with Arriva the frequency of timetable changes would reduce in future and that this should, in turn, reduce some of their workload in updating existing information, enabling them to focus on other areas.

Officers said that if resources and influence were unconstrained, they would:

- implement more bus priority measures in the town;
- promote both bus and train use, including the park-and-ride facility, for interurban trips to help ease congestion on the ring road;
- fund research and data analysis to look at where inter-urban bus routes were needed, and whether they would be commercially viable;
- do more marketing and provide more incentives for bus use.

To deliver such an expanded programme, officers calculated that they would need 2fte: comprised of 0.5fte to maintain their existing activities, such as providing information at bus stops; 0.5fte for further marketing activities; and 1fte to look at cross-boundary journeys and develop the necessary partnerships for tackling these. In addition, an increase in revenue budget would be required to pay for updating information materials.

It was anticipated that, in practice, beyond 2009, staffing would be maintained at its existing staff level of 0.5 fte. Various other resources were being pursued: Darlington had submitted a successful bid to the Department for Transport/Association of Train Operating Companies for a station travel plan at the main station, which would enable some research into travel patterns. Since December 2007, there was a new franchise holder on the line, National Express, which was considering improvements in access to the station, such as better signing. Officers also hoped to encourage retailers to provide more offers to help in promoting bus journeys to town.

In Peterborough, officers felt that the quality of information materials had improved significantly since 2004, and that the joint work between Stagecoach and the council as part of *Travelchoice* had demonstrated the benefits of good information and marketing. This had been reflected in the significant improvement to best value performance indicators on public satisfaction with transport information. The Passenger Transport Unit was keen to maintain a 'joined up' approach to publicity, branding and information,

working closely with Stagecoach. The team said that, looking to the future, the areas they would like to develop were:

- better public transport promotional work in the rural areas around Peterborough;
- building real-time information into the *Travelchoice* website and making it available through the Text & Go service;
- extending the opening hours for the *Travelchoice* Centre to include opening earlier and later and on Sunday, which was now a busy shopping day in Peterborough;
- instituting a regular programme of leaflet updates and refreshing information displays on a programmed basis.

To carry forward their promotional work, the team was looking to secure funding through Section 106 agreements from the redevelopment of the city centre and bus station site and also from public transport operators who did not currently provide public transport information. At present, the council did not charge operators for the information it produced, but in future they intended to do so using powers under the Transport Act 2000.

In Worcester, the team considered that there was scope to do more bus promotion, and that they could meaningfully continue the programme at its current level beyond 2009. Officers said that, given unconstrained resources, they would choose to expand the work by:

- providing personal journey planning and more free ticket trials;
- marketing every route across the city within its catchment area;
- carrying out more generic promotion of buses;
- introducing real-time information, timetable texting and other technical improvements.

To do this work in Worcester, they estimated, would require a dedicated fulltime post. Interviewees also argued that tackling bus priority and reducing fares could greatly increase the scope for effective marketing.

7.7 References

Socialdata & Sustrans (2005) *Travel Behaviour Research Survey 2004: Sustainable Travel Demonstration Towns*