Making Smarter Choices Work Foreword

We call these measures `smarter choices' and they are becoming an increasingly important area for the Department for Transport.

Smarter choices include local programmes to encourage school, workplace and individualised travel planning; improving public transport information and marketing services; setting up web sites for car share schemes and supporting car clubs; and encouraging teleworking and teleconferencing.

This guide has been written for local authorities – both members and officers – and explains what we know about smarter choice measures, based on the latest research. It explains how local authorities can use them to improve traffic flows and make life more pleasant for local people.

The research on which this document is based was carried out during 2003-04 and looked at the impact that these measures can have on traffic. The final report, *`Smarter Choices – Changing the Way We Travel'* was published in July this year in parallel with the Department's White Paper *'The Future of Transport'*. It provides firm evidence of the impact of smarter choices on traffic, particularly where local authorities have promoted them vigorously.

The challenge now for local authorities is to recognise the potential benefits of smarter choice measures so that they make them an integral part of their transport strategies. Not only can they reduce congestion, but they give people genuine travel choices. They also contribute cost-effectively to other Government priorities, such as improving accessibility and social inclusion, encouraging regeneration, reducing pollution and carbon emissions and helping to increase levels of physical activity.

Rt Hon Alistair Darling MP
Secretary of State for Transport

Making Smarter Choices Work

There's no denying it – as a nation, we like to be behind the wheel. Cars accounted for 79 per cent of the total distance we travelled back in 1980 but by 2002, it was up to 85 per cent

This isn't all bad news – it's a sign that we're getting wealthier and it has brought real benefits to many people. But it has added to the problems of congestion and pollution that we're all so familiar with.

People choose the car for many journeys because it allows them to travel direct from one place to another in comfort. Persuading them to travel differently – and more sustainably – has never been easy.

But now there's a wide new choice of techniques available to help local authorities influence the travel decisions people make and to cut congestion on our roads. These techniques are already delivering big changes in people's travel patterns.

This guide explains what we know about them, based on the latest research, and how local authorities can use them to help solve their traffic problems.

What are 'smarter choices'?

These are new techniques for influencing people's travel behaviour towards more sustainable options, such as walking, cycling, travelling by public transport and car sharing. They are sometimes also called 'soft' measures.

There isn't a hard and fast definition of what measures constitute 'smarter choices', but they include:

+ giving people better information about their existing travel options;
+ marketing sustainable travel options more effectively, so they are better used;
+ making improvements to the way services are organised, so they better meet the needs of a particular group of people;
+ providing new transport services, very closely focussed on a particular target market such as a workplace or a residential area; and
+ providing new options that reduce the need to travel at all.

This guide covers 10 'smarter choice' measures:

workplace travel plans;

school travel plans;

personalised travel planning;

public transport information and marketing;

travel awareness campaigns;

car clubs;

car sharing schemes;

teleworking;

teleconferencing; and

home shopping.

Why are they the smarter thing to do?

These measures could help to ease congestion, reduce the impact of traffic on the environment, make sustainable transport options more attractive and improve people's quality of life. They can also boost social inclusion and encourage people to be more physically active.

They are now a vital part of the Government's strategy for local transport and local authorities are key to making them happen.

Recent research, commissioned by the Department for Transport, found that an intensive smarter choices programme over 10 years could cut car traffic significantly:

Urban peak-hour traffic could be cut by 21 per cent and off-peak traffic by 13 per cent.

Non-urban peak hour traffic could be cut by 14 per cent, and off-peak traffic by 7 per cent.

Nationally, traffic volumes could be cut by 11 per cent.

Smarter choices would have to be used much more intensively than they are now to achieve this much change. Every town would need to do what the most advanced are already doing, while leading local authorities would need to continue to develop their existing schemes.

What would a local smarter choices programme look like?

A balanced, local smarter choices programme for the next decade might include some or all of the following:

+ A team of people working with businesses to set up workplace travel plans. This team might also help set up workplace-based car sharing schemes and would promote sustainable working practices including teleworking (working from home or some other location) and teleconferencing (holding a 'virtual conference' using phone, video or computer links). Over a period of about 10 years, it would reach the stage where about half of the workforce was covered by travel plans;
+ A rolling programme of personalised travel planning, targeting at least 5,000 – 10,000 people each year, probably neighbourhood by neighbourhood;
+ A partnership with local bus and rail operators to market public transport improvements to people living nearby;
+ A rolling programme to develop school travel plans, including 'safe routes' infrastructure such as cycle tracks, zebra crossings and speed management measures. Over 10 years, this would cover every school in the area;
+ A broader travel awareness campaign, which would underpin the more targeted initiatives; and
+ A series of smaller projects for some of the measures which local authorities don't usually get involved with. For example, this might include establishing a car club and looking at ways of promoting home shopping.

In the short term, some smarter measures are likely to have a bigger effect than others. The evidence suggests that measures targeting the journey to work (workplace travel plans, car sharing schemes and telework) could deliver about half the potential overall traffic reduction. Other significant contributions are likely to come from personalised travel planning and teleconferencing. But this does not mean that the other measures are unimportant. School travel planning shapes future attitudes and travel choices when today's children are grown up. Initiatives like car clubs will not have a big impact in the next 10 years. However, in the longer term, they could deliver large reductions in car use and are potentially self-financing.

For greatest effect, a smarter choices programme should be combined with 'hard' traffic restraint measures. Without this, the road space freed up by the smarter choices programme could simply attract more car use by other people, so the net effect would be much less.

Hard measures to 'lock in' the benefits might include:

+ re-allocating road capacity – for example, installing high quality bus priority measures, increasing space for pedestrians and cyclists;
+ re-phasing traffic lights to give pedestrians and buses more time;
+ replacing pedestrian subways with surface crossings;
+ parking control (including low parking standards for new developments, charging, use of workplace parking levies, re-development of parking space for more productive uses);

"An intensive smart choices programme can greatly affect people's travel choices"

- congestion charging and adjustment of transport prices and fares; and
- traffic calming, pedestrianisation, stronger speed regulation and enforcement.

Traffic restraint is likely to be more effective, and potentially meet less opposition, if it goes alongside an intensive smarter choices programme.

The Department for Transport believes that many of the most effective transport interventions are revenue programmes. Some of the smarter choice programmes may be classed as capital (and can therefore be funded from the local transport capital settlement) – local authorities should resolve any issues about the precise definition of capital with their auditors.

What the Government is doing to encourage smarter choices

- Funding of £10 million over five years for three Sustainable Travel Demonstration Towns and sharing best practice with other towns that want to develop similar initiatives.
- Funding of £50 million for travel to school initiatives between 2004 and 2006. This is paying for 250 school travel advisers in local authorities and regional co-ordinators, together with capital funding for schools to spend on measures identified in their travel plans (typically £5,000 – £10,000 per school).

- Evaluation and disseminating the results of the £580,000 invested in 14 demonstration projects designed to broaden experience of the techniques of personalised travel planning.
- 42 point action plan to encourage more walking and cycling.
- A programme offering up to five days free site-specific consultancy advice to organisations that want to develop travel plans.
- The Healthy Schools scheme, which encourages schools to promote more physical activity, such as walking and cycling to school.
- Tax incentives to support travel plan measures.
- National endorsement of '*In town without my car!*' day.
- National guidance on school and workplace travel plan best practice.
- Strengthened planning policy guidance, which states that travel plans should be submitted alongside planning applications that are likely to have significant transport implications.
- Financially supporting the work of a number of non-governmental organisations such as the Association of Commuter Transport, Sustrans, Transport 2000, the National TravelWise Association and Carplus.

How do we know it will work? Evidence from the research

In July 2004, the Department for Transport published a major research report into smarter measures, called '*Smarter Choices: Changing the Way We Travel*'. It was based on 24 UK case studies and a worldwide literature review into the effects of smarter choice schemes.

The case studies involved in-depth interviews with local authorities with a track record in one or more of these measures. The aim was to find out what resources they had had available to them and how much change they had been able to deliver.

The researchers were asked to consider what difference smarter choices could make to future UK traffic levels in about 10 years time. They developed two scenarios, 'low intensity' and 'high intensity'. In the low intensity scenario, they assumed that local authorities would carry on introducing these initiatives, so there would be gradual growth in the number of schemes, but no step-change. In the high intensity scenario, the researchers assumed that there would be much more activity and many more resources than at present, while within the limits of what is achievable.

The scenarios were based on evidence from the case studies. They considered how much difference each individual measure made to car use and how many people could be affected bearing in mind various practical constraints.

These figures were used to generate 'journey change factors' for each of the smarter measures, which the researchers then applied to traffic data from the National Transport Model. The calculations allowed for some overlapping effects of different measures.

The final figures estimate how much traffic could be cut if a smarter choices programme was developed over a period of about 10 years. In the high intensity scenario, peak hour urban traffic could be cut by 21 per cent and peak hour non-urban traffic by 14 per cent. Nationally, traffic could be cut by 11 per cent.

Workplace travel planning

What is a workplace travel plan?

A workplace travel plan sets out steps to encourage staff to travel to work by public transport, on foot, by bike or by car share.

Travel plans could cover a single site or a cluster of businesses – for example, on a business park.

Travel plan measures would vary depending on the number of employees, but might include:

+ new public bus or rail services linking to the site;
+ dedicated 'works buses' shuttling between the site and the town centre;
+ giving all staff public transport information;
+ offering personalised journey plans to staff;
+ interest-free season ticket loans;
+ special deals to reduce the cost of bus and rail travel for employees;
+ secure cycle parking;
+ changing facilities, showers and lockers;
+ business cycle mileage allowance;
+ a car sharing scheme;
+ preferential car parking for sharers;
+ parking 'cash out' (paying employees a small sum on days they do not drive);
+ car parking restricted to essential users;
+ parking charges;
+ publicity: newsletters, prize draws etc, linked to special car-free days;
+ services on site to reduce need to travel (e.g. cafeteria, cash dispenser, convenience store);
+ encouraging teleworking; and
+ variations on the five-day week e.g. compressed working hours.

+ Cheaper bus tickets
+ Reducing car use between 10 and 25 per cent.

"Although there may be some costs for businesses, there are also opportunities to save money too"

How can local authorities promote workplace travel plans?

Evidence from the Smarter Choices research suggests that local authorities stand the best chance of having an impact if they do the following:

+ Employ a dedicated team of several workplace travel officers to promote travel planning to businesses;
+ Get the development control section to review all planning applications and require workplace travel plans to be built into all large or strategically significant developments. For example, any development that will employ more than 50 people might be required to draw up a travel plan in order to get planning permission;
+ Set up a partnership with public transport operators and negotiate special deals for companies with active travel plans. For example, Birmingham City Council works closely with bus companies Travel West Midlands and CENTRO. They offer a half-price season ticket to any employee who gives up a work parking space or a company car;
+ Concentrate on larger employers and those with congested site access. For example, hospitals often suffer acute problems with ambulances, staff, visitors and patients getting onto the site. Several local authorities are now targeting about 30 per cent of the workforce in their area just by concentrating on large employers;
+ Set up commuter planner clubs to encourage travel co-ordinators in different companies to share information and work together. Sometimes it is useful to set up business clusters – for example bringing together employers in the same sector (such as educational institutions) or employers based in the same area. Companies based near Nottingham station have worked with Central Trains to promote train travel to their staff. Over 15 per cent of staff at one of the largest companies, Capital One, now commute by train; and
+ Offer grants to businesses – especially small and medium enterprises (SMEs) – to encourage them to develop travel plans. In Bristol, companies receive grants of up to £5,000 to fund up to 40 to 50 per cent of the cost of their travel plan initiatives.

Case Study

Cheaper bus tickets, fewer parking spaces: Buckinghamshire County Council

Buckinghamshire County Council reduced the proportion of council employees driving to work from 71 per cent in 1998 to 49 per cent in 2003. The Council negotiated half price bus fares and a third off rail fares for its staff. It set up a car sharing scheme and installed new cycle shelters, together with lockers and showers. There was a lot of publicity to encourage staff to walk to work. At the same time, less than half the staff were entitled to free parking close to the offices.

How much does workplace travel planning cost?

The seven local authority workplace travel planning case studies in the Smarter Choices research spent between £2 and £4 a year on each employee targeted, although one local authority spent more than this and one spent less. These figures include the cost of a staff team, plus a grants scheme (if one existed) and a promotional budget.

A medium-sized town with a workforce of 100,000 might expect to spend between £60,000 and £120,000 a year to reach about a third of its workforce. A conurbation of half a million people would need to spend about £100,000 to £200,000 a year to reach a tenth of its workforce and more than that as the programme grew to cover more people.

None of the case study areas was spending enough to target the whole workforce. Since these local authorities were among those at the forefront of workplace travel planning, this suggests most local authorities could spend substantially more on workplace travel planning than they do at the moment.

Although there may be some costs for businesses, there are also opportunities to save money. Earlier research published in *'Making Travel Plans Work'* suggests that the average cost of a travel plan is about £50 a year for each employee.

This is a lot less than the typical £300 to £500 cost of a parking space. Some businesses may even save money, for example by using revenue from car park charges to help fund travel plan measures, and by saving on the amount of car parking they need.

How effective is workplace travel planning?

Workplace travel plans looked at during the Smarter Choices research showed varying results, ranging from no impact (and even a few examples where car use went up), to cuts in car use of over 35 per cent. But a typical travel plan can reduce car use by between 10 per cent and 25 per cent.

Taken together, a well-developed programme of workplace travel planning across a large number of employers might be expected to reduce car commuting by an average of about 18 per cent. This figure allows for some 'poor performers' as well as some companies that do much better.

The impact of a travel plan can go up over time, as more measures are put in place. However, it can also go down, for example if a key champion leaves a company. So it is important to keep supporting a company once it has got its travel plan up and running. Travel plans do not run themselves.

Case Studies

Birmingham makes it easy for businesses

Birmingham City Council has set up the Company TravelWise programme for employers. It offers companies a menu of options, rather than expecting each to draw up their own travel plans. About 165 companies are affiliated to Company TravelWise, covering 29 per cent of Birmingham's workforce.

Affiliated companies get regular mailings, including public transport timetables for their staff. Discounts are available for equipment such as cycle parking stands.

The Council's travel plan team believes that an important part of its role is trouble-shooting. Project Leader Mike Cooper says, "Any obstacle that gets in the way of someone being sustainable, we will try to sort it out – whether it is cycle parking, street lighting, poor bus routes that don't meet shift patterns, or an access route from a business park to a station."

Partnership Working in Cambridgeshire

The Cambridgeshire Travel for Work Partnership unites the county and city councils with partners South Cambridgeshire District Council, Cambridge University, Addenbrooke's Hospital and the local primary care trust.

The partnership has about 60 active members, covering 34,000 employees – about 29 per cent of the workforce in the city and South Cambridgeshire.

Member companies receive support and advice to draw up a travel plan. There is an annual web-based travel survey that all members are encouraged to take part in.

School travel plans

What is a school travel plan?

A school travel plan aims to cut the congestion caused by the school run; reduce traffic danger; and support pupils who are already travelling by more sustainable means.

It makes it more attractive for pupils to get to school by walking, cycling, public transport or sometimes car sharing. School travel plans work best where the school is actively involved but with strong support from the local authority.

Typical school travel plan measures might include:

+ special walking or cycling promotion days;
+ walking buses or cycle trains;
+ a programme of pedestrian and cycle training for children, including on-road tuition as well as in the playground;
+ cycle parking;
+ improvements to bus or train services;
+ special school buses, with a seat for every child, on-board escorts, seatbelts, a smoking ban, and drivers trained in supervising children;
+ fare cuts;
+ car sharing schemes for families living in the same neighbourhood;
+ activities as part of the curriculum to sell the benefits of sustainable transport and involve children in developing the plan;
+ physical changes to the streets around the school, such as 20mph limits, traffic calming, pedestrian crossings and cycle lanes; and
+ setting out the travel policy in the school prospectus and/or home-school agreement.

How can local authorities promote school travel plans?

The Smarter Choices research and forthcoming guidance *Making School Travel Plans Work* suggest that local authorities are likely to have most impact on car travel to school if they do the following:

+ Employ a dedicated team of school travel officers to get schools involved in travel planning;

+ Walking buses can improve punctuality attendance at school
+ Developing better road safety skills
+ Getting regular healthy exercise

+ Work in partnership with schools, involving children, parents and teachers in the process of deciding what to do. This gives much better results than if the local authority simply goes ahead and installs traffic calming or new crossings without active involvement from the school. Sometimes, very small actions identified by the school can have a large effect;
+ Offer a step by step framework for schools to follow, so they know what they need to do to develop their travel plan. Make sure it shows the benefits, such as funding for traffic calming or cycle shelters, once the school reaches a certain stage. For example, Buckinghamshire County Council has developed a three tiered grading system for travel plans, with level three schools eligible for an awards scheme to get funding for the measures they feel are needed. It is important that schools receive support to get started; and
+ Work with both the keenest schools and those that have significant safety problems. Some local authorities have had a lot of success working with groups of schools. As word spreads, more and more schools will start to see the benefits of being involved.

How much does school travel planning cost?

The Smarter Choices research looked at three local authorities that supported school travel plans. They typically spent around £4 a year on each pupil covered by a school travel plan. This covered the cost of a staff team, plus funding for promotional materials and small grants to schools, but not the cost of infrastructure such as cycle lanes and traffic calming.

Typically, capital spending on infrastructure measures in the case studies was between £30,000 to £75,000 per school or £30 to £250 for each pupil place. However, this is not enough for comprehensive `safe routes' treatment. For example, £30,000 would pay for a zebra crossing and some footway improvements. More comprehensive treatment might well cost over £100,000.

A county council with about 75,000 children on the school roll would need to spend about £150,000 a year to work with half its schools and £300,000 a year to work with them all. On top of this, it would need to allocate capital funding of about £0.75 million a year to improve the basic infrastructure (such as a pedestrian crossing or traffic calming and a 20mph zone) at every school over 10 years.

How effective is school travel planning?

Two of the local authority case studies for the Smarter Choices research had already engaged 60 per cent of their schools in travel planning. The third case study area, a city that had started school travel work more recently, had engaged 20 per cent of their schools in travel planning.

Amongst schools involved in travel planning, most (about 60 to 90 per cent) can be expected to cut car use to some extent. A substantial proportion (about 15 to 40 per cent) can be expected to cut car use by over a fifth.

The case studies showed that a well-developed programme of school travel planning across a number of schools might be expected to reduce the amount of school run traffic by between 8 per cent and 15 per cent.

There are many other benefits to school travel work. Some teachers say that children who have walked to school with their friends are more ready to settle down and learn once they reach school. `Walking buses' can improve punctuality and attendance at schools. Children who walk to school develop better road safety skills than children who are dropped off by car. They also develop more independence and get regular healthy exercise.

The case studies examined by the Smarter Choices research cost about 2 to 10 pence per car kilometre taken off the road. The higher figure was for a local authority that was investing heavily in traffic calming, cycle lanes and pedestrian crossings; the lower figure was for a local authority that was concentrating on non-infrastructure measures.

Case Study

Merseyside travel co-ordinators walk the talk

School travel planning in Merseyside is co-ordinated by Merseyside TravelWise, a partnership of the five local authorities and Merseytravel. The team of school travel co-ordinators has worked with over 120 schools. Their main techniques are walking promotion days ('Walking Wednesdays' and 'Fresh Air Fridays'), park-away days and walking buses.

Schools with fully-fledged travel plans are encouraged to draw up a wish list of infrastructure and environmental improvements, which are funded through a local authority Safer Routes LTP budget. The TravelWise team gives schools a lot of support, and has a close relationship with each one. This may extend to joining a new walking bus in its early days, taking school assemblies and drawing up grant applications for regeneration funding.

Case Study

Buckinghamshire's partnership approach

Buckinghamshire County Council has worked with nearly two-thirds of the schools in the county. It has focussed on Crocodile Trails – the name it gives to walking buses – and an incentive scheme called Go for Gold, which rewards children for walking or park and walk or cycling. The Council has also provided cycle parking and gazebos (covered waiting areas for parents). Buckinghamshire monitors progress annually in October, with a 'hands up' survey in which about half of all schools take part. The former team leader, Catherine Rawas, emphasises that the schools are key partners, "Our top priority is to listen to what the schools want, be open to new suggestions, and support the schools in achieving change".

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Personalised travel planning

What is personalised travel planning?

Personalised travel planning is a targeted marketing technique, providing travel advice and information to people based on an understanding of their personal trip patterns.

Employees, school children or households in a particular area might be contacted to find out which of a range of services and information and sometimes incentives they would find useful. The items on offer might include:

+ pocket sized public transport timetables for the main routes into town;
+ a timetable specifically for their nearest bus stop;
+ a personalised journey plan for a trip they make on a regular basis;
+ a free one-month public transport trial ticket for people who do not already use public transport;
+ the offer of a visit from someone who can provide personal travel advice;
+ a map of walking and cycle routes in their area; and
+ loan of a bike.

Participants are sometimes asked to keep a travel diary and may be given tips and suggestions for how to use their cars less.

How can local authorities use personalised travel planning?

At present, consultants carry out most personalised travel planning, although there is no reason why a local authority should not develop the expertise to run an in-house programme. Experience of personalised travel planning is still at quite an early stage but there are already lessons to be learned from the early programmes.

+ Car use fell by 9 per cent in Gloucester – a Smarter Choices case study area
+ Possible to cut car use by 7 to 15 per cent in urban areas

- A single phase can target as many as 5,000 to 10,000 people. If this many residents are targeted in a single neighbourhood, the effect of the programme should show up in increased public transport use, as well as in monitoring surveys.
- The effect is greater where public transport is reasonably good. Places with very poor alternatives to the car may see smaller changes in people's behaviour, although there will probably still be some effect.
- The most suitable neighbourhoods for personalised travel planning are also likely to have reasonable local shops and facilities, some excess capacity on public transport, a reasonable quality environment for walking and cycling and local recognition that traffic is a problem.
- Personalised travel planning can increase the impact of public transport improvements.
- Many of the changes in people's travel choices are for journeys that were previously made by car and which switch to being made on foot. These could be short journeys or journeys which switch destination. For example, someone may decide to walk to the local shop rather than driving to an out-of-town superstore.
- The effects of a personalised travel planning programme seem to last for some time. Follow-up surveys between one and four years later have shown sustained behaviour change. However, the effect of the programme may diminish over time if there is no effort to reinforce it with the same group of people.

How much does personalised travel planning cost?

A pilot personalised travel planning scheme involving, say, 500 people, might be expected to cost about £60 per person. Large-scale initiatives are much cheaper, at around £10 to £20 per person. Larger initiatives cost less due to economies of scale in producing information material, and because before and after monitoring can generally be carried out on a sample rather than everyone targeted.

The first large-scale personalised travel planning project in the UK took place in Gloucester and targeted 10,000 people at a cost of £170,000. A few local authorities are starting to look at the cost of rolling out large-scale annual programmes. Transport for London has estimated that a programme targeting 120,000 to 150,000 people a year would cost about £1.3 million.

There are several possible sources of funding for personalised travel planning projects. Case study interviewees suggested that funding might come from:

- planning gain agreements for new housing developments;
- partnerships with bus operators (since they stand to gain commercially); and
- partnerships with health promotion bodies (since personalised travel planning can encourage more healthy and active lifestyles).

How effective is personalised travel planning?

Results from personalised travel planning projects worldwide suggest that it is possible to cut car use by 7 to 15 per cent in urban areas, and perhaps somewhat less in rural areas. In the Smarter Choices case study areas, car use was reported to fall by 9 per cent in Gloucester, and 5 per cent and 10 per cent in two areas of Bristol.

Bus services were being improved in the Bristol case study area and monitoring showed that bus use went up both in households that were part of the personalised travel planning programme and in those that were not. However, the increase in bus use in the households that were involved in personalised travel planning was about twice that of the other group.

Car drivers were more likely to take extra bus trips in the households that had received personalised travel planning, whereas most of the extra bus trips in the other group were by people who had previously walked or travelled as a car passenger. This suggests that personalised travel planning can help make the most of public transport improvements.

Case Study

Gloucester suburb signs up for travel planning

Quedgeley is a suburb of Gloucester, a few miles from the city centre. A lot of new homes were built there in the 1970s. It is a fairly affluent area, with good local facilities, including a primary and a secondary school, a library and a supermarket. It has a good bus service into Gloucester, which runs every 15 minutes. The area has higher than average car use and relatively little problem with traffic congestion.

Consultants tried to contact someone from every household for the large-scale TravelSmart personalised travel planning project in Quedgeley. Some households were contacted by phone, some by post and some face-to-face. About half of all households were not regular users of environmentally-friendly forms of transport, but wanted more information about them. The most popular item was a bus-stop specific timetable. Many households wanted information leaflets about walking and cycling. About a quarter of all households asked for further services, such as a public transport discount card or a home visit to get personal advice about public transport, cycling or walking. Provisional results in January 2004 suggested that the project may have cut car use by 9 per cent.

Public transport information and marketing

What is public transport information and marketing?

The public transport information and marketing projects examined, as part of the Smarter Choices research, included projects promoting an individual bus route to the people most likely to use it.

Others include:

+ projects using personalised journey planners and other targeted marketing techniques to promote an entire network; and
+ area-wide projects involving non-targeted marketing, promotion, information and re-branding of a public transport service.

These approaches can prove very effective at getting people to use public transport more often.

The benefits

+ In Perth, Scotland, a direct marketing campaign produced passenger growth of 63 per cent over three years
+ In London, bus travel has increased by 31 per cent over four years

How can local authorities promote public transport?

The Smarter Choices case studies suggest that there is lots of potential to increase public transport travel through marketing and information. Here are some key lessons from the case studies:

+ Many people have poor or outdated information about public transport. When services get better, targeted marketing to people living nearby is likely to increase use. Targeted marketing as part of a quality bus partnership will lead to greater passenger growth than would be expected from a conventional quality bus partnership, and for relatively little extra cost;
+ Branding is important. It can be used to improve the image of public transport and to give people confidence that different bus services are part of a co-ordinated network;
+ Personalised journey planners can increase public transport use across an entire network;
+ Targeted marketing may be particularly effective in attracting car drivers, whereas general public transport improvements without marketing may mainly influence existing bus users;
+ Marketing and information can increase public transport patronage even where it has been declining; and
+ Sustained attention to marketing and information can result in patronage growth for a decade or possibly longer.

How much does public transport information and marketing cost?

The budget for the Travel Options Planning Service, covering the whole of the South Yorkshire PTE area, was £176,000. This included the cost of seven full-time staff. However, the service almost paid for itself through additional ticket revenue of at least £150,000 a year.

In Nottingham and Brighton, city-wide public transport promotion cost each local authority about £60,000 to £85,000 a year, including staff costs and promotional materials. There was also significant capital spending in Nottingham, covering information panels, information 'drums' at bus stops, departure boards and real-time information. This came to about £220,000 a year.

The bus companies in Nottingham and Brighton spent about £225,000 to £250,000 a year on marketing and promotion, including radio ads, poster campaigns, timetables and bus stop information.

The Smarter Choices research estimated that the public cost of the information and marketing activities in Nottingham and Brighton was about 1 to 2 pence per car kilometre taken off the road.

How effective is public transport information and marketing?

Information and marketing can clearly lead to more passengers travelling by public transport. But this will only cut traffic congestion if some of the new passengers would otherwise have gone by car.

Typically, about a third of new passengers may be ex-car users. However, some targeted marketing campaigns have focussed on car drivers. TOPS in South Yorkshire and the Red Route 9 promotion in Buckinghamshire are good examples of marketing campaigns designed to appeal to this group.

In London, bus travel has increased by 31 per cent over four years, with half the additional travel made by people who previously did not use buses at all. Although 'hard' bus priority measures and extra bus services have been important, 'soft' measures including the introduction of a simple flat fare are also significant.

In Perth, Scotland, a direct marketing campaign produced passenger growth of 63 per cent over three years, roughly double the average increase for a conventional quality bus partnership. The people converted to public transport were all from the social groups most likely to be car drivers.

Case Studies

Promoting an individual route

Buckinghamshire County Council ran a targeted marketing campaign to increase the number of passengers on Red Route 9 between Stoke Mandeville hospital and Aylesbury town centre. The buses were given a distinctive livery, with information about the route and the words 'every 10 minutes' blazed on the side of each vehicle. The Council produced a glossy timetable booklet, which Travel Choice Team Leader Stefan Dimic says was "designed to look aspirational, like a Mercedes advert". This and a letter from the Council's Chair of Transportation was sent to all 5,000 people living within 500 metres of the route, encouraging them to try the service.

Two years before the marketing of Red Route 9, the Council had improved the bus infrastructure on the route, installing a bus lane, new signs at bus stops, and new shelters and seats. These changes had little effect on patronage but two months after the marketing campaign, the number of passengers had risen by 28 per cent. Eight months later patronage was up 42 per cent.

Personalised journey planning to promote an entire network

South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive runs a Travel Options Planning Service (TOPS), which tailors travel information to companies, employees and individuals.
The programme targets people who are not already using public transport. It includes personalised journey planners, which are offered to employees in local companies, people travelling to job interviews and children moving up to secondary school. These have been successful in increasing public transport use.
A follow-up survey of people who had been given a personalised journey planner found bus travel had risen 18 per cent, train travel 10 per cent and tram use 12 per cent.

Generalised area-wide marketing and promotion

A long-term decline in bus use has been reversed in Nottingham by re-branding the bus network, coupled with marketing and better information. Cross-city services were removed, so all buses started or finished in the city centre. This greatly improved reliability. Each corridor out of the city was colour-coded, so all buses using that main route are the same colour. New 'Go2' services run on main corridors every 10 minutes.

Bus stops are clustered to form mini-bus stations, with co-ordinated information covering the services run by all operators. City centre maps explaining where to change bus are on the back of every bus shelter and on stand-alone panels throughout the city centre. Passenger journeys are now increasing at about 1.8 per cent a year.

Bus travel in Brighton has been rising 5 per cent a year for the last 10 years. A close and long-standing partnership between the bus company and the city council has delivered:

+ colour-coded, Tube-style 'Metro' branding for the five most frequent cross-city routes;
+ a flat fare; and
+ comprehensive printed information about services.

Express commuter services from two housing estates to Brighton city centre have attracted many former drivers.

Travel awareness campaigns

What are travel awareness campaigns?

Travel awareness campaigns aim to improve general public understanding of the problems caused by traffic growth and to encourage people to think about their own travel behaviour.

They may use posters, leaflets, advertising in the press or on local radio, television or cinemas, or tie-in with high profile events such as the annual '*In Town Without My Car!*' campaign.

Travel awareness campaigns tend to be aimed at the whole population rather than particular groups of people. Their messages therefore tend to be simple and general but they help to prepare people for change.

City of York Council has run a series of city-wide awareness campaigns. The campaigns are based on media space that car drivers will see – for example, on the backs of buses and on the back of car park tickets. There have been adverts on the local radio station, because drivers often tune in to this, and at out of town cinemas. The travel awareness team has also produced coasters and beer mats with campaign messages, for distribution to local pubs and employers.

In 2001, York ran a walking campaign targeted at car drivers, which used eight different images. The main message was that walking is healthy, but there were also messages about congestion and climate change. Pictures showed shoes with straplines such as, 'With sporty looks and powerful pavement handling...walking is the healthiest way to travel'.

+ Local travel awareness campaigns can commonly reach about 20 to 40 per cent of residents and in some cases more
+ Aimed at whole population

"The success of travel awareness campaigns is often measured by the number of people recalling the campaign and what they remember from it"

The Council has also run a cycling campaign, with messages designed to evoke the sense of freedom offered by cycling and to appeal to 18 to 25 year olds. This campaign used the slogan 'How far will you go?' with messages such as 'How far will you go...for a fitter body?' and 'How far will you go...to get closer to nature?' In 2003, the campaign used two slogans, 'Walk on by' and 'Ride on by', aimed at young professionals going to work.

How local authorities can use travel awareness campaigns

Evidence from the Smarter Choices research suggests the following:

+ It is worth employing specialists with a background in marketing to co-ordinate and develop a campaign strategy;
+ Sustained campaigns may be more effective than short bursts, as these give the opportunity to reinforce a message and achieve greater impact;
+ Some local authorities have successfully funded travel awareness campaigns from capital programmes by linking the campaign to a specific infrastructure improvement. York City Council allocated 1 per cent of the LTP integrated transport plan capital budget to travel awareness campaigns. Each campaign was linked to a specific capital project, such as a new cycle route or improved walking route;

+ Travel awareness campaigns can act as a unifying 'brand' for many different activities, showing the public how they all fit together. Nottingham's 'Big Wheel' campaign has articulated a transport vision for the city and linked it to individual initiatives. The Big Wheel brand is used for timetables, area travel guides, school travel plan packs, workplace travel plan information, brochures, posters and postcards;
+ Health seems to be the strongest motivation for people to change their travel behaviour. Local authorities can work closely with the health sector to communicate campaign messages about the health benefits of walking and cycling; and
+ Travel awareness campaigns can help build acceptance of potentially unpopular measures. An important objective of Nottingham's 'Big Wheel' campaign was to reassure businesses that the proposed workplace parking levy was part of a long term vision and strategy for improving the city.

How much do travel awareness campaigns cost?

The travel awareness campaign in York costs about £90,000 a year, including staff time. This works out at about 50 pence per resident. Nottingham's 'Big Wheel' campaign costs just under 40 pence a year for each resident.

How effective are travel awareness campaigns?

The success of travel awareness campaigns is often measured by the number of people recalling the campaign and what they remember from it. Local travel awareness campaigns can commonly reach about 20 to 40 per cent of residents and in some cases more. In York, 32 per cent of residents were aware of the TravelWise campaign in 2002. In Nottingham, 67 per cent of residents were aware of the 'Big Wheel' campaign.

Tentative evidence from the York campaign suggested that between 3 per cent and 12 per cent of drivers may have cut their car use as a result of the campaign.

Car sharing

What is car sharing?

There are two types of car sharing. Some local authorities, businesses and schools promote car sharing for regular trips to work or school.

People who register with the scheme are matched with one or more people who make the same trip. Alternatively, there are schemes, which help people find someone to share a one-off car journey.

At the moment, the best-developed car sharing schemes are targeted at the daily commute. Such schemes may operate within a single company or across a number of different employers in the same area. A typical car sharing scheme would involve some of the following:

+ Buying car sharing software. This generally requires in-house administrative support to match people who are making similar journeys. Companies such as Intrinsica and JamBusters sell software for this;
+ Buying into an internet-based scheme, such as those operated by Share-a-journey and Liftshare. These can be locally branded. They do not require day-to-day administrative support to make car sharing matches, although they should be locally managed and marketed to maximise their potential;
+ Promotion to encourage people to register. This might include a lunchtime launch event in a staff cafeteria, with a prize draw or a small gift such as a voucher for people who sign up;
+ Ongoing incentives for people to join. In some organisations, car sharers are exempt from parking charges. For example, car sharers at the financial services company Egg were exempt from paying a daily 75 pence parking charge;
+ Dedicated parking spaces for sharers in the most attractive spots, such as immediately outside the main entrance. This gives a visible reminder of the scheme as well as a being a bonus to sharers; and
+ Some firms guarantee a taxi ride home if a car sharing arrangement falls through. Their experience is that this arrangement is rarely taken up but reassures staff.

+ Companies can be encouraged to join the scheme and promote it to their staff
+ Local authorities can promote car sharing across an entire area

"CarShare Devon was launched in 2003, and is provided by Liftshare.com for Devon County Council"

Some car sharing schemes target leisure trips and the school run. Share-a-journey has helped develop a car sharing scheme for 15,000 to 20,000 regular visitors to the Eden Project (`passport holders' who live within 50 to 60 miles), and a lift-sharing scheme for private schools in Cambridgeshire which is run in collaboration with the County Council.

How can local authorities promote car sharing?

Local authorities can promote car sharing across an entire area, involving many employers. Companies can be encouraged to join the scheme and promote it to their staff or local publicity can contact employees directly.

The Smarter Choices case studies suggest the following key ingredients for success.

+ Lots of publicity. CarShare Devon was launched in 2003 and is provided by Liftshare.com for Devon County Council. It was publicised through:
  + 40 temporary road signs on regular commuting routes;
  + provocative radio adverts;
  + 116 bus back adverts;
  + adverts on the back of car park tickets;
  + 5,000 leaflets sent out with NHS Trust wage slips;
  + leaflets sent to all staff at Plymouth University;
  + contact with over 500 employers with more than 50 staff;
  + publicity on all outgoing council franked mail;
  + displays at the Devon County Show and in large libraries; and
  + a message from the Chief Executive of Devon County Council on the bottom of all 24,000 staff wage slips.

Nearly 400 members registered in the first eight weeks. A year later, 1,673 members had registered.

+ Clear incentives for joiners to save time or money or both. One of the fastest-growing car share schemes is 2carshare.com, which operates in South Gloucestershire and has over 1,800 members. This scheme has advertised above a high-occupancy vehicle lane on part of the Avon ring road in north Bristol. The Milton Keynes car-share scheme (see below) offers free town centre parking to car-sharers.

Car sharing schemes are particularly appropriate where:

+ people are travelling relatively long distances to work;
+ public transport is poor;
+ car ownership and car dependency are high; and
+ there are many journeys to a limited number of places (for example, from surrounding villages into a town centre).

How much does a car sharing scheme cost?

Start-up costs, including software and feasibility work, were £15,000 to £35,000 in the two Smarter Choices area-wide case studies. However, some schemes may be cheaper than this, particularly as experience of car sharing schemes spreads. Liftshare reports that an automated web-based car sharing scheme can cost as little as £400 to £8,000 to set up.

The main running cost should be publicity and marketing. This depends on the size of the target market. Liftshare.com suggests budgeting about £5 for each person targeted.

Other running costs include staff time, which may range from about one full-time member of staff in an internally managed scheme, to one day a week or less for web-based schemes. An annual licence for a web-based scheme might cost £200 to £2,000, depending on size.

Where companies are invited to buy into an area-wide scheme, they may have to spend some money on incentive payments to staff, paying for taxi-rides home where car sharing arrangements fall through, and marking out dedicated parking for sharers. These costs might add up to a few thousand pounds.

How effective is car sharing?

There is not yet enough evidence to say by how much a car sharing scheme will reduce car use. Effectiveness will depend on the number of people joining and how often they car share. The Smarter Choices research estimated that each active member of a car sharing scheme might save about 4,500 km per year. The cost per car kilometre taken off the road was put at about 1 to 3 pence.

Case Study

Making car sharing pay in Milton Keynes

CarShare MK was launched in Milton Keynes on the same day as a major extension of parking charges across the town centre. Car sharing members of the scheme can park for free, saving up to £5 a day. To qualify, two registered sharers must display their permits in the windscreen. There are designated car sharing bays around the town centre in prime sites. Non-car-sharers pay 20 to 80 pence an hour to park in the town centre.

Car clubs

What is a car club?

A car club gives people the choice of a fleet of vehicles parked in their neighbourhood.

This gives them access to a car whenever they need it, but without the high fixed costs of individual car ownership.

Car club members are able to mix and match their travel, using a car when that is the best option but travelling by public transport, on foot or by bike at other times.

Members of a car club pay an annual fee of between £100 and £200, plus a charge for each mile and hour they use a car. The total annual cost for members who do not clock up high mileages is less than that of buying and running a car.

Car clubs are well developed in Switzerland, where the national car club Mobility has about 60,000 members. They are also well established in Germany, the USA and Canada. They are still at an early stage in the UK. The umbrella organisation Carplus knows of 25 car clubs in the UK.

How can local authorities develop a car club?

The two car clubs examined in the Smarter Choices research were in Edinburgh and Bristol. Both clubs are now run by car club operator Smart Moves, with support and funding from the city councils. Local authorities can help car clubs in the following ways:

+ Providing a start-up grant;
+ Designating on-street parking bays for car club vehicles;
+ Block booking car club vehicles during working hours as a car pool for council staff. This helps increase financial viability of the car club, since its vehicles would otherwise be under-used during the day. In Edinburgh, the council has a block booking on five car club vehicles for working hours, replacing leased pool cars;
+ Using supplementary planning guidance to encourage housing developers to provide or contribute towards a car club in new residential developments;
+ Waiving some costs for car club members. For example, car club members in Southwark, London, are exempt from the congestion charge; and
+ Helping negotiate local bus and rail discounts for car club members.

+ Already 25 known in the UK
+ Car club members are able to mix and match their travel
+ Access to a car whenever needed without the high fixed cost of individual car ownership

"UK experience so far suggests that for each car club vehicle, about five private cars are taken off the road"

How much does it cost to set up a car club?

Car clubs need start-up funding. This might be around £100,000 to £160,000 over the first four years for an urban car club. There is some evidence that smaller start-up subsidies of about £60,000 may be enough in rural areas.

Although the start-up costs may be substantial, car clubs should eventually become self-financing. The Edinburgh car club had 317 members by mid-2004 and needs about 500 members to break-even. It is currently gaining about 150 members a year.

How effective are car clubs?

Annual car mileage in the Bristol and Edinburgh car clubs has fallen by at least 3,600 kilometres per member, according to the Smarter Choices research.

Car use goes down more for some people than others. People who sell their car when they join a car club may cut their mileage by about two-thirds. Car mileage often stays unchanged for people who did not own a car before they joined the car club. These people often borrowed friends' cars or hired cars beforehand. Car mileage may even increase slightly for people who keep their own car and treat the car club as an extra household vehicle. UK experience so far suggests that for each car club vehicle, about five private cars are taken off the road.

In the short term car clubs may have relatively little impact on traffic levels. However, they are an attractive option because once they have reached the critical mass required to be self-financing, they do not need any more subsidy. In the longer term, the Smarter Choices research suggested that up to one in ten adults might join a car club.

Case Study

Local council support for Bristol car club

Bristol City Car Club has 160 members and 11 cars. It recruits about 70 new members a year. Cars cost £2.30 an hour plus 15 pence a mile. The club is managed from an office in Bristol but with back-office support from the Smart Moves head office. Local car club staff are responsible for publicity and marketing campaigns, identifying sites for new cars, and day-to-day management.

The local authority has agreed a start-up grant of £160,000 over four years, partly funded from a European initiative. It designates parking bays for the club, and has provided extra publicity. The Council has also negotiated with developers to include car clubs in new residential areas. The local bus company, First Bus, has supported the car club with a 10 per cent discount on tickets for members.

Teleworking

What is teleworking?

Teleworking means working at home, or at a telecentre near to home, for some or all of the time.

It involves work that has to be done with a telephone and a computer (as opposed to work that was traditionally carried out from home, such as piece work). At least 7 per cent of the labour force work from home at least once a week using a phone and a computer, and since 1997 the number of teleworkers has been growing at 13 per cent a year.

The people most likely to telework are managers and people in professional, administrative, secretarial and skilled occupations. However, all occupational groups have some degree of teleworking already. Teleworking takes place even in sectors that rely heavily on personal contact. For example, 10 per cent of people working in education are teleworkers and 5 per cent of people in health and social work.

How can local authorities promote teleworking?

A local authority can promote teleworking by its own staff. One study of Cambridgeshire County Council found that many of the tasks carried out by staff could have been carried out at home as easily as in the office. Up to 20 per cent of the work by support staff and 30-60 per cent of work by service delivery staff was location-independent.

Local authorities can also promote teleworking to employers. Cambridgeshire County Council and the East of England Development Agency produced a teleworking toolkit for employers. Buckinghamshire County Council has set up two telecentres for its own staff in Amersham and Winslow, and would like to make these available to staff from other companies. Local authorities could encourage teleworking in smaller companies by offering grants.

Individual companies that decide to encourage teleworking will need to support their staff. They might offer:

+ a computer;
+ a dedicated phone line;
+ access to IT support (BT runs a phone and email support helpdesk for its teleworking employees, with a team of five); and
+ help towards the cost of office furniture (BT offers staff a furniture budget of up to £650 when they begin telework).

+ Teleworking may not cost companies any more, or may even save money
+ Surveys in many countries shows that teleworking does reduce car milage

“Staff take less sick leave. Teleworkers take 70 per cent fewer days off sick than office-based employees”

How much does teleworking cost?

Teleworking may not cost companies any more, or may even save money if it reduces the amount of office space a company needs. By re-organising its offices, BT has made savings of £180 million a year. Some of this is attributable to teleworking.

There are also less tangible benefits. Surveys of BT employees who telework found the following:

+ Staff are more productive. Eighty-one per cent of employees said they were more productive, produced better work, had a higher total output and were more creative;
+ Staff take less sick leave. Teleworkers take 70 per cent fewer days off sick than office-based employees;
+ Staff retention rates are higher, as are rates of return to work after maternity leave. One in ten teleworking employees said that they would not be able to do their current job if they could not telework – either because of responsibilities for children or for ill or disabled family members, or because they were themselves disabled or recovering from illness; and
+ Better quality of life and a better balance between working life and personal life.

How effective is teleworking?

There has been a lot of debate about whether teleworking actually cuts car use. The chief concerns are that teleworkers may make other car trips if they do not have to drive to work, or that other family members may use the car instead. However, surveys of teleworkers in many countries seem to show that teleworking does reduce car mileage. Although teleworkers may make some extra non-work car trips, these tend to be closer to home. Other family members seem to make fewer trips, not more.

The average teleworker works from home between one and a half and three days a week, although some work at home much less than this. The amount of car travel avoided depends on how often a person teleworks; studies of teleworkers have found reductions in car mileage of between 15 and 193 miles a week.

Case Study

BT does its homework to cut car miles

Over 7,500 BT staff are registered with the company's Workabout scheme. Some work mainly at home, with occasional days or half-days at BT offices. Others split their work between home and several BT offices. BT staff surveys suggest that each employee has cut their commuting by about 193 miles a week on average, even after allowing for some new non-work trips.

Teleconferencing

What is teleconferencing?

Teleconferencing includes communicating by video link or webcam, or several people speaking together by phone (audioconferencing).

Larger organisations may find it worthwhile to install their own videoconferencing suite. Smaller organisations can hire the facilities from commercial companies or, in some cases, local authorities. Phone companies will almost always be able to provide audioconferencing facilities.

How can local authorities encourage teleconferencing?

Local authorities could encourage teleconferencing by:

+ publicising its benefits to businesses, as part of workplace travel planning;
+ providing technical advice to businesses about how to use teleconferencing;
+ running training courses;
+ providing grants for organisations to introduce teleconferencing;
+ encouraging teleconferencing among their own employees, particularly audioconferencing; and
+ promoting a culture where teleconferencing is routinely considered as an alternative to travel to business meetings.

Some local authorities have installed videoconferencing suites for hire at telecentres, community venues or area offices. This can be an important part of a strategy to support economic development in isolated rural areas, since it may make it possible for business start-ups to locate there.

How much does teleconferencing cost?

Videoconferencing equipment costs £5,000 – £40,000, depending on type. Hourly rates for using the equipment are about £35 to £45 for calls between users in the UK. Videoconferencing company face2face hires out facilities at a charge of between £50 and £100 an hour.

+ Can be an important part of a stratergy to support economic development in isolated rural areas
+ Teleconferencing can greatly reduce business travel

“Teleconferencing can greatly reduce business travel. BT estimates that audioconferencing saves the company about 59 million miles a year of car travel”

Audioconferencing (using ordinary phone lines) costs about £10 to £15 per hour, and web conferencing costs about £20 per hour plus ISP charges.

For comparison, a survey by face2face found that the average cost of the staff time involved in a business trip is more than £2,000 per person. Travel costs are on top of this. Business trips involving travel between towns may last over six hours, of which less than two hours is actually spent in the meeting.

Mason Williams, a PR agency with 45 staff, reports that videoconferencing has cut its travel costs by a third, and that the monthly cost of the equipment is recouped in the first week of every month. The Royal Bank of Scotland estimates it saves more than £70,000 a month in travel costs. BT estimates that audioconferencing saves more than £6 million a year in petrol claims.

How effective is teleconferencing?

Teleconferencing can greatly reduce business travel. BT estimates that audioconferencing saves the company about 59 million miles a year of car travel. The Swedish company Tetrapak estimates that videoconferencing has reduced its business travel by about 10 per cent. Another Swedish company, Telia, reduced business flights by a third, mainly through more audioconferencing.

Home shopping

What is home shopping?

A wide range of products can now be ordered for home delivery – not just groceries, but also clothing, footwear, furniture, electrical appliances, books and CDs.

People increasingly shop on-line or they order from a catalogue, and although some home delivery items may have been ordered after a visit to a store, much involves no travel by the purchaser.

Some forms of home delivery have been around for a long time. The newest and fastest-growing sectors are home shopping sales of groceries and 'one person delivery items' such as computers. These are the areas where there is most interest in the potential for home delivery to reduce car traffic.

How can local authorities encourage home shopping?

Local authorities have not had much involvement so far in stimulating home shopping. Development has been led by supermarkets and other retailers, who have seen home delivery as a potential growth area.

Nottingham City Council is one example of a local authority helping to promote home delivery. Here, the City Council worked with Royal Mail on a trial of local collection points in a suburban area with 68,000 households. Each householder was offered various delivery options if they would be not at home when the post arrived. These included picking up the item from the local post office, which was usually closer than the Royal Mail delivery office. The initiative meant that people had less far to travel, and led some people to walk instead of driving. The project was estimated to have saved between 50,000 and 100,000 car miles a year.

Making Smarter Choices Work

The benefits

+ Nottinghham City Council local Authority home delivery trial project was estimated to save between 50,000 and 100,000 miles a year

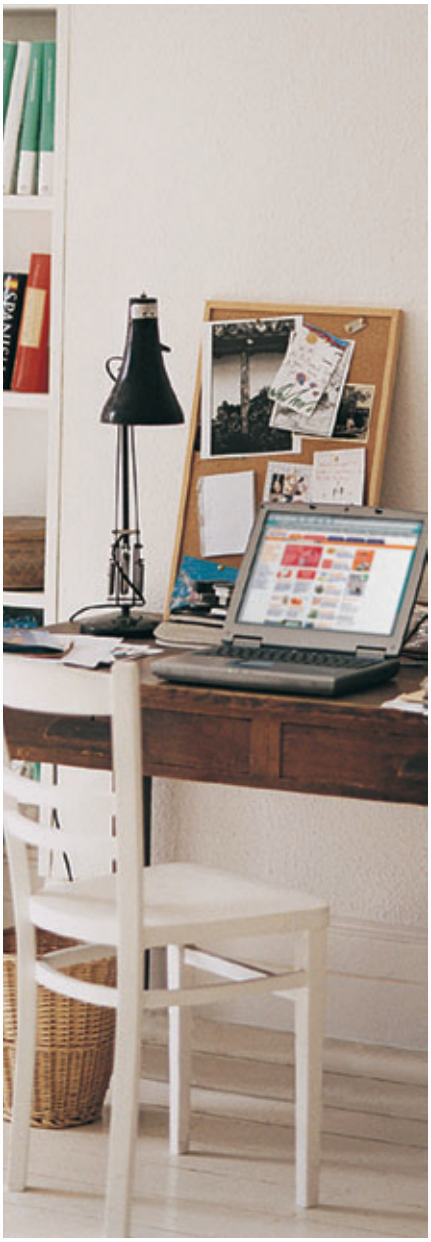
“Home delivery of groceries is estimated to cut car mileage to the supermarket by as much as 70 to 80 per cent for those using the service”

Local authorities could try the following:

+ Providing local collection points, locker banks, or secure 'drop-off' boxes at individual homes, so that companies can deliver goods more flexibly. Customers who don't have to wait at home for their shopping are more likely to try home delivery, and retailers can organise more efficient delivery schedules;
+ Requiring new housing developments to include facilities for delivering shopping;
+ Encouraging local shops and services to operate in conjunction with home shopping services as a way of increasing their viability; and
+ Offering home delivery of shopping as an option for housebound social services clients.

How much does it cost?

In Nottingham, the local authority mainly acted to facilitate the local collection point experiment, and costs were minimal. However, the potential gains would justify a local authority funding pilot projects.



How effective is home shopping?

Home delivery of groceries is estimated to cut car mileage to the supermarket by as much as 70 to 80 per cent for those using the service. But the effect of home delivery services on the overall level of shopping traffic depends on how many people use the service. If home delivery of groceries reaches 15 per cent of the grocery market within 10 years (a reasonable estimate based on current growth rates), it could cut car mileage for grocery shopping by 8 per cent and car mileage for all shopping by 4 per cent.

The Nottingham project suggested that local collection points could reduce car mileage to collect packages by 72 per cent.

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Where to find out more

You can get the full document 'Smarter Choices: Changing the way we travel' or further copies of 'Making Smarter Choices Work' from:

DfT Publication
PO Box 236
Wetherby, LS23 7NB

E-mail dft@twoten.press.net Website www.publications.dft.gov.uk or visit the DfT website at www.dft.gov.uk