Smarter Choices: changing the way we travel

Research for DfT by
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What are Smart Choices?

- techniques for influencing travel behaviour towards more sustainable options
- sometimes called ‘soft’ measures
- more psychology than engineering
- engage with people about their travel choices
- may involve:
  - better information about existing travel options
  - marketing and communication
  - new transport services, closely focussed on target market
  - carrots and sticks, working together
The Smart Choice measures we looked at

- Workplace travel plans
- School travel plans
- Personalised travel planning
- Public transport information and marketing
- Travel awareness campaigns
- Car clubs
- Car sharing schemes
- Teleworking
- Teleconferencing
- Home shopping
Why are they the smart thing to do?

- An intensive Smart Choices Programme could deliver large cuts in traffic

- It would have most impact in places where the problems are greatest (urban areas at peak times)

- These measures are excellent value for money
By how much could traffic be cut?

- National: 11%
- Non-urban off-peak: 7%
- Non-urban peak: 14%
- Urban off-peak: 13%
- Urban peak: 21%

% traffic
How were the figures derived?

- Based on worldwide literature review and 24 detailed case studies of what is being achieved *now* by local authorities.
- Birmingham, Bristol, BT, Buckinghamshire, Cambridgeshire, Edinburgh, Gloucester, Merseyside, Milton Keynes, Nottingham, SYPTE, York
How were the figures derived?

- ‘Journey change factors’ derived for each measure, based on average effectiveness in reducing car use and potential scale of implementation in 10 years time
- Applied these factors to traffic data from the National Transport Model
- Distinguished between urban and non-urban areas
- Distinguished peak hour traffic and off-peak traffic
How were the figures derived?

- Calculations allowed for overlapping effects of some measures (avoiding ‘double counting’)
- Two scenarios: low intensity and high intensity
- **High intensity scenario** assumes step-change in activity and resources, but within limits of what is practically achievable
Some measures had bigger effect…but all were important.

- Teleconferencing
- Personalised travel planning
- Teleworking
- Workplace travel plans
- Car sharing
- Other

National traffic cut: 11%
Value for money

- Average cost = £15 for each 1000 vehicle km of traffic removed
- Average benefit = £150 for each 1000 vehicle km of traffic removed (only taking account of congestion relief, not environmental or social benefits)
- Benefit : cost ratio is at least 10:1
- Higher BCRs (up to 30:1) in congested city streets
BUT…. Benefits will only be realised if traffic reduction is accompanied by ‘locking in’ restraint measures
Locking in

- **Re-allocate road capacity**
  - bus priority measures
  - more space for pedestrians and cyclists
  - re-phase traffic lights: more time for pedestrians and buses
  - replace pedestrian subways with surface level crossings

- **Parking control**
  - low parking standards for new developments
  - charging
  - workplace parking levies
  - re-develop car parks for more productive uses
Locking in

- **Pricing**
  - Congestion charging
  - Adjustment of transport prices and fares
- **Quality streets**
  - Traffic calming
  - Home zones
  - Pedestrianisation
- **Stronger speed regulation and enforcement**
With an intensive Smart Choices Programme, parallel policies of traffic restraint are likely to be more effective, and potentially meet with less opposition.
What would an intensive Smart Choices Programme in a mid-size town look like?

- **Workplace travel plan team**
  - covering WTP, car-sharing, telework, teleconferencing
  - requires team of 7-10 people
  - over 10 years, reach half the workforce

- **Personalised travel planning rolling programme**
  - target 5-10,000 people per year
  - over 10 years, reach a third of households
- Partnership to **promote and market bus/rail**
  - sufficient to increase ridership by 2-3% per year
  - (half what is being achieved in Brighton)
- Rolling programme of **school travel plans**
  - over 10 years, cover every school

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Transport for Quality of Life
- Over-arching travel awareness campaign
- Experimental projects: car clubs, home shopping (prepare for next phase)
How much will an intensive Smart Choices Programme cost?

- It will require **step-change** in priority and resources
- (Guesstimate) annual revenue spend ~ **£½ million** in medium-sized town
- Capital funding needed too
- Roughly same revenue needed as in Sustainable Travel Towns
Where will the money come from?

- New evidence (and glossy Smart Choices guide) will help sell Smart Choices to councillors and senior officers in preparation for next round of LTPs

- Smart Choice measures can assist social inclusion and increase physical activity. Potential funding from non-traditional sources e.g. regeneration budgets, health sector
Where will the money come from?

- York: 1% of capital integrated transport budget allocated to travel awareness campaign – with auditor’s approval
- DfT now say they ‘encourage local authorities [to explore] how ‘revenue-type’ transport activity, aimed at maximising the benefits of a particular infrastructure project, could be funded from capital allocations’ (LTP round 2 draft guidance)
Conclusions....

- Pilot programmes have now proved the effectiveness of individual Smart Choice measures
- We have the evidence that they work, and can deliver large cuts in traffic
- ...But only if they become mainstream
- The next stage: large-scale local Smart Choice Programmes
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