



Travelchoice – promoting sustainable transport for the UK's environmental capital

The success of Peterborough's Travelchoice programme in helping people adopt healthier and more sustainable travel options over the past five years is now being imitated by other local authorities throughout the UK.

Travelchoice was created in 2004 under a five-year £3.24 million government-funded 'sustainable transport demonstration town' project. By encouraging people to walk, cycle, car-share and travel by public transport, it is helping cut pollution and keep traffic moving despite a growing population.

Travelchoice initiatives have been so effective that, despite the end of government-funding, they are now embedded as essential elements in Peterborough City Council's transport strategy. The programme also supports Peterborough's growing reputation as the UK's environment capital.

Research undertaken for Travelchoice shows that Peterborough residents have on average reduced their car travel by 2.5km per day over the past five years. That equates to an annual reduction of 30.9 million km and a saving of 6,400 tonnes of CO₂.

There has been a four per cent drop in the number of cars being used daily and a reduction in the number of vehicle trips made per day from 2.4 to 2.2. In contrast, the amount of time people spend walking and cycling has increased by 16 per cent.

Other successes include a reduction in 'school-run' car journeys from 28 per cent in 2007 to 25.7 per cent in 2008; an overall nine per cent reduction in car journeys in the urban areas; a 14 per cent increase in walking; 12 per cent increase in cycling; a 35 per cent increase in public transport; over 1,000 people registering on a car-share website; over 6,000 people making a 'Good Going' pledge to choose sustainable travel options; 400-plus people using a Travelchoice information centre daily; and scores of schools and businesses adopting sustainable travel plans.

In June 2009, the transport and sustainable environment team was highly commended in the Improving Public Services category of the National eWell-Being Awards 2009.

Peterborough's application cited a text-and-go service which delivers timetable information to mobile phones, interactive mapping and real time passenger information, which gives passengers information on arrival times of buses at key locations across the city; a Routewatch web based tool detailing changes to bus services as they happen; a car-share website; and an online home to school transport applications process.

Travelchoice has also linked to other initiatives, such as active travel through its 'Transport to Healthcare' booklets, working with NHS Peterborough and the Hospitals Trust and working with the Healthy Schools initiative.

The Travelchoice team focused on a number of primary schemes including:

- Canvassers from the Sustrans sustainable transport charity provided personalised travel planning for 30,000 households.
- A new Travelchoice information centre and ticket kiosk was opened at Peterborough bus station as part of a travel awareness campaign, which also included an interactive online map, website, guides, maps, a 'Passport to Travel' and a Good Going pledge and reward card.



- Real-time passenger information displays at bus stops and a 'Text-&-Go' service. Travellers can buy a bus timetable folder and register for automatic updates.
- Businesses and schools are encouraged to develop travel plans to reduce car journeys – Bike to School Week is from 20 to 25 April and Walk to Work Week follows from 27 April to 1 May.
- Other initiatives included using solar-powered route-markers to promote walking and cycling and several 'time trial' events to compare travelling by car, bus and cycle.