ShowCase

Smarter Travel Sutton

Topic:

Sustainability

Organisation:

Transport for London

Location:

Sutton (London)

Dates:

September 2006 to September 2009

Budget:

£5,000,000

Website:

www.smartertravelsutton.org

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Smarter Travel Sutton

Overview

Smarter Travel Sutton aimed to encourage a whole community to cycle, walk or use public transport for some of their trips. Funded by Transport for London and delivered in partnership with Sutton Council, the 3-year programme challenged the 184,500 residents of the London Borough of Sutton to reduce car use and traffic congestion.

The programme included: travel planning for larger employers and in every school; personal travel information and advice (direct marketing) offered to every household and through medical professionals to patients; incentive and reward promotions; borough-wide advertising campaigns; events and a touring roadshow; a car club; and additional on-street cycle parking and cycle training.

Results:

- 75 per cent increase in average cycle traffic
- Increase in cycling's mode share, from 0.6 per cent to 2.1 per cent
- Increase of more than 16 per cent in bus patronage
- Increase in walking's mode share from 19.4 per cent to 22 per cent
- Reduction of 6 per cent in car's mode share
- Traffic levels reduced by 3.2 per cent

GETTING
STARTED

Reliance on private motorised transport leads to a number of challenges, including climate change, traffic congestion and negative health impacts of physical inactivity.

The Department for Transport's (DfT's) Integrated Transport White Paper of 1998 and subsequent 2004 White Paper *The Future of Transport* identified the need for a better transport system that could respond to the increasing demand for travel, and recognised there was an important role for travel behaviour change interventions.

Smarter Travel Sutton (STS) was set up by Transport for London (TfL) in 2006 to test the extent to which behaviour can be changed through the integrated delivery of a programme of social marketing interventions. A number of factors led TfL to choose Sutton over other authorities. First, car ownership was high, with 77 per cent of households having access to at least one car. Second, Sutton Council had been at the forefront of environment policy for many years, so the project was an opportunity for the borough to extend its good record in energy efficiency, waste minimisation and pollution control to sustainable transport.

TfL and Sutton Council decided on a three-year timescale for the programme so that interventions could become embedded and any resulting behaviour change could be measured.

Aims
The primary objectives for Smarter Travel Sutton were to:

- Reduce car trips made by Sutton residents
- Reduce congestion and delay to all road users across the borough
- Achieve this by promoting a change to travel mode choice (to more sustainable options) or individuals' time of travel, or by reducing the need to travel

Three specific targets were set for the programme:

- Reduce residents' car trips by 5 per cent or more by the end of the programme
- All schools to have a travel plan by March 2008
- 15,000 (18 per cent of the workforce) to be covered by a travel plan by March 2009

These targets were identified through assessments of smaller scale projects carried out in other boroughs and through looking at the experiences and achievements of the DfT's sustainable travel demonstration towns – Darlington, Peterborough and Worcester.
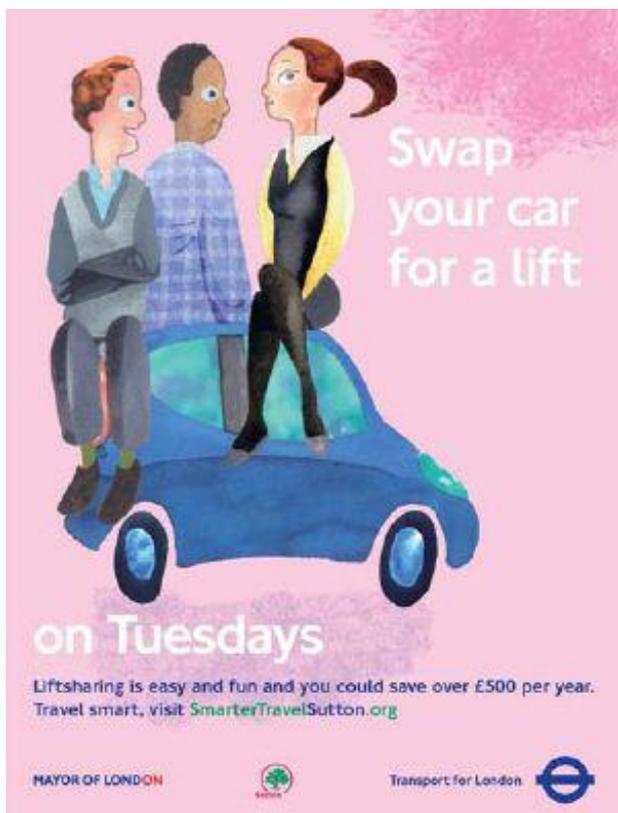
Car use was not positioned as a 'problem behaviour' in the STS programme, because it was recognised that car use is necessary for many people for some trips and can bring many personal benefits, including access to employment, education and leisure opportunities. Relying on cars for every trip was, however, seen as contributing to unnecessary congestion and emissions. Consequently, the STS programme focused on simple and achievable behavioural objectives, or calls-to-action for residents.

SCOPE
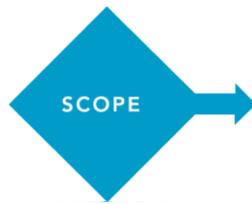
Target journeys

The team looked at what types of journeys Sutton residents make, where use of sustainable travel modes was already well established, and what differences in travel behaviour could be found in different parts of the borough. In addition, they assessed which types of trips have a good sustainable travel mode share and could easily be convertible from car. They identified that 69 per cent of outer London trips (in boroughs like Sutton) are less than 3km in length.

Consequently, it was decided the focus would be on local destinations and local travel, for instance trips to school, local amenities, district centres and work, and to access public transport nodes for longer-distance journeys (like rail commuting into central London).

Swap your car for a lift on Tuesdays

Liftsharing is easy and fun and you could save over £500 per year. Travel smart, visit SmarterTravelSutton.org

MAYOR OF LONDON   Transport for London

Target segments

Market research was then commissioned to identify market segments that were more likely to reduce their car use and the factors that could influence the desired behaviour change. On the basis of almost 5,000 interviews, 6 market segments were identified as potential targets for the STS programme. Following further analysis and research, these were narrowed down to three target segments, which were identified as representing a sizeable proportion of Sutton residents:

1. **Hard-pressed families** for whom cars are 'trusted companions'. The adults are aged mainly between 25 and 44 and many have school-age children, who typically are taken to school by car. The car is not a status symbol but a practical necessity and there is no prejudice against public transport. Cost and time are key criteria in making travel choices but little time will be spent on considering options. However, people in this segment are concerned about their children's wellbeing and are generally more community-minded than others. An opportunity for a modal shift is likely to be more walking as a family, such as to and from school. Seeing the (free) walking time as useful not 'dead' time could change perceptions of walking.

2. **Affluent women** for whom cars are characterised as life(style) support machines which represent convenience and flexibility rather than status. For these individuals, security and time pressures are major concerns and considerable barriers to behaviour change. Health and activity are potential motivators for change and, for those with children, being seen as 'a good mum' is a possibly useful lever. They do have some feelings of guilt, so are aware of the negative impact of using the car too much. They need a positive alternative that is based on different social norms. Opportunities for modal shifts are likely to be more walking to and from school and local

journeys or more public transport use at weekends.

3. **Men who dislike travel** are neutral to the car, using it largely to stay in control. They might use alternatives more if they were better informed, but they value their privacy and this suggests they would walk or cycle rather than use public transport. For this segment, security is also a key concern. They need simple information on routes and fares since complex information is likely to be ignored. They can be responsive to appeals to using the car more effectively such as car sharing, and can be strongly influenced by work colleagues, therefore work travel planning could be key. There is some potential for modal shifts to cycling for some work travel and more walking for local travel.

Additional insights

Resident attitudinal and behavioural telephone interviews were conducted to gather insight and to form the baseline survey, were repeated every September during the course of the programme to monitor progress. This research identified a number of insights that contributed to the design of the programme:

- Short-trips to key destinations within the Borough (and to immediate locations around) are the trips where the STS programme is likely to have maximum impact
- The reality or perception of being 'time poor' and having many competing commitments can influence resident's willingness to change or consider changing their behaviour
- Personal health and the health of off-spring are potentially more powerful influences on people's choice of transport mode than factors such as environmental concerns

Competition

Research also identified two key areas of competition the programme would need to combat. The main source of competition was the desire to use a privately-run car. Another source of competition for the programme's success could also come from residents themselves. Research indicated people are generally supportive of the promotion of sustainable transport and infrastructure to facilitate cycling, walking and public transport use. However, when specific schemes are brought forward for implementation (such as the introduction of cycle priorities on a residential road) they can be met with significant opposition.

The cause of this seeming contradiction – between what residents support in principle versus what they support in practice – seemed to lie in the way residents had traditionally been involved with the development of transport schemes. Typically, transport schemes were

taken to the public in a 'finalised' format for approval.

Subsequently, the STS programme would aim to engage communities in developing a vision for their area and in designing sustainable transport measures. By asking communities 'what would encourage and enable you to walk, cycle and use public transport more often in your locality?', an inclusive 'upside down' engagement process would make people feel they own the transport schemes that are developed. Whilst this approach increases the design and feasibility costs and timescales of developing schemes, it ultimately enables better schemes to be progressed more effectively. Consultation would thus need to be embedded throughout programme.

The STS programme board and steering group, made up of representatives from TfL and Sutton Council, developed the following interventions:

Advertising campaign
An advertising campaign was developed, using appealing creatives and an achievable call-to-action ('swap your car for feet/bike/bus for one day a week'). The borough-wide advertising used paid space, including lamp post banners, bus shelter panels, bus rears and perimeter hoardings at local football clubs, as well as advertising space that was accessed for little or no cost, such as park and school perimeter railings.

The overarching aims of the advertising were to promote the trial of specific sustainable travel services, such as cyclist training, and drive traffic to the website, where residents could get more information on sustainable travel options.

Direct marketing
Personal travel information and advice was offered to all Sutton households through a direct mail shot, a personal visit to each household (three attempts were made) by travel advisors, and a follow on mailing of information, offers and incentives requested by households at the personal visit. Information was also distributed at leisure centres and workplaces.

Events and experiential marketing
A one-day annual family festival, Move it at the Manor, was devised by the STS programme to promote lifestyles and sustainable travel. Existing events such as the Environment Fair, which is held in Carshalton Park every August Bank Holiday, was also utilised to promote the STS work. The STS programme provided a free bus service to the fair.

School travel planning and school-based promotions
Advice and support was provided to private and state schools on developing travel plans. These

introduced a programme of measures, such as cycle parking, educational activities and reduced car parking to encourage sustainable travel. Since schools were recognised as a valuable channel of communication providing access to parents, who are the main decision makers regarding how children travel, a programme of campaigns was developed to target both parents and children.

Workplace travel planning

The team worked with the borough's largest employers to set up workplace travel plans. These introduced measures to reduce incentives to car use, such as car user allowances and free parking, whilst increasing incentives for sustainable transport, such as cycle parking, discounted cycles and priority parking for car sharers. As most businesses in the borough are small or medium sized enterprises, to engage them business travel networks were developed in Cheam Village and Sutton Town Centre to allow businesses to share ideas and resources for reducing car use. In addition, 'roaming' travel advice services and sustainable travel roadshows in workplaces were developed.

Incentive and reward schemes

File the Miles was a six-week campaign developed to encourage families and young people to replace car miles with walking and cycling. This was promoted through the touring roadshow and participants recorded their sustainable transport trips online. In addition, Tackling Transport was developed to work with local clubs to encourage children and their parents to walk or cycle to weekend mini-league football games. Participants recorded the number of cycling and walking trips they carried out, which entitled them to claim bronze, silver or gold level prizes and enter a prize draw to win football Charity Shield tickets.

Support and motivational services

Active Steps was developed with Sutton and Merton Primary Care Trust (PCT) and was a 12-week motivational, information and support service aiming to improve health through residents walking or cycling for short journeys instead of using a car. Participants were signposted by any medical professional, including their GP, to the programme, which started with a motivational interview and was followed by a programme of incentives and regular information through email, post and text.

Car club

A car club, run by Streetcar, was developed to allow people easy access to communal cars without having to keep their own, thereby reduce people's reliance on driving and encourage greater use of other modes.

Cycle improvements

This included an extensive programme of 300 new or improved cycle parking stands installed at key locations, such as stations, leisure centres and shopping districts. A unique cycle delivery service was developed to provide the community with a zero-carbon option for couriering goods within and beyond the borough.

In addition, the STS programme promoted Safer Sutton Partnership Service's crime reduction strategy for cycles as part of the wider Smartwater initiative. This aimed to reduce theft and provide reassurance across the borough. As well as security marking cycles, Sutton police proactively targeted cycle theft hotspots and used the local media to publicise the project.

Phasing

Year one of the programme focused on school and workplace travel plans to create the foundations for behaviour change and open up a route to market for targeted campaigns. The personal travel advice to every household and advertising campaigns would raise awareness of the benefits of walking, cycling and using public transport.

Years two and three were designed to build on this foundation by moving residents from raised awareness to 'interest' in cycling and walking and 'desire' to trial alternative modes and ultimately change their travel behaviour. Integrated and planned activities and events would consolidate the progress made in year one by using a simple and achievable call-to-action and marketing specific services, such as cyclist training and car clubs.
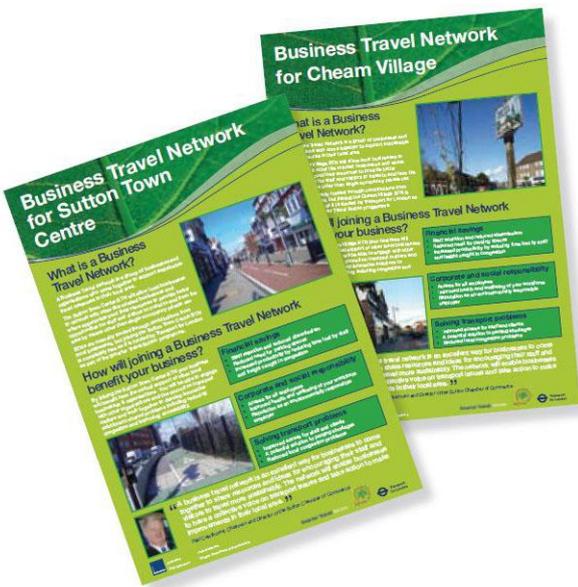

Stages of Change model

The development of the STS programme was underpinned by the application of behavioural change models and theories often used in the health sector for smoking or weight loss, for example. Based on the Stages of Change model, the programme of transport interventions was planned to move the target population of Sutton through five stages of change to achieve a sustained shift to reduce car use.

The Stages of Change model was considered in conjunction with the segmentation work. The model provided an explanation of where a person might be in their change process, whilst the segment into which he/she fell offered an indication of the sorts of intervention that might be appropriate:

1. Pre-contemplation – Advertising, website, branding
2. Contemplation – Roadshow, events
3. Preparation – Website, travel planning (workplace, school, personal)
4. Action – Events, travel planning (workplace, school, personal)
5. Maintenance – Direct marketing, advertising, travel planning (workplace, school)

Certain measures were relevant to more than one of the stages and this reflected their flexibility and longevity. Personal travel planning, for example, was particularly helpful to those preparing to take action, because it provided them with tools (like information and incentives) to overcome barriers to travelling differently. It was equally relevant to those in the action phase, because it provided the encouragement and feedback that ensured the individual 'stuck with it' during the transitional period. A school or work travel plan, meanwhile, was intended to last indefinitely (and be regularly updated), so its impact stretched into the maintenance stage, in which people needed support in sustaining their new habits.
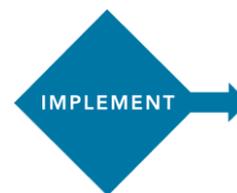
Smarter Travel Sutton was launched in September 2006. The STS team had set a number of key performance indicators (KPIs)

and targets for all elements of the programme. These were continually monitored throughout the three years to ensure the programme was on track and lessons were captured and fed back to adapt elements where necessary.

Personal travel advice was offered to every household in Sutton between April 2007 and October 2007, which helped inform the development of Sutton Council's Transport Action Plan and enabled the Council to respond to specific and general issues raised by residents. For example, a cycle route identified by a resident as feeling unsafe due to graffiti and broken glass was cleaned up within days. Locations identified by residents for cycle parking were recorded and an additional 200 on-street cycle parking stands were installed within 6 months.

The first Move it at the Manor event was held in July 2007 in a local park. It provided activities for all ages and encouraged residents to adopt sustainable travel modes on a regular basis. These included bicycle try-outs, organised rides, bike art, Doctor Bike and fitness checks. The event also offered a range of entertainment, including live music, face painting, children's games, a mini zoo and food stalls. With 5,400 people attending the event, it was deemed a great success and was

repeated in 2008, with 8,400 people attending, and again in 2009, with 6,900 people attending.

"Move it at the Manor was definitely really successful and the reasons for that were we had a lot of people there, so the cost per head of running the activity was very low. We did surveys of people who were there and many were inspired to reduce their car use as a result of attending." (Andy Pidduck, Campaign Project Manager)

A one-day Sutton Active Challenge event was held in May 2008 to mark the culmination of the File The Miles rewards scheme, where the plan was to announce winners from those who had logged their miles online using pedometers and cycle computers. However, due to low numbers of people logging their miles online, the event was opened up to everyone, not just those who had taken part in the File The Miles rewards scheme.

"We distributed 4,000 cycle computers and pedometers, mainly to kids and asked them to log their miles online on a website. We distributed all of them, but the number of people participating online was pretty low. We had aimed to have a one-day festival at the end of it and we'd announce the winners, but in the end we changed that so it was just a festival to the public, so anyone could turn up, you didn't have to have been registering miles." (Andy Pidduck, Campaign Project Manager)

As the programme continued, more initiatives were developed based on lessons learned. These included a cycling direct mail campaign, which was delivered in summer 2009 to 25,000 households in targeted areas of the borough, based on concentrations of the target market segments. The campaign offered four free services – cyclist training, map and route information, cycle maintenance advice and security marking – to overcome specific barriers to cycling and get residents started as cyclists.

In 2009, a Walk to Local Shops campaign was also delivered in three local shopping areas to encourage residents to use their local shops and travel sustainably. In addition to contributing to the aims of STS, the project supported the local economy and promoted wider sustainability goals. The campaign included direct mail to local residential areas, high street banners and advertising, and offered residents discounts at local retailers.

EVALUATE

The STS programme was independently evaluated each year to measure changes in residents' attitudes and self-reported and actual travel habits. It used a monitoring framework consisting of:

- Annual resident opinion telephone surveys in Sutton and a control area
- Campaign awareness through face-to-face interviews with Sutton drivers
- Traffic count, cycle count and bus passenger data
- Visitor exit surveys from events
- Employee travel to work surveys
- School student travel surveys
- Output and usage data, such as web hits, car club membership and usage, and cycle courier service usage
- Baseline and 12-week surveys to monitor specific pilot projects, such as Active Steps.

Results

Travel modes

- 75 per cent increase in average cycle traffic
- Increase in cycling's mode share from 0.6 per cent to 2.1 per cent
- Increase of more than 16 per cent in bus patronage
- Increase in walking's mode share from 19.4 per cent to 22 per cent
- Reduction of 6 per cent in car's mode share
- Traffic levels reduced by 3.2 per cent

School and workforce travel plans

- Sutton was the first London Borough to have all of its schools covered by an operational travel plan

- Over 16,000 employees from over 120 different organisations were covered by a completed workforce travel plan. Results from 12 businesses with baseline and follow-up surveys show that single occupancy vehicle use fell by 2 per cent

Personal travel advisors

- The travel advisors spoke with 66 per cent of Sutton's households and almost 70 per cent of those spoken to requested further information about the best ways to get around the borough

Specific events and pilots

- More than 150 residents attended a programme of climate change workshops run by EcoLocal (Sutton's environmental charity). 87 per cent of attendees felt the workshop had influenced the way they travelled and 63 per cent said they had identified specific journeys they would change as a result
- 10,000 patients were offered the Active Steps service, of which 1,000 participated. Survey results from 12 weeks indicated that 43 per cent reported weight loss and 52 per cent reported a reduction in their car use
- A total of 406 Smartwater packs were distributed at year two STS events as part of the Safer Sutton Partnership Service's crime reduction strategy to reduce cycle theft. There was subsequently a 16.8 per cent reduction in cycle theft crime from between April 2007 and April 2008

Campaign awareness

- Almost half of residents interviewed were aware of the campaign
- Over 8 out of 10 of respondents believed that STS was an appropriate investment for Sutton
- More than 8 out of 10 Sutton drivers agreed the campaign communicates 'reducing car use can help the environment' and 'walking instead of driving is healthier' and 7 out of 10 agreed the campaign communicates 'there are practical alternatives to driving a car'
- Those who recognised the Sutton driver campaign were significantly more likely to agree 'it would be easy for me to reduce my car use' and slightly more likely to agree 'I would like to start walking more' and claim 'I am actively trying to use my car less'

A further evaluation is currently being conducted to look at the results a year after the programme's completion to see if changes in behaviour have been sustained.

FOLLOW-UP

Following completion of the three-year programme, the website and STS branding have been continued. The website is now used for latest news and consultation with local people about further transport initiatives.

At the end of March 2009, a sister programme, Smarter Travel Richmond upon Thames, was launched. Prior to its launch, meetings were held between TfL, Sutton Council and Richmond upon Thames Council to share experiences and aid the planning of the Richmond upon Thames programme. Many of the lessons from Sutton were taken on board and much more time was allocated for the planning of the work in Richmond upon Thames. This allowed more research to be done, such as qualitative focus groups, to find out residents' specific barriers to using sustainable travel and how activity could be tailored to them.

A half-day conference was also held with London boroughs to present the lessons learnt

from the STS programme. The STS team has also developed a Lessons Learnt report, alongside 10 case studies of different aspects of the programme, which include specific lessons learnt. Additionally, a paper about the programme has been produced for senior transport staff in each London borough, outlining how they could implement their own smaller scale Smarter Travel programmes.

Lessons learned

General
Social marketing techniques and behaviour change programmes are attracting interest from all political persuasions, although support should not be taken for granted. The STS programme was launched by the Labour Mayor of London in 2006 and later embraced by the Conservative Mayor Boris Johnson. In Sutton, lead councillors for transport from the Conservative and LibDem Groups sat as members on the Programme Board and supported the programme

Be transparent and honest with residents about what the programme is trying to achieve. STS has shown that most residents will want to support the aims of a behaviour change programme if its intentions are well communicated and it is seen as supporting, rather than restricting, choice. Of Sutton's 180,000 residents, the STS programme received only 1 complaint about the level of investment in the programme

Succession planning needs to take place from the outset to ensure the legacy benefits are captured and continue to be delivered. Sutton Council's commitment to mainstreaming the STS behaviour change work was established from the beginning of the programme but grew as the results and benefits became evident. Engaging partner and political support and also publicising achievements are important for securing legacy delivery.

Lessons learnt in the delivery of a behaviour change programme

Summary report
November 2009

www.smartertravelsutton.org
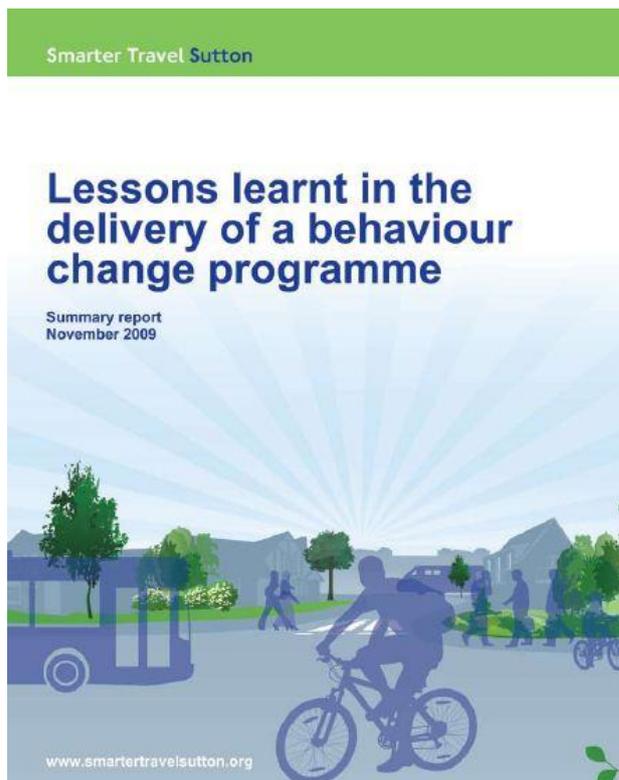
Evaluation

- The small scale of many Smarter Travel projects meant they could not be expected to make a detectable difference in user flows at any given point in a road network
- Develop a monitoring strategy before the launch of the programme, with SMART targets, KPIs and identified ways of collecting the data to measure performance against the KPIs
- Directly link the targets and KPIs to the objectives of the programme
- Include in the monitoring strategy reporting on input, output and outcome data
- Keep the monitoring strategy simple to understand and manage, particularly if budgets are limited. A large set of indicators may be robust, but is likely to be a burden to collect and report on every year
- Identify and manage stakeholders' expectations of monitoring data and reporting from the outset. If it is only feasible to collect from some data sources, or there is a reliability issue with some of

the data sets, then it is better to be honest about these from the beginning

- Distinguish between essential monitoring data and data that may merely be interesting to know

"I think where we ended up with the evaluation was thinking about it as a funnel. So we were trying to measure people's awareness of different products and services at the top of the funnel, and then their understanding of them, and then their claimed attitudes, and then their claimed behaviours, and then right at the bottom of the funnel their actual behaviour. We found by measuring all of those things you build up a picture of how peoples' behaviour was changing. It was really quite complicated and we had dozens of things that we were measuring, and I think we learnt that we just needed to focus on some key measures for each of those areas." (Andy Pidduck, Campaigns Project Manager)

- Look for and understand the possible impact of exogenous factors (fuel prices, economy) and complementary measures (cycle lanes, new bus routes) on behaviour
- Understand the limitations to data sources. In particular, self-reported data can be influenced by social desirability factors, such as respondents wanting to be seen to give the right answer, rather than accurately answer the question
- Use qualitative and anecdotal sources, such as quotes from residents and stakeholders, to add context to reported monitoring data
- Make time to reflect as part of annual cycle of planning, delivery and monitoring. Use the learnings to inform future delivery – adapt and improve some projects, abandon the failures and invest more resources in successes