

# SOUTHEND-ON-SEA BOROUGH COUNCIL

## IDEAS IN MOTION: TRAVEL BETTER IN SOUTHEND-ON-SEA



### SUMMARY

Ideas in Motion does not look or feel like a typical public sector sustainable transport campaign. It combines the marketing of sustainable transport with the provision of infrastructure investment, and is based around a community-led website

that allows local residents to share their ideas to help others travel better.

The campaign's innovative approach has generated enthusiastic support from stakeholders, including private transport operators and local employers. It has reached residents, employees and students in all areas of Southend and is already delivering change with fewer people travelling to work by car or van and cycling numbers increasing.



### BACKGROUND

In April 2011 Southend-on-Sea Borough Council was awarded a grant of £4.82m from the

Department for Transport's Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF). The objective of the grant was to improve economic growth and reduce carbon emissions by encouraging the use of sustainable transport. With this, the Council launched the Ideas in Motion campaign as part of its responsibility to reduce carbon emissions across the whole borough.

### CAMPAIGN OBJECTIVES

The Council wanted a sustainable transport campaign that would:

- Be creative in engaging the community so there was a sense of local ownership
- Promote the infrastructure investment and tangible change being delivered

around the borough

- Be targeted and deliver change in a cost-effective way
- Create 100,000 opportunities for local people to engage by April 2014
- Reduce carbon emissions by 20,000 tonnes by April 2014
- Reduce short car journeys up to 5km by 12% based on 2001 figures by April 2015

### RESEARCH

With professional advisers, the Council conducted primary research into the factors that influence travel behaviour in Southend, including surveys and focus groups. The team also conducted secondary research into behavioural models that would help the authority to understand and influence these drivers of behaviour.

- The research revealed several barriers to sustainable travel, including:
- Thinking distances are too far to walk or cycle
- Concerns about the safety of cycling and walking
- Lack of knowledge about available public transport services
- Social norms that see anything other than driving as odd

It also revealed a number of benefits that people gain from walking or cycling in the borough, including:

- Improved health and fitness
- Financial savings
- Time to themselves
- A sense of community

The Council decided to use Triandis' Theory of Interpersonal Behaviour model to determine how behaviour could most effectively be influenced. This recognises the complexity of the decision-making process, and in particular the importance of habit and facilitating conditions in driving behaviour.

### AN INNOVATIVE CAMPAIGN APPROACH

Using the research, the Council created an innovative strategic approach for its campaign: Ideas in Motion. This moved away from environmental messages, which are a driver of behaviour for relatively few

people, and instead focuses on the benefits of sustainable transport for individuals.

The Council was keen to move beyond expected tactics and deliver the campaign in unusual ways:

### Creating materials that do not look or sound like traditional Council products:

Ideas in Motion has an engaging look and feel and speaks in everyday language without using jargon. Caroline Hanghong, Travel Plan Co-ordinator for Southend Hospital, commented: "Having a green travel plan website that is light-hearted and accessible is a great way to get people informed, engaged and involved in sustainable travel. In the past travel plan websites have been rather dry and full of calculations, timetables and pictures of feet – this is very refreshing."

### Using ideas and content created by the community:

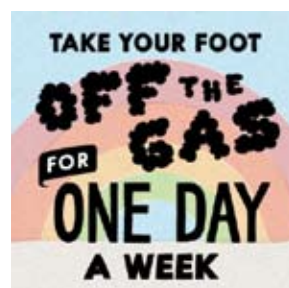
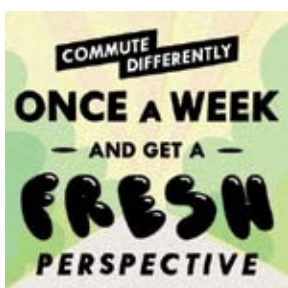
The Council encourages local residents to share their own ideas about how to improve experiences of travelling in the borough, and has launched ideas in collaboration with staff at the Library and the Hospital. Ideas in Motion regularly features guest authored articles, including from local residents who have made changes to their commutes. In addition, the campaign has developed a strong Twitter following of over 500 people who regularly retweet campaign messages and share information on local events.

### Talking in minutes not metres:

Research has shown that people find it difficult to assess whether or not they can realistically walk or cycle a journey when it is presented in terms of distance, meaning they default to using the car. The Council emphasises the short journey times between local landmarks by foot or bike, and has designed a town-wide travel map that shows travel in terms of time rather than distance.

### Working with voluntary organisations to deliver travel planning support:

The Council delivers 'Personalised Travel



Planning' (PTP) in partnership with voluntary organisation Turning Tides. Residents receive one-to-one travel planning advice from volunteers and support is available for trial journeys. PTP advice has been delivered to 11,000 households already (surpassing the original target of 8,000 households by March 2015). It has proved remarkably successful, with car use down and 9 out of 10 people rating their experience as good or very good. In the next year, the PTP programme will be widened to include services delivered through central 'Travel Hubs', at community events and key business locations.

**Embedding sustainable transport in the curriculum:**

The Council is working with Sustrans to develop the existing cycling initiatives such as Bike It and Bikeability into a cross-curricular scheme that combines cycle training for every child with classroom lessons which use sustainable transport as the topic for work. For instance, pupils might learn about geography by route-planning a journey from their home to school or study travel literature in English classes. This transformed programme is currently being delivered in six schools across the borough, where it is achieving greater than 95% uptake of Bikeability Level 2.

**Setting up a social enterprise:**

The Council set up the Sustainable Motion Community Interest Company. The Comfy Saddle cycle hub allows people to access advice on how to travel more sustainably, and offers people the opportunity to buy reconditioned bikes from the Re-Cycle Centre. The Comfy Saddle employs trained technicians and apprentices in an extension to an already successful volunteer programme.

The Council has also invested in a

number of infrastructure improvements around the borough. This has included:

- Delivering new cycle parking spaces in the town centre and at schools, small businesses and London Southend Airport
- Installing five electric vehicle charging points across the borough as part of the Eval8 'Plugged in Places' project
- Delivering the City Beach scheme, with a larger promenade for pedestrians, reduced speed limits and new road design along a section of Southend's sea front
- Delivering the Victoria Gateway scheme, with the reconfiguration of a large roundabout separating the High Street from one of the main routes into town, provision of shared space for pedestrians and buses and creation of a bus and rail interchange
- Completing the Prittle Brook Greenway, a 5.7km cycle and walking route that links Priory Park in the town centre with Belfairs Wood to the west, with access to local schools, residential areas and the Hospital.
- Providing showers, changing rooms, locker facilities and secure cycle storage facilities at the Civic Centre so Council employees can more easily walk or cycle to the office

**INVOLVING PARTNERS**

Ideas in Motion is used as an umbrella brand by partners and other Council teams engaging with the local community on issues relating to sustainable travel. A steering group comprising of officers, councillors and partners meets regularly. This includes representatives from the University of Essex, the Hospital, local employers, SAVS Southend Association of Voluntary Services and Sustrans.

The Ideas in Motion team also run events in collaboration with other relevant

departments and organisations. For instance, Ideas in Motion delivered an event to support schools considering travel plan activity in partnership with the Council's Education, Public Health and Road Safety teams and Essex County Fire and Rescue Service.

**IMPACT AND VALUE FOR MONEY**

Ideas in Motion is a cost-effective campaign that is already delivering behaviour change across Southend. The campaign's focus on media relations, targeted marketing activity and mutually beneficial partnerships has allowed the Council to create more than 138,000 opportunities for local people to engage with Ideas in Motion already, exceeding the target of 100,000 by April 2014. This has been achieved on a budget of less than £50,000 a year, generating an ROI of 2.8 opportunities for every £1 spent.

Our analysis suggests that the PTP programme and the work to embed sustainable transport in the curriculum and increase Bikeability take-up will have reduced carbon emissions by 21,175 tonnes per year.

While the ultimate campaign objective (to reduce short car journeys by 12%) relates to 2015, the Council's ongoing monitoring shows that:

- daily cycle counts at 12 sites have increased by an average of just over 30% on 2012 levels, and by up to 60% in some areas
- the percentage of businesses to which people travel primarily by car or van has reduced by nearly 11%
- the percentage of businesses to which people travel primarily by walking has risen by 14%

