

Cycle Chester Focus Sessions for Non-, Nervous- and Infrequent-Cyclists 2010

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1. Report summary

The main project objective was to find out how Cycle Chester can encourage this identified group to engage in cycling-based activities, thereby contributing to Cycle Chester's goal of doubling the number of cyclists in Chester by 2012. As well as reporting on the key findings this report shares ideas for running a similar consultation.

Two focus group sessions were held in each of two identified areas in the City of Chester for non-nervous- and infrequent-cyclists. In addition, questionnaires were used to initiate a conversation about cycling with non-, nervous-, and infrequent-cyclists in two further areas in the City of Chester. A total of seventy people engaged with the process.

Participants cite many and varied reasons for wanting to start cycling/cycle more frequently - health/fitness being the most common, followed by recreation and access to new places.

A large number of respondents (including those who class themselves as 'confident cyclists') feel intimidated by other road traffic and cite this as the main obstacle to cycling/cycling more frequently. Lack of confidence on a bicycle and lack of confidence that other road users will respect cyclists' safety were common concerns.

Forty two percent of participants classed themselves as 'confident cyclists' but only 28% of participants cycle at least once a week.

Not being able to carry everything needed (for the journey and destination) on a bike was a concern expressed by many people. Chester-specific/local road issues and lack of awareness of 'safe' cycling routes and location of on- and off-road cycle ways were also listed as obstacles to cycling. Thirty eight and a half percent of respondents could not mend a puncture indicating that minor mechanical faults may prevent a number of people from regularly cycling.

A number of participants stated an interest in finding out more about Cycle Chester initiatives, especially the e-newsletter, cycle training and personal travel planning.

Participants provided a wide range of suggested solutions for tackling the issues raised and were keen to be kept up to date with how their ideas will be integrated into Cycle Chester's programmes and more generally into Cheshire West and Chester (CWaC) Council's longer-term cycling strategies.

The sections of most relevance to you will depend on your interest in this project. If you have any questions about the content of this report or would like templates for the activities please contact Beth Brockett on 01606 723160 or at beth.brockett@groundwork.org.uk

2. Project brief

Cycle Chester required Groundwork Cheshire to undertake community consultations in four key geographical communities across Chester:

- Establish four focus groups; one in each of Upton, Hoole & Newton, Lache and Blacon.
- Identify twelve individuals from each community to attend the focus group meetings – successful engagement will hope for attendance of eight participants.
- Ensure that attendees are the Cycle Chester target users – 'The overall aim is to double the number of journeys made by bike over this three year period with the main target being people who don't currently use their bikes to cycle short journeys in and around Chester'.
- Facilitate a minimum of one focus group meeting in each community

- Identify reasons why individuals do not make regular journeys by bicycle
- Identify recommendations for Cycle Chester to address these reasons
- Agree content for discussion with Cycle Chester Programme Manager
- Develop a report on findings from the focus group meetings and deliver findings to the Cycle Chester Steering Group by the end of April 2010.

3. Delivery/methodology

3.1 Publicity

Groundwork undertook an intense publicity campaign in the month leading up to the focus sessions. Please see appendix for full list of promotions. Posters and leaflets were created with the title 'Non-, nervous- and infrequent-cyclists wanted' (please see appendices). We promoted the sessions through radio, newspapers (articles and advertisements), local newsletters, local websites, area representatives, safety wardens and community forums, community venues, community groups, each school in the 4 areas received a leaflet for each student, through the health service, email lists, local shops and pubs, local businesses through Groundwork's Environmental Business Team, local amenities, partner organisations, Chester University and West Cheshire College.

Feedback indicated that newspapers and email networks (e.g. through the Countess of Chester, Transition Chester and Chester Zoo) were the most successful promotional vehicles.

A £15 voucher for the Bike Factory (subsidised by the Bike Factory) was offered as an incentive. Facilities such as on-site child care and deaf signing were offered.

3.2 Venues

Venues were chosen based on their facilities, position within the community (central and near good public transport links), accessibility and whether they were well-known within the community. The venues chosen were: Blacon Community Centre, Lache Community Centre, Hoole Community Centre and Upton United Reform Church.

3.3 Session structure

The **first session** lasted one and a half hours. The objectives for this session were: to gather information on people's experience of cycling; investigate what (if any) obstacles and issues were preventing them from cycling/cycling more and to start to explore participants' views on how to tackle these obstacles and issues. We wanted to allow people to have their say, introduce them to Cycle Chester and enthuse them about the possibilities for this kind of project.

1. We asked people to fill in a brief questionnaire as they arrived, which provided us with basic personal information, contact details and their ability/experience of cycling. They also filled in photo consent forms if they were happy to do so, and put on name badges. They received an outline agenda for the session.
2. Refreshments were made available.
3. Two Groundwork Cheshire staff members were present at each session. We briefly introduced ourselves, Groundwork Cheshire and Cycle Chester. We explained the format for session, what people could expect to gain from the session, what we (Groundwork and Cycle Chester) hoped to gain and why the information gathered is important – including an explanation of why it was important to attend the second session if possible (it was also

- explained that the voucher incentive would be handed out at the end of the second session).
4. To get people talking to each other we asked them to introduce themselves to the person sitting next to them and tell this person about a positive cycling experience – whether it be cycling themselves or watching others cycling or alternatively explain why they would like to cycle. This information about their neighbour was then fed back to the rest of the group.
 5. We asked participants to form groups of 3 to 4 and discuss and feedback the top 3 or 4 reasons why the session participants would like to cycle short journeys. Groundwork staff provided prompts as necessary. Groups were also asked to provide an example of a regular journey they already make or would like to make by bike (it could be a recreational journey on different routes).
 6. We then facilitated a brain-storm focusing on negative issues with cycling/what stops people cycling. It was emphasized that there were no ‘wrong answers’ and that there was to be no discussion.
 7. These suggestions were noted down under one of three headings (3 flipchart sheets): **1. Chester/journey-specific** (e.g. difficult road crossing on journey), **2. Person-specific** (e.g. need for an adapted bike), **3. General issues** (e.g. worry about buses).
 8. We used a map of Chester to pin-point area-specific issues.
 9. Short break
 10. After the break we facilitated a ‘diamond-ranking’ exercise (see Appendix for completed sheets). Each participant was given a number of diamond-shaped cards inscribed with negative issues and a number of blank cards. Participants used the cards to rank the issues most affecting them. The blank cards were used to record any pertinent issues raised in the brain storm which we had not recorded on the original cards. The limited number of spaces meant that a number of issues had to be discarded by participants. The cards were stuck down to ensure a permanent record.
 11. A staff member tallied the highest ranked issues whilst a colleague gave short presentation sharing some examples of what other Cycle Cities have organised to encourage and assist cycling and some examples of what Cycle Chester has carried out and is proposing.
 12. Groundwork then presented the 3/4 highest ranked issues and the participants were asked to brain-storm solutions (again, no wrong answers and no discussion) – under the same 3 categories (Chester-specific, personal and general).
 13. Groundwork then explained to the participants that the suggested solutions, along with all the issues raised, would be discussed with the Cycle Chester Project Manager and feedback would be provided at the next session.
 14. We outlined the content of the next session and explained that it would be shorter.
 15. Finally we thanked everyone for coming and offered to stay behind to answer questions or note additional suggestions. Information on and freebies from Cycle Chester, information on local cycling groups, route maps and fliers about rides and events were made available.

Between sessions we performed an initial analysis on the data obtained and discussed this with the Cycle Chester Project Manager. Strategies for the second session were decided upon and the obstacles/issues and proposed solutions were discussed in the context of existing and proposed Cycle Chester programmes of work.

The **second session** was an hour long. The objectives were to: feedback Cycle Chester's perspective on the issues and suggestions from the first session; explore some possible solutions in more detail and find out what further information we could provide to session participants.

1. We asked any participants who didn't attend the previous session to fill out the relevant forms. Asked each person to make a name badge.
2. Refreshments available
3. Groundwork staff re-introduced ourselves and re-capped on last session
4. Staff presented each obstacle/issue in turn and the feedback provided from Cycle Chester. Participants were encouraged to ask questions.
5. Participants then voted on 3/4 proposed solutions (either proposed by session participants or Cycle Chester) which they wished to explore in more detail.
6. The 3 solutions were then written in the centre of flip chart paper and the paper divided into 4 sections with the sub-headings – **'Write something positive about the proposed solution'**, **'Write something negative about the proposed solution'**, **'Write something creative about the proposed solution'** and **'Write something about how this solution could best be delivered'**. One sheet of paper was placed on each of 3 tables and participants were asked to move around the tables writing one thing under each heading.
7. Participants were then given the opportunity to sign-up to receive further information on Cycle Chester initiatives (e-newsletter, cycle training, cycle loan scheme, personal travel planning, etc).
8. Staff thanked them for their help, gave out the voucher incentives and information about cycling and Cycle Chester, how to get involved, Cycle Chester goodies and asked them to ensure they had left an email or postal address if they would like copy of the report.

3.4 Questionnaire approach

It became apparent that, despite intensive publicity and over-subscription to the Upton and Hoole and Newton sessions, the Blacon and Lache sessions were going to be severely under-subscribed. In addition, some interested residents of Upton and Hoole and Newton couldn't make the focus sessions and asked us for a way to contribute outside of these sessions. After discussing this issue with Cycle Chester and with local partner organisations, who have expertise in working in Blacon and Lache, the decision was taken to also create a questionnaire based on the session structures. We posted questionnaires out and also used an approach favoured by Participatory Appraisal Consultation practitioners - we visited venues where residents already convene. This ensured we were able to ask the required number of people and also ensured we asked a broad range of people.

Three questionnaires were created – 1. A full questionnaire, covering material from both sessions; 2. A questionnaire for people only attending session two of the focus groups, and 3. A questionnaire for people only attending session one of the focus groups. Please see appendix for copies of the questionnaires. These participants were offered the same incentive for completing and returning the questionnaire/s.

As well as posting out questionnaires to people who were unable to attend the sessions, we visited the following venues/groups:

- Café Life in Blacon
- The Blacon Community Trust Dee Point Centre

- Step by Step Weight Loss Group in Blacon
- Lache Community Centre
- Martial Arts group in Lache
- Cheerleading group in Lache
- Health check sessions in Blacon and Lache
- We also conducted door-knocking sessions in Blacon and Lache

4. Base-line data

4.1 Summary statistics

Focus Group Participants

Twenty six people took part in the focus sessions – twelve in Upton and fourteen in Hoole/Newton. Five people attended the first Upton session and eleven attended the second, with an 80% second session return rate. Thirteen people attended the first Hoole/Newton session and eleven the second, with a 77% return rate.

Overall, 25% of participants at the Upton sessions were male, and 43% of the participants in the Hoole sessions. Twenty five percent of the Upton participants were 60 or over, with the rest in the 26-59 age group. One participant of the Hoole sessions was under 25, with the majority (57%) being 26-59.

There was representation from a range of ages across the 4 geographic areas, although there were only a small number of young people (under 25 years old) represented in Upton and Hoole/ Newton. This is likely because young people are not attracted to focus group sessions, rather than lack of publicity, as every school in the area was contacted as well as youth groups.

Sixty four percent of participants had children or grandchildren who cycle (6 participants knew that their children/grandchildren had received bike training at school).

Questionnaire Respondents

Forty four people responded to the questionnaires. Fifteen of these were from Blacon, 13 from Lache, 5 from Hoole, none from Upton, 7 from another part of Chester and 4 unconfirmed. Twenty nine and a half percent were male. The age range was from 13 to 77 years.

Fifty eight percent of participants had children or grandchildren who cycle (5 respondents knew that their children/grandchildren had received bike training at school).

4.2 Ability of participants and frequency of cycle journeys

Focus Group Participants

Eight percent of participants could not ride a bicycle and 50% were nervous cyclists. The remainder classed themselves as confident cyclists. Relatively, a higher percentage of females said they were nervous cyclists compared to males.

Seventeen percent of participants cycle every day, 21% once or a couple of times a week, 25% a couple of times a month, 29% very occasionally and 8% never cycle (this 8% corresponds to the percentage of people who cannot ride a bike). Only four participants (male) said that they cycle every day. As would be expected, nervous cyclists are more infrequent cyclists.

As a measure of bike maintenance skills we asked if the participants could mend a puncture. Thirty eight and a half percent said they could not and this suggests a significant number of people would be

unable to make basic repairs on their bikes. Local businesses can charge £35+ for a basic bike service and this may put people off getting 'back in the saddle' if their bike has a mechanical problem, however minor. Those people who said they could mend a puncture tended to be male and confident cyclists.

Questionnaire Respondents

Just over one half the respondents were nervous cyclists and 5% could not ride a bike. Fifty percent of respondents very occasionally or never cycled.

Fifty eight percent of respondents said they could not mend a puncture. Relatively more of these were males.

Positive experiences of cycling – yourself or observing others

Many people cited cycling experiences in Continental Europe, family cycling experiences and getting back into cycling after a number of years.

“Family experience on Millennium Greenway”

“Four year old just had stabilisers removed”

“Used to cycle to Wales regularly in teens”

“At the age of 10 enjoyed riding from Old Trafford to Pickmere in Cheshire”

4.3 What journeys do people make by bike?

Focus Group Participants

Forty three percent of participants use their bike for or would like to cycle more than one type of journey. Social cycle rides are the single most popular journey option (24%). Every person who uses their bike for work also uses it for other types of journeys.

Questionnaire Respondents

Fifty six percent of respondents who cycle use their bike for more than one type of journey. There is an even split (12%) between social, work and fitness journeys from the other respondents. Eight percent use their bike for 'other' journeys.

4.4 Why people want to cycle

Focus Group Participants

- To cycle to work
- Shopping - local shopping, supermarkets
- To spend more time with children
- To explore the area and to access leisure activities e.g. Chester, Delamere Forest (via the train), North Wales, Chester Zoo, Northgate Leisure Complex, local parks
- Training for sport and fitness purposes including measured journeys and triathlon
- Reduce carbon footprint
- Social reasons
- Economy – cheaper than local bus, save on parking fees and car expense

- General fitness and health reasons – physical and mental health, to lose weight
- For journeys into the city centre
- General recreation and leisure
- To become familiar with cycle paths
- To cycle to school
- For generally getting around the city, but not necessarily into the city centre (Vickers Cross to Town, Hoole to Boughton, Upton to Whealstone Park, Upton to Countess, Upton to Northgate)
- For speed and efficiency of travel
- Have a peripatetic lifestyle – want to travel to evening meetings and events

Questionnaire Respondents

Why do you like to/want to cycle?	Number of respondents
Fitness/exercise/health/lose weight	28
Free/cheaper	10
Access a wider area/countryside	10
Faster/convenience	7
Environmentally friendly	7
Fun/adventure	6
Social	5
Children/grandchildren	2
Fresh air/freedom	1

“Cycling is a way to get into the countryside quickly and cheaply”

“As I can't drive our car I find it quicker to travel around Blacon [by bike] than walking or waiting for a bus”

“It is a quick way into the city without worries of parking”

“To work [but] would involve travelling on a busy road from Boughton to Chester City Centre”

5. Session One

5.1 Why do people not cycle at present? What obstacles/issues are people facing?

Focus Group Participants

Despite 42% of participants classing themselves as confident cyclists only 28% of all participants cycle at least once a week. This indicates that being able to ride a bike confidently does not necessarily mean people are frequent cyclists; other issues/obstacles must play a role.

Listed below are the issues raised in the brain-storming session (multiple similar suggestions have been aggregated into one bullet point).

Chester-specific issues

- Bottom of Hoole Lane where the railway bridge crosses the canal is dangerous.
- Hoole Bridge in general. Dissuades people in Hoole from travelling to station by bike and taking bike on train, for example to work or on social rides along train network.
- Boughton Lane problem – after Hoole Lane junction the duel carriageway splits and it is very hard for cyclists to get in the right hand lane to turn right onto the A5115 Christleton Road
- Bike path on Northgate St - buses and taxis park in cycle way.
- General problem of vehicles parking in cycle ways in Chester with no punishment. Also problem in Chester of parking on double yellow lines and no/very little control.
- Hoole Road - buses pulling out in front of cyclists.
- Fountains Roundabout very difficult and dangerous for cyclists.
- Sealand Road – cars parking in cycle lane.
- A41 – cycle lane runs out in Waverton with no warning to motorists or cyclists.
- Eastgate Street near M&S – are there (enough) cycle racks?
- Railway Station – not enough cycle storage, no road markings to help cyclists, signage is non-existent. Not apparent how to get to station/away from station by bike, to cycle storage, best cycle entrance etc.
- No cycle storage at Bache Railway Station.
- On the canal towpath and on highway – businesses blocking the way with A-frame signs.
- Canal by the Globe Pub/Steam Mill – A-frame signs on towpath.
- No north-south route through city centre.
- No University cycle policy [known].
- General black spots:
 1. Liverpool Road – near University.
 2. Corner of Watergate St (Lower and Upper) by duel carriageway.
- Canal tow path has not got a good surface for cycling.
- No cycle route – have to cycle on pavement – from Newton to Queens Park High School.
- Narrowness – Mill Lane. Get pushed onto kerb. Space and speed. Speed bumps add to problem – cars travel to other side of road to avoid them (although cycle channels help on chicanes).
- On the A41 towards Newton the cycle lane stops and there is no controlled crossing towards Hoole.
- Hedgerow overgrown on A41 cycle path.
- Hedge cuttings left on cycle path, especially on canal towpath.
- Lack of cycle racks:
 1. local shops
 2. town centre
 3. on routes e.g. by benches

Person-specific issues:

- Fitness – aware of holding up traffic as am slow – I get flustered (on narrow roads cars can't pass).
- Would never cycle on road – too scared.
- Lack of changing facilities at County Hall and other work buildings.
- Lack of publicity about available staff facilities in work places.
- Bike maintenance – don't know how and costly to maintain bike (service expensive).
- Don't have proper equipment to take on journeys and information on how to use it.
- Not being able to cycle.
- Lack of confidence.
- Lack of bike.
- Design and location of cycle racks – ones that you can only lock your wheels to no good. People stealing cycle wheels. Sheffield stands good.
- Difficult to store bike at home.
- General cost of running a bike.

General issues:

- Making sure the road near the kerb (where some people cycle) is clear of debris.
- Not adequate clearing-up after road repairs.
- Taxi and bus drivers - aggressive towards cyclists.
- The design of some red cycle path routes is dangerous.
- There need to be warnings/signs to make other vehicles aware of bikes.
- Cars parking on cycle lanes.
- When there are repairs to roads/cycle paths no diversions are set up.
- Cycle provision is patchy, not joined up – not a very cycle-friendly city. Way behind others.
- No more cobbles or level them off properly.
- All Cycle City staff must ride a bike when in city.
- Lights and bells – issue with pedestrians – lack of cyclist education, need a guide.
- Pedestrians with mobiles and i-pods on dual-use paths.

Highest-ranked issues in Hoole/ Newton

1. Feel intimidated by other road users
2. Can't carry all of my stuff on a bike
3. My bike might get stolen if I park it somewhere
4. Rain/wind

Highest-ranked issues in Upton

1. Feel intimidated by other road users
2. Rain/wind
3. Can't carry all of my stuff on my bike

Questionnaire Respondents

Issues that prevent/discourage people from cycling	Number of respondents
Intimidated by other road users	24
Rain/wind	16
Can't carry everything	13
No access to bike	12
Bike may get stolen	11
Not fit enough	8
Slower	7
Bike needs mending	5
Can't ride a bike	1

"Traffic volume"

"Have 3 children [who] as yet cannot ride"

"Get laughed at by bullies"

"Clothing - my bike doesn't have a skirt guard or chain guard. I've tried to get both but none made. Am still trying to find them. So can only cycle wearing certain clothes"

"Lots of traffic in Chester and they cut cyclists up"

5.2 Suggested solutions from session participants

Chester-specific:

- At all entrances to city more prominent and larger signs 'This is a Cycle City'.
- Tourism aspect - destination FOR cyclists.
- Bike boxes 'Bike in a Box' (based on car cooperatives) – to include bike, panniers (addressing the carrying issue), helmet etc – a coordinated system.
- Park and Cycle / Cycle and Park for all P&R sites.
- Have red cycle paths on Hoole Road and every busy road that is wide enough.
- Segregate cars and bikes as much as possible.
- Forum or website to log black spots and potholes.
- Continue this initiative with an organised group for non and nervous-cyclists
- Reduce speed limit to 20mph within city – would have other positive spin-offs too.
- Adequate and frequent signage being considered.
- Cycle paths – off-road or separated from road.
- Turn roads over to cycle ways.

- Local campaign along lines of 'Think Bike' for drivers – publicise details of penalties.
- Penalties seen to be enforced – driver awareness.
- Liverpool Road – coloured cycle lane, signage to the Deva Link alternative route, suggest continued cycle path from Fountains Roundabout to Countess – re-think route.

Person-specific:

- Adult stabilizers on loan.
- Promote cool-looking cycle clothing. If all promotional literature has people in cycle helmets you will put people off cycling as some people will never wear helmets. Women don't like helmet hair – is a real issue.
- Cycle-training for adults (older-people-friendly) – accredited and informal:
 - Teach how to ride a bike
 - Teach on-road safety – workshops, different ages.
 - Personal travel planning – also linked in to training.
 - Loan scheme for non-cyclists – bikes and equipment.
 - Speed displays on helmets!
 - Points in Chester to have a subsidised bike maintenance service.
 - Bike maintenance workshops.
 - Place to be able to use maintenance equipment and receive tutoring.
 - Instruction on cycling roundabouts and junctions – cycle safety workshops. On weekends and summer evenings. Accreditation offered. Link into an event, e.g. cycle ride at the zoo.
 - Mix of on- and off-road training.
 - Free hi-vis vests (with logo?), cycle clips and reflective strips.
 - Publicity about kit when publicise cycle to work schemes.

General issues:

- Awareness of Highway Code and how it relates to bikes – both drivers and cyclists.
- More, better and targeted publicity of schemes:
 - Chronicle and Extra newspapers
 - Standard newspaper
 - On buses and at bus stops
 - Local radio
 - Chester Cycle Campaign
 - Council Recycling Magazine 'Recycling and cycling'!
 - Council magazine which is delivered to all residences
 - Council sub-groups
- Use existing cycle groups to advertise schemes and use their volunteers and experience

- Feature each week in newspaper – circular route each week:
 - how long
 - gradient
 - pubs/stopping places
 - details for on-road sections
- Pamphlets and map routes, distribute to:
 - council offices
 - tourist office
 - online
 - zoo
 - local businesses – hotels, restaurants, pubs
- Advertise route finder cyclestreets.net
- Map should be simplistic with not too much detail (like the Delamere Forest one), text also, a key, show whether routes are on-road or off-road.
- Schools should be included in cycle to work schemes – so can obtain children's bikes.
- Pick-up/drop-off bike hire system – tourism in city centre – research other examples
 - novelty bikes
 - children's trailers
 - kit e.g. panniers.
- Advertise Bike Doctor sessions on back of maps.
- Advertise cycle hire on back of maps.
- Psychologically red cycle ways help nervous cyclists.
- Advance stop boxes don't help.
- Educating other cyclists – talk to cycle groups.
- Bikes on buses and trains. Talk to companies. Clear communication with companies and passengers.

5.3 Suggested solutions from questionnaire respondents

“Cooler helmets (with rabbit ears!)”

“Children’s bike loan scheme”

Suggestions	Number
More/improved cycle paths/segregating cyclists from traffic/red paths	19
Bike loan/hire	10
Better/more bike parking	4
More publicity/driver awareness	4
Reduce speed limits/traffic calming	3
Grosvenor Bridge improvements	2
Security on routes	2
Training	2

“More cycle lanes!!!”

“Reduce road speeds to 20mph”

6. Session Two

6.1 A detailed look at proposed solutions

Upton residents chose to discuss the following proposed solutions in more detail:

<p>Positive</p> <p>If targeted properly, word of mouth will help initiatives grow</p>	<p>Negative</p> <p>Poor signage</p>
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Promotion of the Cycle Chester programme

<p>How?</p> <p>Public places (e.g. leaflets in supermarkets etc...) rather than targeted paper that not everyone might read. Use web Mail drops – combine in recycle leaflets Bike user email groups? Using cycle maps (small / pocket size) Grade the routes Designated ‘travel’ space / boards in libraries / village halls etc....</p>	<p>Creative</p> <p>Themed Cycling Days Out Use rising cost of petrol in advertising as well as health and green.</p>
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Positive

Agree strongly – ongoing to reinforce, road dangers, safety etc...

Fewer accidents should be an outcome of effective training - which could encourage the Government to invest more in Adult Training Schemes.

Negative

Take up could be low if not promoted enough

Agree with above – need to reach people who are not already active / interested in Cycle Chester, etc...

Lack of knowledge of maintenance

Adult training

How?

Combine in group cycle rides to ↑ confidence and ↑ awareness of routes.

Summer eve classes locally

Offer incentives – high vis gear etc & certificates

Have some bikes available for non cycling owners

Including bike maintenance

Creative

Use free papers

Lots of local firms / charities post leaflets / bags. Co-operate with leafleting.

Workshop for bike maintenance.

Positive

Health promoting

Good to have perspective of other road user groups

Negative

Wear dark clothes

Not wearing helmet

No light, no reflectors

'Think Cyclist' Campaign

How?

Promote in work place i.e bright clothes

Promote in High School etc...

Make it compulsory wear a helmet

Where two pavements exist designate one for pedestrians & one for cyclists.

Creative

Set colours & shapes of signs to provide uniformity and awareness of all road users

Computer simulator for bus drivers etc of what it's like on the road from cyclists perspective and vice versa

Hoole and Newton residents chose to discuss the following proposed solutions in more detail:

Positive

Bargains, Bike rental
Events training
Larger schemes
Adverts – 10–20% if relevant
Bike maintenance – Doctor bike
Info on fixing a bike – links to websites

Negative

Adverts not related to bikes

E-Newsletter

How?

Minimum, once a month
Bullet points
No waffle
Good design
Through the What's On guide - promoted

Creative

Info about work on cycle ways and diversions
Text in email & links – explain what contained in title / subtitle

Positive

1st aid
Maintenance
On-road training
Feel more safe & more comfortable riding confident

Negative

Not got a bike
Health – bad back concerns

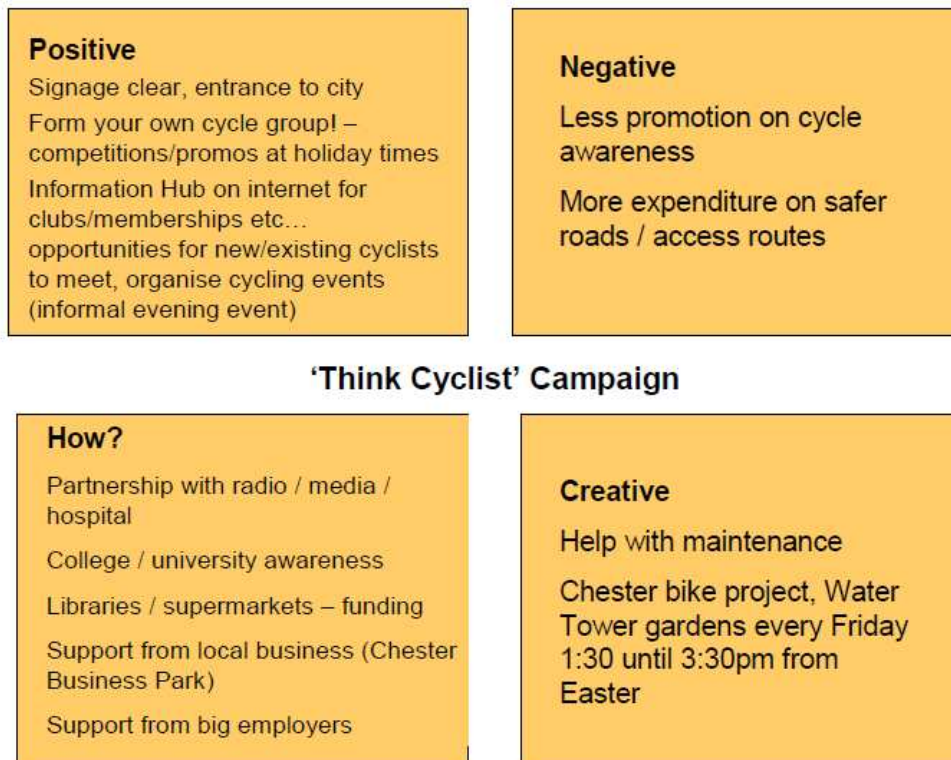
Adult Training

How?

Two hours at a time
During day in week, weekends
Once a week

Creative

Poster in Blacon Furniture Project
Promotion through word of mouth
Leaflets – libraries, tourist information
Newton newsletter



6.2 Cycle Chester programme solutions

Cycle Chester has initiated and is planning to initiate solutions to some of the issues listed. These proposals were discussed with the Project Manager between the sessions and then, in some detail, with the session participants. Session participants were interested in being kept up-to-date with the progression of these solutions.

6.3 Interest in solutions/initiatives from participants

Groundwork staff collected a list of contact details for participants and respondents who wished to learn more about specified projects and initiatives. The Cycle Chester Project Manager will contact individuals. Please see appendix for full list (this part of the appendices is only available to CWaC Council).

More focus group participants were interested in training and personal travel planning than were questionnaire respondents. In the focus sessions we had time to discuss what these initiatives were about and how they could benefit non-, nervous- and infrequent-cyclists and this may explain why the session participants showed more interest.

6.4 Suggested solutions outside the remit of Cycle Chester

Some of the solutions proposed by participants and respondents were outside of the remit for Cycle Chester – either geographically, in scale or the content. It has been agreed that these suggestions will be passed onto relevant departments, as deemed appropriate, by the Cycle Chester Project Manager.

7. Suggestions for using the report and data and taking the initiative forward

There may be an assumption that infrequent cycling is primarily due to people not being able to cycle however, this research found a relatively small number of participants are unable to cycle.

Intimidating behaviour by other road users was the primary negative issue raised by participants however, it appears that increasing the confidence of these cyclists is not the only solution as a large number of people thought of themselves as 'confident cyclists' and yet still felt intimidated by other road users. A large number of these confident cyclists were not cycling frequently, if at all.

Participants and respondents suggested a large number of solutions to a variety of negative issues/obstacles to cycling and although it is recognised that not all of these ideas can be taken up within the scope of the Cycle Chester programme, it is suggested that the council use this information to take the initiative forward into a long-term strategy for engaging with and encouraging non-, nervous- and infrequent-cyclists to start cycling/cycle more in Chester.

A large number of participants were interested in the 'soft' options offered by Cycle Chester (e.g. training, personal travel planning, bike loan) but were unaware of the opportunities previous to the sessions/questionnaires. We note the challenges facing Cycle Chester in promotion – we devoted a lot of time and energy to promoting the cycle sessions relative to the interest we got from the public. However, the participants and respondents have made some good suggestions as to how promotions can reach more people and they support Cycle Chester's proposed plans for utilising newspapers, the radio and e-newsletters. It should be noted that the Cycle Chester website can be very slow to respond to changes and events and the focus sessions were not able to be advertised through this medium because of the slow reaction time. Many people now use the internet on a regular basis and this is an area of promotion which participants thought could be improved.

There was also a lot of interest generated in a local 'Think Cyclist' campaign, along the lines of the Department for Transport 'Think Bike' campaign; which would address the road traffic intimidation Chester cyclists and non-cyclists clearly feel is a major issue.

It is recommended that, if possible, Cycle Chester facilitates the continuation of a non-, nervous- and infrequent-cyclist forum, which would complement, rather than replace existing cycle groups. Many participants were keen to stay involved in the project but were not confident enough to join a more traditional cycling group at this stage. A number of participants were interested in joining a 'beginners' cycle group, especially one which led cycle rides, and it would make sense for Cycle Chester to help promote the range of groups already present in Chester, who cater to a range of abilities and fitness levels.

Bicycle maintenance was an issue for many people as indicated through the lower-than-expected number of people who are able to mend a puncture and through specific concerns about cost of maintenance and the number of people who indicated that their bike needs mending. Some solutions were discussed such as including basic bike maintenance as a part of the adult training sessions and extending the Dr Bike sessions, which currently run occasionally in Blacon and at the Water Tower Gardens. Dr Bike sessions have been very popular in the past and it is recognised nationally that a large number of bikes are unused because of a lack of basic knowledge about how to maintain and repair them.

Forty two people wished to receive a copy of this report, thirty wished to receive e-newsletters, fourteen requested information on adult training, six on personal travel planning, two on the open cycle parking scheme and adult stabilisers and one on bike loan and maintenance training. We suggest Cycle Chester send a response to those people interested in general and specific Cycle Chester initiatives and projects as soon as possible. Most participants also wished to see a copy of the City Centre Permeability Master Plan and it is suggested that a link to the plan is made available through the Cycle Chester website. A new edition of an e-newsletter with updates and recent project history will help to keep people engaged with the programme. It is unfortunate that the newsletter cannot be produced in hard copy and therefore it is important to ensure that those people who do not have access to the internet are kept informed through another medium.

There was a large amount of interest in the sessions and questionnaires from non-, nervous- and infrequent-cyclists from the Boughton area of Chester. Some did respond to the promotional material and take part in the sessions and questionnaire despite the geographic constraints advertised. We suggest another session targeting this area, which has some unique geographical challenges for cyclists and a large number of households with younger children who wish to find ways of cycling as a family.

A large amount of raw data was created from this exercise (and is available in the appendix). It was impractical to present it all in this report but we encourage Cycle Chester and CWaC Council to utilise it in future planning and targeting of resources.

8. Recommendations for similar initiatives

8.1 Publicity

It is recommended that a wide range of publicity is carried out in an intensive period in order to promote focus sessions. If a wide demographic group is targeted, a wide range of methods will need to be employed including use of the internet and social networking sites. Although time consuming, posters in local shops and contacting local newsletters proved successful. A detailed list of the promotional activity carried out is included in the appendix.

Use and promotion of incentives is recommended.

8.2 Session structure

It is recommended that a focus session-based approach is tried for at least some of the engagement. Although similar questions can be asked in a questionnaire, the sessions enabled the presence of discussion and spending a longer period of time on each question provided a lot more useful information. The sessions also enabled us to explain about Cycle Chester, answer questions and gauge interest in initiatives and projects.

The two-session-approach enabled us to take the suggestions and issues back to the Cycle Chester Project Manager and so give the participants valuable and appreciated feedback in the second session. Although the two-session approach may put some potential participants off the return rates for the second session were very good and it can be communicated that, although it is preferable for participants to attend both sessions, it is not compulsory.

According to the feedback forms the length of time was fine for both sessions. It is recommended that two members of staff are involved for practical reasons and that there is a maximum of fifteen participants per session.

Asking people to fill in a brief questionnaire at the beginning of the session worked well as it gave people an immediate focus and gave us valuable information on the participants.

Refreshments are very important and name badges help people to feel at ease.

Providing people with an agenda worked as it allowed people to see where the session was heading and enabled us to prevent people from leaping ahead by referring them to the ordering of items on the agenda.

It is recommended that venues are accessible to wheelchairs, those with mobility problems and to pushchairs (adapted bikes could be discussed specifically as an agenda item). These sessions did attract people with health issues but no one who would require an adapted bike. We also suggest that child care and deaf signers are offered as part of the promotional material if possible.

8.3 Session content

Feedback forms indicate that overall the content of the session was good. It is easy for such sessions to turn into complaint sessions with protracted discussion. To prevent this, a tight agenda and a variety of facilitated activities, as well as rules such as 'no wrong answers', 'no discussion for this item' and 'one person speaking at a time' can work well. A good facilitator will be needed to ensure everyone gets a chance to contribute to proceedings and the group doesn't move off the scheduled programme.

8.4 Flexibility

If you want to engage participants with a range of ages and from a range of backgrounds we recommend you take a multi-phase approach – questionnaires, visiting venues, and focus groups. Focus groups tend to attract more participants in areas with an already active community and tend not to appeal to younger people. Questionnaires should be no longer than two A4 sides. As non-cyclists are not an easily definable group time should be spent considering whom to approach in order to get a representative spread of respondents.

8.5 Feedback

Feedback forms were sent to all participants from the focus sessions; sixteen people responded. Participants were invited to rate various aspects of the focus sessions from one to five – one being bad and five being excellent. The mean scores are displayed below in bold:

- How was Groundwork's communication prior to the event? **4/5**
- How was the venue? **4/5**
- What did you think of the delivery of the first session? **4/5**
- What did you think of the content of the first session? **4/5**
- What did you think of the delivery of the second session? **4/5**
- What did you think of the content of the second session? **4/5**

Eleven people thought the sessions were about the right length the remainder thought they were too short. Everyone thought that their views were listened to. A sample of feedback comments:

"I learnt about things I was not aware existed regarding speed limit, bike hire plans, workshops and linking up with, for example, the bus company to learn about what a cyclist looks like from a big vehicle driver's aspect. I look forward to getting on my bike now."

"I hope to hear more from you. I also hope that the things we have been talking about will be fulfilled."

"I felt all our concerns and suggestions were taken seriously, and taken forward for consideration. I am very grateful to Groundwork for taking the time to speak to nervous cyclists such as myself."

"Not received a copy of the report. Sceptical as to whether our views will be taken seriously considered (tick box exercise?) I wait to be convinced by the action of the council with implementation."

"I found the sessions informative and relaxed, will be using some of the route maps from the Chester Cycling Campaign in the near future (as soon as I can fix my bike) and will also be taking part in the rides from the Town Hall in May."

9. Appendices content (appendices only available to CWaC Council)

Appendix A. List for highways engineers

Appendix B. List for maintenance department

Appendix C. Photos from sessions

Appendix D. Diamond-ranking sheets

Appendix E. Raw data (CD)

Appendix F. Sample questionnaire

Appendix G. Contact list and interest in Cycle Chester initiatives

Appendix H. Feedback forms – sample and raw data

**Appendix I. Map identifying Chester-specific issues available as a Google map:
<http://maps.google.com/maps/ms?ie=UTF8&hl=en&msa=0&t=h&msid=115594138130796317093.00048ab68e294ebe18142&ll=53.189373,-2.890091&spn=0.081666,0.219383&z=12>**

Appendix J. List of promotions

Appendix K. Sample poster