



THE CHARTERED  
INSTITUTION OF HIGHWAYS  
& TRANSPORTATION

**ACT**  
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# MAKING SMARTER CHOICES

FACTSHEET 001

[www.ciht.org.uk](http://www.ciht.org.uk)

THE CHARTERED INSTITUTION OF HIGHWAYS  
& TRANSPORTATION 'SMARTER' TRAVEL GUIDE

# I'M A LOCAL WARD MEMBER, WHAT SHOULD I KNOW ABOUT SMARTER TRAVEL

## WHAT THIS COVERS

'Smarter travel' provides a way of delivering local transport strategies with reduced funding.

As a councillor, your local knowledge and understanding means that you often know who to contact and how to get things done. You are in a good position to encourage your local authority to adopt smarter travel measures and to work with your own community to make best use of the benefits they can bring.



Used courtesy of Martin Breschinski, on behalf of TfL

## WHAT IS SMARTER TRAVEL?

This encompasses a family of techniques (also known as 'smarter choices') for influencing travel behaviour towards more sustainable options. Key characteristics include greater use of public transport, increased walking and cycling, reduced single occupancy car use, reduced travel for work and using technology to help all of these.

**The smarter travel family of techniques includes 4 main types:**

- ◆ Soft measures (eg setting up a car share scheme);
- ◆ Promotion and awareness raising (eg personalised travel planning);
- ◆ Sustainable transport infrastructure (eg new walking and cycling routes);
- ◆ Monitoring and evaluation (eg measuring increased use of infrastructure).

## WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS FROM SMARTER TRAVEL?

There is plenty of evidence that where local authorities have encouraged specific smarter travel measures, such as workplace, school and personalised travel plans, car sharing schemes and car clubs that there can be noticeable reductions in traffic resulting in a more pleasant local environment. The benefit-cost ratios for smarter travel measures are usually at least comparable to, if not better than, more traditional road building solutions. They can give people wider choices of travel and the benefits are greater than just transport. They also play a significant role in increasing the potential to improve accessibility, equality of opportunity, quality of life, health and well-being.

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## **IF THEY ARE AS GOOD AS YOU SAY, WHY ISN'T EVERY LOCAL AUTHORITY MAKING THE MOST OF SMARTER TRAVEL?**

Many are but frequently those who make the decisions in local authorities do not realise the potential of smarter travel for tackling a wide range of transport problems. The Government has recognised the importance of smarter travel and it is a key element of transport planning across the UK and Ireland.

## **HOW WILL SMARTER TRAVEL HELP MY COMMUNITY?**

The important point about smarter travel is that the type of measures introduced should be adapted to the location. It is not a question of one-size-fits-all. So if your community is an inner city ward with employment close by, then walking and cycling schemes and improved public transport might be suitable. In a suburban situation where people have to travel farther to work, then travel plans for the workplace, schools and access to stations, flexible working and car sharing might be more appropriate. Some measures like car clubs can work very well in both urban and rural situations.

Smarter travel projects can help develop a real sense of belonging to a community which can be boosted through events run by the local authority. There are strong democratic reasons for involving local people in the decisions that shape their communities.

For example, the London Borough of Sutton and Transport for London ran a 3 year project (2006-2009) to introduce smarter travel measures across the borough with the following results:

- ◆ 75% increase in cycling – greater than the rest of London;
- ◆ 16% increase in the number of people travelling by bus;
- ◆ 6% reduction in residents travelling by car;
- ◆ All Sutton's 68 schools had travel plans by March 2008 – 2 years ahead of the Government's target;
- ◆ More than 16,000 employees in Sutton worked for companies with travel plans;
- ◆ Every household in Sutton was offered free personal travel advice and information;
- ◆ 10,000 primary school children regularly participated in the Walk Once a Week initiative;
- ◆ In the final year, 27,000 people attended Smarter Sutton events.

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## WHAT IF MY LOCAL AUTHORITY IS RELUCTANT TO PROMOTE SMARTER TRAVEL?

You need to find out why this is; point them to research (eg Department for Transport website: <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/sustainable/smarterchoices/>) on the benefits of smarter travel; and encourage them to think how smarter travel measures could help solve transport issues for less money than by building infrastructure. For instance, they could be assessing the viability of a key road link; dealing with the implications of a town centre traffic management scheme; or tackling the transport issues associated with a new development – all these situations are well-suited to being addressed by smarter travel measures.

[Making Smarter Choices Work](#)

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/sustainable/smarterchoices/makingwork/ngsmarterchoicesworkfull5770.pdf>

