

Warrington Adult Cycle training

Costs

A recent Smarter Choices report for Warrington Council stated that:

“Currently no adult cycle training programmes are available in Warrington, although these are available commercially elsewhere in the North West. The provision of high quality cycle training for both children and adults comes with a high price tag, and options on how to provide this will be a high priority within the smarter choices agenda. (5.4.23)¹

The potential cost of a Warrington adult cycle training scheme can be estimated by examining the level of cycle training provided by other cities and comparing on a pro-rata population basis.

In 2008/9 Transport for London (TfL) provided funding for 4000 adults across all London boroughs to receive cycle training. Warrington has a total population of around 200,000² and to deliver comparable levels of adult cycle training, on a pro-rata population basis, a Warrington project would deliver 105 cycle training places.³ Providing cycle training sessions for this number of people would cost approximately £5250, allowing for management, publicity and evaluation would require project funding of order of £6500.

This does not appear to be a “high price tag” and this amount would be the equivalent of approximately 160 to 320 metres of standard cycle lane.⁴

Benefits

Research undertaken by the SQW consultancy for Cycling England published in "Valuing the Benefits of Cycling", 2007 highlighted that each new "additional cyclist" generated [by promoting and encouraging] cycling could

¹ www.warrington.gov.uk/images/Appendix%20%20Smarter%20Choices_tcm15-48815.pdf

² Of which 49.1% are male and 50.9% are female. The average age of the population is 38.06 years, which is slightly below the regional and national averages. (Office of National Statistics data)

³ London (population) (2007 figures) = 7,556,900. Warrington population (2008 figures) = 200,000.

To match the London cycle training figures, pro rata (by population) Warrington would need to provide 105 adult cycle training places.

⁴ Transport for London (TfL) (2005) costs for standard cycle lanes (no junctions) were £20 - £40 per metre and these are likely to have increased since that date.

deliver saving benefits of up to £382 in relation to health, pollution and congestion issues.⁵

Based on this figure a Warrington cycle training project would only need to encourage and assist 17 people to start cycling regularly to generate overall benefits equal to the cost of the cycle training project.

Effectiveness

Since July 2010, BikeRight! has been delivering an adult cycle training project (Freewheeling) with funding from Manchester City Council (MCC).

The latest BikeRight! Freewheeling report (November) for MCC indicated that:

- Nearly 20% of the adult cycle training places delivered have been for 'Learn to Ride' sessions (58). It is clear that significant numbers of adults never learned to cycle during childhood or in later life.
- Over 60.5% (173) of the participants who have received adult cycle training reported that they do not currently cycle (Never cycle).
- So far 76.4% (223) of the cycle training places delivered have been for women participants.

In December 2010, BikeRight! surveyed all the Freewheeling cycle training participants. Preliminary results from a 50% response rate indicate that:

- Before the Freewheeling cycle training 16% of the participants assessed themselves as being unable to cycle. This had reduced to 1.9% after the participating in the Freewheeling training.
- Before participating in the cycle training, over 50% of respondents assessed themselves as being a "complete beginner", or "returning to cycling" or having "basic skills". Following the Freewheeling cycle training over 66% of respondents assessed themselves as having "average" (40.7%) or "advanced" (25.9%) cycling skills.
- Before the Freewheeling cycle training 57% (68) of respondents reported that they "never" or "not often" cycled. After the cycle training the percentage of people in this category had reduced to 20.9% (24). Following the cycle training over 65% of the respondents reported that they now cycled "once a fortnight" (11.3%), "once a week" (20.9%) or

⁵ www.dft.gov.uk/cyclingengland/site/wp-content/uploads/2008/08/valuing-the-benefits-of-cycling-exec-summary.pdf [Page 2 of Exec summary]

[The research defines regular cycling as three times a week and measures the impact across the lifetime of a project – assumed in this study to be 30 years.]

“most days” (33%). It is clear that the Freewheeling training had made a significant difference to the frequency of cycling.

- Just over half of the survey respondents reported that they “agree” or “strongly agree” that the Freewheeling cycle training had:

Encouraged me to cycle longer distances (55.6%)

A significant majority of respondents indicated they “agree” or “strongly agree” that the Freewheeling adult cycle training had:

Encouraged me to cycle more often (73.8%)

Helped me feel safer when cycling on the road (79.3%)

Increased my competence when cycling on the road (80.9%)

Helped me feel more confident when cycling on the road (81.9%)

The Freewheeling cycle training made a clear difference to the cycling frequency, perception of safety, competence and confidence of the respondents.

- The survey results indicate that following the Freewheeling cycle training that 16 participants now regularly travel to work by bicycle and there was a 7.7% reduction in car use as the travel to work mode. If this reduction in car use continues to be a long term change then the Freewheeling cycle training will have achieved comparable results to the Cycling Demonstration Town and Sustainable Travel Towns programmes.
- Overall, 95.8% of respondents who answered this question indicated that their level of satisfaction with the Freewheeling adult cycle training sessions was either Good (16.8%) or Very Good (79%).
- The high levels of satisfaction with the Freewheeling cycle training was also reflected in the responses to the question which asked whether people would recommend the cycle training to family, friends or work colleagues. Overall, 99.1% stated that they would be willing to recommend Freewheeling.