

# On target for sustainable travel solutions

Congestion and traffic pollution are problems without borders - and solutions developed in one country can be applied successfully in another. Now sustainable travel options that offer a viable alternative to car use are being developed by a partnership of European countries led by the UK.

Target 2 is a European project co-funded by the Interreg IIIB North Sea Region programme. Launched in spring 2002 and ending in summer 2005, Target 2 aims to develop realistic travel choices for work, school and leisure journeys. Working alongside Metro (the lead partner) are authorities from the rest of the Yorkshire and Humber region, Bremen, Goteborg, Odense and the regional partnership of Euregio Scheldemonde in Flanders/Province of Zeeland.

A strength of the project is the similarity between the partner cities, although the Yorkshire and Humber authorities have to work with the problems of integration in a deregulated bus market and, unlike the smaller cities of Bremen and Goteborg, Leeds has no tram system to improve the quality of public transport.

By encouraging more flexible attitudes and providing travel options, the project intends to alter people's perceptions and travel habits - achieving a greater use of public transport.

Many of Target 2's activities have looked at existing lifestyles and posed the question: "Is a car necessary to make this journey?" Even when it is, measures can be considered to help mitigate the impact of car use. In the UK, many of these measures have already been successfully implemented.

In Leeds, the recently launched car club provides incentives to use public transport. Members of the Whizzgo car club are eligible for a 15% reduction on the cost of an annual MetroCard, which can be used on buses and trains across West Yorkshire. When a car is required, members can drive a Citroen C3 available at bays in the heart of Leeds and the suburb of Chapel Allerton. This scheme was fast-tracked thanks to the experiences of a similar scheme in Bremen; the German partners who provided set-up and Smartcard technological advice.

The Bremen experience suggests that drivers save money by joining a car club and help reduce city pollution and congestion problems. Now discussions are taking place over the creation of car clubs in three other cities within the Yorkshire and Humberside region.

Meanwhile, work to make public transport a viable alternative for business travellers continues. In West Yorkshire, Metro has negotiated a 15 per cent discount on MetroCards for businesses that join the Travel Plan Network. This resulted in a 25 per cent increase in sales last year, with more people commuting on buses and trains instead of using their cars.

Through Target funding, South Yorkshire PTE has further developed their TOPS (Travel Options Planning Service) scheme, providing new survey software and web based information to help businesses and other Authorities produce travel plans.

In another initiative, Target-supported authorities in the Yorkshire and Humber region are addressing an integrated planning process that encourages developers to accommodate restricted parking provision while contributing to public transport services and infrastructure.

Young people are a key target and in the field of education, the SAFEMark awards have increased the use of public transport for the school run, making it safer and more enjoyable for students. In South Yorkshire, the Transport Executive has worked closely with the police to address behavioural problems. While over the border in West Yorkshire, SAFEMark has been rolled out, and complements the Yellow Bus initiative run by Metro. Both these schemes provide students with a lasting good experience of public transport.

Target 2 is also tackling social inclusion through the Access to Communities initiative, providing public transport ticketing offers so that people can attend interviews and access jobs and services. In the Yorkshire Dales, a series of taster days have been staged in partnership with Walking for Health, offering minority and disadvantaged groups access to the countryside.



Business conference



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