

Using Travel Disruption to Encourage Cycling for Short Journeys: a Rail case study. Cycling Scotland

1 Introduction

A programme of works to encourage active travel was developed in December 2015/January 2016 in advance of the scheduled Glasgow Queen Street tunnel works commencing on 21 March 2016 for a 20-week period. This idea was raised by Cycling Scotland, commissioned by Scotrail and developed by Transport Planning & Engineering, the engineering social enterprise established by Cycling Scotland.¹

2 The project

2.1 Overview

TP&E was asked to co-ordinate the provision of investment that would benefit active travel in the corridors between Glasgow Queen Street and Bishopbriggs, and Queen Street and Anniesland [via Maryhill], giving particular consideration to safety, delivery timescales and long-term legacy.

The brief included the development of an active travel programme for commuter use.

A range of options were examined (Table 1) and a stakeholder advisory group convened to evaluate the options, identify match funding and align with existing programmes and priorities.

Product / Service	Summary
Event	An event to showcase the product/service being delivered during the closure.
Promotional Material	A range of promotional items (Radio, Maps and Leaflets) including the ability to work with Scotrail on their bulk purchase
Surfacing along Canal: Balmuildy	Existing surfacing project (850m) requiring match funding to permit a uniform surface from Bishopbriggs to Cowcaddens.
Surfacing from Canal to Cowcaddens Station Subway	Improving the surfacing of the 'Metal Petals' section and the access ramp.
Monitoring	Before and after data with counts taking place in December and then the delivery of 3 automatic counters along canal to show how the closure has been used. Potential for paper in the future to showcase the project.
Led Rides	A range of rides as detailed in CS paper

¹ In 2006, Cycling Scotland established an engineering subsidiary, TP&E. As a social enterprise engineering consultancy, TP&E continues to design and manage multi-million-pound investment in cycling and active travel infrastructure throughout Scotland. Earnings from TP&E are reinvested into cycling through Cycling Scotland-led projects.

Signage	Three aspects of signage including diversion, promotional and shared use.
Access Points - Bairds Brae	Improving cycle access from Canal to Possil Road and towpath surface by Canal House
Access Points - Maryhill	Improvements to access points near Maryhill Station and Canal
A803 / Minor Road	Establishment of alternative routes working with councils to deliver temporary segregated / minor road cycle routes.
Cycle Parking	Location of cycle parking at Bishopbriggs, Maryhill, Anniesland, Cowcaddens and Queen Street
Trip End Facilities	A range of facilities at Bishopbriggs / Queen Street / Cowcaddens - Showers, Changing Rooms, Bike Service Areas and Maps
Access Points	Enhancement to existing Baird Brae and Bishopbriggs to provide improved access points to the towpath
Firhill Court	Install Dropped kerbs and upgrade surfacing
Bike Hire	Bike Hire at Bishopbriggs / Queen Street / Maryhill / Anniesland / Cowcaddens
Brompton Bike and Go	Bike Hire at Bishopbriggs / Queen Street / Maryhill / Anniesland / Cowcaddens
Event	Event at end of project to celebrate the people who have changed behaviour
Internet promotional product	Challenge users to change behaviour

Table 1: Range of Activities

2.2 Decisions on delivery

In summary the stakeholder group chose to prioritise three key areas for further review and delivery:

1. Led Rides
2. Active Travel Signage
3. Event

Other options were considered but discounted. These included:

- a. installing various cycle hire schemes;
- b. creating an experimental temporary cycleway along the A803 Bishopbriggs-Glasgow Road;

- c. provision of temporary trip end facilities;
- d. using Glasgow City Council banner signage to demonstrate led ride routes;
- e. reviewing existing cycle parking facilities with a view to additional provision;
- f. constructing additional access points; and
- g. promotional behaviour change work.

3 Led Rides



3.1 Led Rides

Priority was given to developing a led ride programme to cover journeys from Bishopbriggs-Queen Street for the following reasons:-

- Passenger numbers are high at Bishopbriggs, with significant commuter population
- The nature of potential disruption. Journey times during the tunnel works increased disproportionately, more than doubling and becoming roughly equal to cycle ride times
- Easily identified cycle route options, in particular the Forth & Clyde Canal towpath and quiet residential roads
- A comfortable commuting distance (around 4 miles).

Scotrail's passenger survey carried out in December 2015 indicated relatively low levels of cycle travel for commuters using Bishopbriggs station. Use of the cycle storage available at the station was low and there were no cycle hire options available in the immediate area. Although there were safe and straightforward cycle routes available using minor roads, a lack of signage contributed to low awareness of these. An 8-week programme of led rides was devised that focused on the first weeks of the Queen Street works, when the impact might be highest and [with increased journey times] the demand for alternative travel options was perceived to be greatest. Supervision was necessary to build the confidence of new or returning cyclists.

TP&E tendered for the led rides in early February, which gave a little over five weeks for the successful supplier, BikeStation Glasgow, to prepare the rides. On tendering it became apparent that the capacity across all potential organisations in the Glasgow area to deliver a led ride programme of this nature was limited; each of the bidders would need to rely on additional third parties to help staff the led rides. For this reason, it was agreed to pursue a collaborative approach with ride leaders from other local cycling organisations involved. A booking system was set up using a simple online registration process. A total of 11 qualified ride leaders were used in the project.

Following a thorough risk assessment three routes were offered, graded by difficulty. The easiest – using the canal towpath – was the most popular. The most challenging route using the busy A803 dual carriageway raised safety queries, and was dropped from the programme before the start.

Weekly evaluations of the programme were carried out. Initial numbers showed considerably more support for rides at morning peak than evening peak [this was put down to riders preferring to use the routes at a time of their choosing]. As a result, resources were reconfigured to extend the morning led ride programme and reduce the evening ride programme. It quickly became evident that the evening ride programme had even less demand. Anecdotal feedback suggested that riders wanted to find their own time to cycle from work depending on the time of the end of the working day. They also chose to cycle from their work location rather than rendezvous at a separate location. It is recommended to use flexibility for this eventuality in future, or (depending on geography) take account that there will be more demand from morning commuters rather than in the evening.

A survey of ride participants has been carried out to assist with this evaluation. The results are set out below.

3.2 Safety

The safety of riders was placed at the heart of the programme, with safety checks provided at workshops and minimising the risk of accidents a key consideration in preparing the led rides. Before the led ride routes were agreed, detailed risk assessments were carried out including site visits. This led to changes being made to the ride routes. Ride leaders were briefed and given uniform guidance. A safety briefing preceded each ride.

Zero accidents were reported during the led ride programme. However, there were a small number of 'near misses'. The one reportable incident involved a ride leader (riding solo after a ride) having bottles thrown at her. Fortunately, she was not hit. The incident was reported to police.

3.3 Partnership

The programme delivered a number of effective partnerships.

- As well as funding, Scotrail provided considerable assistance including publicity and use of social media to support the led rides
- Local authorities Glasgow City Council and East Dunbartonshire Council provided additional publicity input as well as funding the signage
- Scottish Canals provided additional publicity support
- Sustrans provided match funding for some of the infrastructure works
- Additional options for the programme were discussed and received valuable input from partners.

3.4 Impact

Positive publicity was gained throughout the programme, although some of the initial media coverage of the Queen Street works omitted details of the rides. It was particularly challenging for getting the message out that the local newspaper, after an extensive briefing, failed to report details of the

programme before the 21 March start date. Press releases were issued and were followed up not only by the local press; The Scotsman newspaper and BBC Radio Scotland covered the programme positively too and generated positive media coverage for a new innovative approach to promoting cycling.

Commuters hit canal cycle paths to beat Glasgow rail disruption



Qualified ride leaders from Bike Station are taking to the towpaths of the Forth and Clyde Canal.
Picture: Contributed

By
ALASTAIR DALTON

<http://www.scotsman.com/news/transport/commuters-hit-canal-cycle-paths-to-beat-glasgow-rail-disruption-1-4081010>

The rides were mentioned in a large number of leaflets distributed at Bishopbriggs station in the weeks prior to the closure, and a poster was displayed on the Glasgow-bound platform a week before.

People either officially registered or attended informally throughout the programme. We also had a very positive Bike Breakfast event, attended by over 20 people with a noticeable number of others riding bicycles past the station to work. Despite very low publicity, nearly 100 people attended the initial 'bike briefing' event at Bishopbriggs.

The survey results established:

- 90% of participants commuted by rail prior to the programme
- 80% described themselves as fairly confident cyclists before the programme
- 15% described themselves as novice and new to cycle commuting
- 70% said they had not previously considered commuting by bike due to safety concerns
- 100% of participants said they now feel more confident and safe cycling to work
- 71% intend to continue to cycle to work following the end of the programme.



A sample of the Bike Breakfast participants revealed the following information:

- College lecturer riding on the A803, male
- Tennents Brewery employee riding on the A803, female
- Teacher, male
- Employee, riding on the canal, female
- Two secondary pupils, both male
- Two individuals from the led ride programme, taking Route 2, now unassisted, one female, one male
- Physiotherapist riding on the A803, sold 2nd car and deciding to bike for financial and health benefits, initially on 2nd hand bike, now since replaced by new Chris Boardman commuter.

3.5 Quotes - “what did you enjoy the most about the programme”

- *I enjoyed meeting new people, all the cycle leaders were very friendly. I also benefited enormously from their experience learning how best to use my bikes gears etc.*
- *Friendly and safe way to get me comfortable on a new way to work and good to meet other commuters*
- *Meeting others. Being part of something and it being quicker then the train and buses. (I work outside the city centre so had two train rides affected and the the buses affected by road works!!!*
- *Social aspect of meeting fellow cyclists.*
- *Getting confidence with the routes, and having a good chat with people along the way. The ride leaders were great.*
- *I've enjoyed gaining confidence on the road, and having the opportunity to meet and discuss cycling with the leaders and other commuters. The Dr Bike sessions were excellent as well.*
- *Engaging and competent leaders.*

3.6 Legacy/Sustainability

The survey results reflect the intention by the bulk of led ride participants to continue to use active travel to work or for leisure. Events such as ‘Dr Bike’ were also helpful in generating interest focusing on new as opposed to existing cyclists. The provision of improved signage and resurfacing of the canal towpath were clear long-term legacy benefits: quantifying these will be less easy, but they will be demonstrated by any increased cycling activity in the corridors concerned. A continuing programme to encourage the combination of active travel and rail could extend these benefits.

4 Active Travel Signage

Infrastructure is a key element of providing safe cycle facilities, however due to the timeframe of the closure it would not be possible to deliver major infrastructure projects. However, TP&E established existing work was taking place in the area along the canal towpath network. Engagement confirmed Scottish Canals and Sustrans were to be completing the surfacing of the towpath to a bound surface therefore making the route from Bishopbriggs to Glasgow more suitable for commuting cyclists.

Glasgow City Council and TP&E reviewed minor infrastructure projects which could be related to improving the routes being proposed for the led rides. However, timeframe again excluded them from being a consideration.

On completion of the access point review and A803 temporary route being discounted it was agreed infrastructure linking Bishopbriggs, Anniesland and Glasgow could be signed to match existing signage which has taken place within East Dunbartonshire Council and Glasgow City Council. This was prioritised and established two routes could be signed in partnership with Glasgow City Council/Scottish Canals who were due to complete signage in and around Anniesland.



4.1 Signage

100 signs were installed during July/August 2016 after a series of delays due to manufacturing issues. The routes now form part of the promotional maps created by Glasgow and East Dunbartonshire to advertise cycle routes in their area.



4.2 Legacy/Sustainability

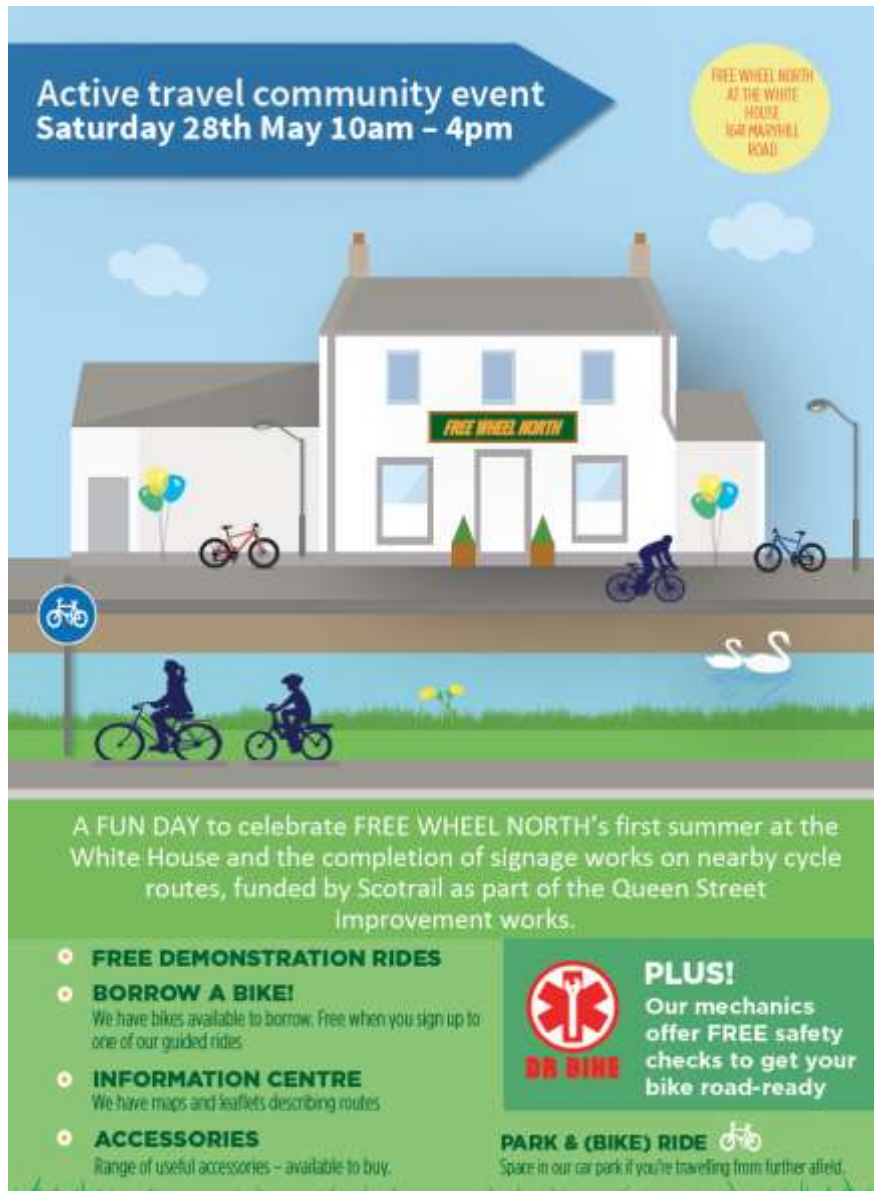
The legacy of the signage is that there is something left for use by future users of the routes advertising cycling as an alternative from the two areas of Bishopbriggs and Anniesland. The provision of improved

signage and resurfacing of the canal towpath were clear long-term legacy benefits: A continuing programme to encourage the combination of active travel and rail could extend these benefits.

5 Events

Events were commissioned to assist in the development of the Led Rides and advertise that existing routes were there to be used.

An event took place at Free Wheel North premises situated on Maryhill Road call the White House. The rear of the White House provides access to the Canal Network.



The event attracted local users advertising the signage being installed and a series of social rides took place during the day.

In addition:

- Two 'taster' events were held in the weeks before the start of the Queen Street works. These were held away from Bishopbriggs station in a nearby park due to space and safety considerations at the station. They included free bike repairs in a 'Dr Bike' event and demonstration led cycle rides.
- On 21 April a 'Bike Breakfast' was offered at Bishopbriggs station with hot drinks and pastries available.

Legacy/Sustainability

Events have the potential to promote the alternative routes etc. to the use of rail travel but as standalone events the effort and advertising required can present a barrier. The legacy could be improved by the events forming part of larger events. The main improvement could be made in providing time to organise and establish the main output of the event at an early stage. Overall the events permitted the message to be provided but had even greater potential if taking place at more prominent positions.

6 Conclusions

Overall the Active Travel alternatives exercise established what can and cannot be completed during major travel disruption projects. As with all projects time is a major factor but TP&E would recommend that if active travel solutions are being proposed/funded then a minimum 3-6 months' lead in time if provided to organise the chosen alternatives. Although the initial contact took place 6 months prior to the closure the lead in time was just under 3 months to procure and progress with the chosen projects.

Led Rides

The led ride project was an innovative attempt to achieve positive outcomes from the challenges posed by some of the most significant rail engineering works seen in Scotland in many years. It provided an opportunity to experiment through partnership working with strengthening local cycling infrastructure and encouraging cycling in areas traditionally reliant on commuting by rail.

The lessons learned:

1. Provide at least 3 months' lead in time and budget to permit promotion of the programme
2. Evening rides are not essential as users wish to leave work and ride home
3. Users wish minor roads/off road routes and the feeling of safety as a priority

The response by participants to the rides was overwhelmingly positive. There clearly exists an audience interested in active travel but who, by and large, do not cycle for a range of reasons. The measures of success for future led ride programmes derive from understanding the levels of interest and successfully promoting led ride activity to potential participants. This requires considerable effort even where there is a significant commuter base with whom communication is relatively straightforward. BikeStation Glasgow and their partners deserve great credit for successful delivery of the programme.

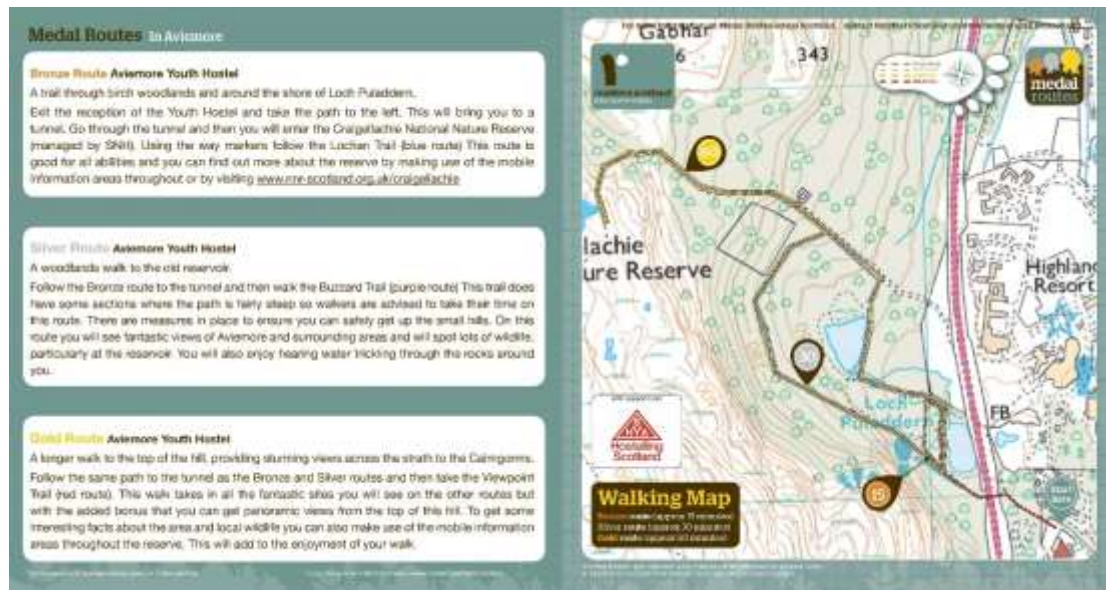
One participant fed back as follows:

'Hi,

Just to say how much I enjoyed my rides today. Can't remember the leaders' names (Pat from Italy?) but both were really professional and encouraging. I found new routes that I will safely and easily be able to do by myself, and consequently I hope to continue cycling once the tunnel is mended at least during the summer. From a personal point of view I was very happy to be travelling to work by sustainable means. I tweeted about the service today.'

Signage

The signage has the opportunity to create a legacy but signage requires to match existing networks therefore there is no lasting reminder of Scotrail's contribution. Signage could be extended to include maps, provided at the stations to advertise the signed routes, similar to the Commonwealth Games Walking Routes.



Events

Events provided a buzz during the bike breakfast as they were positioned in prominent locations near Bishopbriggs Station. Overall the opportunity to speak with passengers on the trains about the proposed events and alternatives could be something used in the future to permit a wider impact and improved messaging.

6.1 Lessons Learned

Capacity

There is finite capacity within the cycling community for trained and available ride leaders, available at relatively short notice. It became apparent during the commissioning stage of the project that the ambition of the Bishopbriggs programme would use significant amounts of that capacity. Consideration may have to be given to capacity-building or training for additional schemes in the future. However, it was possible to flex provision; once it became apparent that evening rides could be reduced, the resources were shifted to provide an additional two weeks' morning led rides.

Publicity

The lesson from publicity was that the optimum visibility of the programme to potential led ride users did not coincide with the start of the tunnel works. This had an effect on take-up of the led ride programme. This was partly because of the complexity of the communications messages and the need to segment and target them geographically by audience. The tight timescale for works created additional pressure. It was unfortunate that the local newspaper did not publish details of the initial taster events, which as a result were underpublicized. Although the led ride programme was featured on the leaflets handed out to Bishopbriggs commuters in considerable numbers, this itself did not automatically result in take-up. Although partner organisations helped through social media, more was needed to generate interest in the led rides at the very start of the programme. The publicity programme could also have benefited from engaging local sports clubs

The information offered on the Scotrail website was excellent; the only potential improvement was the technical ability to provide a direct quick link to the led rides page for social media purposes.

Publicity for the led rides grew after initial coverage of the Queen Street works focused on the predicted and actual disruption. A series of positive articles and a successful 'Bike Breakfast' event linking with

the local café helped grow numbers. A key lesson learned is that momentum needs to be generated early in the process, with pre-publicity being key to a successful launch. This was particularly important because of the degree of separation needed between the led ride programme and Scotrail's broader nationwide communication programme for the Queen Street works.

6.2 Future projects

Given time and resource constraints, there were challenges in evaluating the merits of the legacy suggestions.

Bike Hire

Had more time been available, it is likely that the stakeholder group would have prioritised promoting installation of cycle hire points. The areas covered by this project are short of coverage and this would have secured lasting legacy connected to the led rides offer.

Celebrating success

An event to mark the end of the project would have been an alternative way to celebrate the success of the project and focus on potential further improvements. This could have formed part of the continuing cycling improvement programme being run by Scotrail.

Incentivising led rides

There was some feedback from led ride users that more could have been done to incentivise use. There was a promotion involving Café Torino at the train station and further promotions via coffee vouchers or travel discounts are worth considering in future projects. A higher profile for the scheme at participating stations would also be helpful. The Bishopbriggs programme has increased interest in cycling at Bishopbriggs. Scotrail may see positive take-up to any further activities it can provide in the area such as installing a Bike & Go facility. It would also be interesting to monitor use of cycle storage at the station after the end of the works, as one possible indicator of permanent take-up of cycling.

6.3 Conclusion

Scotrail have undertaken a valuable exercise and established a network of providers and future partners. The report documents that alternatives can be provided and could be replicated for other large infrastructure projects not just related to rail where the right circumstances (above all journey distance) are in place.

Acknowledgements

A steering group was involved in this project comprising Scotrail, Cycling Scotland, East Dunbartonshire Council, Glasgow Council, Scottish Canals, Sustrans, SPT and Transport Scotland. The work of TP&E, Community Relations, Glasgow Bike Station, Freewheel North and many others was critical to the success of the programme.