

Department for Transport (National)

Bristol appointed UK's first cycling city £100m package for cycling in 12 towns and cities

Transport Secretary Ruth Kelly today appointed Bristol as the UK's first official Cycling City, and announced a further 11 Cycling Demonstration Towns across England.

Bristol and the 11 towns have succeeded in winning a share of the record £100m investment package to pioneer innovative ways to increase cycling in their areas. Proposals include improving cycling infrastructure such as dedicated cycle lanes, increasing bike parking provision and cycle training and promoting the benefits of cycling.

Today's announcement aims to encourage 2.5 million more adults and children to take up cycling, improve their fitness and beat the traffic.

Bristol wants to double the number of people cycling over the next three years, by:

- * creating the UK's first on-street bike rental network, modelled on the successful Paris scheme;
- * establishing a 're-cycling' scheme, providing free bikes to those in deprived communities;
- * building a state-of-the-art facility for cyclists in the city centre providing showers, bike parking and lockers so commuters can have a wash and brush up before starting work;
- * creating a dedicated cycleway to link the suburbs with the city centre opening up new, safer options for commuters who currently rely on their cars;
- * more than doubling the number of children receiving cycling training.

Ruth Kelly said:

"The UK's first ever Cycling City and 11 new Cycling Demonstration Towns will pioneer new ways of encouraging people to get on their bikes.

"A quarter of journeys made every day by car are less than two miles. Cycling is an alternative that could bring real health benefits to millions of adults and children, as well as helping them save money and beat congestion.

"The first step in persuading people to leave their cars at home is to offer them a real choice. Providing a step change in cycling facilities, dedicated cycle lanes, more training and information will have a big impact on how people choose to travel.

"I look forward to seeing these towns and cities put their plans into action and urge other communities across the country to follow their lead."

The further 11 Cycling Demonstration Towns will build on the work of the existing six Cycling Demonstration Towns appointed in 2005, which have seen significant increases in cycling levels. They are Blackpool, Cambridge, Chester, Colchester, Leighton/Linslade, Shrewsbury, Southend on Sea, Southport with Ainsdale, Stoke, Woking and York.

Phillip Darnton, Chairman of Cycling England, added:

"We have learnt from our European neighbours, such as the Netherlands, that increased and sustained investment is the key to getting more people enjoying the benefits of cycling. The funding that Bristol and the other 11 towns have been awarded is designed to create a real step change in levels of cycling, starting in 2008 and for years to come.

"Beyond well co-ordinated, consistent investment in cycling, and the introduction of policy measures to encourage it, cycling crucially needs determined and persistent high-level leadership. We are delighted that the Government has championed this and Cycling England's other projects which aim to increase national cycling levels by 20 per cent overall by 2012."

The Government has already announced it is investing an unprecedented £140 million in cycling to increase the provision of Bikeability training to help half a million children cycle safely by 2012; build 250 new Safe Links to School as well as create the UK's first-ever Cycling City and appoint further Cycling Demonstration Towns, as announced today.

Notes to Editors

1. The £100m package breaks down as £47 million for the cycling demonstration towns and city until March 2011, with at least match funding from each place to ensure local commitment. It includes £7m awarded to the first six Cycling Demonstration Towns who were first established in 2005.
2. Applicants were chosen from a shortlist of 19 local authorities, out of an original 74 bids. Panel members were Philip Darnton (Chair of Cycling England); John Grimshaw (Cycling England Board member and founder of Sustrans); Lynn Sloman (Cycling England Board member and Director of Transport for Quality of Life); Tony Russell (leads Cycling England local authority advice team); Steve Garidis (Cycling England's Programme Manager) and Martin Ellis (Cycling Team, Department for Transport)
3. There are currently six Cycling Demonstration Towns. These are Aylesbury, Brighton, Darlington, Derby, Exeter and Lancaster. Further details of these schemes, and applicants for this year, can be seen at <http://www.cyclingengland.co.uk>.
4. Cycling England is the national body co-ordinating the development of cycling across England. It was launched by the Minister for Local Transport in March 2005, replacing the previous National Cycling Strategy Board, and is supported by a number of Government Departments, including health, education, planning and sport as well as transport.
5. Bikeability is a new training standard designed to provide children with the on-road skills they need to handle modern traffic conditions. It was launched in March 2007. See <http://www.bikeability.org.uk>.