Transport and Health – An integrated approach
An interprofessional Public Health learning event held in the West Midlands
27 September 2013

“This event has inspired me to go back and do more”
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Acknowledgements
This report was produced using information from presentations delivered on the day, discussion by delegates and post event evaluations from attendees. Thanks extended to SUSTRANS, Food Dudes and PHE WM for their support with the planning and on the day.

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“We are nourishing at immense cost a monster of great potential destructiveness [the motor vehicle], and yet we love him dearly. To refuse to accept the challenge it presents would be an act of defeatism.”

The Buchanan report - 1963

Executive Summary

A partnership event hosted by Learning for Public Health West Midlands (LfPHWM) on 27 September 2013 in Birmingham at Public Health England West Midlands (PHE WM) offices. The event was very well attended attracting 40 delegates from across the West Midlands with representation from PHE National and WM Centre team along with third sector colleagues and the wider PH workforce. The programme attracted attendees with a variety of backgrounds including planners, transport and housing leads, specialist PH consultants and PH practitioners.

The purpose of the event was to bring public health professionals together to aid a more joined up interdisciplinary approach and to share learning.

The event aimed to demonstrate the key links between health and the urban environment through the work delivered by Sustrans. Links were made with planning, housing and transport and the impact of the wider determinants on the physical, social and emotional well being of individuals. The event also identified other successful lifestyle projects such as Food Dudes to raise awareness of the advantages of integrated working in order to promote a healthier lifestyle.

A number of presentations were delivered which offered examples of best practice and policy links to engage planners, developers, knowledge around active travel and the links to healthier food initiatives. Discussion resulted in a number of recommendations and next steps which LfPHWM and partners will pursue including engagement with clinicians, commissioners and local government colleagues working in transport, planning and the highways.
Background

The event was planned in partnership with PHE Centre for the WM and Sustrans WM. Links between transport and health have been made by a number of key reports: The Marmot Review ‘Fair Society, Healthy Lives’\(^1\) refer to specific policy objectives related to active travel which identified social determinants as the cause for health inequalities and the need to tackle the wider determinants if we are to succeed in improving lifestyles and creating environments that are safe and promote mental well being.

The aim of the event was to highlight how improving active travel and healthy eating can contribute to a healthier lifestyle for children and young people through more integrated approaches. The workshop used case studies, tools, resources and the current policy context to identify opportunities for further work on transport, health and wellbeing. *a copy of the programme is listed in the appendix.

2. Examples of good practice

2.1 Sustrans **Connect 2** is a UK wide project which has helped to transform everyday travel in communities across the country by building new bridges and crossings to overcome busy roads, rivers and railways and linking them to popular walking and cycle routes. This good work has helped to transform 84 communities across the country by:

- Resolving connectivity barriers to walking and cycling
- Obtaining £50M of National Lottery funding which became a portfolio worth £165M
- Benefitted from bold decisions made by local politicians\(^2\)

**Key point: Walking and cycling needs to have higher priority on the political agenda**

2.2 How do PH colleagues engage further with planners?

Notably, there are 5 questions if raised in the appropriate forums such as local health and wellbeing boards (H&WBB) could help to generate a more joined up public health and planning approach:

1. Are new developments prioritising walking and cycling over car use?
2. How do new developments affect the need to travel to work, to school, to amenities?
3. How do new developments impact upon existing walking and cycling networks?
4. What opportunities do these provide to extend & develop walking & cycling networks?
5. Cycle parking and signing may seem trivial but they help to “sell the idea” of sustainable travel.

**Key point: Public Health, planners and highways engineers must work more closely together**


2.3 Examples of international good practice
Dutch colleagues introduced 5 criteria which demonstrate high quality cycle route options which have been adapted for UK cycle legislation by SUSTRANS.

SAFETY:
A route that minimises danger for cyclists, pedestrians and other users and gives a feeling of security by:
- Routing away from traffic wherever possible
- Not compromising on road widths
- Improving public perception of cycle safety

COHERENCE:
A continuous route with a distinct and identifiable National Cycle Network character, integrated with local roads and cycle paths by

DIRECTNESS:
A route that is as direct and quick as possible by:
- Short distances to encourage use
- Contra-flow cycle lanes
- Existing desire lanes
- Allow time to plan, design and construct

ATTRACTIVENESS:
A route that compliments and enhances its environment in such a way that makes cycling more attractive to potential active travellers by:
- Starting and stopping takes effort – give priority at crossings
- Detector loops on approach paths
- Single stage crossings on bigger roads
- Easy gradients without extensive detours
- Lighting, personal security, aesthetics

COMFORT
A route that enables a comfortable flow of cycle traffic and is easy to use by:
- Ensuring cycle parking is visible
- Well maintained paths and edges
- Flush kerbing

Key point: Active travel must be made more accessible for the public
2.4 Regional case study - Cycle Coventry, Healthy Transport in a Marmot City

Coventry is a Marmot city and is working towards policy objective E: ‘**improving active travel across the social gradient**’. Local approaches include:

- Local sustainable transport fund project funded by the department of Transport until 2015 with an aim to get more people cycling particularly to work and training opportunities

**What we are doing:** Cycle Coventry is a three year project which aims to improve facilities for cyclists and pedestrians in Coventry and in turn encourage higher levels of physical activity amongst the population.

**Why are we doing it?** In 2011/12, the National Child Measurement Programme found that 11.2% of Coventry’s children are obese at Reception (aged 5); rising to 20.6% in Year 6 (aged 11). There is also worrying evidence of an association between Obesity levels and deprivation where children going to schools located in the most socio-economically deprived areas of Coventry has obesity levels of 23% in Year 6, compared to 13% for those children going to schools in the least deprived areas. The weight profile of adults in Coventry with Obesity at 25.6% also compares unfavourably with the national average of 24.1%.

There is evidence that physical activity levels in Coventry are considerably less than recommended for both adults and children. Children should have one hour of moderate intensity exercise every day, yet local self-reported survey data indicates that at most only 50% do. For adults, estimation from the National Sport England Active People Survey indicates that 80% of the population do not achieve the recommended 30 minutes of moderate intensity exercise 5 times per week.

The Department for Transport awarded Local Sustainable Transport Funding (LSTF) to successful authorities and is intended to support sustainable and active travel projects. Coventry City Council received almost £7 million investment to spend between 2012 and 2015 to create a network of cycle routes that will link residential areas with jobs, education and local services. There are four secondary objectives for the LSTF, as follows:

- helping to deliver wider social and economic benefits (e.g. accessibility and social inclusion) for the community
- improving safety
- bringing about improvements to air quality and increased compliance with air quality standards, and wider environmental benefits such as noise reduction
- promoting increased levels of physical activity

How did we do it?

Cycle Coventry is taking place in two distinct geographical locations in Coventry comprising wards which are amongst the 10% most deprived areas in England. These are also the areas of highest obesity in the city. The project focuses on the south-west and north-east of the city, covering the residential areas of Canley, Tile Hill, Henley, Foleshill and City Centre. The south-west project is funded by a local LSTF bid, and the north-east project in collaboration with a regional wide Centro bid.

The aims of Cycle Coventry were:

- to connect existing pedestrian and cycle routes together,
- improve or create new routes
- to avoid busy roads, and
- to provide new crossing facilities.

New route signage has been installed to ensure everyone can access the routes easily, and new cycle parking installed in local areas, railway stations and employment sites to remove the barriers to cycling and help promote behaviour change.

These 'hard' measures are accompanied by a range of 'soft' measures. These include travel plans which are a package of bespoke measures for individual companies, schools, colleges, universities, train stations and even residential estates, to help people get to and from them by bus, train, bike or walking. New cycle maps have been prepared to encourage people to explore more of Coventry by bicycle, and bike maintenance and cycle training for adults will encourage people who might not have been on a bike for years to give it a go.

Cycle Coventry will also be encouraging GPs to refer patients who would benefit from cycle training and participating in led rides through the established Active for Health exercise referral programme co-ordinated by the Council’s Be Active Be Healthy Team. Patients will be offered 1:1 or group (1:3) training appropriate to their level of fitness and ability. The cycle training will form part of the 12-week Active for Health programme, through which all patients will receive a body MOT check at weeks 1, 6 and 12.

The benefits/evidence of impact on our population from taking this action

Cycle Coventry targets would-be cyclists amongst commuters and the local community in the north east and south west of the city. The cycle network created will improve access to local employment centre’s, retail centres and railway stations. Individual businesses have been targeted and work carried out to promote travel choices to encourage greater uptake of cycling.

In time, delivering new routes and links, and giving people the information, skills and incentives they need to utilise the new network, the projects will reduce congestion and carbon emissions. It will also improve safety and security; enhance the local environment by reducing the number of singly used car journeys, and increase levels of physical activity.
Formal monitoring and evaluation will be carried out for the duration of all LSTF funded projects using a framework published by the Department for Transport. This will include outputs such as:

- Secure cycle parking at railway stations
- Workplace travel plans
- Cycle training

And outcomes such as:

- Increased number of cyclists
- Increased number of cycle trips.

Physical activity is most likely to be a resulting factor from LSTF projects that have a specific focus on active travel such as this.

**Key point: Transport can tackle health inequalities and health can support active travel long term**

### 2.5 Food Dudes programme

Research at the Food and Activity Research Unit Bangor University identified the key psychological factors influencing children’s food choices and using this knowledge, devised a school-based intervention - the *Food Dudes* programme enables children to enjoy eating healthy diets rich in fruit and vegetables.

*Food Dudes* spun out from Bangor University in 2012 and is now a rapidly growing Social Enterprise with offices in Knutsford and Bangor. The award winning evidence based behaviour change programme has over 50 psychological principals but the 3 main ones are the three “Rs”: Role-Modelling, Rewards, and Repeated Tastings. Over 16 days, children watch a series of DVD’s featuring the *Food Dudes*, a group of positive role-model children. During this period the children consume a portion of fruit and a portion of vegetable. For the first 4 days they only have to taste the portion to receive a reward. For the remaining 11 days the child has to consume the whole portion to gain their reward. After 16 days the emphasis moves from the classroom to the dining room. Choice Architecture is deployed in the dining hall with a focus on food presentation, food positioning and *Food Dudes* branding, and behavioural cuing training for dining hall support staff and cooks. The children receive Fruit and Vegetable cards, on which their consumption is recorded. Every time they complete a card they receive a reward. Rewards are spaced out over the remainder of the year linked to the consumption cards. The cards are highly collectable and children take them home to show their parents how well they are doing.

In the following year the children maintain their changes in eating behaviour through the *Food Dudes Forever* Programme which has two elements: A repeat of the first year of the programme for reception pupils, known as ‘Next Generation’ this embeds the healthy eating behaviours in the new cohort of pupils. The remainder of the pupils engage with the FD’s Dining Hall Experience which is linked to new food tasting and the curriculum.

The combination of biological and psychological factors is what maintains the change of eating behaviour over the long term as evidence tells us that effects generalise from school to home.
Food Dudes programmes are available for Early Years Settings, Primary Schools and Special Schools and operate in the classroom, the dining hall, the curriculum and the home. Over 600,000 children have taken part in the programme, with take up locally across the West Midlands, North West, Scotland, Wales and Ireland and internationally, with pilot projects taking place in Italy and the USA.

Positive effects include:
- Large and long lasting changes in diet
- Reduces health inequalities
- Biggest effects with poorest eaters especially in Special Schools
- Displacement of energy-dense, nutrient-poor foods
- Works on large scale and internationally
- Effects generalise from school to home

Food Dudes will be starting a controlled study of Dynamic Dudes, a new Physical Activity Programme in 2014.

3. Lessons learned and recommendations

The following lessons and recommendations were noted:

- We saw excellent examples of joined up working between public health and planners.

- Public Health and planners need to engage further with highway engineers.

- We can change behaviours in schools, further and higher education, work places and communities through transport and health based interventions.
Transport projects can tackle health inequalities and health projects can support active travel delivery (see below)

Local solutions include designing cycle parks in safe areas in front of prominent places to encourage active travel. (see below)
Improving signage to inform pedestrians and potential cyclists of their active travel options (see below)

4. Next steps
LFPHWM will work with partners to take forward some of the key recommendations as highlighted in the above section. A greater emphasis on what works and how we support practitioners to engage with key partners and directorates, influence local politicians and communities.
There is opportunity to work across other departments, charity organisations and the third sector by creating links with community safety, mental well being specifically exploring issues that impact on children and young people.
Partners will engage with local leaders i.e. Directors of Public health (DsPH) and national policy leads to share best practice and influence future policy working towards a joined up integrated policy at national level to support decisions that include integrated working at the frontline i.e. planning, housing and transport.
5. Appendix

5.1 Link to the presentations and programme: http://www.lfphwm.org.uk/library/recent-events/transport-health

5.2 Event Feedback - How did we do?

Listed below is the evaluation feedback received via written forms on the day. Of the 39 delegates that attended 24 forms were completed resulting in a 62% return rate.
Delegates were asked 7 questions. The first 3 of which were multiple choice results listed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event Feedback</th>
<th>Very Good</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Poor</th>
<th>Very Poor</th>
<th>No Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q1 Did the event achieve its aims and objectives?</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2 How would you rate the content of the event?</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3 How well has the event met your expectations?</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q 4: What was good about the event?

- How important cross department working is in delivery
- Good source of evidence to support influence for change
- Cycle route planning
- Positive ideas from other authorities

Q5: What could be improved if anything?

- Taking a whole day to discuss in more depth
- Some confusion around the ‘Food Dudes’ presentation. As many budgets are being cut the idea of ‘buying in’ a service was difficult for some delegates to engage with. Attendees also felt that it added little to the learning around transport and health.
- The inclusion of a scenario test and group discussion would have helped learning and generated ideas.
- More information on how to build a successful active travel bid/programme

Q6: What aspects of the event made you reconsider your current views?

- Scope of agenda is huge
- Engineering and planning joint working
- Impact of 20mph zones
• More effective cycle route planning – taking the cyclists away from traffic

**Q7: Any other comments?**

“An excellent morning”
“Would have been beneficial to get a planners view”
“Good base to start conversations”

**Summary:**

The event was very well received with positive feedback. The presentations and information were very useful to delegates to support future work and influence local and national policy. The event has identified how partnership working and pooling of resource and expertise can support the development of creative infrastructure and provide an environment that promotes a healthy lifestyle. There are some excellent examples of good practice that can be explored to support other areas, there is also further work required at a national strategic policy level and at local level for how we influence and engage with the wider public health workforce to use the opportunities Local Government presents and apply a solution focused approach.