

**Moving leisure  
cyclists into  
commuting by  
bicycle/utility cycling**

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## Background and Research Objectives

- TfL has identified an opportunity to increase utility cycling or commuting by bicycle amongst the population who already cycle for leisure.
- TfL's Cycling Behaviour Survey (2010) found there are considerably more cyclists in London who 'never' cycle to work (46%) than 'never' cycle for leisure (6%). And recent Sustrans research found that the vast majority of 'every day cyclists' had previously been recreational cyclists
- Research is required to understand the leisure cyclist audience more fully

### Research objectives:

- To explore and understand leisure cyclists' barriers to commuting by bicycle and/or making other utility trips by bicycle
- Identify opportunities for tipping leisure cyclists into commuting by bicycle and utility cycling

## Methodology and Sample

- Four 1 ½ hour mini-group discussions with a range of leisure cyclists
- All respondents were pre-tasked with a short homework diary to uncover barriers and motivations to different types of cycling

Group	Cycling Behaviour	Life stage	Location	SEG	Gender	Life stage
1	Leisure cyclist	Pre-family	Inner	BC1C2	Mixed	Pre-family
2	Leisure cyclist	Family	Inner	BC1C2	Mixed	Family
3	Leisure cyclist	Pre-family	Outer	BC1C2	Mixed	Pre-family
4	Leisure cyclist	Family	Outer	BC1C2	Mixed	Family

- All research conducted by 2CV in March 2012

# Executive summary

## Headlines from the research

- Leisure cyclists are strongly attuned to the emotional 'feel good factor' of cycling. However, **much of the positivity around leisure cycling does not apply (and is, in fact, reversed into a negative) for commuting**
  - **Commuting by bicycle throws up a lot of emotional and practical barriers** for leisure cyclists, primarily requiring breaking strong habits and heuristics around current commute
  - **Utility cycling, is an easier 'next step' for leisure cyclists**, as a 'progression' from leisure cycling (with a few practical steps to get over)
  
- **There is a strong opportunity to encourage leisure cyclists to cycle more frequently**, including for utility trips, eg through leveraging leisure-focused or family-bonding initiatives, and inspiring them with more leisure-minded occasions
  - This will help prime leisure cyclists for utility and commuting
  
- **Targeting commuting specifically will require a longer period of practical and emotional priming and support**
  - Workplace initiatives can play an important role in shifting social norms and increasing identification around commuting
  - There is an opportunity to help leisure cyclists fit commuting and utility cycling into their broader travel repertoire

# **Leisure cyclist motivations and behaviours to current cycling**

# Cycling fits into specific moments in leisure cyclists' lives

## A social activity

- Main motivation is family/kids bonding
  - A few cycling with a friend

To Ravenscourt Park with husband at weekends, for a couple of hours, or along the river at Hammersmith. We don't prepare, we just go! I really enjoy this type of cycling.

## Mainly cycling at the weekend

- No time pressure
- Fits with weekend leisure mind-set

FOR LEISURE CYCLING I GENERALLY FOLLOW THE RIVER TO TOWER BRIDGE OR LONDON BRIDGE, OR CYCLE AROUND THE DOCKS + PARKS LOCATED AT SURREY QUAYS/CANADA WATER. OFTEN I AM ACCOMPANIED BY THE CHILDREN AS IT IS A SAFE ENVIRONMENT AND DOES NOT HAVE TO INVOLVE ANY ROAD CYCLING. I ENJOY THESE TRIPS THE MOST.

## Holiday

- Enjoyable holiday activity
- Fits with holiday leisure mind-set

## Cycling in scenic locations on sunny days

- Along the river/in parks
- Tend to be 'fair weather cyclists'

OUR MOST REGULAR TRIPS ON OUR BICYCLES ARE TO EITHER RICHMOND OR BUSHEY PARK. WE USUALLY TAKE A PICNIC AND LEAVE AROUND LUNCHTIME, RETURNING IN TIME FOR DINNER. IT'S MY PARTNER, DAUGHTER AYA AND MYSELF, WE PREPARE BY PACKING ALL OUR THINGS INTO A RUCKSACK. CHECKING THE BABYSEAT IS PROPERLY FITTED AND DASHING BACK TO THE SUPERMARKET TO PICK UP THINGS WE FORGOT FIRST TIME! IT MAKES US FEEL AWAKE, RELAXED, HAPPY AND ENERGISED.

## Minimalist cyclists

- Most own a bike, but often very old
- Rarely wearing cycling gear – helmets, waterproofs, lights etc.



## Leisure cycling generally inspires positive associations

Lots of strong positive associations around cycling



But, don't have a powerful connection with it - not a passion area per se! (don't get all the gear, or do it as a sport – still a means to an end)

And there are some negative associations (around 'hassle' mainly)



Cycling is an enjoyable activity but not something they are passionate/obsessive about

## Why they got into leisure cycling in the first place...

- This audience started cycling for a number of leisure-focused reasons:

- **Family bonding**, esp. at the weekend
- **Pestered into cycling by their kids**
- **An activity to do with friends in the summer** – often tying it in with picnics, etc.
- Because it's **easy and accessible** – **have parks nearby** (esp. Outer Londoners)
- For **health/fitness** reasons (often inspired by an event)



*'I saw people cycling around Richmond Park and thought it looked fun'*

*'Bushy Park is so close... I started cycling to take my dog and get fit at the same time'*



*'A few of us decided to do the London to Brighton...'*

People start cycling for leisure because of its ease and sociability

## Leisure cyclists are tuned-in to the growing momentum around cycling in London

- Already cycling themselves, they really *feel* the momentum around cycling, both among their social groups and London in general
  - **Many have friends and family who cycle**; social identification is not a barrier for them
  - **Higher awareness and positivity of improved infrastructure**
    - Esp. BCH, and Barclay's Cycle Superhighways for some
- **But, also hearing/tuned-in to more negative stories** eg cyclist deaths, ghost bikes etc.
  - Reinforces concerns around safety – a key barrier to commuting

*'You hear about more cyclist deaths these days'*

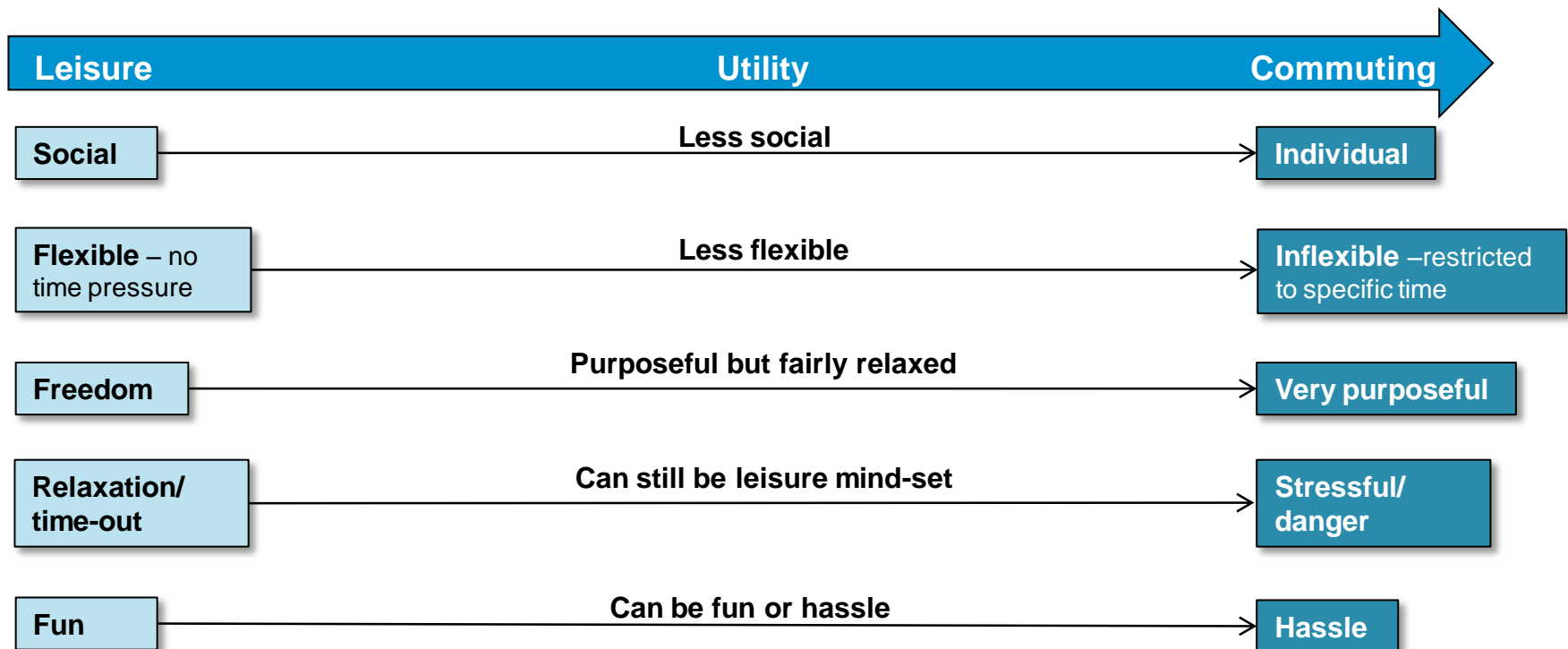


A captive and already engaged group for cycling communications and initiatives

**Leisure cyclist  
perceptions of utility  
cycling and  
commuting by bicycle**

## Commuting is a world away from leisure cycling

- There are opposing associations around leisure cycling and commuting by bicycle; with utility cycling sitting somewhere in-between:



Much of the positivity around leisure cycling does not apply (and is reversed into a negative) for commuting

## Mixed perceptions of commuter cyclists

### Commuter Cyclists are Cool

- Aspirational 'go-getters', esp. for Inner London audience
- The smart person's choice (not stuck in traffic, saving money)
- Have friends and colleagues who commute

### Commuter Cyclists are Crazy

- Image is hostile and aggressive (esp. Outer London, many who are drivers and have experienced negative encounters)
- Need to be brave, ruthless and even slightly mad to commute by bicycle

Commuting is often aspirational but unappealing in practice

## The benefits of commuting by bicycle are quite clear

- Leisure cyclists perceive there are various emotional and practical benefits of commuting

### Practical

- 1. More control** (time and stress) over public transport/car
- 2. Health/fitness**
- 3. Money saving**
- 4. Environment/nice weather**

*'Cycling makes you feel more energised'*

*'It's a nice way to see the world on a sunny day... rather than being stuck on the Tube'*

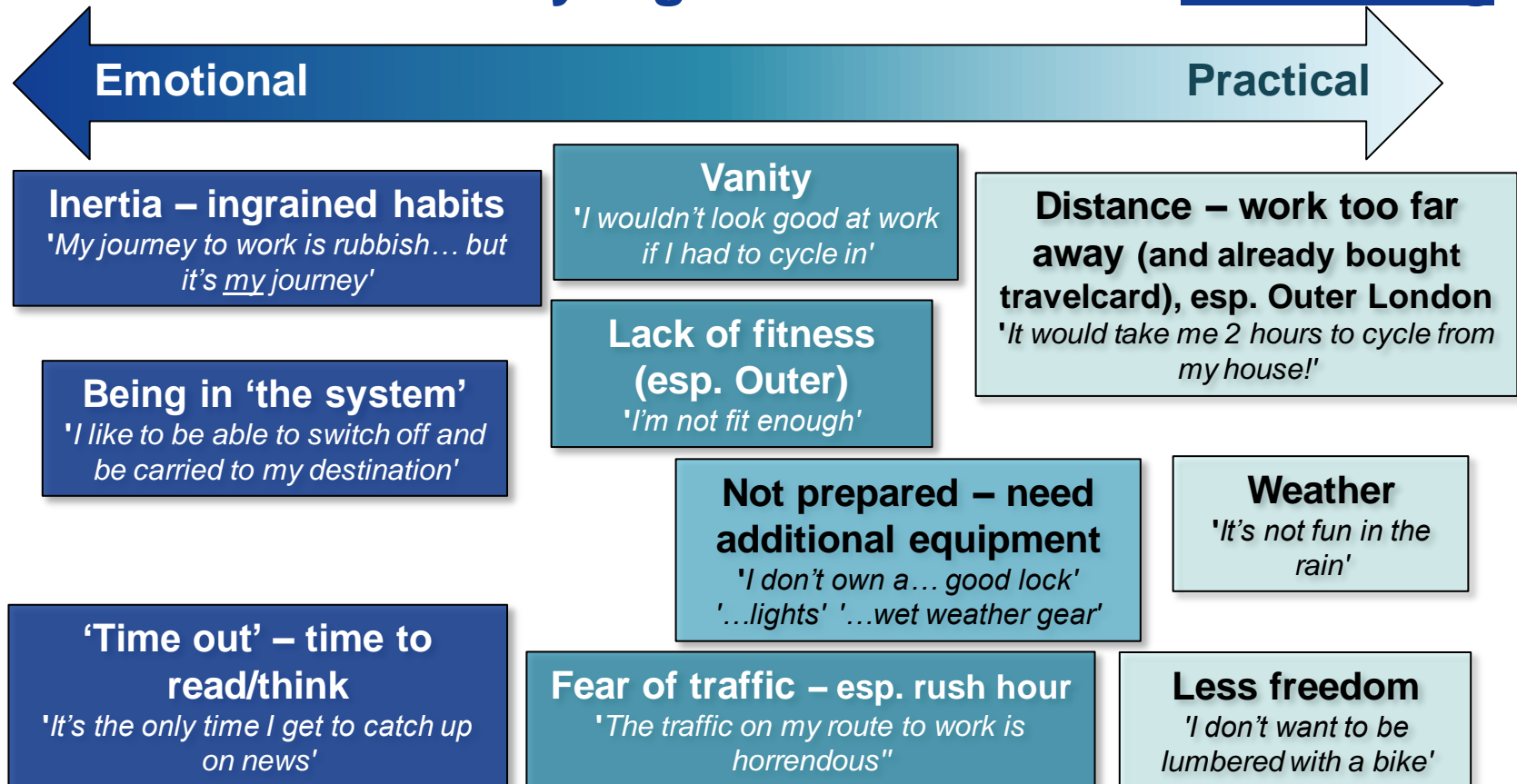
### Emotional

- 1. Satisfaction** – being 'smart' (cheaper, healthier, faster)
- 2. More positive attitude** – feel good mentally and physically
- 3. Virtuous** – looking after my wellbeing/doing my bit for the environment

*'I think I'd definitely feel better about myself'*

Leisure cyclists are attuned to emotional 'feel good factor' of commuting by bicycle

## But there are also many ingrained barriers to commuting



Commuting by bicycle throws up a lot of emotional and practical barriers/resistance



## Commuting by bicycle is hard to visualise

- Most struggle to imagine themselves making cycling journeys that are much different to what they do currently
  - Real commuting is especially hard for people to imagine - either visualise leisure-inspired routes to work or un-real leisure worlds
- Commuting by bicycle requires a complete replacement of modes and adopting a different approach to cycling:
  - Normally breaking an ingrained public transport habit
  - A whole journey – there and back (can't turn back half way, as with leisure cycling)
  - Involves a completely unknown route/journey, or imagine following a known Bus/car route where they face traffic/road fears
  - Requires lots of mental effort in planning

*'Cycling is all about sunny weekend days with the kids for me... so I can't think of where else I'd do it'*

*'I'd cycle along the river to work if I could'*

*'You'd have to commit to it completely... You can't just stop half way if you're tired'*

**Commuting by bicycle involves breaking some very strong travel habits and heuristics around current commuting mode(s) and current cycling**

## Utility cycling has more emotional relevance/similarities to leisure cycling

- **Utility cycling enjoys similar occasions and mindset (emotionally)**

- At weekends/free time
- Less time pressures
- Can fit it into existing lifestyle – when it feels easiest/most enjoyable (ie when weather is good, when friends are around etc.)

*'I can imagine cycling to the gym or to my friend's house through the park'*

*'We get into the wine when I go to my friend's house so cycling back would be a no no'*

- **But, there are a number of practical barriers**

- Hard to do with the kids in tow
- Nowhere to put the shopping
- Issues around safe parking
- Less freedom – esp. not being able to drink
- Can't wear what I want
- Would still need additional equipment (lock, lights etc)

*'I'd love to be able to pop down the shops on the bike, but where would I put the shopping?'*

**Utility cycling is more of a 'progression' from leisure cycling (with a few practical steps to get over) than a radical change in lifestyle and mind-set**

## Utility journeys that are closest to leisure journeys are an obvious entry point

- Some utility journeys with leisure aspects are a more naturally viable option :

### Journey with leisure element/ environment

- Through park, along river
- Warm sunny day



### In active mindset

- Going to other active leisure pursuits (eg gym, football, running track)



### In family-bonding mindset

- Taking kids to school



*'I think I'll cycle more in the summer when it's warm'*

*'I have cycled to the gym before and I'll do that again... you're in that active frame of mind, so why not!'*

*'I'd cycle the kids to school, if I could park my bike there. It's not far, and it would give us a little more exercise'*

**Cycling to a friend's house...**

Nice / leisurely /

Benefits - cycle through some parks  
to get there / fresh air / healthy

Drawbacks - time / might not feel like riding home

**Cycling to the local shops...**

I have no issue doing this as it's a regular trip I make.  
I know the roads I need to take and I feel it's a  
safe journey. Put my bags in my basket.

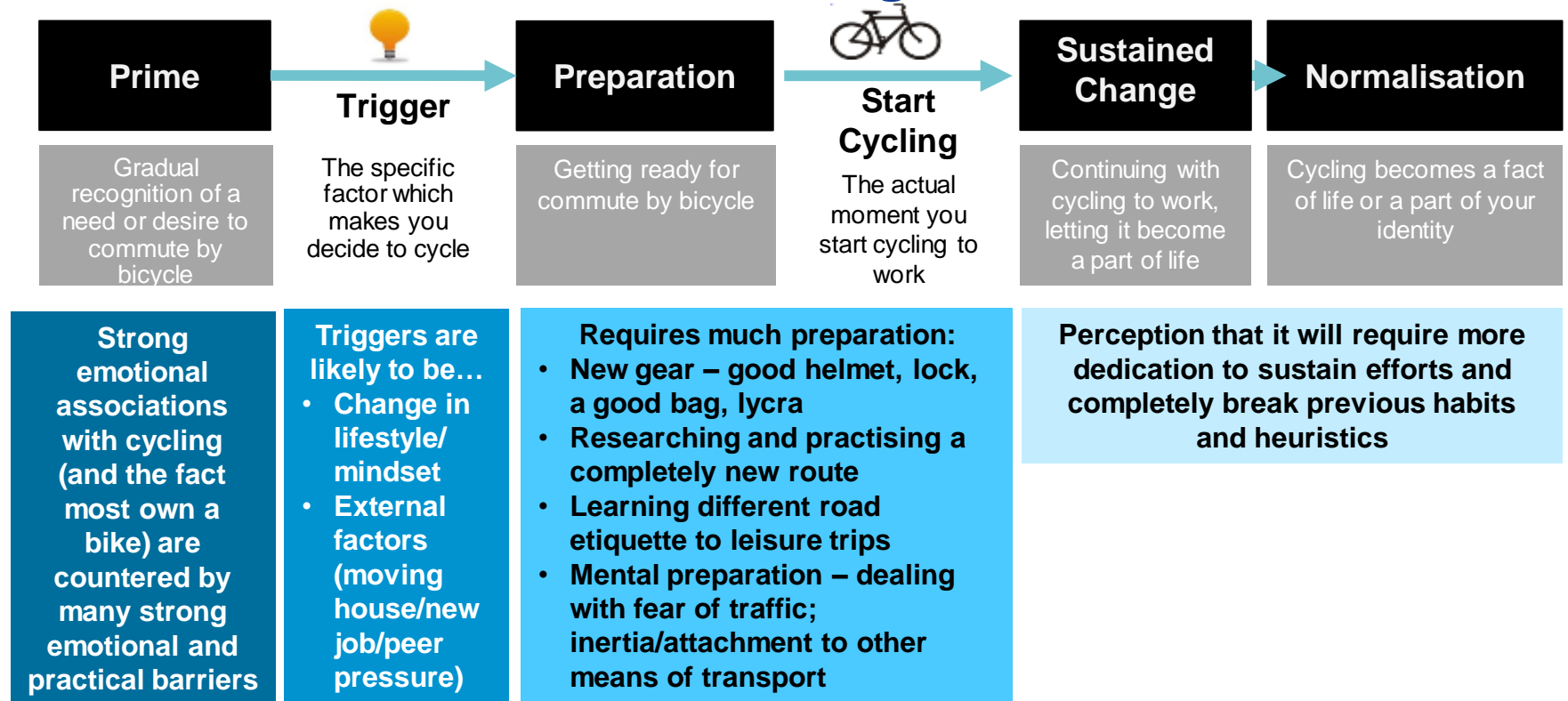
**Cycling to a friend's house...**

SAVE TIME IF LOCAL

ECO FRIENDLY

ARRIVE FEELING ENERGISED + FEEL  
GOOD FOR NOT TAKING CAR

# Encouraging commuting by bicycle will be a larger and more involved behavioural change to achieve



Commuting believed to require a complete change in mindset/lifestyle; lots of barriers to be addressed at the priming and preparation stages

# Encouraging utility cycling is more of a progression from leisure cycling



<p><b>Much more primed and ready</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Similar mind-set to leisure cycling</li> <li>• Likely to have a bike!</li> </ul>	<p><b>Likely to require a 'weaker' trigger:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Warm weather</li> <li>• Friend getting a bike</li> <li>• Pester power</li> </ul>	<p><b>Less preparation required:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More spontaneous shorter local trips                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Places/routes they know from walking/driving – less need to research</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Can tie in with family/social/leisure circumstances (taking kids to school/friends' house)</li> <li>• Some practical barriers to overcome (eg equipment, safe parking)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Given less fixed nature of utility trips, easier to fit into and develop around their current lifestyle/when it feels most enjoyable</b></p> <p>However, may be very dependent on weather</p>
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Utility cycling is a more obvious 'next step' for leisure cyclists

**Opportunities to  
encourage transition to  
commuting/utility  
cycling**

## A captive audience for cycling initiatives

- Leisure cyclists are more aware of cycling initiatives than considerers
  - BCH and other leisure-focused hire schemes, eg Skyride (due to advertising); Barclay's Cycle Superhighways
- However, seeing the full range of initiatives together, results in **positive surprise**
  - Shows there is a lot of investment to support cycling in London
- A lot of interest in hearing more about initiatives that **provide tools and support for them** to move their cycling forward

*'Because I cycle myself I do notice more things going on. But, I didn't realise there was so much going on around cycling in London...'*



## Two strategies for targeting leisure cyclists

### 1. Increasing cycling frequency

- Leveraging ‘feel good’ elements of increasing cycling (for any type of trip) appears an easier win:
  - Allows people to pick out the journeys/occasions that are most appealing/easiest to them – more likely to lead to utility trips
  - Avoids barriers associated with specific trips (esp. commuting)

### 2. Targeting ‘commuting’ specifically

- Overtly promoting commuting will require a lot more support:
  - Leveraging ‘feel good factor’ is engaging but also less easily applicable to commuting
  - Requires new priming and a strong trigger to break down ingrained habits and heuristics
  - Likely to require more incentivising

Encouraging leisure cyclists to ‘cycle more’ will help strengthen the cycling habit and may be more powerful than targeting commuting directly for increasing the range of trips made by bicycle

# 1. Increasing cycling frequency: *Focus on inspiring new leisure-minded occasions*

- Leisure cyclists require **inspiration for new cycling occasions** which they can fit into their existing lifestyle easily and 'painlessly'
- Strong potential to **inspire a greater range of leisure and utility cycling trips and broaden current cycling repertoires**
  - Potential to encourage BCH in Inner London for Outer Londoners who find it impractical to bring own bikes into London, eg promote cycling in Inner London parks
  - Cycling events offer much potential to strengthen relationship to cycling and build confidence whilst tapping into current sociability motivations for cycling



## BARCLAYS CYCLE HIRE



*'We come into London for days out with the kids, so why not come in to do a something fun with a bike?'*

# 1. Increasing cycling frequency: *Potential for initiatives that leverage leisure or family-bonding aspects of cycling*

- Increasing cycling amongst leisure cyclists is **most viable where it is closest to current leisure cycling mindset and experiences** that they already enjoy
  - **Tapping into family bonding/sociable aspects**
    - Family-focused initiatives – ie Cycling to school, local events
  - **Leveraging leisure environments/feelings/mind-set for a broader range of journeys**
    - eg Greenways as part of utility/commuting journey

*'Greenways sounds interesting... It would give another nicer and safer option for cycling with my kids'*

CYCLING TO SCHOOL

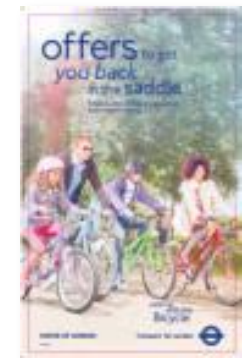


GREENWAYS



## 2. Targeting 'commuting' (and utility): *Initiatives that help transition from leisure cycling to more purposeful journeys*

- Much potential to offer **practical support at preparation phase** for a new 'type' of cycling
  - 'Offers to get you started' - free/cheap gear
  - Bike makeover/safety checks for old bike
  - Addressing security/parking
    - Biking boroughs
    - More parking spaces at popular local establishments (ie supermarkets/shops, gyms, work places)
  
- And a requirement for **emotional support at preparation phase**
  - 'Guided cycle to work' appealing to some women



*'If I knew there were better parking facilities for my bike in my area I'd be convinced to cycle more'*

## 2. Targeting 'commuting': *Workplace initiatives important to generate a sense of social norms shifting*



- **Workplace incentives and advice will be important for priming commuting by bicycle**

- Ride2Work scheme is well received - a new/better bike and equipment is an incentive to leisure cyclists
- Cycling related talks/companies coming in to promote cycling in the workplace to help motivate/advise



- Workplace initiatives also create **social momentum and advocacy from others** – acting as a strong Prime (or even Trigger) for change

*'I guess if people at my work were constantly telling me how great it is to cycle to work, I might consider it more'*

## 2. Targeting 'commuting': *Fitting commuting and utility cycling into broader travel repertoire*

- Attachment to other modes is a major barrier to commuting by bicycle...
- An opportunity to encourage people to **cycle as part of their commute**
  - Offer/promote initiatives that fit cycling into multi-mode journeys (eg using BCH with Oyster card; more parking facilities at stations)
    - More appealing for those who live too far from work to commute whole way by bicycle
    - Still allowing them to enjoy Public Transport part of the way
    - Less of a full commitment to cycling (less effort potentially planning the route and committing to the change)



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