Wayfinding in support of Active Travel

Urban Activity

Kidlington Zoo Trails

AIMS

This project tested a novel use of wayfinding as a means of encouraging physical activity within the community. Targeted at families with children under the age of 12 years. Evaluation carried out on social return on investment and through informal feedback. The community of Kidlington and Gosford, north of Oxford, was selected as a mixed demographic population.

EXECUTION

- Creation of a cross-stakeholder steering group and employment of community engagement officers.
- Asset scoping of the area mapping out public amenities, green and blue spaces, play areas and target residential areas of known social needs.
- Designs for four routes shared with the community for feedback.
- Engagement with the community, schools, specific needs groups and police over route design, wayfinding signage design, and all aided design and accessibility improvements.
- Trails were cleared of obstacles and barriers to enable access for all.
- Installation of route markings with highway specification paint, wayfinding signage, ground painted games, seating and play equipment.
- Social media engagement to encourage route use was supported by activities featuring the zoo theme animal mascots and follow up evaluation surveying carried out.

RESULTS

Social media feedback

"We love them already – made the walk to school in record time"

resident

"I am writing to you to give amazing feedback on your new health walks in Kidlington. My daughter is usually extremely lazy, to the extent that she would want to catch the bus a couple stops but already she wants to walk, scoot and cycle everywhere. It's a MASSIVE thumbs up from us!"

Liam and Bella

Social return on investment evaluation

Assessment of the routes' social value by surveying key demographics users before and after installation and infrared pedestrian counters on the trails prior to and post installation.

The summary of these studies measured life satisfaction post installation and quantified using the WELLBY scale (endorsed by UK Government HM Treasury Green Book).

Estimating social value of monthly use of the zoo trails

Estimated impact on life satisfaction of using the trails (at least once a month)	0.275
WELLBY value of 1 increase in life satisfaction	£13,000
Estimated monetary value of trails, per person who uses monthly	£3,575
Average estimated no. people who use trails at least monthly	579
Estimated monetary value of trails	£2,068,790

Cost benefit analysis

Estimated monetary value of trails	£2,068,790
Cost (Project management, community engagement and physical infrastructure)	£113,500
Net value	£1,955,290
Benefit-cost ratio	18.23

KEY LEARNINGS

A low-cost urban activity trail intervention in the public realm can be hugely beneficial and the addition of playful elements widens the appeal across age ranges.

Careful route planning used to open up little used areas of green and blue space presenting wider wellbeing and nature connectedness as well as access to amenities for practical active travel use.

The community engagement undertaken by local officers was key to the promotion, acceptance and subsequent success of the trails.

Dr Rosie Rowe
Oxfordshire County Council, Healthy Place Shaping Lead

Mike Clay
Wayfinding Officer

Park and Stride

AIMS

A pilot study to test the effectiveness of a wayfinding intervention to increase active travel to/from primary school. The secondary benefits of reducing congestion and improving air quality around the school gate were also measured. The project was carried out in Oxfordshire.

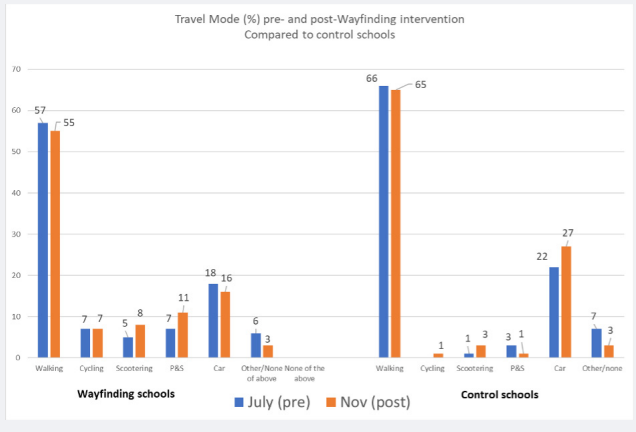
EXECUTION

- Four pilot schools, two in Oxford city and two in towns in the county - Banbury and Carterton.
- Pupil postcode mapping showed likely travel routes and Park and Stride facilities and routes were planned on that basis.
- Parent, staff and pupil consultations carried out to determine route and graphic designs and activity features.
- Routes marked out using colourful animal graphic signs and ground markings with 'hop-scotch' type games.
- Evaluation by travel data and parental surveys, vehicle counts, and air quality monitoring at sample and control schools.
- Qualitative work carried out by Oxford Brookes University through interviews.

RESULTS

The pilot demonstrated that:

110 parents from intervention locations responded to the post intervention survey: **59 per cent had used the 'Park and Stride' routes**, 28 per cent were aware of it but hadn't used it, and 13 per cent were unaware or only somewhat aware of it.



Qualitative Insights

- Pavement markings were colourful and uplifting, enhancing the urban environment and were intuitive and ea to understand making active travel mor enjoyable and more likely.
- Parents and schools regarded the Park and Stride project as successful and good value for money.
- Permanent nature of the scheme viewed as better than time-limited initiatives such as Walk to School Week.
- Park and Stride alone was not sufficient to enable independent walking to school because of infrastructure safety concerns.

"One of the best put together projects that I've ever seen, from start to finish in terms of the involvement with the children, the quality of the resources that are out there for them to get to school."

Headteacher

Active travel increased ↑ and car travel decreased ↓ in wayfinding schools.

KEY LEARNINGS

The significant impact of increasing the enjoyment and sense of relative safety of active travel as a motivator to mode use. Some school locations may see greater impact on school gate congestion from 'School Streets' type road closures especially if supported by Park and Stride measures.

Community feedback:

"Dear Carterton Town Council,
I just wanted to compliment you on the new addition to the park. My children love the solar system artwork on the path around the bandstand. We make a point of walking that way to and from school. They love space so this brings a smile to us every morning.
Thank you. Kindest regards,
local parent"

Dr Sarah Payne Riches
Public Health Consultant

Mike Clay
Wayfinding Officer

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