

Residential travel packs deliver



Summary

Local authority:
City of Edinburgh Council



In 2017-18, the City of Edinburgh Council commenced delivering Residential Travel Packs to tenants moving into the city's new 'Small Sites Affordable Homes' developments. Led by the Council's Housing Development and Regeneration team, the 'Small Sites Affordable Homes' programme is constructing new housing stock for social and mid-market rental.

During the planning process, the Council's Planning team encouraged the development team to consider how best to encourage incoming tenants to use active and sustainable modes of travel more often. With support from the Council's Smarter Choices, Smarter Places Programme Manager, a decision was taken to offer new tenants Residential Travel Packs.

Compiled and delivered by the house building contractor, Robertson Partnership Homes, the packs contain a mixture of materials, including pre-loaded smart-cards for bus and tram journeys in Edinburgh, as well as active travel maps, to inform new tenants about their local travel choices. More recently, the packs have also included day passes for the Just Eat Cycles scheme.

Ultimately, the aim is to deliver packs to all 263 homes being delivered through the 'Small Sites Affordable Homes' programme. By March 2019, a total of 142 households had received a pack, with the remainder to be delivered as the final phases of the development are rolled out.

This project received funding through the *Smarter Choices, Smarter Places* programme, which is administered by Paths for All and funded by Transport Scotland.



Residential travel packs deliver

The City of Edinburgh Council has been working closely with tenants as they move into the city's newly constructed 'Small Sites Affordable Homes' developments, to encourage greater uptake of active and sustainable modes.

The 'Small Sites Affordable Homes' programme is being managed by the Council's Housing Development and Regeneration team. Designed to create homes for social and mid-market rent, by March 2019, it had delivered new housing stock at Fernieflat Neuk, West Pilton Grove, Hailesland Place and Parkgrove Terrace, with future developments planned in Royston, Crewe Road Gardens and Dumbryden Drive.

During the formal planning phase for the development programme, Council Planning Officers encouraged the Housing Development and Regeneration team to seek advice and support from the Council's Smarter Choices, Smarter Places Programme Manager, who sits in the Active Travel team. The purpose of this partnership was to identify and implement innovative measures designed to influence the travel behaviour of tenants, as they moved in to their newly constructed homes.

The approach that was ultimately identified and adopted by the partners involved distributing Residential Travel Packs to each new household. Commencing in 2017-18 a phased approach to distribution was adopted, to coincide with the phasing of the development programme.

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The Residential Travel Packs have been compiled and delivered by the house building contractor, Robertson Partnership Homes. Their content has evolved over time and by early 2019, the packs included Lothian Bus/ Edinburgh Trams City Smart Cards, active travel maps and Just Eat Cycles day passes.

The packs have been designed to provide direct support to new tenants, to help them make more informed decisions about their travel choices. In particular, they encourage active and sustainable travel choices by offering households financial support via bus/ tram smart cards, which were pre-loaded with 20 single journeys. Alongside this, active travel maps were provided, to inform new tenants about their local active travel routes, which are designed to be traffic-free, or using quieter streets and suitable for people who are less confident using a bicycle, near their home.

The Just Eat Cycles day passes were introduced to the residential travel packs more recently. From the outset, the operator was keen to support the initiative as part of their wider outreach work. They also saw it as an opportunity to promote the Just Eat Cycles scheme to a specific target audience and to trial a new way of reaching them.

In retrospect, the delivery phase of the project would have benefited from using more of a 'just-in-time' approach to purchasing the City Smart Cards. During the project, cards were pre-purchased for incoming tenants to the Fernieflat Neuk and West

Pilton Grove developments. However, an unexpected delay in completing these homes meant that the six-month validity of the pre-loaded bus and tram smart cards went close to expiring. Consequently, the delivery team had to purchase one additional journey per card, to keep them 'live' for another six months.

In March 2019, the Partners undertook monitoring to help build a picture about the impact of the Residential Travel Pack initiative. Initially, it was hoped that Lothian Buses would be able to supply data about if and how the passes that were issued had been used. Unfortunately, this was not possible, so instead, a questionnaire was issued to recipients of the Packs, to explore if and how they had used the passes and to learn more about how well received the Travel Packs were by the target audience.

With the benefit of hindsight, it would be beneficial to carry out monitoring earlier in the process, to establish the immediate impact of the Residential Travel Packs. In particular, capturing monitoring data just after hand over would be helpful, as experience showed some tenants moved on quite quickly, before any information could be gathered.

The next phase of the project will involve delivering Packs to the incoming tenants who will occupy new homes in Royston, Crewe Road Gardens and Dumbryden Drive. The learning gained through earlier phases of the project will help ensure these new tenants understand how to access active and sustainable travel options and that they are more likely to do so. This is undoubtedly a model that could benefit all new housing developments in Edinburgh and across Scotland, and through co-ordinated efforts between teams, achieve health and environmental benefits for the residents.

“Through this initiative, we have been able to reach a defined group of people, who are all going through the process of moving home. The initiative aims to support new residents with the challenge of finding ways to travel from somewhere new and unfamiliar, and also with the cost of public transport. This initiative is tailored to directly reach individuals going through a significant time of change, which is a great time to achieve a change in travel habits too. This initiative can be easily replicated in other areas, and demonstrates where there can be collaboration between planning and transport teams to give people the tools to make informed travel choices.”

SCSP Programme Manager,
City of Edinburgh Council

In numbers

£2,244

was spent delivering the initiative in 2017-18 and £2,696 in 2018-19



In April 2019, initial monitoring results showed that **all survey respondents** had used their **City Smart Card**



All respondents indicated that the **pack helped them** with making journeys by walking, cycling and taking public transport to the places they need to go to



Monitoring also indicated that **almost all respondents** had made use of the local walking and cycling **route maps**

20

was the number of journeys **most respondents** felt was the right **amount to pre-load** on the City Smart Card

142

Lothian Buses City **Smart Cards** were **issued** to **incoming tenants**

“ Thank you for the travel folder – it’s a great initiative and makes me consider alternative means of travel within Edinburgh. ”

Recipient, Residential Travel Pack

“ This joined up approach between the Active Travel /Transport team and Housing sections has been extremely valuable. It has allowed us to enhance the information which is contained within the Tenant Handover Packs which are produced for each of the Council’s new-build affordable homes delivered as part of ‘Small Sites Affordable Homes’ programme. This will help our new tenants, many of whom will be new to an area and will be unaware of active travel routes or public transport options, whilst the pre-paid travel passes should also be of value in encouraging public transport use. ”

21st Century Homes Project Manager, City of Edinburgh Council

