

# — PACE →

## Session Two Utilising the Art of Behavioural Insight

### The brief

During the first session, the cohort identified a number of key challenges that might serve as live case studies for problems that would benefit from the application of behavioural insight techniques.

Post-event discussion and reflection led the cohort to refine a brief to: Using behavioural insight to 'drive up' modal shift and 'drive down' car travel.

The challenge for session two is to drill into this challenge using the COM-B behavioural science technique to:

1. Identify what and whose **Behaviour** needs to change to achieve the desired outcome?
2. Discuss whether the target population has the **Capability** to enact the behaviour?
3. Discuss whether the target population has the **Opportunity** to enable the behaviour?
4. Discuss whether the target population has the **Motivation** to perform/avoid the behaviour?



## Leadership: key to changing behaviour

The challenge of bringing the public and politicians through potential advantageous but difficult local decision making was highlighted by two recent, contrasting policy decisions affecting UK cities.

First, was the recent decision to abandon plans in Cambridge to introduce a congestion charge on motorists in the city centre. Despite many years of investment in public transport, and despite a huge amount of work to demonstrate the benefits – social, health, environmental and economic – of a £5 a day charge, the policy was rejected after a consultation 58:42 vote led politicians to fear the policy might penalise lower income families.

Second, was the decision by London Mayor Sadiq Khan to press forward with plans to extend the London Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ), which is designed to improve the capital's air quality. Despite challenges in the High Court and political interventions by the Prime Minister, this policy was enacted.

**The difference – leadership.**

“A consultative style is important, but it makes decision-making hard and can result in money not being invested. True behavioural change fundamentally needs strong leadership.”

**Andy Denman, Highways Sector  
Director, Amey**



## How behavioural science can make it easier for people to make different travel choices

While the COM-B model is very useful, it is not enough to change motivations, opportunities and capabilities to affect behaviour since this is not usually driven by only rational decisions.

As highlighted by Nobel prize winning economist, Daniel Kahneman, human behaviour is governed by the way we think:

- Thinking Slow: Rational and conscious but affected by social norms
- Thinking Fast: Unconscious, habit driven behaviour requiring lower cognitive burden so more efficient

When trying to change behaviour we need to be aware of these different ways of thinking and build them into our armoury of tools. Specifically, when looking at how we can help people make different travel choices, three approaches can be used:

- Using norms
- Overcoming habits
- Reducing reactance.

### Using norms

We currently suffer from “motornormativity” in the UK – the social norm that puts the car at the top of the pecking order when it comes to transport options.

Changing this social norm to switch away from the car is possible – as has been achieved in many Dutch cities. Research has demonstrated that one key to influencing this change is to make people feel that “everyone else is doing it”.

### Overcoming habits

Routines become embedded into the unconscious and are often reinforced by environmental cues.

Breaking those habits to promote different behaviours is greatly assisted by focusing on “moments of change” – if other norms in a person’s life are changing – new home, new job, new relationship – one more change is usually considered less challenging.

### Reducing reactance

Understanding how to reduce pushback from change is critical. People value their freedom and any threat to that perceived freedom will stimulate anger and emotion as they attempt to protect their threatened freedom – particularly if that threat is coming from someone of something they don’t know – the “out-group”.

The use of “choice enhancing language” which emphasises the gains, not losses from change and positions that change as coming from something or someone they know and trust – the “in-group”.



## What promotes mode shift?

- Appealing to environmental concerns - **No**
- Rewards – **Only in the short term**
- Rewards plus travel planning apps - **Possibly**
- Promote health benefits – **Perhaps moderate changes**
- Highlight examples of people that had switched - **YES**
- Self- monitor to compare with perceived norms - **YES**

## Behavioural science as a tool for government policy

The use of behavioural science in the Civil Service grew rapidly during and after the Covid-19 pandemic. As a new discipline it is emerging in its importance.

The Department for Transport (DfT) has a team of seven behavioural scientists with over 100 now employed across the entire Civil Service. The primary goals for the DfT team are to apply behavioural science theory, evidence and research to:

- understand the reasons for travel behaviours.
- propose ways of changing behaviours.
- test proposed ways of changing behaviours.

“In government we don’t talk about changing driving behaviours, we talk about extending people’s choices. This is rooted in behavioural science; if you try to make people do things then you get reactance but offer choice and you are more likely to get their buy-in.”

**Dr Tim Harries, Principal Behavioural Scientist, DfT Social & Behavioural Research Team**



## Moment of Change Guidance

The DfT commissioned Sustrans to produce its 'Moment of Change' report post Covid-19 to coincide with the introduction of the Capability Fund. Working with the Behavioural Insights Team (BIT) 'Cycle to Work' was identified as one of the top three policy options to focus on.

A number of measures were highlighted to target and maximise the benefit of this major post-pandemic moment of change including:

- Considering how best to target interventions that lead to maximum impact.
- Geographic Information Systems are a useful starting point for planning targets.
- Overlaying data can highlight areas where key factors coincide, then target workplaces that align.
- Align with wider Local Authority objectives such as local growth and health inequalities.
- Evidence shows that the biggest impact is demonstrated where infrastructure is supported by behaviour change interventions.

## Children and Young People

Based on the theory that safe streets that succeed for children and young people will succeed for everyone Sustrans carried out a desk study into the thoughts, habits and behaviours of children's travel – specifically, the school run.

This work was used to inform how Sustrans' projects might best cater to children and young people and highlighted a number of key findings and recommendations to improve active travel for children and young people based around three areas.

**People:** Giving children and adults the skills, confidence, motivation and information to travel actively. Ensuring families have access and storage for bikes.

**Places:** Developing safe routes and spaces for children to travel actively, where they live around schools.

**Society:** Using communication channels to normalise and value active and independent travel for children, and to make the case for long-term political commitment, funding, policy and laws.



## UK city-wide examples

There are a number of examples of successful behaviour change programmes in cities around the world from which lessons can be drawn:



**Congestion charge, London (2003):** Reduced traffic entering the zone by 18% during weekday charging hours; reduced congestion by 30% and increased bus travel by 33%; 10% of journeys switched to sustainable modes.



**ULEZ (2019) and expansion (2021), London:** 74,000 fewer polluting vehicles in the zone, down 60% since 2021 expansion; compliant vehicles increased from 39% in 2017 to 94.4% in October 2022; more public transport and active travel journeys.

**Clean Air Zone, Birmingham (2021):** Halved number of polluting vehicles entering zone in six months; 7.3% reduction of harmful nitrogen dioxide pollution in first seven months.



**Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTN), London:** Over 100 schemes in London. After three years, Waltham Forest LTN residents increased walking by 115 minutes per week and cycling by 20 minutes per week and saw car/van ownership decrease by 7%.



## International active travel examples

### Cycling infrastructure, Seville (2006):

Citizen engagement led to traffic calming, pedestrianisation, bike hire alongside a rapidly built network. Cycle use increased from almost nothing to 6%.



### Cycling revolution, Paris (2014):

Huge support for Mayor's shift in transport policy. Engaged citizens and worked with policy makers to support policy with new infrastructure. Car trips within Paris reduced by almost 60% between 2001 and 2018.



### Traffic free bridges, Copenhagen (2006):

Three new car-free bridges and others across smaller canals and busy roads created huge impact on travel time, safety, and travel quality for cyclists and pedestrians.



### Traffic circulation plan, Ghent (2017):

Political will and dedication plus a neighbourhood approach to citizen input. Cycling increased from 22% to 37% of journeys. Air pollution and traffic reduced.



## Critical elements for success

- Extensive consultation, engagement and citizen input is critical for support and acceptance of change.
- Modelling of household behaviour and traffic patterns helps to gain insight and design schemes that are more likely to work.
- Strong and visible political leadership is vital.
- Public awareness campaigns and/or local engagement/co-design will help engagement.
- Multiple interventions at neighbourhood and/or city scale, with incentives and support embedded into solutions with the community.

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“Resources are an issue in local authorities but there is a lot more that can be done around story-telling to highlight examples of how individuals have changed their travel behaviour. If we are thinking about safe streets for children, then we know that we are thinking about safe streets for everyone.”

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**Sarah Leeming, Regional Director, England South, Sustrans**



## The GO-HI MaaS Project - Delivering the future of mobility.

As governments accelerate their journeys toward net zero emissions, the future of mobility solutions is changing rapidly. Mobility as a Service (MaaS) has long been considered as key to embedding affordable public and private transport choice into people's lives but has usually failed due to the complexity of the practical delivery.

The Go-Hi MaaS Project in the Scottish Highlands and Islands has demonstrated that it is possible to bring together transport operators to provide a single integrated ticketing solution that works for passengers.

Led by the Scottish Highlands and Island authority the project set out to bring together all forms of transport – buses, trains, ferries, taxis, car hire, bike hire, and on demand travel.

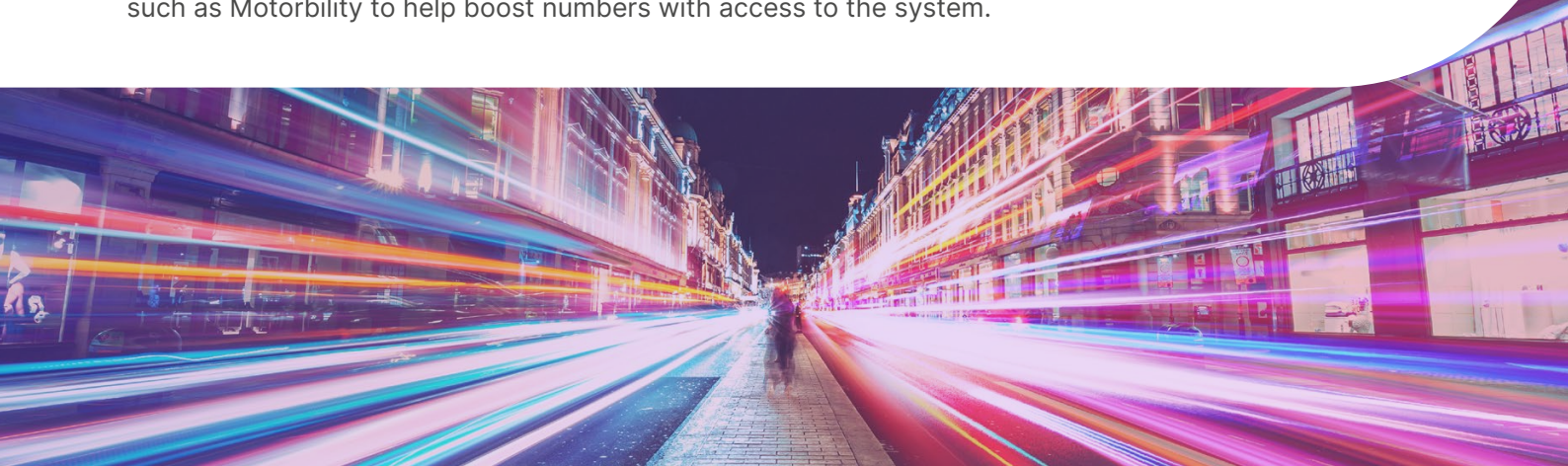
Key project objectives were:

- Deliver a branded MaaS platform with journey planning and integrated ticketing
- Integrate the demand responsive transport service, and include booking and payment
- Integrate public e-bike dock system in Inverness
- Extend Enterprise Car Club into rural areas
- Monitor engagement, evaluation and research to understand any behavioural change
- Market an alternative option to the principle of vehicle ownership

To date, the service has over 5,000 users, a number that is still growing.

### Key project insights

- **Complex integrations and delays:** the process of gaining buy-in from multiple operators was long and hard and required a dedicated and committed team pre-empting problems.
- **Consensus on priorities:** the brief was to give people choice. Achieving consensus was vital. The challenge now is to ensure people's behaviour change continues.
- **Branding and marketing strategy:** focus is on the 85% of people not using public transport to help encourage them to try out an alternative to the car.
- **User engagement and feedback:** The University of Leeds has been working to ensure that regular user surveys and stakeholder evaluation informs the decision making.
- **Funding and commercial models:** finding ways to incentivise commercial companies to be involved and continue offering improvements.
- **Incentives and rewards:** both for the public using the systems and for the companies providing the services.
- **Behavioural change monitoring:** measures include partnering with organisations such as Motorbility to help boost numbers with access to the system.







## Next steps

Having established the MaaS system the plan is to enhance the service through:

- Improved accessibility
- Onboard Highland Council to expand the reach
- Greater coverage beyond Highlands
- Further integrations through creation of Mobility Hubs
- Engaging businesses with a travel policy

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“Getting all the operators to integrate their services was very difficult – but it’s done. The brief was to give people choice and that goal has been realised – we are now starting to see people changing their behaviour.”

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**Oz Choudhri, Head of Mobility Solutions, UK and Ireland, Enterprise**



## Workshop 1: How can you creatively use behavioural insight to drive up modal shift and drive down car use

### Identify the core problem and what would better look like in the future?

#### Group 1:

Where councils are using data driven behavioural insights to deliver change

#### Group 2:

Challenging “motor-normity” by:

- Offering genuine choices
- Understanding the diverse needs of communities
- Having data and facts to support brave decisions
- Giving permission to choose
- Operating in a national framework





## Identify the audience and their capability, opportunity and motivation.

Use the COMB model of behaviour change to determine what is influencing the behaviour:

1. Whose **Behaviour** needs to change to achieve the desired outcome?
2. Does the target population have the **Capability** to enact the behaviour?
3. Does the target population have the **Opportunity** to enable the behaviour?
4. Does the target population have the **Motivation** to perform/avoid the behaviour?

### Group 1:

Senior officers

- **Capability:** Some – it's new(ish); systematic CPD; it's not often asked of us
- **Opportunity:** Lack of resources – short termism; lack of time to change; need more prioritisation of resources, tools, stories
- **Motivation:** Are motivated

Members

- **Capability:** Some – use knowledge gained from electoral expertise
- **Opportunity:** Alignment with officers – set vision for place
- **Motivation:** May not have knowledge about manifesto delivery

Officers

- **Capability:** Some will but it isn't in professional training for officers
- **Opportunity:** Unless as individuals they do it
- **Motivation:** Varies - in highways teams there is but generally there is a lack of time, energy and resources as it's not often their core job





## Group 2:

### Politicians

- **Capability:** They have the power to change things but can the lack of imagination and specific skills required
- **Opportunity:** Absolutely but only in their own locality and it is constrained by politics and limited by election cycles which are shorter than project timescales
- **Motivation:** Motivated by “doing good” for the community

### Officers

- **Capability:** They can lack specific skills required to find the solutions and lack the funding and resources. There is a need to join up resources across departmental silos. Their technical focus often overrides engagement and understanding
- **Opportunity:** Delivery focus and day-to-day pressures restricts opportunity. Lack of time and resources and inability to raise their head beyond the day job prevents strategic thinking
- **Motivation:** Change is desired and sought, but there can be a fear of making the wrong decision. Resources/time/weariness prevents focus on making place better

### Media

- **Capability:** Has the resources – influential and has the power to lead change
- **Opportunity:** Driven access to audiences – able to amplify
- **Motivation:** driven by revenue needs and by self-promotion. Enjoy telling their story and uncovering their truth

### Partners

- **Capability:** Variable - depends on who and what the partner is. Have the resources, tools and advocacy
- **Opportunity:** Independent source of information – offers trust
- **Motivation:** Revenue opportunities – ability to create local impact and build wider partnerships



## Workshop 2: Identifying blockers to change

Prioritise one target population/ audience and agree the actions, interventions and resources you need to creatively use behavioural insight to 'drive up' modal shift and 'drive down' car travel.

### Group 1

Senior Officers

1. Overcome resource constraints by initiating shared behavioural insights consultancy service for local authorities where a small annual fee buys a small number of consultancy days a year.
  - Carry out horizon scanning to understand the challenges out there.
  - Ensure that leaders understand that the service is there to be used.
  - Create a learning organisation to help share the benefits.
2. Scale up the PACE programme to widen the pool of officers with behavioural insight understanding.
3. Training for LA officers – funded through the levy.
4. Can we access the Civil Service training scheme to boost training resources available?
5. Assess the impact of the tools – work with universities to assess the impacts – is change being driven and improving services?

### Group 2

Politicians

1. Broaden capability – they lack the skills required to understand the complexity of the problem.
2. Widen the capability – to help understand what the wider community thinks; provide the skills that help them politically and personally.
3. Talk to them about the opportunities of investing in behavioural science.
4. Co-design solutions.
5. Develop greater and deeper relationships and partnerships with politicians.
6. Generate better data analysis and use story-telling to draw out lived experiences – align data and ideas to politicians personal lives.
7. Establish cross-party panels to hear evidence and witness accounts around specific themes to help embed reality into policy making.
8. Share lessons from other local authorities.
9. Have the confidence to wait for long-term impact to emerge and bear fruit.

## Next steps – session three - 13 October 2023

Using behavioural insight to achieve more consistent strategic decision making across local political cycles.

### Points for reflection and discussion

- How can investment in better story-telling help influence behavioural change and better decision-making?
- How can we make better use of data?
- How can we influence and improve the leadership that drives local policy decisions?
- What examples of the successful application of behavioural insight can be shared amongst the cohort?

