



Streetalk

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Walking, cycling and health



A 2017 study by the University of Glasgow, published in the British Medical Journal*, analysed data from over a quarter of a million participants. It found that cycling to work is associated with a 45% lower risk of developing cancer and a 46% lower risk of heart disease, compared to a non-active commute. Overall the study found that commuters who cycled were associated with a 41% lower risk of premature death.

Walking to work was associated with 27% lower risk of developing cardiovascular disease and a 36% lower risk of dying from cardiovascular disease, but not cancer or premature death overall.

The above represents concrete proof that getting people active, both in their commute to work and in general, is what should be strived for. Most local authorities have walking and cycling initiatives or are looking to instigate them. Apart from health benefits, they reduce pollution, place less stress on health services and provide an indication of a forward thinking, mature society.

Hand in hand with a good walking or cycling network is good signing, making it as easy as possible for people to navigate and find their destinations. Streetwise have many years of experience in examining town and city centres, and cycling networks, to advise on what type of signage is needed, and where it should be located. This results in a detailed report presenting our analysis and costed recommendations on what

changes are needed to achieve the location's objectives. In most of our work we also go advise on and design/develop the elements required to create the improved system - and then assist our clients to implement the plan.

At the time of writing we are engaged on a project for Milton Keynes Council where we are providing recommendations to improve wayfinding signage for the city's Redways – 270 kilometres of paths designated for cyclists and pedestrians. We are advising primarily on signage type and location as well as destinations to include. As a result of our preliminary recommendations, we have also now been commissioned to consider the development and design of the content for new monoliths. These will carry mapping and complete route line diagrams, complementing the directional signage.

* <http://www.bmj.com/content/357/bmj.j1456>

Gaining the attention of visitors and customers



Digital wayfinding is moving at a pace in the UK and we are keeping abreast of all the latest technology in order to advise our clients effectively. We recently saw an innovative piece of signage in France and knew that it had great potential for the UK. We can now offer you the world's first interactive digital fingerpost that offers wayfinding assistance, but a great deal more - being able to display live messaging on blades that rotate 360 degrees. Instantly updatable it offers a new level of communication with visitors to any location. Take a look at this video;

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DOFCKqGnMIY&feature=youtu.be>

Wayfinding improvements – without starting from scratch and...it's always nice to be appreciated!

There are very often instances where an existing wayfinding network can be improved and refined – rather than going back to square one and starting all over again. A case in point was the City of Bath. We were pleased to be appointed by Bath and North East Somerset Council (B&NES) to consult on what was already an award-winning City Information System - and produce our recommendations for its further improvement.



This involved the facilitation of focus groups consisting of local retailers, visitor attractions, residents, as well as tourism visitors themselves, in order to establish participants' opinions on the effectiveness of the existing system and to identify what was required to meet the changing needs of this leading tourist city. After what was a thorough examination, we went on to produce a series of recommendations, which were adopted in full by B&NES. We have subsequently been commissioned to develop and install prototypes of new units that are intended to complement the existing wayfinding provision

For further information on this project, and to see the reports that we produced, click on the following link;

<http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/services/planning-and-building-control/major-projects/public-realm-and-movement/city-information-sys>

At the conclusion of our work we were delighted to receive the following reference from the project manager;

“In 2016 Streetwise was appointed to undertake a technical and stakeholder review of Bath City Information System. The system had been installed for three years in which time it won awards but also received criticism in particular from the business community. It piloted an innovative and high quality approach to providing visitor and resident wayfinding information that integrated with Bath's outstanding World Heritage Environment.

Streetwise delivered their thorough technical review of the system channels, on-street network, equipment and graphic design and information content to provide a robust professional assessment. They also facilitated a series of stakeholder events and focus groups to gauge customer opinion evenly. All were thoroughly recorded.

Their report went on to provide the Council with a set of recommended actions in response to identified issues and opportunities. This was backed up with cost estimates and prioritisation. It was delivered on schedule and within agreed costs. The full report was clearly written with extensive findings that were also summarised for publication.

Streetwise was subsequently appointed to develop and supply a pilot version of an improved on-street component of the system, which is now in testing.

I consider Streetwise to have conducted a sound, robust and open review process to produce realistic and effective recommendations that responded to findings and feedback”.

Vaughan Thompson
Independent Project Consultant, appointed by
Bath and North East Somerset Council

To discuss anything within this newsletter, or to talk about any aspect of wayfinding improvement, then please call Graham Macready at Streetwise on 0131 229 5441 or email him at g.macready@streetwisesystems.com