

NEWS RELEASE**Green group scoops gold****For immediate
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Manchester Friends of the Earth's [1] innovative, city-wide "Love Your Bike" cycling campaign has scooped a prestigious 'Earthmovers' award. These accolades are given annually by national Friends of the Earth (England, Wales & Northern Ireland) to recognise group or individual campaigning excellence.

The Manchester Friends of the Earth campaign, which was part-funded by Manchester Transport Thematic Partnership [2], aims to reduce the number of car journeys into Manchester city centre during peak commuter times by encouraging people who currently drive to work to cycle instead.

The initial campaign, which was designed in partnership with Creative Concern [3], used 22 billboards and 100 back-of-bus advertisements on key commuter routes into the city centre to drive home the powerful message that cycling is better for your health, better for your wallet and better for getting you to work on time. Central to the campaign is an interactive website at www.loveyourbike.org where people can find out more information about cycle routes, get discounts at local bike shops, join an online community of cyclists and even complete a quiz to find out just how much they really do love their bike.

Graeme Sherriff, campaigner with Manchester Friends of the Earth, says: *"We're delighted that this project has been recognised at the national level. In launching Love your Bike, we wanted to remind commuters that in Manchester cycling to work is a practical and low cost commuting option and an excellent opportunity for anyone to fit exercise into their daily life and at the same time do their bit for the environment."*

Neil Swannick, Manchester City Council's Executive Member for Planning and Environment, says: *"We're really pleased to be working with Manchester Friends of the Earth on this exciting and compelling campaign and congratulate them on winning this deserved award. The Love your Bike campaign has shown people that there is a convenient alternative to sitting in a slow-moving traffic jam every morning, and hopefully made them think about getting their bikes out - at least once in a while - if not daily."*

ENDS**CONTACTS FOR COMMENT**

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Notes to editors

[1] Manchester Friends of the Earth is a prominent campaigns group, raising awareness and lobbying for policy changes at a local, regional, national and international level. The group consists entirely of volunteers, and its campaigns are funded by membership fees and individual donations. Up-to-date information is available on its website:

<http://www.manchesterfoe.org.uk>. Manchester Friends of the Earth is part of a national network of local groups, affiliated to the national organisation (further information can be found at <http://www.foe.co.uk>).

[2] The Transport Thematic Partnership is part of the Manchester Local Strategic Partnership. It is working to improve Manchester's local transport system and allocates Government Neighbourhood Renewal funding to projects which contribute to its objectives of obtaining sustainable communities.

[3] Creative Concern is an issues-based communications agency based in Manchester, dedicated to 'Communications for a Sustainable Future'. The agency has run successful environmental campaigns using design, advertising, film, media relations and viral messaging.

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