

GREEN TRAVEL PLAN

Agenda Item 9a.

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Background Papers:- None
Financial Implications:- See Report
Equalities Implications:- See Report
Legal Implications:- None
Options: See Report
Risks: See Report

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report reviews the work to date on preparing a green travel plan for the authority, and the process for completing the work. It sets out the benefits of a green travel plan and outlines examples of measures that might be included in the plan.

DECISION

To agree the development of a Green Travel Plan as outlined in the report.

GREEN TRAVEL PLAN

1. Background

A green travel plan is a package of measures tailored to the needs of individual workplaces and aimed at promoting greener, cleaner and healthier travel choices. The emphasis is on changing travel modes and reducing reliance on the car. The plan involves the development of mechanisms, initiatives, and targets that enable the organisation to reduce its environmental impact, whilst also bringing employer and staff benefits.

Braintree District Council first produced a draft travel plan in 2001. The Executive supported this in principle but the proposals were not funded and the plan was never implemented.

Renewed interest in the sustainability and climate change agenda led to the plan being re-visited in 2006, with a corporate plan target to develop a new green travel plan. The project has been delayed to take advantage of two free external consultancy opportunities and good progress is now being made on the preparatory work streams.

This report outlines the progress being made and seeks member approval to move to the next phase of the project, which includes consultation with staff and development of an action plan.

2. Scope of Plan

The plan will cover travel at work and commuting to and from work. It will apply to all Council staff but the main impact is expected to be on travel to and from Causeway House. Housing transfer will impact on the scope of the plan, staff transferring to Greenfields Community Housing have been included in preparatory work and the new organisation will be encouraged to adopt the travel plan measures.

The plan will address technical fleet management issues as well as individual travel patterns and habits.

3. Benefits to the Authority

3.1 Community Leadership

The Council has a strong commitment to Sustainable Development and through the Nottingham Declaration the Council has made specific commitments to deal with Climate Change. The travel plan has considerable potential as a carbon management tool and will be a very visible expression of the Council's commitment to environmental issues. In addition, the Council is increasingly using its planning powers to require travel plans for new development. Setting an example with our own travel plan makes this process more equitable and more likely to succeed.

3.2 Carbon Reduction

The Council has just started work on a carbon management plan. The vehicle fleet and staff travel are responsible for a large proportion of the Council's CO₂ emissions and the plan will lead to measurable reductions in emissions.

3.3 Staff Well-Being

Walking or cycling will result in a fitter, healthier and more alert workforce. Even those employees who continue to rely on the car will benefit from less traffic congestion during rush hour periods. If the plan succeeds in developing the public transport infrastructure it could lead to a greater modal shift with less stressful car journeys to and at work.

3.4 Financial Benefits

Opportunities to save on car parking provision and switch to cheaper forms of travel will give financial savings, although initially these may not be cashable and will be tied to repaying invest to save funding.

4. Project Timescale

The project started during 2006/07 with a desktop review of the previous travel plan, identifying actions which have already been carried out, or are no longer relevant. This review is currently being extended to examine latest best practice in other organisations, including web based travel planning tools.

The second work stream, a staff survey, was carried out with free consultancy support from Essex County Council during April. The survey will provide an analysis of current travel patterns and will form the basis for identifying what elements should be included in the plan. Survey results are expected in early June.

The third workstream is a "Green Fleet Review". Currently in progress, this free service is provided by the Energy Savings Trust and involves a specialist transport consultant analysing the Council's vehicle fleet and related policies. Data collection is currently underway and the report is expected at the end of June. This review will identify technical improvements to the fleet, better fleet management practices, and examine how casual user and lease car policies can help reduce overall mileage.

Once completed these three preparatory workstreams will lead to some clear recommendations for an action plan which in turn will form the basis for a staff consultation. This is currently scheduled for August with an aim to complete the process by the end of September.

5. Example Measures

The following is a list of some of the measures that might have a place in a comprehensive travel plan. This is given as an example and is not exhaustive or an indication that they will form part of the eventual plan. Some are simple quick win solutions whilst others are longer term and may require funding. Similarly some will be welcomed whilst others will be more controversial.

- Review fuel efficiency and fuel type of heavy goods vehicle and van fleet.
- Review car allowance payments to incentivise better travel planning.
- Review lease car subsidies to promote better route planning.
- Encourage car sharing
- Provide public transport information to encourage greater use.
- Work with transport operators to improve services.
- Restrict car parking capacity at Council offices.
- Driver training.
- Facilitate home working.
- Provide better facilities for cyclists.
- Promote cycle purchase schemes.
- Improve cycle mileage allowances.
- Ban the use of internal flights for travel in the UK

6. Financial Implications

No provision has been made to fund the travel plan. It is expected that many of the low cost initiatives can be actioned from existing budgets or using invest to save provisions. Any actions with a business case for more substantial funding will be introduced into the next budget cycle.

7. Equalities

Although the plan is most likely to deliver benefits in its application to Causeway House, measures will need to be applied equitably to all Council staff and workplaces. This could have future implications as the organisation develops more workplace sharing opportunities with partners.

8. Risks

A number of risks have been identified as follows:

- The travel plan is largely location based and will be affected by any future plans to move from Causeway House.
- Lack of specific funding or resourcing a co-ordinator post will limit the extent and speed of implementation.
- Housing transfer will leave a smaller organisation with less potential for implementing the plan, partnership with Greenfields Community Housing and/or Essex County Council may be required to achieve a critical mass for car share and other initiatives.
- Insufficient drivers such as local congestion to incentivise staff acceptance of measures.

9. Conclusion

Preparatory work has been carried out to re-launch a Green Travel Plan for Braintree District Council. The plan is expected to have major benefits in meeting carbon reduction aims and will demonstrate community leadership in this area of work. It will also provide health and well being impacts on staff and longer term financial benefits to the organisation. There are some risks associated with housing transfer, and organisational change but these are largely outweighed by potential benefits.

Appendix 1 – High Level Project Plan Gantt Chart

