

AGENDA MANAGEMENT SHEET

Name of Committee Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date of Committee 24 January 2008

Report Title Green Transport Plan Progress

Summary This report updates Members of the progress made with regards to our own Green Transport Plan approved in 2004.

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Would the recommended decision be contrary to the Budget and Policy Framework? Yes/No

Background Papers None

CONSULTATION ALREADY UNDERTAKEN:- *Details to be specified*

- Other Committees
- Local Member(s)
(With brief comments, if appropriate)
- Other Elected Members Councillor J Appleton } for information
Councillor K Browne }
Councillor Mrs E Goode }
- Cabinet Member Councillor M Heatley - for information
(Reports to The Cabinet, to be cleared with appropriate Cabinet Member)
- Chief Executive
- Legal I Marriott – agreed.
- Finance
- Other Chief Officers

- District Councils
- Health Authority
- Police
- Other Bodies/Individuals

FINAL DECISION **YES/NO** *(If 'No' complete Suggested Next Steps)*

SUGGESTED NEXT STEPS :

Details to be specified

- Further consideration by this Committee
- To Council
- To Cabinet
- To an O & S Committee
- To an Area Committee
- Further Consultation

**Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee –
24 January 2008**

Green Transport Plan Progress

**Report of the Interim Strategic Director for
Environment and Economy**

Recommendation

That Members support the implementation of 'harder' Green Transport Plan measures.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Green Transport Plan originally produced in 1999 and updated in 2004, has driven the sustainable travel agenda for Warwickshire County Council (WCC) employees. The overall objective of this plan is geared to support many benefits, from specially supporting the Council objectives of reducing CO₂, to reducing cost to the employer and employees, plus the wider community. The action coming out of the plan should help to relieve problems with on-site parking and/or congestion, and may in the long term lead to improvements in public transport, cycle-paths etc. In turn they can bring about an increase in personal well-being by promoting healthier forms of transport and reducing the stress associated with delays and congestion.
- 1.2 Since its initial launch of our Green Travel Plan, many schemes have been implemented. However, despite these schemes, the number of single occupancy vehicles commuting to Warwick has remained fairly consistent according to WCC annual travel to work survey. This indicates that whilst the 'soft' measures have prevented a rise in the number of single occupancy vehicles, it is time to implement the 'harder' measures if we are to see a significant decline in this activity.

2. Green Transport Plan Progress

- 2.1 Since the 2004 Green Transport Plan the following schemes have been implemented:-
- (i) New car share software system - Since its launch in November 2005 over 250 employees have signed up. In 2006 the number of car share spaces was increased from 60 to 72 to accommodate the extra demand for these spaces.

- (ii) Secure cycle parking installed - Cycle parking in Barrack Street was expanded and made secure in March 2005. In the summer of 2007 these spaces were at capacity and a request was put forward to the Car Park Working Party to further expand the cycle facilities. A review of F deck is due to take place and we are waiting to see if an expansion can be accommodated.
- (iii) Expansion of pool fleet - Warwick based staff have seen a 100% increase in pool vehicles since 2004. We now have access to four cars, two pool vans and from January 2008 a utility vehicle will be available to all (donated to the pool fleet by Road Safety). A number of Satellite Navigation systems are also available for staff to borrow to prevent unnecessary fuel being wasted on journeys and to save staff time.
- (iv) 'Cyclescheme', bike buying scheme - Since July 2007, all WCC staff can benefit from a salary sacrifice bike buying scheme which enables them to purchase a bike for commuting purposes with at least 42% off. This scheme operates within 'windows of opportunity' and in July and August 2007 135 bikes were purchased by staff. Three 'windows of opportunity' have been set for 2008.
- (v) Chiltern Rail discount - Since September 2007 all WCC staff can benefit from 20% discount on an annual season rail ticket with Chiltern rail only. This discount also applies to pre-paid business rail tickets. This discount will increase to 34% when WCC have achieved their corporate spend target of £100k.
- (vi) Interest free season ticket loan - All staff have access to an interest free season ticket loan for any bus or rail pass they wish to purchase.
- (vii) 'Busscheme' - Since December 2007 all WCC staff have access to a salary sacrifice scheme which enables them to purchase an annual bus pass making at least a 22% saving. To date only two staff have applied but promotional work will be carried out in the coming months to make all staff aware of the scheme.
- (viii) Travel Code of Conduct - The County has always had a Travel Code of Conduct, but to date it has not been widely publicised. This document sets out how staff should travel for County business to incur minimum costs to the authority (see **Appendix A** for full details). The document has recently been revised and will be promoted widely in 2008 in an effort to reduce the number of business miles claimed (in 2005/6 nearly £3.5 m was spent on business mileage).

2.2 In addition to the above schemes, the sustainable travel team have been pro-actively promoting all aspects of sustainable travel by writing articles for both internal and external publications, holding events (such as a Commuter event held in September 2007) and sending e-mails to all staff informing them of the latest initiative.

3. Green Transport Plan Measures Outstanding

3.1 Although many schemes have been implemented, there are a number of 'harder' measures that still need to be addressed.

- (i) Increase the number of shower facilities and provide changing areas with hairdryers, hooks, mirror, lockers and drying facilities for wet clothes. A commitment has been made to improve the current facilities whilst the refurbishment of Shire Hall is taking place.
- (ii) Review mileage allowances. Seek to negotiate a flat rate.
- (iii) Seek to negotiate payment of casual car users in line with tax threshold i.e. 40p per mile.

3.2 The above measures are currently being reviewed by Corporate HR through the current single status review.

4. Develop a Corporate Policy Relating to the Distribution of Parking Permits

4.1 This measure has proved difficult to implement due to equalities issues. HR officers feel that any policy will be subjective and do not feel confident that such a policy would be applied fairly.

4.2 In early 2006 WCC commissioned RTA Associates to undertake a study relating to staff parking in Warwick. The report recommended that charging should be implemented in WCC Warwick car parks. In June 2007 Strategic Directors Leadership Team (SDLT) were presented with a report that recommended amongst other items to 'Introduce car parking charges at point of use, at a charge of £1 per day, income generated being used to subsidise public transport'. As yet, no decision has been taken on whether or not to proceed with charging as it is a contentious issue

4.3 A further report has been prepared for SDLT outlining options which can be explored with regard to parking. The Sustainable Travel Team will be guided by their advice on how to pursue this issue.

5. Conclusion

5.1 It is clear that progress has been made with regard to the Green Transport Plan. Many schemes are now in place and staff can benefit from discounted passes for trains and buses as well as discounted bikes. Furthermore, seven pool cars are available should staff require to travel for business purposes.

- 5.2 However, despite these initiatives, WCC are yet to witness a significant change in the travel behaviour of staff. If we are to bring about a change, and support the reduction in CO2 emissions then we now need to pursue the 'harder' measures. To do that we need to gain support and leadership by example from Members and SDLT.

DAVID PYWELL
Interim Strategic Director for Environment and Economy
Shire Hall
Warwick

9 January 2008

Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee 24 January 2008

Travel Code of Conduct

1. Purpose of Code

- 1.1 This Code of Conduct is intended to act as a guide to employees as to the Council's objectives in the payment of travelling allowances. It is seen as an aid in minimising travelling, to keep costs as low as possible.
- 1.2 It is for individual employees and managers to plan their journeys in such a way as to limit travelling to the lowest possible level consistent with the efficient performance of their duties.

2. Planning of Journeys

- 2.1 Journeys should only be undertaken when they are absolutely necessary. Employees must consider first whether the objective of the journey could be achieved by writing, telephoning or e-mail.
- 2.2 Journeys should be by the shortest possible route (using www.multimap.co.uk) except where by the use of other major roads a significant saving in time can be achieved.
- 2.3 Journeys should be planned so as to secure the completion of the maximum amount of business with the minimum amount of travelling. Additional mileage should not be incurred by unnecessary visits to work base at the beginning and end of the day.
- 2.4 Where possible, employees should share the use of vehicles, especially when they are required to attend site or other meetings away from their operating base.
- 2.5 Public transport should be used as an alternative to car use where it is practical and efficient to do so.
- 2.6 In addition, an employee designated as a casual car user should consider the use of a pool car (where one is available) or a hire car (where it is cheaper to do so) in preference to using their own car.
- 2.7 Meetings should be arranged so that those attending minimise travelling, irrespective of the departments to which they may be attached.
- 2.8 Total car mileage claimed should be rounded up or down to the nearest mile.
- 2.9 Employees should carry official passengers without additional payment.
- 2.10 Wherever a number of employees are jointly to attend a meeting away from their operational centres, preference would be given to the car of an essential car

user. In any case, wherever employees travel together, so far as is practicable the car attracting the lowest mileage rate should be used.

- 2.11 All journeys must have the approval of the Head of Service or appropriate line manager. Therefore, employees should obtain any necessary prior authority for making journeys on official business. In giving authority for journeys, managers should have regard to the necessity for the journey, the relative cost of car use compared with public transport expenses and also to the time and convenience factors. In the case of long journeys, the cost of overnight accommodation when using public transport might need to be balanced against the cost of car usage which avoids an overnight stay.
- 2.12 Employees travelling by rail should normally travel Second Class. However, Heads of Service have discretion to authorise First Class travel where the additional cost can be justified.

3. Journeys that Start and/or Finish at Home

- 3.1 A basic principle adopted by the national negotiating bodies is that employees are responsible for their travel to and from work. Furthermore, the Inland Revenue regards any payment for travel to and from work as a taxable benefit which must be declared for tax purposes.
- 3.2 In calculating business mileage, therefore, the employee's normal daily mileage to and from work should ordinarily be taken into account. The claim would be for the additional (excess) mileage covered by virtue of the visit.
- 3.3 However, as an alternative where the journey either begins or ends at home, the employee may claim home to site or office to site, whichever is the less. This may prove advantageous to the employee compared to the excess mileage calculation and is intended to provide an incentive to sensible and economical journey planning and use of time. For example, an employee who normally travels 15 miles to work, visits a site 10 miles from home and then travels a further 7 miles to the office. Under the excess mileage rule only 2 miles would be claimable, but the alternative, (the shorter of home to site or office to site), allows 7 miles to be claimed. Visits on the homeward journey may be treated in the same way.

4. Car Allowances

- 4.1 When a Head of Service decides that it is essential for an employee to provide a car for the performance of their job and that the employee should, therefore, be contractually required to do so, he/she may designate such an employee an essential car user.
- 4.2 However, that does not mean that once designated an essential user an employee will be in breach of contract if they do not bring their car into work each day, providing that on such days they are confident they won't need it for official business. In fact, essential users who live within one mile of their work base are particularly encouraged to leave their car at home if at the start of the day they are confident they will not require it. Should the car be required at

short notice, the employee can use work time to walk or cycle home to pick up their vehicle.

- 4.3 In determining whether provision of a car is essential, the Head of Service should take into account the anticipated level of mileage involved, the frequency of journeys undertaken and the availability and practicality of alternative means of transport. Although annual mileage is not the overriding factor, it would be unusual for employees to be designated as essential car users who are not travelling at least 2,500 miles per annum on Council business.

When an employee is not designated an essential user, but nevertheless uses their car on Council business, they will be treated as a casual user. Alternatives to personal car use should be actively considered as in paragraphs 2.5. and 2.6.

Car users should normally use the appropriate allowance for the engine capacity of their car, except in the following circumstances:-

- (i) for travel in connection with training, the lowest essential user rate, and
- (ii) for excess mileage following relocation

- 4.5 In cases where an essential user's car is "off the road", or while the employee is absent due to illness or injury, the lump sum allowance will continue to be paid for the remainder of that month, for three months thereafter and at a rate of 50% for a further three months.

- 4.6 Where it is practical to use public transport, but the employee uses their own car (with the authority of their manager) they should claim either the appropriate public transport fare or the appropriate mileage rate, whichever is the lower.

5. VAT Receipts.

- 5.1 Claims for all mileage need to be accompanied by valid VAT receipts. Such receipts should cover the same period as which the mileage is being claimed.

6. Insurance

- 6.1 All employees who use a vehicle in connection with Council business must ensure that the vehicle is insured for business use.

7. Reimbursement of Car Hire Charges to Essential Users.

- 7.1 When an essential user's car is "off the road" for repairs, car hire charges may be reimbursed subject to the following:

- 7.2 The employee is unable to use a pool vehicle for business as it has already been booked out.

- 7.3 The employee's Head of Service is satisfied that the car hire is necessary and that it is impossible or impractical to either rearrange the employee's duties or to provide other means of transport (e.g. use of a County vehicle).

- 7.4 No car shall be hired for less than a week unless the Head of Service considers a shorter time essential.
- 7.5 The Head of Service is satisfied that every reasonable effort has been made to hire a suitable vehicle at the lowest cost. Normally, the type and size of car shall be the cheapest available.
- 7.6 The employee will be reimbursed the cost of the hire charge, together with the cost of petrol used on business mileage only. VAT receipts should be obtained to support any claim for reimbursement.
- 7.7 During the period of hire the normal essential user allowance mileage rate and lump sum allowance will be suspended.
- 7.8 The mileage covered in the hire vehicle will count towards the mileage figure used for the purpose of essential user mileage allowance.
- 7.9 The employee shall in appropriate circumstances endeavour to reclaim the cost of car hire from a third party should his/her car be off the road due to an accident.

8. Car Parking Fees

- 8.1 When car parking fees are incurred on a visit and there are no convenient free parking available the appropriate amount will be reimbursed.

9. Car Loan Scheme

- 9.1 The County Council operates two car loan schemes. One exists to allow essential car users to purchase a car and is based on a lower interest rate than that available to casual car users. (Details of the scheme are available from Directorate HR officers)

10. Contract Car Hire Scheme

- 10.1 As an alternative to the car loan scheme, and/or essential car user allowance, Heads of Service and essential car users travelling in excess of 3,000 business miles per annum are able to participate in the car leasing scheme.
- 10.2 The scheme provides vehicles for a 3 year lease period, the terms of which include servicing and road fund licence. The employee is required to provide their own insurance cover which must, of course, include business use.
- 10.3 The employees contribution to the cost of the lease depends on the level of business and private mileage and the type of vehicle chosen. (Details of the scheme are available from directorate HR officers).

Reuben Bergman, County Human Resources
November 2007
(To be reviewed in March 2008)