

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL (SERVICE SUPPORT)	12 SEPTEMBER 2006
EMPLOYEES' LIAISON ADVISORY GROUP	20 SEPTEMBER 2006
EMPLOYMENT PANEL	20 SEPTEMBER 2006
CABINET	19 OCTOBER 2006

TRAVEL PLAN
(Report by Head of Technical Services)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The council is a signatory to the Local Transport Plan for Cambridgeshire and has contributed to a wide range of measures intended to encourage more sustainable modes of travel.
- 1.2 Carbon emissions is a major theme in the council's emerging environmental strategy and reducing the contribution that travel makes to those emissions will be a key objective.
- 1.3 Demonstrating good practice in a number of council policy areas is at the heart of planning the council's new accommodation. Not least will be the requirement to have in place a robust Travel Plan which will demonstrate that Members and employees share a vision of reducing unnecessary and inefficient car usage, of promoting healthier travel and, if possible, removing the need for travel by the use of technology.

2 DEVELOPING THE PLAN

- 2.1 Although the council has had a travel plan for a number of years only small changes in travel patterns have been observed. A combination of improved walking and cycling routes and encouragement to car-share has resulted in a downward trend in the numbers of employees using single-occupant car for travel to work (66% in 2003 to 62% in 2005). However, single-occupant car remains the preferred mode of travel for six out of ten employees (2005 Travel for Work Survey).
- 2.2 Refreshing and revitalising the Travel Plan was started in 2004 and has involved a process of formal and informal engagement with employees and Members. The plan is intended to bring about behavioural change and this is notoriously difficult and much painstaking work has been done in an attempt to raise awareness of why a new plan is needed. The plan has sought, where possible, to address the issues raised in the Employees' Liaison Advisory Group's April 2006 travel questionnaire. The survey results with a commentary are summarised at Annex A.
- 2.3 The Travel Plan is inexorably linked to the council's new operations centre and headquarters. As with all major employment sites the council, in its role as the local planning authority requires, a travel plan to be prepared demonstrating a commitment to promoting sustainable travel. Limited on-site parking is an inevitable consequence of higher site coverage to reduce demand for more development land and is a main plank of planning policies required to deliver sustainable development.

- 2.4 The travel issues associated with each of the council's sites will be different and would not be addressed properly by a single plan that did not differentiate between them. Accordingly, the plan now comprises content setting the overall corporate vision, objectives and targets and will include site specific plans as annexes. Each site specific plan will interpret the corporate plan for the local situation.
- 2.5 The Travel Plan is attached/has been circulated separately. It will be considered by cabinet at their meeting on 19 October 2006. In advance of that the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) and the Employees' Liaison Advisory Group/Employment Panel on 12 and 20 September respectively are invited to comment on the plan.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The overall budget requirement cannot be determined until the site specific plans are fully developed. However, Section 8 of the attached plan identifies a number of corporate measures that could be pursued independently of the specific plans.
- 3.2 The full year budgetary implications of these measures identified in the Travel Plan are illustrated in the following table -

	£	
Promoting Cycling and Walking	3,000	
Cycle to Work – bicycle provision	7,500	
Working From Home	0	<i>Note (a)</i>
HQ Car Park Management	750	<i>Note (b)</i>
Provision of Pool Cars	17,200	
Reduced Car Allowances	-68,000	
Season Ticket Loans	19,500	<i>Note (c)</i>
Annual Cost/Saving	-20,550	

Notes to Table (a) all costs assumed in other budgets
 (b) enforcement from within existing resources
 (c) based on 2008 target for bus/train usage

- 3.3 It is evident from the table that the proposed measures would be funded from a reduction the payment of mileage allowances. The principle of moving expenditure from supporting car travel to more sustainable modes is to be encouraged. However, no provision has been identified for addressing the contractual issues associated with removal of the lump sum element of the essential user allowance from 120 employees.

4. CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The Travel Plan provides a range of measures that will enable the council to engage in a dialogue with employees and Members with a view to reducing, over time, inefficient travel by private car where this can possibly be

avoided. Environmental and health benefits from such action are potentially considerable and are worthy of being pursued as an end in themselves.

- 4.2 As a community leader and a major employer the council should also be demonstrating good practice wherever possible. The Travel Plan provides an opportunity to encourage others to consider sustainable travel options and to promote the use of the infrastructure footways, cycleways and public transport facilities in which it has already invested.
- 4.3 Reviewing arrangements for reimbursing the cost of business travel could provide funding to support other, more sustainable, travel options whilst still compensating employees and Members for the cost of business travel.

RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 It is recommended that Cabinet –
- (a) consider any representations from the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) and the Employees' Liaison Advisory Group/Employment Panel;
 - (b) authorise the Head of Technical Services, after consulting the Executive Councillor for Environment & Transport, to make any textual changes he considers appropriate in response to the representations received;
 - (c) approve the Travel Plan for publication.

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ANNEX A:

Staff Travel and Parking arrangements for New Headquarters and Outlying Sites Response to main findings of ELAG Staff Travel Questionnaire

The following table outlines the main concerns highlighted within the ELAG Staff Travel Questionnaire and identifies where these concerns are currently being addressed by the Staff Travel Plan and where additional work is necessary to progress the suggestions made.

Current Travel Patterns	Response
<p data-bbox="252 568 632 600">ELAG Questionnaire findings</p> <p data-bbox="252 629 711 689">1/ Over 80% of employees drive to work, of these nearly 87% drive alone.</p> <p data-bbox="252 1182 703 1243">2/ Nearly 60% of respondents park at Pathfinder House.</p> <p data-bbox="252 1644 699 1704">3/ Only 5.3% of respondents use any form of public transport</p>	<p data-bbox="746 568 1015 600">The HDC Travel Plan</p> <p data-bbox="746 629 1331 689">1/ The travel for work survey carried out annually showed that in 2004 at HDC:</p> <ul data-bbox="807 723 1222 936" style="list-style-type: none">72% travelled to work alone by car8% car shared7% walked to work7% used public transport2% Tele worked2% cycled2% motorbike. <p data-bbox="746 969 1369 1122">The overall aim of the Staff Travel Plan is to achieve a significant level of modal shift – that is cutting the number of single occupancy car journeys to and for work from 72% to 50% by either changing the mode of travel or reducing the need to travel.</p> <p data-bbox="746 1182 1331 1243">2/ Pathfinder House currently has 190 spaces for around 400 staff.</p> <p data-bbox="746 1272 1382 1364">Staff without access to the car parks who drive in can park at long stay car parks free or pay to park closer in short stay or edge of centre car parks.</p> <p data-bbox="746 1395 1385 1576">Parking at the other sites is generally unrestricted and is mixed with the public parking. At the leisure centres the sites are all joint use with schools and demand for parking at certain times of day is very high. There is limited parking at the new call centre at Speke House in St Ives.</p> <p data-bbox="746 1644 1358 1736">3/ National transportation policy seeks to improve travel choices and provide viable alternatives to the car where possible.</p> <p data-bbox="746 1767 1377 1919">Increasing the percentage of employees routinely using public transport to get to work and for business journeys is central to the success of the Travel Plan. However, it is potentially the most difficult area to meaningfully address. (See Public Transport; below)</p>

<p>Future Travel Arrangements</p> <p>ELAG Questionnaire findings</p> <p>1/ Most staff – over 90% - of those who drive, say that that they will continue to drive into work and park elsewhere if they don't have a parking space at the new HQ.</p> <p>2/ Of those above, most – 61% would park at the free car park near the Godmanchester Depot.</p> <p>3/A large majority of staff responding feel that it would be a good idea if all HDC owned car parks could be subsidised for staff.</p> <p>4/ Nearly 39% of respondents said that the loss of the ability to park at the Council's HQ prompt them to seek employment elsewhere.</p>	<p>Response</p> <p>1/ Parking provision at Pathfinder House site will change with the development of the new HQ building. Parking will be reduced to some 33 spaces, meaning that most staff currently parking on site will be unable to do so in future.</p> <p>2/ It is likely that staff relocated to the Godmanchester Depot, whilst the new HQ is being built, will have an area of an extended depot car park (100 spaces) designated for their sole use.</p> <p>Additional public parking provision elsewhere in Huntingdon will become available in the medium term.</p> <p>3/ There is currently a mixture of pay and free parking in HDC owned car parks. The Car Parking Strategy may conclude that all HDC owned car parks should charge for parking.</p> <p>If all town centre parking becomes chargeable, ' Staff Car Park Permits' may be issued for some staff at designated HDC owned car parks.</p> <p>The criteria for granting permits would need to be laid out in an HDC Car Parking Procedure and such a policy may lead to claims of special treatment for HDC staff by members of the public who still have to pay to park.</p> <p>In public car parks, staff parking permits, are also likely to be considered to be a 'perk' with tax implications.</p> <p>4/ Although it will not be possible for the vast majority of staff to park at the new HQ, it is hoped that equitable and workable alternative arrangements will encourage staff retention.</p>
<p>Allocation of Parking Spaces in new Car Park</p> <p>ELAG Questionnaire findings</p> <p>1/ Respondents felt that those with Essential Car user Allowances, followed by 'first come, first served' should have priority in any new car park for work.</p>	<p>Response</p> <p>1/ With parking at the new HQ reduced to 33 spaces, the scope for officers to park on site will be minimal.</p> <p>It is likely that the only spaces available will be allocated for short stays of no more than half an hour, disabled badge holders and possibly designated Senior Officers (2) and senior Members (2)</p>

<p>2/ Just under 2/3rds of respondents felt that a pool car would be feasible for them to use.</p> <p>3/ Respondents were equally divided as to whether they felt safe walking to collect your car from the Riverside/other off-site car parks in the dark or later than normal working hours.</p> <p>4/ A large majority (87%) of respondents said that special provision for car parking should be made on those occasions when officers are required to work late in the office.</p>	<p>2/ It may be possible to allocate some spaces to a fleet of possibly 4 – 6 pool vehicles, which would be available for staff to book and use whilst at work.</p> <p>Such a fleet would have the dual benefit of providing transport for staff that have left their car at home and would also minimise disruption for those who have parked off site but need to attend site visits during the course of the working day.</p> <p>3/ A considerable number of staff already make the journey from outlying car parks to Pathfinder House and other HDC sites.</p> <p>The improvement of walking routes to Council sites is being considered, linked to the market town transport strategies. An example of a planned improvement is the construction of a pedestrian crossing between the Godmanchester Depot Car Park and the Town Bridge.</p> <p>If lighting improvements are needed, these can be investigated on recommended walking routes and these routes can be publicised through the Travel For Work section of the intranet.</p> <p>4/ Short stay restrictions at the HQ car park could be relaxed after 4pm for staff who know they need to work late or attend an evening meeting to retrieve their car from off site.</p> <p>However, with 33 spaces planned at the new HQ it is recognised that the natural capacity of the car park may still limit after hours parking.</p>
<p>Incentives to travel to work by alternate means</p> <p>ELAG Questionnaire findings</p> <p>1/ A quarter of respondents would be encouraged to use alternative modes of transport by free or subsidised travel.</p> <p>2/ Just under 80% of respondents were of the opinion that it would help if HDC could come to an agreement with local bus/train companies for a reduction in fares.</p>	<p>Response</p> <p>1/ The establishment of interest free season ticket loans for train and bus passes would cost the Council £150 per year per employee and can be undertaken without tax implications for the employee.</p> <p>Uptake would determine whether this proved to be a significant incentive for people to use alternatives to the car.</p> <p>2/ There are tax implications for employees taking advantage of concessionary fares, negotiated by the employer, with the transport provider. For this reason this becomes a comparatively unattractive option, even if the Council were to fund such a scheme.</p>

<p>3/ 2/3rds of respondents said that they would use a park and ride option from a car park on the outskirts of Huntingdon.</p> <p>4/ Just over 2/3rds of the respondents felt that working from home would be a real alternative to travelling into work each day.</p>	<p>3/ Evidence suggests that there is little incentive for staff to consider park and ride schemes, whilst free town centre parking provision remains. The motive behind the success of Park and Ride schemes invariably lies in the rising cost and limited availability of town centre parking.</p> <p>4/ The travel plan aims to increase the number of employees regularly working from home and also those routinely working a nine day fortnight.</p> <p>To do this it will be necessary to improve network connections for staff working at home and to promote home working to managers and staff so that it is not just accepted but actively encouraged.</p>
<p>General observations</p> <p>1/ A majority of respondents (72%) think lack of parking may discourage recruitment of people living in rural areas.</p> <p>2/ A majority of respondents (79%) felt that displaced employees parking in Huntingdon will cause parking difficulties for the public and affect local businesses.</p> <p>3/ Just over half of the respondents felt that there had not been sufficient consultation on the proposed travel plan.</p>	<p>Response</p> <p>1/ Travel to work from rural areas is inevitably problematic, other factors such as lack of frequent and affordable public transport are a more significant concern and it is important that the needs of rural settlements are addressed in transport planning in the district in future years.</p> <p>2/ The existing car parking provision in and around Huntingdon will be extended to allow for displacement from Pathfinder House</p> <p>3/ ELAG is represented on the Travel Plan working Group. The draft travel plan has been presented to meetings of ELAG and the group organised a travel plan consultation, which has informed the development of the travel plan .</p> <p>Continued ELAG involvement will be central to the development of the travel plan.</p>