

UPDATE OF THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE TRAVEL PLAN

(Report by Head of Environmental Management)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report accompanies a revision of the Council's Corporate Travel Plan (Annexe A attached). The updated plan replaces the Council's existing Travel Plan 2006/07 to 2011/12 and is designed to build on work already undertaken to reduce single occupant car use by employees travelling to and for work and to encourage a modal shift towards more sustainable forms of transport.
- 1.2 The updated plan will cover the period 2012/13 to 2017/18. It provides an overview of progress to date, objectives and targets going forward and an action plan of measures some corporate and some specific to the Council's main sites at Pathfinder House and Eastfield House. Travel associated with Huntingdonshire District Council's call centre located at Speke House is covered under the remit of Cambridgeshire County Council, and therefore does not feature in this plan.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Work related travel whether for commuting or business accounts for around 27% of the total distance travelled in the UK every year. As a local authority responsible for a wide range of services across the district, travel is essential for the Council to function successfully and convenient travel has the potential to promote economic development and improve the quality of life for employees and residents of the district.
- 2.2 However, it has been estimated that road congestion costs the UK economy £20 billion annually and this figure is expected to rise as traffic volumes increase by over 40% to 2035. Furthermore transport is a large contributor to carbon emissions, responsible for 20% of the UK's total emissions in 2009. At a local level, particularly in a district that will see considerable growth in the coming years, further road congestion and traffic pollution will have a significant detrimental impact on the lives of residents and potential economic prosperity of the district as a whole.
- 2.3 Travel planning has the ability to reduce car use, increase public transport and active travel, enhance social inclusion, improve staff recruitment and retention, bring financial savings and reduce noise congestion and pollution. As a major employer Huntingdonshire District Council has a responsibility to promote good practice in travel behaviour and must lead by example through adopting and maintaining a comprehensive travel plan.
- 2.4 Significant progress was made in changing employee travel behaviour during the period covered by the Council's existing Corporate Travel Plan. Employees travelling to work alone by car fell by 14% from 64% to 50% and there was a

notable increase in the number of employees cycling to work (up from 4% to 14%) walking to work and working from home on a regular basis. Despite the many improvements made, considerable challenges remain, and these will be tackled through the measures set out in the updated Travel Plan attached.

2.5 The travel plan has four main objectives:

- To reduce local traffic and road congestion
- To reduce the Councils transport related carbon emissions
- To improve the health and wellbeing of Council employees
- To deliver financial savings through a reduction in business mileage

2.6 The Travel Plan contains a concise set of indicators to monitor the progress of the four objectives and these will be regularly reviewed, as part of the annual review of our Environment Strategy, reflecting a focus on continuous monitoring and improvement.

3. FINANCIAL/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

3.1 With the public sector facing considerable ongoing financial pressure, it will be essential to work with partners in both the public and private sectors to make the most of opportunities and available funding to meet the objectives of the Travel Plan. To this end the Council will continue to work co-operatively with the Huntingdon Travel for Work Cluster organising joint events and sharing best practice. Members of the Huntingdon Cluster include a range of major local employers including the Cambridgeshire Constabulary, the Environment Agency, Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue, Hinchingsbrooke Hospital and School and Huntingdon Regional College amongst others.

3.2 The Council is also a Member of the Cambridgeshire Travel for work Partnership benefiting from a range of services offered including Travel planning assistance and advice on sustainable travel promotions. The Council's membership of the partnership will also enable us to benefit directly from Local Sustainable Transport Funding (LSTF), £5 million of which was recently awarded to Cambridgeshire County Council to support the implementation of a range of transport measures focusing on the A14 and M11 transport corridors. As a result services including adult cycle training, business grant funding, event organisation and subsidised electric vehicle charging points will be made available to the Council over the three year funding period.

3.3 Aside from partnership working and external grant funding, resources to implement the measures included within the Corporate Travel Plan will come predominantly from the existing budgets. Where larger scale projects are proposed such as any replacement of the Councils Pool Car fleet, they will be subject to approval through the Medium Term Plan (MTP) process in the usual manner.

4. CONCLUSIONS

4.1 As a major employer, Huntingdonshire District Council has a responsibility to promote good practice in travel behaviour by adopting and maintaining a comprehensive travel plan.

4.2 This update to the Corporate Travel Plan will ensure that the Council continues to lead by example and make measurable improvements to its travel footprint.

- 4.3 The actions contained within the plan will result in reduced costs for the Council, reduced traffic congestion in the district and improvements to the health and well-being of the Council's employees.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

- 6.1 Members support the adoption of this updated Corporate Travel Plan (2012/13 to 2017/18) supporting the objectives, targets and action plan contained within it.
- 6.2 That the targets are regularly reviewed, as part of the annual review of the Council's Environment Strategy, reflecting our focus on continuous monitoring and improvement.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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