

Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C-018-2009/10
Date of meeting: 7 September 2009



Portfolio: Community Safety and Transport.
(With links also to Environment, Leisure and Wellbeing & Performance Management)

Subject: Epping Forest District Council Travel Plan

Responsible Officer: Chris Overend (01992 564247)

Democratic Services Officer: Gary Woodhall (01992 564470)

Recommendation:

That approval be given to the introduction and development of a District Council Travel Plan.

Executive Summary:

A 'Travel Plan' is a general item for a package of measures tailored to the needs of individual sites and aimed at promoting greener, cleaner travel choices and reducing reliance on the car. It involves the development of a set of initiatives that, together, enable an organisation to reduce the impact of travel and transport on the environment, whilst also bringing benefits to it as an employer and to its staff. The Cabinet is asked to approve the introduction and development of a Travel Plan for the District Council.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

Therefore apart from the intended benefits for the environment, a Travel Plan offers benefits to the organisation, its employees and the local community. For instance, it may help relieve an on-site parking or congestion problem, or it may help to improve public transport services, two particular issues faced by the District Council. In turn, it may relieve stress on employees by improving their health by encouraging walking or cycling, or through the opportunity to reduce the amount they travel, perhaps by working at home.

Other Options for Action:

To refuse to adopt the concept of developing a District Council Travel Plan.

Report:

1. A Travel Plan is a management approach looking at the key transport challenges and opportunities facing an employer. It should identify an appropriate package of measures aimed at promoting sustainable travel, with an emphasis on reducing reliance on single occupancy car journeys. A good Travel Plan addresses environmental and health issues, provides increased travel choices for staff and visitors and includes at least some of the following:

- Car sharing;
- Car Park management;
- Public transport improvements, information and fare details;

- Cycling and walking facilities and incentives;
- Flexible hours.

2. Other objectives can include:

- Improving site access and travel choice;
- Meeting an organisation's environmental standards;
- Increasing business efficiency and equality;
- Reducing congestion and demand for parking spaces;
- Ensuring adequate provision for people with disabilities;
- Providing choice and quality access to key services (such as hospitals, education and shops);
- Delivering local environmental improvements from reduced congestion, pollution and noise;
- Providing opportunities for active, healthy travel.

3. A Travel Plan is not a one-off event to be undertaken and completed, but can become a resource pack for employers and employees alike. A certain amount of good practice within the District Council already takes place. For instance, there are staff who operate "informal" car sharing agreements. Travel Plans help to bring these practices and other measures together in a co-ordinated way.

4. One of the best means of informing the process leading to the production of a Travel Plan is through a staff survey. The results of such surveys are recognised as the most appropriate means of identifying key issues to be addressed.

5. A staff travel survey was carried out in late 2008 at the District Council, in association with the Essex County Council branded site www.essextravellBUDi.com. An analysis of the results identified some of the issues which need investigating, either generally or as a specific response to the survey results:

- (i) an increased use of car sharing and the allocating of dedicated spaces to those eligible for spaces who join the Car Sharing Agreement;
- (ii) dedicated car parking spaces to all those who are required to have a car as part of their job;
- (iii) the need for a further analysis of the car parking and travel arrangements for those working part-time;
- (iv) the possibility of more home-working (where it would be of mutual benefit to staff and the District Council);
- (v) developing the idea of a car pool – obtain information regarding schemes operating at other local authorities – and provide dedicated spaces to those using the car pool;
- (vi) placing further limits on the type of car available through the Car Lease Scheme to encourage use of more environmentally friendly travel;
- (vii) further promotion of healthy living;
- (viii) where planning approval is given to developments for companies with 50+ employees, setting a requirement for them to have their own suitable Travel Plan – the best method of ensuring this takes place is probably through Section 106 Agreements;
- (ix) encouraging development of Travel Plans by companies of 50+ employees already located in the District; and

(x) the need to set targets and indicators and monitor/review arrangements for the various ideas agreed and commit to looking further at other ideas such as incentives for walking, cycling, motorcycling as an alternative to the car.

6. Some of the issues concerned, for instance those in respect of the promotion of healthy living, car sharing, dedicated spaces and facilities for cycles and motorcycles, can be looked at straightaway. Indeed, in that regard, the Council has already agreed or is looking at measures which fit within the overall concept of a Travel Plan. There are others, such as the development of a car pool and further home-working, which would require more detailed investigation.

7. As their Travel Plans are implemented and developed, many organisations carry out follow-up surveys to illustrate trends and patterns and the requirement for further measures. It is suggested that a decision regarding the need for a follow-up survey could be taken, say, a year after the introduction of the first "official" measures introduced as part of the Travel Plan.

8. The Cabinet is asked to approve the development of a Travel Plan for the District Council. The various measures which might be suitable for inclusion in the Plan referred to in this report, will then be investigated further and brought forward for consideration by members at the appropriate time.

Resource Implications:

None at this stage. Individual elements of a Travel Plan may have resource implications, be they costs or savings.

Legal and Governance Implications:

Nil.

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

Reduced traffic congestion and resultant environmental benefits.

Consultation Undertaken:

The Travel Plan Survey carried out amongst District Council staff in late 2008 also provided was a form of consultation seeking the views of staff on the various elements which might be included in a Travel Plan.

Background Papers:

Essex Travel Plan. Results and Analysis of District Council Travel Plan Survey.

Impact Assessments:

The adoption of the general concept of a Travel Plan by an organisation has no specific impact. The individual elements implemented during the development of a Travel Plan will have their own impact and individual impact assessments will be carried out for each of these elements. These, if managed correctly, should generally be of benefit.