

SCRUTINY COMMISSION – 21 JUNE 2006

COUNTY HALL TRAVEL PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES

Purpose of Report

1. To inform the Commission of the progress made by the County Hall Travel Plan Co-ordination Team (CHTPCT) on implementation of the County Hall Travel Plan (CHTP) and to provide an opportunity for comment on proposals to roll the Plan forward.

Background

2. The main objectives of the CHTP are to reduce the number of single occupancy car journeys to and from County Hall and to encourage employees to adopt non-car modes of travel, where appropriate. It was adopted and approved by Cabinet in November 2003.
3. The CHTPCT, whose brief is to implement the Plan's proposals, has met regularly since its formation in June 2004 and the team's work has focussed on achieving the objectives and targets set out in the Plan, mainly in relation to car sharing, regular bus use and the number of employees cycling and walking to work. It was envisaged that the targets would be achieved through a number of incentives and support measures.
4. A questionnaire survey of employees was carried out at the end of 2005, in order to assess current employee travel preferences and views. Some 2000 questionnaires were distributed to employees based at County Hall, with approximately 40% returned completed. The results of this survey have been evaluated and used to assess progress made on the Plan's implementation.

Progress made to 31 March 2006

5. Three specific targets were set in the CHTP.

Triple the number of active, registered car sharers (achieved)

In 2003 an informal car share register listed 25 employees as being interested in car sharing, with **10** of those having found sharing partners.

There are currently 350 employees on the new managed car share register with **207** actively sharing. A monthly prize is awarded to the most active car sharer, as an added incentive.

Increase the number of regular bus users by at least 50% (partially achieved)

In the original Travel Survey carried out in 1999 6% of employees said they regularly travelled to work by bus. A re-survey in 2003 showed a reduction to **5%**. The latest survey indicates that the number of employees regularly travelling to work by bus has increased to **7%**. In addition 22% say they sometimes use the bus to get to work.

Increase the number of cyclists and walkers to work by at least 50% (achieved)

The 1999 Travel Survey recorded **4%** of employees regularly cycling or walking to work. The latest survey shows **7%** of employees regularly travelling to work by cycle or on foot, with some 22% sometimes cycling, walking or running to work.

6. The following measures have been put in place: -
- the appointment of a part-time Co-ordinator to develop, administer and promote the initiatives proposed in the CHTP and roll the Plan forward
 - a managed Car Share Scheme, addressing tax, insurance and personal safety issues – 97% of employees now say they are aware of the Car Share Scheme
 - a 'Get-you-home Guarantee Scheme' for active car sharers
 - prime location parking spaces for registered active car sharers – the number of designated spaces has been progressively increased from an original 20 to 40, with a further 10 spaces now being considered
 - a bus shelter on the northbound side of the A 50
 - 'star trak' real-time bus information display boards, for Routes 27 and 28, in the outer lobby to the main entrance
 - improved shower and changing room facilities
 - additional, managed locker space for cyclists and walkers to work
 - the cycle mileage rate for work journeys increased to 20p per mile
 - a 'safe-routes' audit of walking and cycling routes, from local residential areas, to identify and recommend the need for surfacing, lighting, cleansing and signing improvements to attract more use
 - regular publicity for CHTP initiatives and successes, in 'Newline' and 'County Green'
 - continuous provision of up to date information to employees on services and facilities available for alternative travel, using posters, leaflets and e-mail
 - participation in relevant awareness campaigns e.g. 'Bike Week', 'in Town Without My Car' and 'Walk In to Work Out'
7. The following measures, which were also proposed in the CHTP, are being progressed and should be in place during the current calendar year: -
- the provision of a cycleway and footway from The Gynsills to the Visitors Car Park
 - improved control and management of the car parks, through the installation of an automatic number plate recognition system
 - no-cost loans for the purchase of cycles, as part of the introduction of a wider salary sacrifice scheme
 - development of a CHTP site on the new Intranet
 - provision of a clothes drying facility in the Pen Lloyd Building

Proposals for 2006/07

8. The introduction and promotion of the managed Car Share Scheme has been a success. However, there appears to be little scope for significantly increasing the number of registered sharers beyond the current level. The latest Travel Survey indicates that even the introduction of guaranteed parking spaces for car sharers would not represent a sufficient incentive for the vast majority of employees to join the scheme. In future it is anticipated that the Scheme will be promoted largely through targeted marketing to individuals, based on their home postcode. It is proposed that discussion take place with the Glenfield Hospital to explore the possibility of joint working on car sharing initiatives.
9. On average employees who actively car share do so 5 times a month. One of the main reasons given for not car sharing more often is the requirement to have a car available for work journeys. Increased use and sharing of lease cars and the provision of pool or contract hire vehicles, for some work journeys, could go some way to reducing this barrier. It is proposed that further investigation be undertaken on alternative ways of providing vehicles for work journeys.
10. Increasing the number of employees using the bus, for journeys to and from work, is largely dependent on improvement to bus services. Employees who live on or near to bus routes providing reasonable access to County Hall will be targeted and provided with route maps and timetable information. The new Hospital Hopper service, provided through the University Hospitals of Leicester, will be promoted.
11. HR is to investigate the possibility of no-cost loans being made available, through the salary sacrifice scheme, for the purchase of bus season tickets. Discounts from bus operators will also be sought.
12. Proposals are being worked on for the improvement of the original shower room in the basement of the Pen Lloyd Building, in order to provide separate male and female facilities for cyclists and walkers to work. Providing a monthly prize for the employee who cycles or walks to work most frequently is also being considered.
13. Without doubt the greatest impact on reducing single occupancy car use would result from the introduction of alternative methods of working. The increased use of IT and homeworking, for suitable tasks and groups of employees, could significantly reduce the need for travel to County Hall to work and for car use in the delivery of services.
14. Other issues which will be considered during the year will be the inclusion of personalised travel plans in the employee induction process, promotion of travel planning to other County Council sites and encouragement to the use of alternative fuels for transport.

Recommendation

15. The Commission is asked to note the progress made so far in implementing the CHTP and comment on the proposals for taking the Plan forward in 2006/07.

Equal Opportunities Implications

16. The Plan is intended to offer choices for travel to work to all employees based at County Hall and to support those who choose to use a method other than car travel.

Circulation under Sensitive Issues Procedure

17. None.

Background Papers

County Hall Travel Plan adopted and approved by Cabinet on 11th November 2003.

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