METROPOLITAN BOROUGH OF WIRRAL

TRAVEL PLAN

summary
This document acts to summarise the main points set out in the Council’s Travel Plan for all staff in Wirral. It has been developed as part of the Authority’s over-arching transportation and environmental strategy and was approved by Cabinet November 2002.

Since the working draft in February 2001, the Staff Travel Plan has been responsible for a number of initiatives and modest improvements which have provided staff with more choice in how they travel to work, and undertake their work. The appointment of the Sustainable Transport Co-ordinator resulted in this version being reviewed and updated, and allowed an opportunity to increase the profile and scope of its activities. This is particularly important as it comes at a time when the Council in partnership with Merseyside TravelWise are engaged in work to help a growing number of Wirral organisations develop their own Travel Plans.

What is a Travel Plan?
- It is a package of measures that supports all aspects of an organisations transport needs and responds to any problems that may be occurring;
- They are commonly introduced in response to concerns about growing traffic congestion or where car parking problems exist;
- They can also be required to support planning applications for new development;
- They have an emphasis on increasing travel choice and reducing single occupancy car trips;
- They commonly deal with commuter trips. However, an effective plan should also address business travel, the needs of visitors or clients, fleet operations and deliveries.

A growing number of Wirral organisations are working towards adopting a Travel Plan. Each is unique and reflects the characteristics, specific problems and opportunities for an employer or site depending on location, size or activity. In many cases, these organisations have been able to demonstrate very real benefits in reducing congestion and increasing use of sustainable modes of transport. There are also proven business benefits arising from cost or efficiency savings as well as environmental gains achieved by reducing the amount of traffic on Wirral roads.

Why does the Council need a Travel Plan?
- The Council is the largest employer in Wirral, and has the highest concentration of employees in and around Birkenhead;
- Traffic congestion in Birkenhead is getting worst;
- Our own research has found that the majority of staff travel alone by car to reach work each day and are increasingly frustrated by the problems and stress of driving in congested traffic;
Within Birkenhead there is growing competition at certain car parks for the available spaces, that have a considerable annual maintenance cost;

Our Local Transport Plan actively encourages companies to consider adopting Travel Plans. We have an obligation to lead by example ourselves as part of this process.

The Travel Plan has been developed as a means to respond to these issues. It is not anti-car. It seeks to give staff more choice in how they travel to work and travel on Council business without always having to rely on their cars to do so. The successful adoption of these proposals can also benefit the Council’s operational effectiveness and efficiency and conforms to a number of existing corporate policy objectives.

This initiative is supported by the Council’s Chief Officers Management Team and is directed through the Environmental Management Action Team. Day to day responsibility is co-ordinated by the Sustainable Transport Co-ordinator, and a number of nominated officers who actively assist and support progression and implementation of target measures.

OUR STRATEGY

The Council’s Travel Plan seeks to:

- Promote the use of alternative modes of transport for travel to and from work;
- Change working patterns in order to reduce the need to travel, or allow more flexible journey times and types;
- Discourage the use of cars for journeys to and from work, and for business/work duty purposes.

Current travel patterns

A detailed staff travel survey was undertaken in December 1999 by MIS (now managed by Mott MacDonald), taking the form of a questionnaire survey that was distributed to staff at the main Council complexes with active Green Teams equalling approximately 3,000 staff (25% of total). There were 1,096 survey forms returned a response rate of 36% that formed the basis of consultation with Green Teams and Management during 2000. The responses informed the preparation of the working draft Travel Plan (February 2001), providing information on commuting patterns, travel during work and on possible alternatives that may be attractive to people who currently use cars for these purposes.
Gender of Respondents

- Female: 55.3%
- Male: 44.7%

Age of respondents

- Under 25: 5.1%
- 25-34: 19.3%
- 35-44: 35.1%
- 45-54: 18.5%
- 55+: 10.5%

Distance travelled from home to work

- Under 1 mile: 4.5%
- 1-2 miles: 6.5%
- 2-4 miles: 15.9%
- 4-10 miles: 36%
- 10-20 miles: 26%
- 20+ miles: 18.1%

Time taken to travel from home to work

- Under 15 minutes: 16.1%
- 16-30 minutes: 60.8%
- 31-60 minutes: 10.3%
- 61-90 minutes: 5.7%
- 91+ minutes: 1.6%

Mode of transport for journey from home to work

- Car driver: 51.5%
- Car passenger: 38.3%
- Bus: 10.1%
- Foot: 1.6%
- Train: 0.1%
- Bicycle: 0.8%
- Motorbike: 0.8%
- Other: 0.1%
What the survey revealed

Car users:
- 86.5% of respondents use a car to get to work, although only 70% use their car for work related purposes, with only 51.5% stating that using a car is essential to perform their job;
- 87.5% of respondents have a parking space provided at their place of work, 9% park on-street nearby their place of work, and 1.5% park in a paid space nearby their place of work;
- 45% of respondents do not use any alternative method of transport;

Car sharing:
- 19.5% of respondents travel to work with others;
- 55% of respondents stated that they would be prepared to car share, but 33% said that they would not due to the nature of their job, i.e. they do not travel directly to/ from the work base;
- helping to find car share partners with similar work patterns would encourage approximately 64% to car share, and 43% would be encouraged to car share if they were provided with emergency transport;

Public transport:
- 40% of respondents believe that no measures would be able to convince them to use public transport;
- however, more frequent bus services would encourage 31% of respondents to use public transport more, and more direct bus services would encourage 25% of respondents;

Cycling:
- 69% of respondents believe that no measures would be able to convince them to cycle to work;
- however, 18% of respondents would be encouraged to cycle to work if there were improved cycle paths on the journey to work;

Home working:
- 70% of respondents would be interested in working from home if it was available;

Proposed measures

The main challenge facing the Council with regard to its progression and use of its Travel Plan is to ensure that the aims, targets, objectives and actions apply to all staff irrespective of location, and that there is a properly managed and co-ordinated funding, monitoring and review system. The measures that exist to encourage greater choice in how staff reach work and how they undertake business are:

Walking/Cycling/Motorbikes

A key target for the Travel Plan is to encourage more staff to walk and cycle to work, particularly in the summer months. We are also keen to promote the health benefits that walking and cycling can provide. There has been the installation and improvement of changing and showering facilities, as well as secure cycle/motorbike parking at the Bebington Complex and Treasury Building in the
previous 12 months. An audit of facilities has been undertaken, and it is proposed:

- to work with Property Services and Complex Managers to improve the repair/maintenance of existing changing/showering facilities, and to install new facilities where required;
- to work with Complex Managers and Highway and Engineering Services to improve the repair/maintenance of existing secure cycle/motorcycle parking facilities, and to install new facilities where required;
- to make all managers and staff aware that where an employee has undertaken a business journey by cycle that reasonable time (i.e. 15 minutes) is allowed for a shower and other action(s) connected with the journey, i.e. the storage of waterproof clothing, for these purposes within their normal working day;
- to relaunch/advertise to all managers and staff the Council’s season ticket loan facilities;
- to promote the use of bus services as part of our wider travel awareness campaign, and keep staff informed about the progress of the public transport improvement measures;

**Car Sharing**

There is an established informal car-sharing culture at the main Council sites/buildings, that consists of family/friends and work colleagues. This type of alternative to single occupancy car use is the one with the most support from staff to be addressed. It is proposed:

- to introduce and promote a Council-wide car-sharing scheme;
- to encourage staff to self-register at all sites/complexes, via the Staff Car Sharing Chat Forum;

**Public Transport**

There is an extensive bus network in the Wirral, with good connections to Liverpool and Chester. A wealth of bus/train/ferry timetable and ticket and travel information is already available in the reception areas of the main Council sites/buildings, and can be viewed on the Merseytravel website www.merseytravel.gov.uk. In addition, there is a ‘journey planner’ icon that will allow you to arrange a journey by public transport. There are a range of bus/train/ferry infrastructure improvements being implemented as part of the Merseyside Local Transport Plan in the Wirral, from a rolling programme of bus stop/shelter improvements, train station enhancement programme, and park 'n ride schemes. It is proposed:

- to relaunch/advertise to all managers and staff the Council’s cycle mileage and loan facilities;
to create car-sharers only parking spaces at sites where users are registered;

- **Remove the need for making journeys**
  A range of opportunities exist that can reduce or remove the need for some journeys altogether. The flexitime scheme, subject to work/service delivery needs gives the opportunity to take a day off each four-week period, potentially removing a car from central Birkenhead rush hour. Flexitime also allows the opportunity to travel a little earlier or later than normal to avoid the busiest time on the road, saving both time and fuel.

  Modern computer and communications technology makes it easier than ever to support home working, hotdesking or teleworking. A number of services are already undertaking pilot schemes to evaluate the value of home working and many services support occasional home working on an ad hoc basis. It is proposed:

  - to clarify a number of operational issues, including reviewing current and best practices, before establishing and introducing the Council’s own policy on home working that does not compromise the individual or corporate effectiveness of the Council;

- **Managing our Car Parks**
  There is no control or limit on staff using the Council’s staff car parking spaces, that are numerous and costly to provide/maintain. Evidence suggests that the most successful Travel Plans rely on a combination of incentives and disincentives to encourage the use of alternatives to the car. However, the Council recognises that these must be balanced with the operational requirements of the Authority. It is proposed:

  - to clarify a number of operational issues, including reviewing current and best practices, before determining whether to establish and introduce a staff parking permit scheme – one that does not compromise the individual or corporate effectiveness of the Council;

  - not to introduce (if ever) car parking charges for staff car parks until it is judged that there are a range of alternatives available for staff to reach work without the need to travel by car;

- **Business Travel**
  Many employees may need to bring a car to work so that they can undertake work duties – known as business travel/trips. The Council monitors business travel/trips on an annual basis, both the mileage driven and allowances claimed. However, the Council believes that there is scope to reduce the amount of business travel/trips by car that need to be made without compromising operational effectiveness and service delivery. The range of Council travel alternatives are gradually increasing with the operation of the Birkenhead–Wallasey Eco-shuttle Bus and the provision of pool vehicles. Comprehensive public transport travel and timetable information is available from Merseytravel website www.merseytravel.gov.uk.
The Single Status Agreement requires services to review working time arrangements by March 2004. Guidance will remind Managers to consider the impact on the green agenda of the options that they consider. It is proposed:

- to continue to target business travel/trips as an area where the Council can play a direct role in reducing traffic congestion and the environmental impact;
- to prepare good practice guidance for business travel/trips, and to circulate it to all Managers;
- to review the Council’s vehicle fleet, and to introduce subject to appropriate insurance cover and fuelling facilities a wider range of pool vehicles – cycles, vans and cars;
- to expand the Council’s staff safer driving training courses once all everyday/regular fleet vehicles drivers have attended to all occasional and then irregular drivers who undertake business travel/trips;
- monitor the Government’s review of the existing tax system in respect of the successful adoption of Travel Plans, and thereby pay appropriate mileage rates for business travel/trips by cycle;

Environmentally the plan demonstrates a strong commitment to the principles of LA21 and takes into account all other relevant documents, including the LTP. It also encourages the Council to “continue to take the initiative and demonstrate to others good practice”, thus enabling the Authority to lead by example and ideally influence other organisations to follow suit and develop their own Travel Plans.

During summer 2002 the Corporate Green Team Network (CGTN) and the Environmental Management Action Group (EMAG) were actively involved in updating the working draft version, thereby ensuring that the Council has an adopted version by December 2002. It is intended to undertake a full staff travel plan survey during winter 2003/04, that will act as a monitoring and progress exercise with regard to the overall aims, targets, objectives and actions of the new adopted version.

Delivery of the Travel Plan will rely not only on the mobilisation of staff and financial resources, but willingness to adapt processes/systems and to apply new methods of operation. Some of the costs involved in taking forward the Travel Plan are known while others are exploratory and remain unclear. However, it is likely that not all proposals will immediately yield financial savings, especially within the short-term.

The Travel Plan will be reviewed on an annual basis, covering impact and implementation. Staff travel plan surveys will be undertaken biennially over the winter period,
with annual staff snap shot surveys, in order to monitor progress, and identify any major issues to be modified – the journey to work targets will provide the basis for reviewing the Travel Plans success. If the plan is failing to meet these targets, new measures will be bought forward as part of the review process.

The Sustainable Transport Sub-Group, consisting of nominated officers and representatives of Merseytravel/TravelWise, will undertake implementation and progress of the Travel Plan. The actions will be monitored by EMAG with update reports twice a year to the CGTN, LA21 Chief Officers Group (COG) and Chief Officers Management Team (COMT). Thereafter, an annual report will be presented in the summer to the Council’s Environment, Transportation and Planning Strategy Select Committee.

How can I find out more?
A wealth of information about our Staff Travel Plan activities is available on the Council’s website: www.wirral.gov.uk/travel

For further information about the Council’s Travel Plan work contact:

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