
REPORT TO THE MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE 21 SEPTEMBER 2011

PORTFOLIO: ENVIRONMENT

REPORT FROM HEAD OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

SUBJECT: TRAVEL PLAN 2011

1 DECISION BEING RECOMMENDED

- 1.1 To adopt and implement the Council's Travel Plan 2011, as appended.

2 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 The Travel Plan assists in the carbon and financial management of the Council. It builds upon our Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy and is identified as a key action in this year's Climate CO₂de action plan.
- 2.2 The Travel Plan identifies a series of actions which focus on three elements:-
- Staff commuting.
 - Staff business travel.
 - Commercial and operational fleet.
- 2.3 The required actions will be facilitated by the Head of Environmental Services through the Council's Environmental Strategy Group with the co-operation of all Heads of Service.

3 SALIENT INFORMATION

- 3.1 The authority has a major transport impact from staff travel to work, business mileage and the service delivery activities of both itself and external strategic partners which include SITA (refuse collection and street cleansing) and Fountains (grounds maintenance). In 2009, 29% of the Council's carbon emissions were transport-related with the authority using 331,429 litres of fuel.
- 3.2 This Travel Plan will help the authority take a co-ordinated approach towards reducing its transport-related carbon footprint, fuel usage and therefore expenditure. It will do this by:-
- Seeking to reduce both the use of private cars by employees in travelling to work and in carrying out their work duties; and
 - Minimising the impact of the authority's associated commercial fleet activity such as waste collection, street cleansing and park/countryside management.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 Not to adopt a travel plan. This would result in a co-ordinated approach to transport management and would reduce the authority's ability to realise financial and carbon savings.

5 RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Failure to address transport-related carbon emissions will result in the Council missing its carbon-reduction target. Implementing this Travel Plan will also result in financial savings for the authority through reduced expenditure on fuel.

6 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Adopting and implementing the Travel Plan will assist the Council in reducing its carbon footprint and contribution to air pollution.

7 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Annex 1 to the Travel Plan details the actions to be taken in 2011/12, none of which entail direct expenditure. The Plan identifies annual savings in the order of £3000 and these have been included in the Medium Term Financial Strategy. Any additional savings will be factored into revised budgets.

8 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 It is anticipated that the Travel Plan will enable a greater variety of more sustainable travel choices for staff journeys to and from work.

I confirm that the above recommendation does not depart from Council policy and that appropriate consideration has been given to any budgetary and legal implications.

SMT Lead Officer Signature: _____

Head of Environmental Services

Background Papers:

None.

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If you would like this report in large print, Braille or another language please contact 01702 318111.

Travel Plan 2011



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Foreword

Increasingly, we are seeing a divergence between global concerns of climate change, availability of natural resources with local impacts of environmental quality and pollution, road safety and modern cultural demands for personal transportation.

At Rochford District Council, we recognise that to simply wait for technological advances or to wait for others to solve the problem is foolhardy. As a leader in the community, we have a responsibility and duty to ensure that we, as an organisation, minimise any negative impact we may have on local environmental quality, and maximise the efficiency of natural resources such as fuel. This responsibility extends beyond simply service provision activities but also includes the travel patterns of our employees when travelling to work.

Of course in reality this is not just the problem of local authorities or governments generally, but a problem we all share. We are in it together and therefore we all need to take personal responsibility for the problem and individually contribute.

Indeed everybody can get involved in green travel and help to reduce the cumulative impact of those who live and work in the district upon the environment. By reducing the number of solo car journeys we take, through to considering alternatives such as using the internet or telephone, choosing to walk or cycle, using public transport, or even by car sharing we can all make a contribution.

This plan sets out why green travel is important to us and how we intend to achieve it.

Councillor Mike Steptoe
Portfolio Holder for Environment

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The primary purpose of a Travel Plan is to reduce the local and global environmental impacts of an organisation's transport requirements. Its key objectives therefore include:
- To seek to reduce both the use of private cars by employees in travelling to work and in carrying out their work duties;
 - To minimise the impact of the authority's associated commercial fleet activity such as waste collection and street cleansing and park/countryside management;
- 1.2 However, the combined impact of public sector budget cuts, escalating energy costs and an ongoing need to transform service delivery provides a further and very modern objective for the role travel planning can provide.
- 1.3 Rochford like other local authorities is having to find new and more efficient ways of working. Within this context Rochford District Council is utilising the travel plan as a catalyst of change drawing together new and existing corporate and service initiatives. These include considering new ways of working, including how many staff we require in the offices to maintain services, as well as challenging, reviewing and re-defining existing travel needs, policies and procedures within the authority. A core aim being to ensure the evolving context of both environmental considerations and service delivery is adequately supported by relevant incentives, procedures, policies and infrastructure.
- 1.4 In terms of the more traditional travel plan's environmental focus, Rochford has a number of key objectives and issues which the plan is also aimed at contributing to, these include:
- Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy (Climate CO₂de), whose primary aim is to reduce the authority's carbon footprint and ensure the authority becomes resilient to climate change in the future. The Council has a 10% carbon reduction target by 2016;
 - Meeting the authority's commitments to the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change, which the authority signed in 2009 and consists of a public commitment to take action on the causes of climate change;
 - Local Air Quality Management, whose aim is to address significant traffic congestion or major air quality management issues in the District, specifically in the Rayleigh and Rawreth areas.
- 1.5 In order to devise both appropriate measures to address the authority's transport impact as well as to respond to efficiency pressures the starting point is to first understand the organisation's key transport impacts. For Rochford District Council the major transport impacts arise from the following:
- The way employees travel to and from work;
 - Employee business-related travel;
 - Commercial and contracted fleet operations.

The most significant of these are commercial and contracted fleet operations and involve external strategic partners delivering services on behalf of the Council including Sita (refuse collection and street cleansing), Fountains (grounds maintenance) and Virgin Active (leisure).

- 1.6 Together, such transport activity accounts for 29% of the Council's own carbon footprint and during 2009 the authority used a combined total of 331,429 litres of fuel for both fleet and business mileage use (Rochford District Council National Indicator 185 return).
- 1.7 In order to reflect the enhanced aims of this travel plan it is crucial that this plan does not simply reflect a static snap shot in time. Instead, the travel plan needs to be a living document which consists of both clear annual quantitative and qualitative targets and acts as a measure against which our progress can be judged.
- 1.8 The following sections set out in more detail the key transport components of the authority, the key issues and the measures and targets we are putting in place to establish a culture and commitment of continuous improvement in this respect.

2 Staff Commuting

- 2.1 Rochford District Council recognises that the transport movement of its employees to and from work has a significant daily environmental impact both in terms of local environment quality such as congestion and air pollution as well as contributing to the District's carbon footprint. At the time of writing, the authority has 208 full-time equivalent employees.
- 2.2 In terms of their travel patterns, over 70% of employees live within a 30 minute drive of their place of work and despite the majority of employees living within the greater Southend conurbation only 6% use public transport to travel to work. The majority (86%) are travelling to and from work as single occupant car users.
- 2.3 While this close proximity would appear to support alternative transport uses such as cycling the proportion of staff cycling is very low, despite improved connectivity to the Southend Cycle Route via Cherry Orchard Link.
- 2.4 In April 2011 Rochford District Council introduced car parking charges for staff. As well as raising revenue as part of the authority's austerity measures, this also provided an initial step toward removing the incentive for individual car use in terms of travel to work. Removing free staff parking is traditionally a first step in the travel planning process and in encouraging greater car sharing and other more sustainable transport choices.
- 2.5 Alternative working practices are also regarded as a key facilitator to more sustainable transport within an organisation. Indeed, within the Rochford 2010 Travel Survey staff clearly indicated that the greatest incentive in terms of changing their travel patterns would be the opportunity to work from home for one or two days a week.
- 2.6 Home and mobile working does provide a real opportunity to reduce both staff commuting and business travel. Such developments also provide the potential to realise efficiencies in overhead costs through the rationalisation of property assets and intensifying their use.

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- 2.7 Within the travel survey a significant number of staff also stated that a key reason for their single occupancy car use to and from work was because they needed their car for work. This, it was claimed, prevented them from car sharing or adopting more sustainable travel choices. Indeed while initiatives such as “Flexi Time” offers a freedom of movement it also potentially reduces the likely compatibility of employee journeys.
- 2.8 While influencing individual’s behaviour is often difficult, it is essential for the future sustainability of local authority services that we challenge traditional ways of working and explore viable alternatives. As well as directly contributing to future sustainability of service delivery and reducing the authority’s carbon footprint this also has the potential to enable staff to make more sustainable choices on how they travel to and from work even if only for part of the working week.
- 2.9 In order to address these issues the authority has devised a series of measures to facilitate more sustainable transport patterns, through which it is committed to achieving a target of 2% year-on-year change from single occupancy car use by its employees between 2011/12 and 2013/14.
- 2.10 Measures the authority intends to utilise to achieve this include the following:
- Introduction of parking charging at all the authority’s dedicated staff parking sites;
 - Re launch and promotion of the authority’s existing sign up to the EssextravelBUDI scheme which facilitates car sharing, walking and cycling;
 - The promotion of the Council’s existing mobile and flexible working policy to both employees and managers;
 - Increased awareness and promotion of the Southend Cycle Path to staff;
 - The promotion of national salary sacrifice scheme to support employees in funding financial outlay for bikes and public transport season tickets for employees home to work commuting purposes;
 - The Council will promote sustainable travel opportunities, benefits and incentives available to staff to facilitate greater sustainable transport usage;
 - The Council will review existing activity and investigate new opportunities arising from national developments and best practice.

Staff Commuting Corporate Performance Target

Reduction in single occupancy car use	2010/11 Baseline	2011/12 target	2012/13 target	2013/14
Percent improvement		2%	2%	2%
Performance target	86%	84%	82%	80%

Source: Annual RDC Travel Survey - percentage of respondents travelling to and from work as single occupancy car users

3 Staff Business Travel

- 3.1 In delivery of the Council's core service activities, which include development control, refuse collection, regulatory enforcement, and civic duties, the authority generates a significant transport footprint. The Rochford District Council Travel Survey showed that 55% of respondents stated that they used their vehicle daily for business travel. Cumulatively, this transport equates to 113,000 miles and cost the authority around £61,000 per annum in staff mileage claims in 2010/11.
- 3.2 Transport is an essential element of local service delivery. However, like travel to work patterns, the drive for improved efficiency in service provision also provides a catalyst to look at the way we work and travel with different eyes. Changes in this respect can have a direct impact upon traditional business travel patterns and provide opportunities for improved efficiencies. They also often challenge traditional procedures and perceptions within the many public sector professions that local authorities are composed of.
- 3.3 Travel Planning has a role to explore and facilitate discussion and change within these professions and provide a valuable contribution to the dynamic process of service transformation.
- 3.4 A starting point for such a discussion is to seek to reduce the need to travel. This requires us to give greater consideration to whether or not a journey is essential, and if so, to ensure that adequate scrutiny of claims is undertaken. Consideration should also be given as to whether the mode of travel taken is the most cost efficient and if effective journey planning is working.
- 3.5 Another topic requiring further discussion in this respect are the authority's mileage remuneration. Rochford District Council is currently part of the National Joint Council for Local Government Services Scheme. This defines the lump sum allowance range for essential users as well as mileage rates for both essential and casual users. However, questions surround both the equity of the scheme in terms of defined casual and essential users and also the fact it pays a higher mileage rate for larger engine size vehicles (less environmentally efficient). It is critical that in devising clear corporate objectives on how we manage our impact that the allowance and remuneration system we use is fair to all employees and seeks to incentivise more sustainable travel and car choices.
- 3.6 A further consideration is the future nature of service provision. With pressure to optimise the value and use of the authority's assets increasingly we are looking at how we can get more from less. This includes our property assets and to consider fundamental service issues such as how many staff we require in our offices and hence the size of accommodation we really require to maintain the level of service we are committed to. This also requires us to ascertain the extent to which officers can work differently, whether this is working from their home or even from within their car. This has the potential to not only reduce mileage it can potentially also deliver efficiency savings through reduced associated overhead costs for property.
- 3.7 Through a combination of existing and new measures the Council is committed to achieving a target of 5 % year on year reduction in business mileage between 2011/12 and 2013/14.

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3.8 Measures the authority intends to utilise to achieve this include the following:

- Review of service functions and transport requirements, to explore opportunities, identify necessary infrastructure to facilitate greater mobile and flexible working patterns;
- The promotion of the council's existing mobile and flexible working policy to both employees and managers;
- Review of essential user allowance scheme and business mileage remuneration scheme with the aim of achieving greater equality within the scheme and seeking to incentivise more sustainable transport users and cars;
- Improvements in Journey Planning within key regulatory services including building control, environmental health and planning;
- Review existing managerial scrutiny and challenge procedures of mileage claims
- Promote self scrutiny to staff in relation to mileage claims i.e. "do I really need to travel or could I have travelled more sustainably?";
- Maintain alignment between measures and corporate property and service review process;

3.9 The authority is already looking at its current policy in this respect and is reviewing existing staff mileage rates and essential user allowance.

Business Mileage Performance Target

Reduction in business mileage	2010/11 Baseline	2011/12 target	2012/13 target	2013/14 target
Percent improvement		5%	5%	5%
Performance Target	113162	107504	102129	97022

Source: Finance Business Mileage Data

4 Commercial and Operational Fleet

4.1 The major transport impact to the Council arises within its waste collection and street cleansing operations undertaken on its behalf by Sita. This amounts to 80% of the authority's transport related CO₂ emissions. As well as providing the largest transport footprint component, waste fleet operations are also particularly vulnerable to fuel price escalation. The existing contract includes a fuel cost saving clause whereby any cost savings achieved through improvement in efficiency are shared between the authority and Sita. The Council is working closely with Sita to improve efficiency in Sita's fleet.

- 4.2 Fountains, the Council's grounds maintenance contractor also operates a small fleet of vehicles. In addition the authority has a small number of vehicles used for activities such as woodland management, depot operations, property maintenance, parking enforcement and civic duties.
- 4.3 While the vehicles and journeys in most cases form key components of the authority's front line service, opportunities to improve efficiency exist.
- 4.4 A key area where the authority can continue to improve is in procurement and service specification. The authority already specifies high environmental performance standards for the vehicles used within the waste fleet (these are Euro 4 standard) within its contract with Sita. The authority must also ensure that both other contracts which involve transportation and any individual vehicle purchasing the authority undertakes demands similarly high standards, relevant to the time of procurement.
- 4.5 However, the authority has already achieved significant reduction in its fleet fuel consumption. This has resulted from changes in April 2010 for green waste composting contract and November 2010 for dry recycling disposal contract. This saw the disposal point moving from Tilbury to Rochford for dry recyclables and from Boreham, Chelmsford to Stock Road, Southend for green waste. Combined, this delivered a mileage reduction of around 16,055 miles a year.
- 4.6 The outsourced nature of commercial fleet operations makes it difficult to establish a purposeful quantitative performance target. For this reason the authority is establishing a qualitative target for this aspect of fleet operations. This is to minimise transportation through contracted services and where necessary to secure the most sustainable option possible. The measures the authority intends to achieve this is through the following:
- Demand high CO2 performance rating of all new fleet vehicles and those for civic and direct service activities;
 - Ensure sustainable transport is a key consideration in service procurement specification and decision making;
 - Ensure our fleet operators establish both robust vehicle maintenance programmes and mileage and fuel data and performance management;
 - Introduction of route optimisation and monitoring software within waste fleet operations.

5 Monitoring and Review

- 5.1 The successful operation of the Travel Plan will be judged in terms of the influence the proposed measures have on both staff's and corporate and service transport requirements. The objective of the monitoring programme will be to assess our success in achieving more sustainable patterns and choices and reducing the overall transport footprint of the authority.
- 5.2 The monitoring activity to be undertaken will include the following:
- Annual sample staff travel surveys will be carried out every year to understand the impact of travel behaviour within the organisation.
 - Key travel/fleet indicators and targets which arise from the action plan will be embedded into existing quarterly performance monitoring framework.
 - Employee feedback on the various schemes and initiatives will be monitored.
 - The Travel Plan will be reviewed on an annual basis in order to:
 - Evaluate whether publicity material is up to date.
 - Review the effectiveness of the various schemes and initiatives and.
 - Produce/revise the Action Plan.

6 Delivery and Responsibility

- 6.1 Although clearly a complex corporate issue, responsibility for the travel plan sits with the Head of Environmental Services and Environmental Strategy Group. Through their regular meetings, the Environmental Strategy Group will monitor progress and steer ongoing development of the Travel Plan. The duties of the Environmental Strategy Group in delivery of the Travel Plan will be to:
- Take responsibility for data collection and review of Travel Plan.
 - Oversee the development and implementation of the Travel Plan actions including:
 - Governance function
 - Programme and Project Management.
 - Obtain and maintain commitment and support from senior managers, staff and union representatives.
 - Implement awareness-raising campaigns to promote the Travel Plan.
 - Act as a point of contact together with Environmental Champion Network for all staff requiring information.

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- Ensure the travel information available is always up to date.
- Negotiate with transport operators to secure discounts for staff.
- Co-ordinate the monitoring programme for the Travel Plan, including target setting.

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Annex 1 – 2011/12 Action Plan

The actions designed to meet the Plan objectives are set out in the table below, detailing the action required, how it will be measured, the outputs, costs and estimated savings, date of completion and who is responsible. Performance management will be undertaken by Environment Strategy Group.

Staff Commuting	Promote sustainable travel choices and incentives to staff	Promote to staff: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Essex travel Budi scheme • Southend Cycle Path • National salary sacrifice scheme 	2% year on year reduction (2011/12-2013/14) Source: Staff Travel Survey	To be monitored	31/03/2012	Facilitated by Head of Environmental Services, Head of Finance and the People and Policy Manager(s).
Business Travel	Review of service functions and transport requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore opportunities and identify necessary infrastructure required to facilitate change. • Facilitate greater journey planning and mobile and flexible working. 	5% year on year reduction (2011/12-2013/14) Source: Finance business mileage remuneration data	£3000 in 2011/12 (based upon 2010/11 baseline)	31/03/2012	Facilitated by Head of Environmental Services with cooperation of all Heads of Service.

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Activity	Action	Measure	Target	Cost saving	Date	Responsibility
Business Travel	<p>Review of essential user allowance scheme and business mileage remuneration scheme</p> <p>Review existing staff and managerial scrutiny procedures including need to travel and challenge of mileage claims</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Achieving greater equality within the scheme and seeking to incentivise more sustainable transport users and cars Promote staff self scrutiny of the need to travel Ensure the effectiveness of existing practices and procedures 			31/03/2012	<p>People and Policy Manager(s)</p> <p>Facilitated by Head of Environmental Services with cooperation of all Heads of Service (each HOS to be measured against 5% improvement target).</p>

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Activity						
Commercial Fleet	Ensure sustainable transport is a key consideration in service procurement specification and decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure robust vehicle maintenance programmes, mileage and fuel data and performance management • Demand high CO₂ performance rating of all new fleet vehicles and those for civic and direct service activities • Introduction of route optimisation and monitoring software with waste fleet operations 	Minimise transportation through contracted services and where necessary to secure the most sustainable option possible	To be monitored	31/03/12	Facilitated by Head of Environmental Services/Street Scene Manager with cooperation of all Heads of Service.