

Meeting:	Cabinet	Date:	10th February 2016
Subject:	Green Travel Plan Update & Staff Business Travel Project		
Report Of:	Cabinet Member for Environment		
Wards Affected:	All		
Key Decision:	No	Budget/Policy Framework:	No
Contact Officer:	Lloyd Griffiths, Head of Neighbourhood Services		
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Appendices:	None		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update Cabinet on the positive progress made in respect of The Green Travel Plan (2014 - 2018), and to outline the intention to undertake a Staff Business Travel Project in order to develop a Fleet Options Appraisal Report for future consideration.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 **CABINET** is asked to **RESOLVE** that:

- (1) The contents of the report be noted, and
- (2) The positive progress in respect of green travel initiatives be endorsed

3.0 Background and Key Issues

- 3.1 Successive Governments have encouraged employers, both public and private, major and minor, to promote green travel in their operations. This includes both commuter journeys and business travel or commercial transport. Green Travel Plans have been useful tools in setting out an organisations commitment to green travel and identifying its specific proposals and initiatives together with monitoring of progress.
- 3.2 Green Travel Plans are not a legal requirement, but many Councils have produced and implemented them, and in doing so have set a good leadership example within their geographical community to other organisations. The Council adopted its first plan in 2001 and it has been reviewed and updated on two further occasions with the most current version spanning 2014 – 2018.
- 3.3 The focus of each of the plans has been to achieve a ‘modal shift’ in how people travel. The ideas for proposals and actions were generated through internal staff surveys and via the Green Travel Working Group. This group when it meets is

made up of staff representatives, Senior Managers and follows guidance produced by the Department of Transport and the Association for Commuter Transport.

3.4 Costs relating to business travel have reduced by over £160,000 since 2010/2011. Over £90,000 of this related to the withdrawal of Essential/Casual Car User Allowances which has had a positive impact on how staff now plan and undertake their journeys. A further £60,000 relates to the termination of operational leases which were connected to vehicles being used to deliver services such as Pest Control, Stray Dogs and Couriering.

3.5 A range of positive measures and incentives in line with the Green Travel Plan, have been implemented in order to promote green travel and these have included –

- Established a car share scheme in partnership with Gloucestershire County Council;
- Provided internet travel information pages;
- Introduced a staff discount for public transport;
- Installed new changing and shower facilities within North Warehouse for staff;
- Promoted and administered the Cycle to Work Scheme for staff;
- Introduced an allowance for purchase of cycle safety equipment and lights;
- Introduced a cycle mileage allowance;
- Overhauled and improved indoor cycle storage area within North Warehouse (2014);
- Improved bicycle parking facilities at North Warehouse (March 2015);
- Purchased 4 bicycles for business journeys;
- Leased an 'electric car' for work journeys;
- Adopted Co-wheels Car Club for business use (April 2011 – January 2014);
- Adopted an online booking service for purchase of business rail warrants;
- Introduced workplace parking charges (January 2011);
- Promote and deliver car free weeks;
- Provide Dr Bike repair and safety check days for cyclists;

3.6 A new voluntary staff parking scheme was introduced in 2011. Staff if they wished, could purchase an annual parking permit to park at a Council Car Park serving their place of work at a cost of £250. This scheme has had a positive impact on the number of staff who bring their car into work, with a 50% reduction in the requests for permits since the scheme was introduced.

3.7 In January 2014 a staff travel survey was undertaken (30% response rate) the headlines being –

- 44% of respondents travel alone to work by car compared to 56% in 2009, 50% in 2011 and the national average of 69%
- Bus, train and cycling journeys are undertaken by 30% of respondents
- The number of respondents who walk/part walk to work had increased to 16%

3.8 Although these figures are positive on the whole, with car journeys still the most popular mode of travel and 44% of these journeys being undertaken alone, there is still considerable scope for further progress. One such area to explore is the viability of the Council offering its officers access to a modern fleet of environmentally

efficient vehicles that supports them in carrying out their work and encourages them further to think about how they travel into work.

- 3.9 The Council's current fleet of business vehicles for officers consists of four vans that have become available through termination of operational lease agreements as outlined in paragraph 3.4. The Council also operates a Civic Car and there are also various grounds maintenance related vehicles attached to the Cemeteries and Crematorium Service and the Countryside Unit. These latter vehicles however are not intended to form part of the project.
- 3.10 The ageing condition of the four vans available to officers for business journeys means that both running costs and maintenance costs are increasing and their reliability and environmental performance are reduced.
- 3.11 As we strive to be a top performing Council in the way in which we deliver our services and support our communities, officers would benefit from having access to a fleet of vehicles that meet business needs and the Council would benefit from having a fleet of vehicles which are environmentally credible in terms of their performance.
- 3.12 Utilising an existing Procurement Framework and at no cost or risk to the Council, it is intended to enter into an agreement with Enterprise (AOL) for them to deliver a staff business travel survey which will assist us in reviewing our business fleet. Entering into such an agreement does not commit us to providing any further business to Enterprise (AOL).
- 3.13 The Staff Business Travel Project would include 5 stages, these being:
- 1) Communication of project to staff (including briefings & instructions);
 - 2) Collection and analysis of business travel information (including all modes of travel) linked to mileage claims;
 - 3) Review of business fleet options;
 - 4) If deemed viable - development of a Cabinet Report requesting approval to procure a new fleet of business vehicles, and
 - 5) Procurement exercise in respect of fleet of vehicles

4.0 Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) Considerations

- 4.1 The Councils staff are a community in their own right and they will play a key role in providing business travel information in respect of the proposed project. They will also be actively invited to participate with their own ideas about how they could travel for business more effectively and efficiently including commuting to and from work.

5.0 Alternative Options Considered

- 5.1 Due to the ageing condition of our current fleet of business vehicles, continuing to operate them is not a viable option as costs associated with running and maintenance are increasing and their environmental performance will also be in decline.

- 5.2 Discussions with Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) around the potential for joint procurement on fleet provision and maintenance have taken place. We would view this collaboration as a means of reducing our respective costs in respect of this project whilst potentially being able to access a larger pool of vehicles to support our work within the City. To date however no firm commitment has been provided by GCC in respect of the project.
- 5.3 One further option would be not to provide a fleet of business vehicles for our officers. Although such an option is not unusual, with the removal of essential and casual car user allowances, the introduction of car parking charges and our commitment to shifting the mode of travel for commuter journeys, providing a fleet of business vehicles for our officers to carry out their work seems to be both a practical and environmentally conscious decision that would be met with favour by staff.

6.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 6.1 Establishing a fleet of business vehicles that are environmentally credible is important given our ambassadorial position within the City and County and recognises the importance the Council attaches to green travel through its Green Travel Plan 2014 – 2018.
- 6.2 As we continue to secure value for money in everything we do as a Council it will be important that any fleet of vehicles we provide are both practical (based on need) and cost effective to deliver, run and maintain.
- 6.3 Providing a fleet of business vehicles based on business need, will support Officers in undertaking their roles more efficiently within our communities and will also present the Council with an opportunity to promote its branding more visibly through badging etc.

7.0 Future Work and Conclusions

- 7.1 A series of staff briefings will be held to inform staff of the project and their critical role in establishing what the Councils need is from a fleet of business vehicles. Arrangements will then be put in place for staff to submit business travel information for a 3 month period which will be linked to their mileage claims and records.
- 7.2 Furthermore work will commence to develop options for how we dispose of our existing vehicles in the most cost effective and environmentally conscious manner.
- 7.3 Once all information has been collated and considered a Fleet Options Appraisal Report will be developed, including a preferred option, that it is intended to bring to Cabinet during early Summer 2016 for consideration.

8.0 Financial Implications

- 8.1 At this stage there is no financial impact or risk by entering into such an agreement with Enterprise (AOL) as this exercise is simply intended to review our Councils business fleet requirements.

(Financial Services have been consulted in respect of this Report)

9.0 Legal Implications

9.1 The agreement with Enterprise (AOL) has been entered in to through an existing Procurement Framework and does not provide any future commitment to Enterprise (AOL). A separate procurement exercise will be required if a decision is taken to procure a new fleet of vehicles.

(One Legal have been consulted in respect of this Report)

10.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications

10.1 There are very few if any risks associated with what is being proposed as part of this report. The opportunities from procuring a new fleet of business vehicles however are many and include –

- Reduction in on-going costs associated with current ageing fleet;
- Assist with Council promoting its green credentials;
- Helps Council minimise its environmental impact and carbon footprint;
- Encourages staff who use their car for business journeys to leave their car at home;
- Assists the Council in making further progress in respect of its Green Travel Plan;
- Provides an opportunity for the Council to promote its brand more visibly, and
- Opens up joint working opportunities for procurement of fleet and its maintenance

11.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA):

Undertaking a staff business travel survey will allow Officers to look at any individual travel needs particularly linked to those with disabilities. This information can then be utilised in conducting a full and thorough People Impact Assessment when determining potential fleet options.

12.0 Other Corporate Implications

12.1 Sustainability

Providing a fleet of vehicles that are based solely around the Council's business needs and are environmentally credible, contributes to the work of the Council in promoting Environmental Sustainability. It also allows our Council to minimise its impact on the environment through running a 'greener fleet'.

12.2 Staffing & Trade Union

No staffing or trade union implications have been identified in respect of this report.

Background Documents: None