

Salisbury Joint Transportation Team
The Council Offices, 37 Endless Street
Salisbury
Wiltshire SP1 1DP

Geoff Hobbs, Transportation Planner
direct line: 01722 434 581
email: ghobbs@salisbury.gov.uk
web: www.salisbury.gov.uk

Report

Subject : Travel Plan for Bourne Hill Office Project

Report to : Cabinet

Date : Wednesday 15 November 2006

Author : Geoff Hobbs

Cabinet Member for Resources: Councillor Donald Culver

Executive Summary:

The Council introduced a Travel Plan in 2001, designed to encourage more sustainable forms of travel for staff commuting to work. This contained a number of incentives to reduce car use and increase use of alternative modes, which at the time were considered to be among best practice. In October 2005, Cabinet agreed to enhance the Travel Plan through a series of additional measures. The Travel Plan document itself was not updated as result of these changes. However, a guide for staff, updating the range of travel options open to them was produced and circulated from May 2006, but this did not constitute a full Travel Plan. One of the planning conditions attached to the grant of planning permission for the District Council Office Project was that an enhanced travel plan be produced, and approved by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development. This report seeks Cabinet approval to adopt the enhanced travel plan attached as **Appendix 1**. This document combines the 2001 Travel Plan measures with the October 2005 enhancements (implemented in April 2006 after agreement from union representatives). It also incorporates other informational and promotional measures to bring the Travel Plan into line with best practice by other local authorities.

The format of the Travel Plan has been brought up to date to include targets for future modal share and other components that were not included within the 2001 Green Travel Plan. By necessity, this has made the document a sizable one. These components include an explanation of why a travel plan is required, clear aims and objectives, an audit of the available facilities for travel to Bourne Hill by all transport modes, a staff travel survey (with explanation of both the results and chosen methodology), a comprehensive action plan of Travel Plan measures, including short and medium term targets, details of how the Plan will be implemented and who will be responsible for this and information about monitoring and marketing of the measures to staff.

The document itself will be used by the Travel Plan Co-ordinator on a day-to-day basis in the implementation of the Travel Plan. Copies will also be circulated to all Service Unit Heads for their information. The May 2006 travel options guide issued to staff provides a simplified guide to the measures and incentives available to them.

1. Purpose of Report:

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Member's approval for the adoption of *A Smarter Way to Work: A Travel Plan for the Salisbury District Council Bourne Hill Office Redevelopment*, attached as **Appendix 1** to this report. The adoption of a new Travel Plan for the Bourne Hill site was required by planning condition attached to the granting of planning permission for the Bourne Hill Office Project.



Awarded in:
Housing Services
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2.0 Background to Travel Plans:

- 2.1 The District Council was one of the first local government employers to introduce a Workplace Travel Plan when the Green Travel Plan was adopted in 2001. Today the vast majority of councils have produced a Travel Plan.
- 2.2 A Travel Plan is a package of measures and policies that aim to encourage greater take up of sustainable forms of travel for employees for the journey to and from work, and for journeys undertaken on business. Travel plans should address the issue of parking policy, provide financial incentives to encourage use of non-car modes and look at to what extent personnel policies encourage green travel and also cover how the range of travel options open to staff will be explained and promoted to staff. It is increasingly common for Travel Plans to also focus on deliveries and servicing and include measures to encourage sustainable travel by visitors to the site or sites that they cover. Whilst a few organisations have developed travel plans on a purely voluntary basis, it is more common for them to be introduced as part of a planning condition of new development, especially for major office, commercial and retail sites. Encouraging greater take up of travel plans has been national government policy since *A New Deal for Transport – better for everyone* (the 1998 Transport White Paper) was published.
- 2.3 To be effective travel plans should set challenging but realistic targets for modal shift that seek to reduce the proportion of journeys to work undertaken by single occupancy private motor car, and increase the proportion of journeys to work undertaken on foot, by bicycle, motorcycle, bus, train, park and ride or lift sharing. The targets should be based on the expected changes to arise from the implementation of packages of measures (incentives and disincentives) to achieve this modal shift. The types of measures adopted within a travel plan should be informed by accurate data on existing patterns of staff travel. Such data is normally collected by way of a staff travel survey. More information on what a travel plan should contain and why can be found in *The Travel Plan Resources Pack for Employers* (produced jointly by the Department for Transport and Transport Energy Best Practice). This is available from the following webpage:
http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_control/documents/contentservertemplate/dft_index.hcst?n=17088&l=3

3 How the Travel Plan was developed:

The enhanced Travel Plan attached as **Appendix 1** has been developed in accordance with guidance and current best practice with the aim of producing a comprehensive, robust and effective document geared to encouraging more sustainable forms of travel to work, whilst fulfilling planning condition number 25 of the consent for the Office Project as reproduced below:

25. Development shall not be commenced until a Travel Plan has been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority. No part of the development shall be occupied prior to the implementation of the approved travel plan (or those parts identified in the approved travel plan as capable of being implemented prior to occupation). Those parts of the approved travel plan that are identified as being capable of being implemented after occupation shall be implemented in accordance with the timetable contained therein and shall continue to be implemented as long as any part of the development is occupied. The records of the implementation shall be made available to the Local Planning Authority if requested.

Reason: In order to promote sustainable modes of travel to and from the site, and to reduce reliance on the private car.

3.1 Staff Travel Survey:

To provide a baseline of data a staff travel survey was carried out in September 2006. This was sent electronically to 395 staff, but was targeted at those staff who would be working at the expanded Bourne Hill office campus. Therefore, responses were not sought from employees of City Hall, Salisbury Commercial Services, Five Rivers leisure centre or the parking ambassador team. A response rate of 41% was achieved, helped by offering a prize draw. A summary of the main findings of the travel survey can be found on pages 16 to 20 of the document. The full results of the staff survey are included within Appendix 1 of the Travel Plan document.

3.2 Continuation of measures from 2001 Travel Plan:

The original 2001 Green Travel Plan introduced a number of very effective measures for encouraging more sustainable staff travel, which were best practice in its' day. The travel plan was developed following a staff travel survey undertaken in 1999, which showed no change in travel patterns when compared to the previous survey of 1997. The measures introduced in 2001 form the bulk of the list of measures shown in Section 4 of the document (pages 7 and 8). The 2006 Staff Travel Survey showed

an improvement in the modal split of staff journeys to work, suggesting that the measures in place since 2001 have made a difference towards reducing the proportion of single-occupancy car journeys. Therefore, these measures will be rolled forward and incorporated into the new Travel Plan.

3.3 Continuation of measures introduced from 1 April 2006:

From 1 April 2006, all non-essential car users who were not making use of free parking at a Park and Ride site were required to pay a parking charge of £1 per day for city centre parking, deducted from monthly salary. This was with the exception of staff who travel in on the A36 Southampton Road corridor, who do not have a Park and Ride site available, who will not have to pay for parking until 1 April 2007. On days when staff choose to work from home, they will not have to pay for parking. Parking charges will increase to £2 per day from 1 April 2007 (£1 for Southampton Road), and £3 per day from 1 April 2008 (£2 for Southampton Road), and by the rate of inflation each April thereafter (£3 for Southampton Road). This date also marked the introduction of an annual subsidy up to the value of £484 to reduce the cost of a public transport annual season ticket – as an alternative to free use of Park and Ride, to complement the existing interest free season ticket loan. This date saw the re-introduction of the staff city centre parking permit buyout option. This had been withdrawn in 2002, due to no budget being available. These changes were agreed by union representatives. A staff travel options guide was produced in June 2006 to summarise and explain all the travel options open to staff, and circulated to staff. This is included within the Travel Plan document as an appendix (pages 51-62). The take up levels of the 2001 and April 2006 travel incentives are summarized in Section 4 (pages 7 and 8).

3.4 Addition of complementary measures:

In addition, there are a number of other low cost measures, mostly reliant on officer time designed to inform staff of their travel options and promote particular modes such as walking and cycling, public transport and lift-sharing. These are based on best practice measures contained within other local authority travel plans. These are listed in the action plans contained within Section 8 of the Travel Plan document, and total £950 per annum. £150 is available from the existing Green Travel budget. It is proposed that the remainder (£800 per annum plus £1,476 of one-off costs) be funded from the income collected from staff city centre parking charges. This is how most other leading examples of travel plans resource their incentives for encouraging sustainable modes.

3.5 Ongoing monitoring and development of the Travel Plan:

The adoption of the Travel Plan document is only the start of the process. In order to successfully implement the measures contained within it and achieve the targets (summarized on page 28), the officer responsible will require the support of a steering group, which will meet bi-annually. It may be necessary to carry out focus groups with staff on a periodic basis to identify how existing measures are thought of and to identify potential new measures. It will be necessary to carry out bi-annual staff travel surveys to monitor progress towards achieving the targets (such as the headline target to reduce the modal split of car journeys to work by 5% by September 2008). It is suggested that these be carried out in September, with the next survey in September 2008. In order to keep Cabinet fully informed of progress towards the targets set out in the travel plan, it is proposed to produce an update report each November to set out the progress made. It is intended that the whole travel plan should be reviewed and updated in October 2008.

3.6 Audit of draft Travel Plan document:

In October 2006, the draft Travel Plan document was sent to an officer within Wiltshire County Council's Travelwise team for comment. This officer is often asked by the District Council Local Planning Authorities within Wiltshire to assess workplace travel plans for large developments required by planning condition against national standards. The Department for Transport has produced a *Workplace Travel Plan Evaluation Tool*, enabling a draft travel plan to be scored for overall quality and content. The Travel Plan was developed with the requirements of this evaluation tool in mind, to help ensure that it would be a robust, effective document to form the basis for future implementation. On 25 October 2006, the officer responded with informal comments for suggested improvements to the content and structure of the Plan. Overall, he suggested that the document was suitably comprehensive and satisfactory. The officer made a number of comments some of which he suggested had to be incorporated into the final travel plan, and other comments that were recommended changes. All of the former have been incorporated into the final document. Should the document be adopted by the Cabinet, it will formally be submitted to the Head of Development services, who will consider whether it fulfils the planning condition. It is anticipated that comments will be formally sought from Wiltshire County Council Travelwise as to whether the Travel Plan is satisfactory.

4. Recommendation:

- 4.1 That the attached document be adopted as the workplace travel plan for Salisbury District Council, to replace the 2001 Green Travel Plan, with a review date of Autumn 2008.

5. Implications:

Financial : Costed measures totalling £950 (£150 from existing budgets) per annum as listed in Section 8 of Appendix 1. Additional one-off costs of £1,476.

Legal : none

Human Rights : none

Personnel : none - All measures affecting staff conditions of service have been previously agreed by unions, and have already been approved by Cabinet on 12 October 2005.

Community Safety : none

Environmental : A reduction in vehicular congestion and pollution in the vicinity of Bourne Hill. Improved health and well being of Council staff.

Council's Core Values : Promoting a thriving economy, being environmentally conscientious, wanting to be an open, learning Council.

Wards Affected : St. Edmunds

Consultation : details contained in the report