

TAUNTON DEANE BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

AUGUST 24TH

Report of Strategic Director: Joy Wislade

(This is the responsibility of Cllr Lewin-Harris, Community Development, and Cllr Hall, Corporate Resources)

TRAVEL PLAN DEVELOPMENT

1. Purpose of Report

To update the Executive on the development of the Travel Plan and to seek support on key issues.

2. Why does Taunton Deane Borough Council require a Travel Plan?

- 2.1 Improving transport and travel within Taunton Deane is a priority of this Council and it therefore has a community leadership role to ensure it is doing all that it can to support the management of congestion in the area both through implementation of policy and through managing the travel of its own workforce. Other key large organisations in Taunton already have Travel Plans and when working with new businesses wishing to locate to Taunton TDBC includes travel planning as part of the planning process. Car parking charges within the town have risen and Taunton Deane has been criticised for asking other workers in the town to pay increased rates whilst continuing to offer unrestricted free parking to a large proportion of employees. Taunton Deane should be leading by example.

3. What is a Travel Plan?

- 3.1 A Travel Plan is a package of measures, individually tailored to efficiently manage the transport impact of an organisation, and aimed at promoting sustainable travel choices.
- 3.2 A Travel Plan is a strategy designed to reduce the impact of traffic especially for the journey to and from work.
- 3.3 Travel Plans are aimed at promoting more sustainable travel to work by offering realistic transport choices.
- 3.4 Travel Plans are not “anti-car” but emphasise the travel choices that are available and offer practical measures on how to make them more accessible for everyone. Each travel plan should be individually tailored to address the particular needs of its employees and its location.

4. Progress to Date

- 4.1 A Travel Plan working group has been set up to consider what the Travel Plan should contain and how it will be implemented.
- 4.2 A Travel Plan should contain a series of “actions” and “targets” based around “carrot” and “stick” measures. The “stick” is the reduction in available free parking for staff. The TP group accept that the current proposal gets the principle that staff are not entitled to car parking as a matter of course established though there will be a need to develop the pricing & allocation policy in the future. The “carrot” measures that are suggested in the first instance are detailed in Paras. 5.4 – 5.8. Targets will be set around reduction in car use / growth in use of other forms of transport and will be set in detail once the Department for Transport advice has been sought as detailed in Para. 4.5.
- 4.3 Action to date has focused on the travel to and from work journeys. In the future, the Travel Plan will need to develop to include business trips and the TDBC fleet.
- 4.4 Staff Survey: To inform where to focus support measures and to give base line data, a staff survey was carried out.

The Travel Plan officer from SCC has assisted in a detailed analysis of the results. However, the key results of the staff survey are:

- 34% of respondents live within 2 miles of their workplace
- 53% live less than 5 miles from their workplace
- 21% have journeys that involve getting children to or from school on a regular basis
- 31% never need to use their car for work, 12% need it every day (although this includes DLO staff)
- 67.5% of those travelling by car do so alone

- 4.5 The Department for Transport are offering free help and advice to Councils developing Travel Plans. TDBC have applied and been accepted for this scheme. The DfT consultant will be advising on a number of issues and will help us to write the final document. As a Travel Plan is a living and developing document it is envisaged that a loose leaf folder will be produced of developments, milestones and targets. A smaller leaflet encompassing the main objectives and key measures of the Travel Plan will be produced for staff.

5. Development of the Travel Plan

- 5.1 The Travel Plan should include both “carrot” and “stick” measures. The measure to reduce car journeys is based on restricting free parking five days a week.
- 5.2 Following consultation with staff on a preliminary proposal, a second proposal was put to staff which has received broad in principle agreement. This proposal relates primarily to Deane and Flook House and has two elements:

- That staff are entitled to park in the staff car park on 4 out of 5 days a week only (i.e. they will have to nominate a “car free day”).
- That to park for the 4 days a week they will have to pay a nominal sum of around £1 a week, deductible from salary.
- Entitlement to car parking will be reviewed regularly and particularly as and when facilities such as park and ride schemes come on line.

There are a lot of details yet to be worked out around this and this will be done by September with a view to implementing in April 2006. The reason for delaying the implementation until then is to ensure that all details are clarified and that the new system has all the problems ironed out. April is also a better time of year to introduce measures to change travel behaviour – i.e. better weather, lighter mornings and evenings.

- 5.3 This timing also gives time for the support measures to be put in place. The analysis of the results from the staff survey suggests that the Travel Plan should focus particularly on the support measures for the 53% of staff who live within 5 miles of their work in order to have the greatest impact. However other measures such as Car Share Scheme and reduced bus tickets will also be brought in to support those staff living further afield.
- 5.4 **Cycling:** suggested actions to support this priority are
- More cycle storage provision
 - Further female shower provision
 - Provision of storage / drying for wet weather clothing / lockers
 - Purchase of 2 further staff pool cycles
 - Staff discounts at local cycle shops
 - Introduction of Government scheme for tax free purchase of bicycles by staff
 - A Bicycle User Group to be set up
 - Promotion of National Bike Week etc.
 - Promotion of cycle routes / lobbying for more
 - Help to identify safer routes to work for individuals
- 5.5 **Walking:** suggested actions to support this priority are:
- Personal alarms to be available for staff
 - Umbrellas for staff to borrow are purchased
 - Staff discounts at walking shop specialists
 - Provision of storage / drying for wet weather clothing
- 5.6 **Car Sharing:** suggested actions to support this priority are:
- High profile launch of the Somerset Car Share Scheme (including sessions in the LRC)
 - Meetings for those from communities where the survey shows a reasonable number of staff live – so that they can meet potential car sharers. (Particularly Bridgwater and Wellington).
 - Marked bays reserved for car sharers

- 5.7 **Public Transport** would become a lower priority in terms of focus as it will have the least major impact. However some actions would still be included in the Travel Plan:
- Information from local bus companies on routes / services / timetables
 - Route planning service
 - High priority launch of new services (e.g. Park and Ride) as they come on stream
 - If there is sufficient usage – discounts on season tickets etc negotiated.
- 5.8 **Home Working**
TDBC already has an Home Working Policy which sets out the guidelines for staff to work from home. Staff will be encouraged to discuss with their managers the opportunity for them to work from home on a regular basis. The relevant requirements in terms of IT provision etc. will be provided as arrangements are approved.
- 5.9 Monitoring of the Travel Plan: monitoring will take place via an annual electronic staff survey to see what changes in behaviour has taken place. The Department of Transport have offered free consultancy on developing the Travel Plan and we are particularly be asking for advice on this issue.

6. **Financial & Resource Implications:**

6.1 Capital resources will be required for the following:

- Increased shower provision
- Increased cycle storage
- Wet weather storage / drying area
- Purchase of two further staff pool bikes
- Umbrellas
- Personal alarms
- Changes required to make the car parking scheme work

A grant of 50 % of the total capital spend up to a limit of £4,000 is available from Somerset County Council.

6.2 A small amount of revenue funding is required for PR activities. This can be found from within current budgets

6.3 Income: the staff survey showed that 240 staff currently work at Deane House or Flook House and travel by car. If all 240 pay £1 per week the potential income is £12,480. This income will be ring fenced for improvements to facilities to support the travel plan.

7. **Timing**: in order to show that TDBC is providing the “carrot” as well as the “stick” it is recommended that at least some of the support measures are brought in before the change to staff car parking. This therefore requires some funding to make the capital improvements to the premises prior to the revenue stream coming on line. Some of the support measure (personal alarms, umbrellas and the new staff bikes) can be purchased from within current

budgets but others such as the provision of further cycle storage and the provision of lockers / drying area and a further female shower will require funding. Costs are being investigated but it is anticipated that around £12k will be needed in 2005 / 06. This of course will be recouped during 2006/07 as the revenue income from the scheme materialises – thereby ensuring that this scheme has no impact on the local taxpayer. Members will be required to make amendment to the approved capital programme to reflect this timing.

8. PR Plan

A draft PR plan and logo “Cutting Congestion” has been produced (logo is attached)

9. Review Board Discussion

The Review Board supported the Travel Plan paper after discussion that included the following points:

- There was overall support for the Travel Plan and its objectives
- Generally it was felt to meet our community leadership role and also one that would take staff support with it.
- There was general support for the 4 days allocated parking and 1 car free day – this was considered to have an impact on congestion
- It was suggested that the charge for staff parking was too low and should either be increased or scrapped. A motion to increase the cost to £5 a week was defeated.
- It was felt that the document should more proactively encourage car sharing (report amended)
- The recommendation for the capital expenditure was supported.

The Executive are asked to consider the points raised at the Review Board

9. Recommendations

- That the Executive support the actions and priorities identified within the Travel Plan
- That the Executive support the capital expenditure of approximately £12,000 in advance of this being brought back to the organisation via the charging for car parking (thereby ensuring no impact on the taxpayer?)

Joy Wishlade
Strategic Director
August 2005