New Forest District Council’s Green Transport Plan

go green
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Introduction

This Green Transport Plan is about providing choice to employees and Members of how they choose to travel to and from Council premises/work places and on Council Business.

It seeks to increase our awareness of transport issues, the alternatives available and helps us to make informed decisions as to how we travel and arrange for Council services to be delivered.

The Plan has been developed within the framework of the Council’s Corporate Strategy, Heart of the Forest and reflects Local Agenda 21.

It responds to the Government’s call, outlined in the Transport White Paper, for organisations to ‘help employees to use alternatives to driving to work alone’.

Members, Senior Management and Employee representatives have guided the development of the Plan, and many have tried a variety of the alternatives which are proposed.

The Green Transport Plan was adopted by Cabinet on the 6 November 2002 and is now Council Policy. It is now time for us all to play our part in making it work.
Development of the Green Transport Plan

Things that would reduce the number of journeys in your car.

Over 450 employees completed our travel survey concerning their journey to work. This is a good response for this type of survey and has given us a lot of useful information that has helped us prepare this plan.

Those responsible for Council services which involve the use of operational vehicles and those responsible for the Council’s fleet of vehicles have been asked how the aims set out in this plan can be best achieved.
Our Aims

1. To encourage employees to reduce the number of driver only car journeys to and from the Council’s work places (commuter journeys) by 5% over the next three years.

If everyone left their car at home just once more each month we would achieve our target.

2. To introduce new vehicle technology and less polluting fuels in a cost effective way so as to reduce the harmful effect that vehicles delivering Council services or provided by the Council have on human health and the environment.

Lease cars that have cleaner engines, such as common rail diesels, are being supplied. If all lease car drivers switched to cleaner engines then CO2 emissions would be reduced.

3. To reduce the total length of business journeys made by private car by 10% over the next three years.

Arranging meetings so we can go to them on our way to or from work or travelling together to meetings can cut down business mileage and save time as well.

The following sections set out how these aims can be achieved.
A number of measures are already in place whilst others will take a number of years to introduce.
Walking and Cycling

Walking can compete well with the car over short distances, and cycling at distances of up to approximately 3 miles.

The travel survey indicated 143 of us live within 2 miles of where we work and that a total of 500 live within 5 miles. Why not consider leaving the car at home and taking the bike or walking?

Cycling to Lymington Town Hall is quite popular already even though the facilities for cyclists could be improved. Recreation Centres generally have good facilities and many employees live nearby so measures to encourage Recreation Centre employees to walk or cycle should be considered.

Some people have concerns about road safety but inactivity has, if anything, greater risks - but do take care when cycling (helmets and high visibility clothing advised) and walking.

A bike user group (BUG) has been set up so if you have any suggestions or want information please contact our Green Transport Coordinator on 023 8028 5915.

Health benefits of regular sustained physical activity:

- 50% reduction in the risk of developing coronary heart disease (i.e. similar effect to not smoking)
- 50% reduction in the risk of developing adult diabetes
- 50% reduction in the risk of becoming obese
- 30% reduction in developing hypertension
- 10/8 mmHg decline in blood pressure in hypertensive subjects
- reduced osteoporosis
- relief of symptoms of depression and anxiety
- prevention of falls in the elderly

What we have in place or is expected soon:

- Secure cycle parking is available at main Council offices (see also below) and many other Council workplaces.
- Showers at Appletree Court and a unisex shower is planned at Lymington Town Hall.
- Cycle allowance (5p per mile) payable for business travel undertaken by bike (see also below).
- Improved pedestrian links including footways on the Council's premises. Also, where appropriate, controlled pedestrian/cycle crossings outside Council premises provided in partnership with other agencies, for example Hampshire County Council.
- Incentives (perhaps a monthly prize draw) to encourage regular walking and cycling to work.

Other options being discussed:

- Low-interest loans and purchase scheme to benefit from VAT concessions for the purchase of bicycles etc.
- Use of Pool bikes (men's and women's) that are in good condition and serviced regularly. Bicycle equipment would also be available including cycle helmets, high visibility tabards and pumps.
- Increase the cycle and motor cycles allowances.
- Additional showers and lockers.
- Improved/additional secure covered parking for bicycles and motorcycles.

143 of us live within 2 miles of where we work and a total of 500 live within 5 miles.
Car Sharing

If giving up the car is not a realistic option for you then how about car sharing?

It can reduce individual fuel costs, helps to limit wear and tear and reduce pollution. It can also help out a colleague who has car problems. It might be difficult to find someone to share with, so we plan to set up a register. The more who take part the easier it will be to find a partner so please register - Contact our Car Share Coordinator on 023 8028 5915 for details.

We are considering benefits to include dedicated parking spaces for drivers arriving with a passenger (available on a first come first served basis). These will be in some of the most convenient locations for employees and can also be used by employees travelling to meetings together.

Public Transport

Many of us discount public transport on the grounds of inconvenience, cost, reliability, frequency, timing, routes, comfort etc. However it may be better than you think as some employees already use it!! There are a number of things we can do to make travelling by public transport easier and cheaper and these are included in the Transport Plan.

Options being considered:

- Public transport information available on the Council’s ForestNet.
- Revised rules for business travel which encourages employees to use public transport for longer official journeys when this would be effective (see above).
Vehicle Technology & Fuels

Longer term options:

- Discounted season tickets for employees who do not choose to take up car related benefits.
- The provision of rail or bus season tickets as an alternative to company car allowances.
- Better transport information on ForestNet.
- Opportunities to use the modified Courier Service to make travelling to Appletree Court by rail more convenient (see above).

New types of engine, such as the ‘common rail’ diesel engine, and special exhaust systems can reduce transport related pollution emissions and reduce fuel consumption.

Less polluting fuels, such as liquid petroleum gas (LPG) and compressed natural gas (CNG), are becoming increasingly available and, with tax incentives, can be cheaper than other fuels. Many organisations are using LPG in some of their vehicles. However, purchase costs of vehicles that use less polluting fuels can be higher than for other vehicles and conversion can be expensive.

What we have in place or are currently considering:

- When replacing vehicles, choosing those that minimise the harmful effects on health and the environment.
- Reviewing travel allowances to encourage vehicles that minimise harmful effects.

Options for future consideration:

- Review lease car / assisted car purchase schemes to encourage vehicles which minimise harmful effects.

1 bus can carry the same number of passengers as 56 cars, using only 6% of the road space.
Reducing Demand for Travel

For many people the only practical way of travelling to Council premises is by private car. An amended flexible working hours scheme and home working were the two things that most employees said would enable them to reduce the number of car journeys to work.

Car sharing could reduce having to drive to work alone - currently about 85% of employees drive to work alone whilst a further 5% car share. However, many of those employees on “flexi-time” value the ability to vary their start and finish times perhaps reducing the scope for widespread car sharing. The need to have a car available for business journeys is another common reason given for not car sharing - having pool cars and pool bikes available may go some way to addressing this concern.

The flexi scheme is being reviewed and one option to be considered is being able to take more than one “flexi-day” per month. This would reduce the number car journeys and needs to be balanced with the impact on service delivery.

The rules covering business travel are being considered to encourage the use of the most sustainable form of transport, even where this is not necessarily the cheapest. Incentives for employees carrying passengers will also be considered.

What we have in place or is expected soon:

- Home working in appropriate circumstances.
- Video conferencing facilities.
- Car sharing (see above).
- Flexible working hours scheme for many employees.
- Alternatives to using private cars for some official journeys to reduce the need for employees to bring their own car to work.

Other options being discussed:

- Encouraging employees to make longer official journeys by public transport.
- Changes to the flexi-time scheme.
- Use of home working scheme.
- Incentives for employees carrying passengers to meetings.
- Additional video conferencing facilities when demand increases.
- Opportunities to use the Courier Service.