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**DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL EMPLOYEE TRAVEL PLAN**

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**Responsible Cabinet Members - Councillor David Lyonette, Transport Portfolio  
Councillor Chris McEwan, Efficiency and Resources Portfolio**

**Responsible Directors - Richard Alty, Assistant Chief Executive (Regeneration)  
Paul Wildsmith, Director of Corporate Services**

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**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To seek approval for the new Employee Travel Plan attached at Appendix 1.

**Summary**

2. A Travel Plan is a strategy for managing the travel generated by an organisation, with the aim of reducing its environmental impact. The Darlington Borough Council travel plan combines measures to support walking, cycling, public transport and car sharing as an alternative to private car use whilst also making it easier for staff that must use a private vehicle to do so. These are reinforced with promotion and incentives and by the management of workplace parking. The DBC travel plan also includes actions to reduce the need to travel, such as teleconferencing and hot desking and has linkages to the Accommodation review project. The travel plan is focussed on both commuter and at work travel.
3. In September and October 2007 employee focus groups were held with around 30 employees across all council departments to discuss how travel affected their ability to carry out their jobs effectively. Employees were asked to comment on what their job required in relation to their need to travel, what travel problems they faced and possible solutions.

The responses from the employee focus groups then informed the first Travel Plan Steering Group which took place on 29th November 2007. The steering group has members of senior staff representing each department and also includes representatives from HR and Unison.

**Recommendation**

4. That Members approve the Employee Travel Plan attached at **Appendix 1**.

## Reasons

5. The recommendation is supported to ensure that the Employee Travel Plan promotes travel choice for all staff members.

**Richard Alty**  
**Assistant Chief Executive (Regeneration)**

## Background Papers

No Background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

Louise Neale : Extension 2716

S17 Crime and Disorder	Schemes and initiatives are designed to take crime and disorder and antisocial behaviour issues into account where appropriate.
Health and Well Being	Sustainable transport schemes have health and well being outcomes.
Sustainability	The Employee Travel Plan encourages sustainable travel.
Diversity	Specific elements within the plan recognise diversity of travel needs: for example criteria for car parking passes reflect diversity of need due to disability.
Wards Affected	Not applicable
Groups Affected	Affects all employees
Budget and Policy Framework	The report does not change the Budget or Policy Framework
Key Decision	This is not a key decision.
Urgent Decision	This does not require an urgent decision.
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	Measures to widen travel choice provide One Darlington benefits.
Efficiency	To make most efficient use of council resources including staff time and minimise the costs associated with business travel.

## MAIN REPORT

### Information and Analysis Why We Have a Travel Plan

6. A Travel Plan is a strategy for managing the travel generated by an organisation, with the aim of reducing its environmental impact. The Darlington Borough Council travel plan combines measures to support walking, cycling, public transport and car sharing as an alternative to private car use whilst also making it easier for staff that must use a private vehicle to do so. These are reinforced with promotion and incentives and by the management of workplace parking. The DBC travel plan also includes actions to reduce the need to travel, such as teleconferencing and hot desking with direct linkages to the Accommodation Review Project. The travel plan is focussed on both commuter and at work travel.
7. Evidence from travel plans that have been implemented across the country have been shown to have the following benefits for both the Local Authorities and for staff:
  - (a) Meeting environmental targets
  - (b) Enable higher occupancy of existing buildings
  - (c) Reduce staff downtime spent travelling on business
  - (d) Reduce the costs of running a fleet
  - (e) Solve problems caused by traffic congestion
  - (f) Improve image with both customers and neighbours
  - (g) Improve staff health and consequently reduce absenteeism
  - (h) Assist with recruitment and retention by making staff journeys to work easier and cheaper
  - (i) Improve staff punctuality by reducing congestion delays and supporting more reliable means of transport.
  - (j) Assure parking for those with most need to access a vehicle
  - (k) Help provide less stressful options for travel to work
  - (l) Give opportunities to build healthy exercise into daily life
  - (m) Reduce journey times to work
  - (n) Reduce the cost of travel to work, or avert the need to buy a car.

8. To achieve the benefits listed above a number of actions are planned or are already underway. These actions include:
  - (a) Additional town centre parking permits; Members of staff were invited to apply for a town centre car parking pass if they did not have access to one. Staff were assessed using an agreed criteria and those that met the criteria were issued with a parking pass. All current holders of car parking passes will be assessed against the criteria during April – July 2010 (in parallel with the review of car allowances – see (e) below.)
  - (b) Bus tickets; Day ticket vouchers have been purchased from Arriva and are available for staff to use on work journeys from the Town Hall, Central House, Vicarage Road Depot and The Beehive.
  - (c) Provision of cycle storage at council sites. New cycle parking installed at the Town Hall and work to install cycle lockers at Central House.
  - (d) Publicity; It has been recognised by the travel plan steering group that in order to achieve the best results from the travel plan staff must be fully aware of the initiatives involved. Intranet pages will be set up to allow staff with internet access to look at all of the available information and articles will be placed in The Flyer to update staff on initiatives and activities linked to the travel plan.
  - (e) Review of car allowances; Through staff focus groups it was identified that there was inequality in the allocation of essential and casual user status. As a result of proposals in the Medium Term Financial Plan, negotiation is currently taking place with trade unions about car allowances.
  - (f) Introduction of cycle pools; Following risk management work, cycle pools will be introduced to the councils main sites. It is envisaged that these will be implemented by Summer 2010.
9. The actions within the travel plan have been assessed with regard to the financial implications, which are highlighted within the action plan. The measures proposed will have some financial implications on a number of individual budgets, however these are minimal and are therefore expected to be managed within existing budgets across the Council. As an example additional cycle parking will be funded from the existing Local Transport Plan budget allocated to cycle parking and travel information will be funded as part of the roles of the Transport Policy Officers.

### **Outcome of Consultation**

10. In September and October 2007 employee focus groups were held with around 30 employees across all council departments to discuss how travel affected their ability to carry out their jobs effectively. Employees were asked to comment on what their job required in relation to their need to travel, what travel problems they faced and possible solutions.
11. The responses from the employee focus groups then informed the first Travel Plan Steering Group which took place on 29th November 2007. The steering group has members of senior staff representing each department and also includes representatives from HR and Unison.

## **The Plan**

12. The Plan has been presented for comment to the Joint Consultative Committee on 16 April 2010. Comments were made about the wording of the Plan in relation to the current negotiations on car allowances and about particular sites. The Plan has been amended to take these comments into account.
13. A copy of the proposed employee travel plan is attached. It includes a wide range of actions designed to achieve the objectives of the plan.
14. The action plan relating to the travel plan has already commenced with salary sacrifice schemes for the purchase of bus tickets and bikes being made available to staff through the cycle to work scheme. The salary sacrifice bus tickets scheme has subsequently had to be withdrawn due to a review of the Revenue and Customs rules. Bus vouchers are available now at all of the main Council buildings for staff to use on work journeys. The implementation and review of the actions within the travel plan is ongoing and will continue as new actions emerge.
15. Approval of the plan does not commit the Council to all the initiatives included within it if they are deemed to be financially unviable upon investigation, the future implementation of the travel plan will be directed and monitored by the existing steering group. In the coming months much more emphasis will be placed upon the promotion and publicity of the plan and the actions contained within it. The plan needs to become more well known and clear benefits for staff communicated to secure buy in across Darlington Borough Council.