

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

**ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
TUESDAY 25 JUNE 2002 at 10.30 a.m.**

Agenda Item No.

1

TOPIC GROUP REVIEW OF TRAVELWISE STRATEGIES

Report of the Director of Environment

Author:- John Sykes, Principal Engineer – Tel No. 01992 556117

Executive Member: - I Tarry

Topic Group Members: N Brook (Chairman), M Bayes, D Drake, S Batson,
I Simpson

1. Purpose of the Report

To advise the Scrutiny Committee on the recommendations of the TravelWise Topic Group following their review of the TravelWise Strategies.

2. Summary

The report sets out how the Topic Group reviewed the current TravelWise Strategies and considered:

- how best to encourage further involvement with schools
- how best to extend the Business TravelWise network
- how to use the “Centre of Excellence” status to help further promote some areas of the TravelWise programme

3. Conclusions

The Committee is invited to consider recommendations proposed by the TravelWise Topic Group and agree those to be referred to the Director of Environment for discussion with the Executive Member and thereafter implementation in liaison with other Directors where appropriate.

4. Background

- 4.1 At the Environment Scrutiny Committee on 22 January 2002, a report was considered which set out how publicity, promotional and educational techniques were being used in Hertfordshire across the key TravelWise target areas of schools, business and community groups.
- 4.2 The Committee strongly supported the TravelWise Campaign and fully endorsed the progress that had been achieved since its launch in 1993. However the Committee also questioned whether it had lost some of its profile, particularly with members and felt that an additional boost was required. It was therefore agreed that a TravelWise Topic Group be established to examine in more detail some aspects of TravelWise strategies and report back with recommendations to a later Committee.
- 4.3 The agreed remit for the Topic Group was to:
“support officers in bringing forward ideas to revitalise the TravelWise Campaign. In particular to review the choice of strategies adopted to encourage schools and businesses to join, and to consider how to most effectively use the “Centre of Excellence” status in the next stage of development”.
- 4.4 At the first meeting on 21 March, Nigel Brook was appointed Chairman and work was broken down into the following areas:
- a) How best to encourage further involvement with schools
 - b) How best to extend the Business TravelWise network
 - c) How to use the “Centre of Excellence” status to help further promote some areas of the TravelWise programme”
- 4.5 Each area was considered in turn over three meetings which took place on 21 March, 12 April and 8 May respectively.

5. Outcomes

- a) Schools
- 5.1 At the meeting on 21 March the Topic Group scrutinised the material presented in the initial report relating to TravelWise work in schools. This also included a detailed analysis of the work programme for the current School Travel Plan Co-ordinator.
- 5.2 Further details were also provided which illustrated the current take up by schools of the recently launched “School Travel Plan Guide”.

Recommendations

5.3 Based on this information, the following recommendations were agreed by the Topic Group to encourage further involvement with schools:

- That a copy of the “School Travel Plan Guide” be sent to the Chair of Governors and headteacher for each school that had not responded to information sent out previously on this guide.
- That schools be given a three month turn around period to respond to the “School Travel Plan Guide” before members are informed of the schools in their division who have not responded. Members would then be encouraged to personally liaise with these schools.
- That there be a “Centre of Excellence” accreditation system devised for schools who complete a School Travel Plan.
- That County Councillors lobby the Government to extend funding for the School Travel Plan Co-ordinator post beyond its current period of three years from April 2001-2004.

b) Business

5.4 At the meeting on 12 April, the Topic Group received further information of the work and current structure of the Business TravelWise network and some sample green travel plans produced by local companies. This also included a review of promotional materials currently used to encourage local employers to develop travel plans for their businesses.

5.5 The Topic Group also undertook a detailed review of the County Hall Travel Plan and its implications for the authority.

Recommendations

5.6 Based on this information, the following recommendations were agreed to help extend the Business TravelWise network:

- That funds for a Green Travel Plan Co-ordinator for business be sought, similar to that of the School Travel Plan Co-ordinator.
- That the parking arrangements within the County Hall Travel Plan be reviewed to include an audit of the member’s car park and other reserved parking spaces.
- That within this audit consideration be given to a bus stop/shelter facility within the grounds of County Hall.
- That the possible introduction of an assisted purchase scheme for bus/rail season tickets for Hertfordshire County Council employees be investigated as part of the Intalink partnership agreement.

c) Centre of Excellence

- 5.7 At the meeting on 8 May, the Topic Group received copies of the DTLR brochure which launched the Centre of Excellence (CoE) programme in March 2002 and details of the budget available to further promote the award.
- 5.8 They also received progress reports on some key 'initiatives' and 'research programmes' which could be used at a 'showcase' event to help promote the TravelWise initiative. This included a new theatre-in-education programme for secondary schools to encourage more responsible behaviour on school buses, along with the current research findings related to the health benefits associated with children who walk to school.

Recommendations

- 5.9 Based on this information, the following recommendations were agreed to help promote TravelWise through the Centre of Excellence status:
- That a one-day seminar be held in July 2002 aimed at local authority practitioners and bus operators, focusing on improving school transport by showcasing a new theatre-in-education production for secondary schools.
 - That the rural transport conference planned for September 2002 should include all the local authorities who have been awarded "Centre of Excellence" status for their work in rural issues.
 - That the annual Local Transport Plan Conference in November 2002 should be extended to act as a showcase for our current innovation in both school and business travel plan work. This would include the dissemination of the outputs from two research projects currently being undertaken by:
 - a) The University College London addressing the health benefits of walking and cycling to school;
 - b) The European programme addressing the effectiveness of the annual "Walk to School Week" campaign.

The conference would also provide an extra opportunity to showcase the current theatre-in-education projects as well as presenting 'real' examples of business travel planning across the Business TravelWise network.

- That a more local conference be held during a weekend in November to supplement the weekday conference and therefore provide opportunities for individuals and groups who are not available during the week to attend.
- That remaining "Centre of Excellence" funds to be used to promote cheaper rail/bus tickets to all businesses, in partnership with local operators and the Interlink and Business TravelWise network.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 Most of the recommendations are achievable within the scope of the current TravelWise budget and/or “Centre of Excellence” award. The recommendations seeking additional or new funds for the School Travel Plan and Business Travel Plan Co-ordinator posts, are initially aimed at securing central Government or other external funding. Failure to achieve external funding for these activities would require further consideration as part of the County Council budget process.