

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT OF THE ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 25 JUNE 2002

NOTE: A copy of the report mentioned below has been sent to all members of the Environment Scrutiny Committee and other members who have requested it. Further copies are available from Nicola Hayden, Room 222, County Secretary's Department, County Hall, Hertford.
(Telephone: 01992 555560)

TOPIC GROUP REVIEW OF TRAVELWISE STRATEGIES

The Scrutiny Committee considered a report setting out the recommendations of the TravelWise Topic Group following their review of the TravelWise strategies.

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".

The Committee congratulated the Topic Group on a very good and helpful piece of scrutiny.

The Committee endorsed the following recommendations proposed by the Topic Group and asked the Director of Environment, in consultation with the Executive Member, to secure their implementation with other Directors:

1. Schools be given a three month turn around period to respond to the School Travel Plan Guide. Where schools have not responded Members would then be encouraged to personally liaise with these schools.
2. A Centre of Excellence accreditation system be devised for those schools who complete a School Travel Plan.
3. That County Councillors lobby Government to extend funding for the School Travel Plan Co-ordinator post beyond April 2004 and seek funding for the creation of a position of Green Travel Plan Co-ordinator.
4. Parking arrangements within the County Hall Travel Plan be reviewed to include an audit of members' car park and reserved parking spaces and consideration be given to a bus stop/shelter facility within the grounds of County Hall.

5. 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.
6. The Rural Transport Conference planned for September 2002 should include all local authorities who have been awarded 'Centre of Excellence' status for their work in rural areas.
7. The annual Local Travel Plan Conference in November 2002 should be extended to act as a showcase for the current innovation in both schools and business travel plan network. This would include the dissemination of the outputs from two research projects currently being undertaken - one addressing the health benefits of walking and cycling to school and one addressing the effectiveness of the annual Walk to School Week campaign.
8. A more local conference be held during a weekend in November to supplement the weekday conference.
9. The remaining 'Centre of Excellence' funds be used to promote cheaper rail/bus tickets to all businesses, in partnership with local operators and the Interlink and Business TravelWise network.

The Committee, however, wished to draw particular attention to the following areas:

- All schools should actively be encouraged to have Home to School Transport plans and members could play an important part in this and the Plans could be on the Education Forum agenda
- Any review of the Home School Agreements should consider recommending inclusion of a commitment to TravelWise issues
- The Walking Bus Scheme, which has been successfully pioneered in Hertfordshire, should be further developed, whilst recognising it relied on the voluntary and consistent involvement of parents.

It was noted that most of the recommendations are achievable within the scope for 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, are initially aimed at securing central Government of other external funding. Failure to achieve external funding for these activities would require further consideration as part of the County Council budget process.

[Since the June meeting significant progress has been made:

Following the endorsement of the report on 25th June 2002, progress has been made on all of the nine recommendations identified in the report – five of which are close to conclusion as summarised below:

- Before the end of the summer term, all schools who had yet to apply for the “School Travel Plan” guide received their copy. If requested, many schools also received a copy of the supporting CD information pack. At the same time, Governing bodies were also sent information about the guide and how they could receive further copies. Follow up to this exercise is planned for this term. It is therefore anticipated that by the start of the January term, members will receive the information of schools in their constituencies that have yet to respond so that they can personally liaise with those concerned to encourage their participation.
- The county is due to produce a progress report to DfT by 30th December 2002 in which it will also lobby the Government to extend the funding for the School Travel Plan Co-ordinator post beyond April 2004.
- The Rural Transport Conference scheduled for 17th September has drawn upon the experiences of other local Authorities in this field where available.
- The annual Local Transport Plan (LTP) Conference has now been arranged for 25th November and will include all of the elements suggested through the Scrutiny Panel recommendations.

A local LTP conference has also been arranged for 2nd November to supplement the weekday conference, as has an internal lunchtime presentation for County Hall staff on the 18th October.]

Chris White
Chairman
County Hall
25 June 2002