

Overview & Scrutiny
In-Depth Review Report

REVIEW OF EMPLOYER TRAVEL PLANS

A Review by a Task and Finish Group set up by the Planning,
Transportation, Economy and Sustainability
Overview and Scrutiny Panel

25th November 2005

Task and Finish Group Members

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Introduction

A Task and Finish Group set up by the Planning, Transportation, Economy and Sustainability (PTES) Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Panel has undertaken a review of Employer Travel Plans, with a view to recommending any necessary improvements to the way in which the Council is developing its own travel plan and also how it can best promote travel plans amongst local employers.

This report sets out the Task and Finish Group's approach to the review, its findings and recommendations to the Council's Executive Member for Transport and Highways.

The report is supported by a number of appendices which provide key background information and evidence for this review.

Context

A travel plan is a general term for a package of measures tailored to the needs of individual sites and aimed at promoting greener, cleaner travel choices and reducing reliance on the car. It involves the development of a set of mechanisms, initiatives and targets that together can enable organisations to reduce the impact of travel and transport on the environment, whilst also bringing a number of other benefits to employers and staff.

A travel plan is a dynamic process designed to grow and develop with time and in accordance with the changing circumstances of an organisation and the environment in which it works. It is not a one-off event nor a document to be produced and put on a shelf. Development of a travel plan for an organisation is designed to encourage staff, and others visiting the organisation's site(s), to use more environmentally-friendly alternatives than driving alone, at least for some of their journeys. To be successful they should contain a mix of incentives and disincentives e.g. car-sharing, promoting more use of public transport, encouraging walking and cycling, restricting on-site car parking spaces and supporting alternative work practices which reduce the need to travel.

Currently Employer Travel Plans are not mandatory, however the Local Authority may require them to be produced as part of the process of a planning application. Some free advice is available from various organisations for employers who wish to prepare travel plans and there is information on both the Council's CIS and on Government websites.

Overview and Scrutiny Involvement

At a meeting of the PTES Overview and Scrutiny Panel on 25th July 2005, the Panel set up a Task and Finish Group to carry out a review on their behalf into Employer Travel Plans. The Task and Finish Group have since undertaken research into issues surrounding national guidelines and best practice guidance on Employer Travel Plans, as well as exploring the current status of Bath and North East

Somerset's own travel plan, the travel plans of local employers, and how other Authorities have worked on both their own plans, and promoting them amongst their local employers.

Purpose of the Overview and Scrutiny Review

The purpose of this review was to explore current practice in Bath and North East Somerset on Employer Travel plans, including the Council's own policy as well as those of other employers in the area. The review also set out to explore issues of best practice, and identify how travel plans can best be further promoted. The Task and Finish Group have taken this opportunity to explore and present options for improvement on these issues.

The Task and Finish Group's recommendations proposing improvements to the way in which the Council is developing its own travel plan and also how it can best promote travel plans amongst local employers will be sent to the Executive Member for Transport and Highways.

This method of working is classified as the 'overview' role of Overview and Scrutiny, where the Task and Finish Group is acting in a pathfinder context to support the Executive as it develops policy, formulates plans and makes decisions around important community issues.

Objectives of the Overview and Scrutiny Review

The objectives of the Task and Finish Group in undertaking this Review have been to recommend:

- Improvements to the way in which the Council currently produces its own Employer Travel Plan
- Future options for creating good practice guidelines for Employer Travel Plans in Bath and North East Somerset
- Options for further promoting Employer Travel Plans amongst employers in the Bath and North East Somerset area.

Appendix 1 provides the full Terms of Reference for this Review.

Review Methodology

The Task and Finish Group have carried out a number of research and evidence gathering activities in order to inform their decisions in this review.

Report from the Service

The Task and Finish Group have received a briefing from the Transportation and Highways Service which covered the following issues:

- The current status of Bath and North East Somerset's own travel plan
- Background on previous work undertaken on the Council's travel plan.
- Details of various initiatives the Council has introduced as part of the travel planning process, including joining a car sharing scheme and departmental promotion of greener travel methods.
- Details of the local "Employers' Travel Forum" which the Council runs, with regular attendance from many local employers.

Correspondence

Through the issuing of a press release, local media coverage, and the use of a webpage the Task and Finish Group sought the views of local people, key stakeholders and interested groups about travel plans. The Task and Finish Group received two submissions in response to their review and these are at Appendix 2.

Desktop Research

The Task and Finish Group carried out research into the following key areas:

- National guidance and best practice guidelines on the development of Employer Travel Plans
- The current status of Bath and North East Somerset's own Employer Travel Plan
- Case studies of other employers' Employer Travel Plans

Good Practice Guidelines

The Task and Finish group have reviewed the guidance available on the websites of the Energy Saving Trust, the Department of Transport, and the Council's own webpage on travel plans.

Current Position in Bath & North East Somerset

The Task and Finish group received a written briefing from Transportation and Highways, which outlined the way in which Bath & North East Somerset is currently developing its own Employer Travel Plan (see details above).

Surveys

The Task and Finish group commissioned three surveys which targeted key groups for information on Employer Travel Plans:

- Other Local Authorities
- Local Employers
- Bath and North East Somerset Council staff

Other Local Authorities

A survey was sent to our twenty benchmarking authorities asking them about their own travel plans and how they promoted travel plans amongst employers in their local area. A copy of the survey and a summary analysis of results are at Appendix 3a and 3b respectively. The Task and Finish Group then approached some Authorities for more detailed information, inviting several to a Contributor session, as well as contacting other local authorities for information on their travel planning processes and travel plans.

Key Local Employers

A survey was sent out to a targeted group of local employers who are currently involved in the Bath and North East Somerset Employers' Travel Forum. This survey sought to find out how local employers had developed their own travel plans, how they promoted them to their staff, and what guidelines and/or support they had draw on. A copy of the survey and a summary of responses are at Appendix 4a and 4b respectively. The Task and Finish Group drew on these survey results to approach some local employers to attend a contributor session.

Bath and North East Somerset Staff

A survey, jointly commissioned by the Task and Finish Group, the Worksmart Project, and the Transportation and Highways Department, was sent to a cross-section of Bath and North East Somerset staff, with a view to eliciting the views of the Councils' own employees. Around 400 employees were selected at random from a database and included casual, full-time and part-time employees. There was a 45% response rate to the survey which was felt to be very good, and the views expressed by respondents were of great value in helping the Task and Finish Group to make recommendations for the shaping of the Council's own travel plan. The questions asked focused around issues such as green travel options, current travel to and from work, and travel whilst at work. A copy of the survey and an analysis of the results can be found at Appendix 5a and Appendix 5b respectively.

Contributor Session

A public Contributor Session was held by the Task and Finish Group on 3rd October. During this half day session the Task and Finish Group heard from the Executive Member for Transport and Highways, Service officers, a representative from another Local Authority, and representatives from local employers.

The invited speakers who attended on the day and the themes around which they were invited to speak were as follows:

Session 1 – Executive Member and Council’s Service Officers to introduce the issue

- Cllr Sir Elgar Jenkins, Executive Member for Transport and Highways
- Laura Gosling, Transport Planner
- Jane Wildblood, Team Leader, Corporate Sustainability

Session 2 – Other Council’s Experiences and Views

- Kathy Saunders, Borough of Poole
- Written submission from Bristol City Council

Session 3 – Local Employers’ Experiences and Views

- Sarah Bailey, BMT Defence Services
- Anne Sharp, Wessex Water
- Nick Helps, Buro Happold

Copies of the presentations made to the Task and Finish Group by these speakers, together with the full notes for the day are at Appendix 6.

Invited contributors who were unable to attend were requested by the Task and Finish Group to make written submissions, and these were also received and considered by the Task and Finish Group. (Appendix 7)

FINDINGS

Due to the range of evidence and information gathered by the Task and Finish Group in this review, the Task and Finish Group’s findings and recommendations have been arranged into thematically organised sections, which reflect the key areas of the scope of this review. Individual recommendations are numbered and set out in highlighted boxes at the end of each section. These recommendations will be submitted to the Executive Member for Transport and Highways through the existing O&S tracking process via the Weekly decision register, and the Executive Member will be asked to respond to the PTES Panel with regard to their recommendations within a six week timescale.

The Task and Finish Group’s full recommendations are laid out below, with a summary available at Appendix 8.

The Council's Own Employer Travel Plan

The Task and Finish Group established that at present the Council does not have an Employer Travel Plan of its own, although work has been being done to develop one. However the survey of staff clearly demonstrated that few staff knew that this work was being done (14%).

The Group feel strongly that it is vital that the Council's own travel plan is given priority to develop and that it is only from this basis that the Council will be able to effectively encourage other local employers to do the same. Several of the invited speakers at the Contributor Session, including the representative from the Borough of Poole highlighted the importance of the Council leading by example in producing a travel plan. Poole related how they had been criticised in their CPA inspection for not having their own travel plan completed, whilst trying to encourage other employers to produce one. Whilst the Council can make the development of a travel plan a requirement for a planning application by a local employer, it was clearly felt that it was far better to encourage employers to look at travel planning rather than to force them. The first step to this is seen very clearly as setting our own house in order and developing a good Employer Travel Plan for Bath and North East Somerset Council.

Several contributors also emphasised that in order to get the Council's own travel plan off the ground it was vital to have top-down senior management and political support. The Task and Finish Group strongly endorse this viewpoint and believe that an initiative to develop our own travel plan should be led by the Chief Executive. In practical terms the Group felt that an Employer Travel Planning Project Board should be set up to run this process which would act as a working group with sub-groups operating for individual sites. Representatives on this Board should include a relevant Director (possibly the Director for Operations), an Executive Member (possible the Executive Member for Transport and Highways or the Executive Member for Sustainability and the Environment), a senior representative from Human Resources, and a staff representative from each of the Council sites.

In practical terms the Task and Finish group learnt that guidance suggests that a travel plan should be site specific and therefore a different approach to travel planning may be required for each site of an organisation. Therefore due to the Council's multiple sites, the travel plan would need to consist of one key document outlining the overarching strategic issues, with appendices for each individual site. It is also important that travel plans are reviewed each year, therefore the travel plan would not be a one-off piece of work but a living document which would need to be revisited on a regular basis.

At present the Council has 0.2 of a full-time-equivalent post working on travel planning issues. This work covers not only the Council's own travel plan and other employers' travel plans but also covers other related issues such as car-sharing. The Task and Finish Group clearly identified a need for more staff resource in order to undertake this work, and they feel that at least one full time equivalent post is necessary in order to co-ordinate the work and encourage roll-out to other employers.

The Department for Transport, through the Transport Energy Best Practice scheme currently provide 5 days free travel planning advice for organisations. Unfortunately this is shortly to come to an end, however Bath and North East Somerset's Transportation and Highways Service have applied for this 5 days of advice in order to kick-start our own travel plan, and the Task and Finish Group strongly support this move. It is hoped that this application is successful.

The staff survey indicated that the car is still the dominant form of transport for staff with a minority using buses for their journey to and from work. However those using cars and buses, as opposed to other means of travel tended to find their journeys to work least easy. This suggests that a twofold approach should be taken within the Council's travel plan. Measures should be taken not only to encourage and facilitate alternative forms of transport so that staff and also Elected Members can be enabled to use greener travel modes where they wish to and where possible, but also to address car use in order to ensure that where this continues it is done in as environmentally friendly and sustainable a way as possible.

On reviewing the evidence the Task and Finish Group felt that there were several key issues which the Council's travel plan could address. They were very impressed by the information they received about Islington Council's pool car scheme, in which those employees who needed to travel during the day for work were able to use a pool car run on environmentally friendly fuel, such as LPG or electricity. It was felt that a similar scheme could be effectively used in Bath and North East Somerset with pool cars based at Keynsham, The Hollies in Midsomer Norton, and in central Bath. Of those who responded to the survey 22% travelled once or twice a day as part of their work, whilst 24% travelled for work at least once a week, and those who made comments about travelling for work said that having a pool car was an attractive option. More work would need to be done to establish how many cars would be needed, how many employees currently use vans who could use pool cars, and further investigations of costs. Whilst the Task and Finish Group recognise that this initiative would require some investment they felt there were clear benefits to be achieved, not only environmental but also financial. There would be better financial control over transport costs, and the Council would no longer have to pay a mileage rate to those using their own cars. The staff survey responses indicated that staff felt that converting Council vehicles to LPG or other environmentally friendly fuels would encourage greener travel. Environmentally the cars would be more fuel efficient and less polluting, and fewer people would have to bring cars into work simply in order to be mobile during their working day. There was some anecdotal evidence that in some cases people who might otherwise have walked into work or used public transport, were forced to bring their cars into work because they needed them for work during the day. The staff survey also suggested that many of those who commented on travelling as part of their work had concerns over the costs to them both in time and money, and this might also be addressed through pool cars, flexible working schemes and so on. Similar issues can be identified as relevant to Elected Members and the use of pool cars running on environmentally friendly fuels could also be of benefit to them.

The Task and Finish Group also felt that for some employees and possibly Elected Members a company car scheme, with all vehicles run on environmentally friendly

fuel, might also ultimately save the Council money in mileage claims, and promote more environmentally friendly fuel use.

The investigation of these issues could be undertaken and co-ordinated by the working group.

The Task and Finish Group felt there were several ways in which the Council could use its travel plan to promote more sustainable means of transport to staff and Elected Members. It was felt cycling could be encouraged by promoting the existing cycle loan scheme and encouraging local companies to come in and demonstrate bikes to interested employees. Similarly it was felt that further promotion could be done of season ticket purchase schemes which are available to staff for use on public transport. Some work needs to be done to ensure that employees are made aware of all these various schemes, and it was felt that this could in part be addressed by a guide to travel in the authority being issued to all new employees.

Staff responding to the survey, suggested that a way of encouraging environmentally friendly travel amongst staff would be to make use of the resources the Council already has to provide in-house transport. The Task and Finish Group also supported this view, and felt there should be an investigation into the feasibility of introducing a multi-purpose vehicle which could go between council buildings carrying not only post as currently happens, but also taking staff and/or Elected Members as well, who could then arrange their meetings at other offices as necessary.

Where employees still need or wish to travel by car, car-sharing may prove a useful tool for the Council in encouraging people travelling on the same or a similar journey to pool their resources and travel in groups of 2 or more. This can prove cost-saving for employees as well as being good for the environment. There is currently a car sharing scheme called 2CarShare.com which has been co-ordinated by the four local authorities of Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol City, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire working together with *liftshare*, who implement car sharing schemes throughout the UK. Those who are interested in car sharing can use this website to find others travelling by the same route, and also to see how much money car sharing could save them. The survey of staff showed that 88% of those responding were aware of the 2CarShare scheme, but only a third felt they would consider it as an option. It may be that this reluctance could in part be addressed by a suggestion raised at the Contributor session that the Council could initiate its own stand-alone internal version of this which would allow employees through the intranet to identify others travelling on similar journeys including during the day between various Council offices, and to arrange to share lifts. The Task and Finish Group understand that all is in place to do this and it needs launching and promoting, and they would strongly recommend that this happens and is linked into the wider travel planning work in the Council. A suggestion which came out from the staff survey was that this could be tied into a "carrot/stick" approach in which employees were rewarded for using transport methods which other than a single occupancy car. It was also felt that work in this area could be linked into the relaunch on 1st November of the Bath Car Share Club which allows members access to short term car hire on a pay as you drive basis. As with consideration of a car pool all these measures could also be of value to Elected Members who might also wish to take advantage of them.

Many of the initiatives which the Task and Finish Group feel should be introduced as part of the Council's travel planning process can be clearly linked to the current Worksmart project being undertaken by the Council. Worksmart is exploring ways in which the Council's employees can work "smarter", making use of flexible working practices, home working, tele-conferencing and so on. It is precisely this kind of culture shift which will be necessary in order to underpin a move by both the Council and its employees towards a commitment to environmentally sustainable transport and green travel planning. More flexible working will interact with employees' ability to travel in different ways, and may also reduce the need for so many employees to make "unnecessary" work-related journeys. This view is supported by the findings of the staff survey which showed that 53% of those surveyed were interested in home working and that many cited flexible working arrangements as a means to encourage environmentally friendly travel. Others also suggested that offices closer together could encourage more green travel, and 41% were either very or quite interested in working at a Council office nearer to their home. Proposed Worksmart initiatives such as making it easier to use nearby offices for hotdesking, might well go some way to addressing this.

The evidence given by Borough of Poole Council clearly suggested that work to introduce employer travel plans was not cost-free and would certainly not succeed if approached primarily as a means for the Council to save money. The Task and Finish Group recognise that there are some cost implications to the work they are recommending take place, and that in order to introduce initiatives some initial investment may well be necessary. However, they strongly feel that such work would ultimately lead to costs benefits to the Council, as well as other less tangible benefits.

In terms of cost benefits, several local employers attending the Contributor Session noted that a good employer travel plan led to happier employees who were less likely to be sick, and were more productive. This would naturally be of benefit both to employees' well-being but also in financial terms to the Council. As has already been suggested, mileage costs could be reduced, as well as there being environmental benefits from a pool of cars all running on cleaner fuels.

A good travel plan which encouraged and enabled employees to make greater use of public transport, could also act as a lever for encouraging improved public transport, and a greater range of services. This was something which was corroborated by the survey of staff in which many suggested that improved reliability and frequency of buses, negotiating improved fares on trains and buses, and improved bus lanes could act as a means of encouraging more staff to travel in a more environmentally friendly way.

There was also a clear lesson to be learnt from Poole where a CPA inspection had noted their lack of a travel plan and identified that in order for Poole to promote good practice in Employers that they should lead by example and develop and promote their own first. Good travel planning could help with inspection results, and it could also further promote the Council's reputation as a good employer and an environmentally responsible local authority and community leader.

The Task and Finish Group therefore recommends that:

1. The Council should give priority to developing its own Employer Travel Plan. In this way it can lead by example and encourage other employers to do likewise. This leadership should come from the Chief Executive and the Executive members.
2. In order to achieve the necessary Council-wide commitment to producing a good Employer Travel Plan it is vital that top-down senior management and political support is given to this work, and the Task and Finish Group feels that the work should be championed by the Chief Executive.
3. An Employer Travel Planning Project Board should be set up in the Council which should:
 - Act as a working group to drive work through on the travel plan
 - Have sub-groups to lead on travel plans for different Council sites
 - Include in its membership: a relevant Director (possibly the Director for Operations); an Executive Member (possibly the Executive Member for Transport and Highways or the Executive Member for Sustainability and the Environment); a senior representative from Human Resources; and a staff representative from each of the Council sites
4. A separate travel plan should be produced for each Council site, and these would then form appendices to an overarching strategic document.
5. The travel plan will need to be reviewed on a yearly basis and should be seen as a living document rather than a one-off process
6. A full time equivalent post should be introduced to lead on travel planning work in the Authority, to oversee the roll-out of the travel plan, and to encourage and help other local employers to produce their own plans.
7. The Council's travel plan should adopt a twofold approach with measures taken not only to encourage and facilitate alternative forms of transport so that staff and Elected Members can be enabled to use greener travel modes where they wish to and where possible, but also to address car use in order to ensure that where this continues it is done in as environmentally friendly and sustainable a way as possible
8. The Working Group should be asked to investigate establishing a Pool Car system with bases in Keynsham, The Hollies and Bath. Pool cars should be run on LPG, or other environmentally friendly fuels. Work would need to be done to establish how many cars would be needed, how many employees currently use vans who could use pool cars, and further investigations of costs.
9. The Executive is also asked to consider tasking the working group to

investigate the feasibility of introducing a company car scheme for some employees and Elected Members which should consist of vehicles run on environmentally friendly fuel.

10. More environmentally friendly means of transport should be promoted to staff and Elected Members (where available) through:
 - Promoting the Council's cycle loan scheme
 - Encouraging local companies to come in and give bike demos to staff
 - Promoting season ticket purchase schemes to staff
 - The production of a guide for new staff which should be issued when a new member of staff joins with the Authority. This guide would set out the various schemes available to staff and the Council's policies on encouraging greener travel to and for its employees
 - The use of practical incentives to encourage green transport, such as a free bacon butty for those who cycle in and so on.
11. The Executive is asked to investigate the feasibility of introducing a multi-purpose vehicle which could carry staff and Elected Members, as well as post, between Council buildings. The utilisation of all vehicles in the Council's transport fleet should be explored to achieve this.
12. The Council should complete work to launch and promote its own stand-alone internal version of the car sharing scheme which would allow employees and Elected Members through the intranet to identify others travelling on similar journeys including during the day between various Council offices, and to arrange to share lifts. This could be linked to the work of the Bath Car Share Club which is being relaunched on 1st November 2005.
13. Consideration should be given to introducing some kind of reward scheme to employees and Elected Members who make use of means of transport other than single-occupancy cars.
14. Clear links should be established between travel planning work in the Council and the Worksmart Project which is currently underway. It should be recognised that new working practices can help to reinforce and enable greener travel.
15. There should be a recognition that there are some cost implications to the work which is being recommended by this review, and that in order to introduce initiatives some initial investment may well be necessary. However, it is strongly felt that such work would ultimately lead to cost benefits to the Council, as well as other less tangible benefits, and these are set out in detail in the Findings section of the report.

Future options for creating good practice guidelines for Employer Travel Plans in Bath and North East Somerset

As has been already stated, the Task and Finish Group believe that the Council should lead by example on Employer Travel Plans. By putting in the necessary work outlined above on their own travel plan, the Council would then be in a far stronger position to act as an advocate of travel planning to other organisations in the Bath and North East Somerset area.

The Task and Finish Group felt that it would be useful to produce a leaflet to give to other employers which would offer advice on travel planning, as well as setting out the benefits. It was felt that this could be linked to the Council's own travel planning work by being in part a "how we did it" style guide, which would set out the Council's own journey in producing their plan, its benefits, potential pitfalls, and best practice.

The Task and Finish group gave some consideration to the contents of such a guide, and as well as the "how we did it" information, felt that other useful items would be:

- Examples of good practice, locally such as Wessex Water, and nationally such as Islington Council
- A "how to" section with a step by step guide to producing a travel plan
- A section on the benefits of producing a travel plan
- Frequently asked questions and answers

National guidance is available for travel planning which Calderdale, Solihull, Herefordshire and Darlington all said they had drawn on in drawing up their travel plans. It would be important to draw on this national guidance in order to inform and develop a local set of guidelines.

The Group were impressed by Borough of Poole's Supplementary Planning Guidance on travel plans, which includes details about travel plans, their benefits, when a travel plan is required as part of a planning application, and how to produce one. It was felt that this would be well worthwhile developing in Bath and North East Somerset.

It was felt that some branding work would be useful in order to create a strong identity for travel planning work in the area – such as Poole's "Travel Wise" slogan.

The Group also felt that the Council could help organisations to think about the kind of practical needs which might be necessary to help their employees travel in a more sustainable manner. These could include provision of:

- Cycle racks
- Showers
- Changing facilities
- Umbrellas for walkers
- Towel drying areas

The Task and Finish Group therefore recommends that:

16. By putting in work on its own travel plan the Council should become a leader in the field of travel planning, able to act as an advocate to other employers in the area.
17. A leaflet should be produced to give to other employers which would offer advice on travel planning, as well as setting out the benefits. This should be linked to the Council's own travel planning work by being in part a "how we did it" style guide, which would set out the Council's own journey in producing their plan, its benefits, potential pitfalls, and best practice. The guide should include:
 - "How we did it" information from the Council
 - Examples of good practice, locally such as Wessex Water, and nationally such as Islington Council
 - A "how to" section with a step by step guide to producing a travel plan
 - A section on the benefits of producing a travel plan
 - Frequently asked questions and answers

The guide should draw on existing national guidelines as a base for developing local ones.
18. Work should be done on developing supplementary planning guidance on travel plans which would include:
 - Details about travel plans and their benefits
 - When a travel plan is required as part of a planning application
 - How to produce a travel plan
19. The Executive is asked to consider undertaking some branding work in order to create a strong identity for travel planning work in the area. An example of this kind of work is Poole's "Travel Wise" slogan.
20. The Council could help advise organisations in thinking about the practical needs which might be necessary to help their employees travel in a more sustainable manner. These could include provision of:
 - Cycle racks
 - Showers
 - Changing facilities
 - Umbrellas for walkers
 - Towel drying areas

Options for promoting Employer Travel Plans among local employers

The Task and Finish group recognise that there is a great deal of linkage between producing guidelines on travel planning for local employers and promoting travel plans in the area. By producing their own travel plan, and then using this work to inform guidance for local employers, the Council would then be in a good position to use their own experience and the guidance to promote travel plans amongst local employers. Once again the key theme which the Group identified is that of the Council leading by example.

The Task and Finish Group identified some key ways in which the Council could encourage and promote the introduction of travel plans amongst local employers, and also facilitate local employers to encourage each other.

The Group recognised the good work already being done by the Bath and North East Somerset Employers' Travel Forum. This group, organised by the Council brings together key local employers with travel plans to discuss travel related issues. The local employers who were invited to attend the contributor session were all members of this group. It was felt that this group is a valuable source of enthusiasm which could be tapped to encourage others to take up the benefits of travel planning. The evidence of companies such as Buro Happold and Wessex Water who told the Panel of the benefits their organisation had experienced from investing in travel planning work, could be used as testimonials to encourage others to explore similar options in their organisations.

It was felt that it would be very helpful to undertake an audit of local employers and key sites of employment to help target promotional work. Performance indicators could be built up around this to set targets for numbers of new employers to produce a travel plan per year.

This kind of audit could also help to establish where employers could usefully come together to create a joint travel plan. For whilst travel plans need to be site specific this can not only mean that a large organisation with several sites will need more than one plan, but also that several employers working out of one site, such as an industrial park, might be able to pool their resources and produce a joint travel plan. Such joint work might also allow a group of employers to negotiate with local public transport companies for better travel links to their site.

As well as producing local guidelines for travel plans, the Council could also take up the example of Herefordshire who produced and distributed a magazine about travel planning and green transport to all local employers. This could be used both to share information and also to further promote travel planning benefits and good practice.

It has been previously noted that The Department for Transport are shortly to stop providing the previously available 5 days of free transport planning advice to organisations. This is clearly an identifiable gap which the Council may be able to go some way towards filling. Whilst in terms of resources it is unlikely that they would be able to provide a direct substitute for such a service, guidance, mutual support

through the Travel Forum, and the role of a full time officer to work on travel planning issues could all make a significant difference in the local community.

The Task and Finish group felt that all three areas of work to be addressed; the Council's own travel plan, local best practice guidance, and promotion of travel plans to employers, required a unified promotional strategy. The Council's own travel plan should be launched both internally to our own employees but also externally in order to encourage other organisations to take up the Council's example. A launch could be a good opportunity to reach out to other local employers and promote travel planning ideas and values. Use could also be made of existing local events such as mixer evenings run by Business West, in order to reach out to our local employers. Internal promotional ideas such as bike demos could also be shared to a wider audience in order to forge links with other organisations.

The Task and Finish Group therefore recommends:

21. The Council should capitalise on its own experience in producing its travel plan and in producing guidance in order to help promote Employer Travel Plans to other organisations in Bath and North East Somerset
22. The Bath and North East Somerset Employers' Travel Forum should be drawn on as an existing and valuable source of enthusiasm which could be tapped to encourage others to take up the benefits of travel planning. The evidence of companies such as Buro Happold and Wessex Water who told the Panel of the benefits their organisation had experienced from investing in travel planning work, could be used as testimonials to encourage others to undertake similar work in their own organisations.
23. An audit should be undertaken of local employers and key sites of employment in the Bath and North East Somerset area. This could be used to help target promotional work, and also as a baseline for setting performance indicators to encourage the Council to achieve a certain number of new travel plans from organisations per year.
24. Where several employers are working out of one site, such as an industrial park, they should be encouraged to pool their resources and produce a joint travel plan. Such joint work might also allow a group of employers to negotiate with local public transport companies for better travel links to their site.
25. Consideration should be given to the production of a travel planning magazine for distribution to local employers. This could include:
 - Information sharing articles
 - Promotion of the benefits of travel planning
 - Good practice guidelines and tips

26. Consideration should be given to the ways in which the Council could help to fill the gap left by the withdrawal of the 5 days free travel planning advice which until recently has been provided by The Department for Transport, through the Transport Energy Best Practice scheme. With resources issues in mind it is unlikely that it would be appropriate for the Council to provide a direct substitute for such a service however thought could be given to:

- Offering guidance to local employers
- The encouragement of mutual support for employers through the Travel Forum
- The ways in which a full time officer dedicated to work on travel planning could help to advise and influence local organisations

27. A unified promotional strategy should be developed to address all three aspects of the Task and Finish Group's recommendations. This should include:

- A launch of the Council's own travel plan both internally to our own employees but also externally in order to encourage other organisations to take up the Council's example.
- This launch should be utilised as an opportunity for reaching out to other local employers and promoting travel planning
- Consideration should be given to making use of existing local events such as mixer evenings run by Business West, in order to reach out to our local employers
- Internal promotional ideas such as bike demos could also be shared to a wider audience in order to forge links with other organisations

Appendices

Appendix 1	Terms of Reference for the Review
Appendix 2	Correspondence received by the Task and Finish Group
Appendix 3a	Survey of Local Authorities
Appendix 3b	Summary analysis of results of survey of Local Authorities
Appendix 4a	Survey of Local Employers
Appendix 4b	Summary analysis of results of survey of local employers
Appendix 5a	Survey of Bath and North East Somerset Council Employees
Appendix 5b	Analysis of results of survey of Council Employees
Appendix 6	Notes of Contributor Session
Appendix 7	Written submissions from invited contributors
Appendix 8	Summary table of recommendations

Appendices are available separately and copies can be obtained by contacting the Overview and Scrutiny Team, Democratic Services, Guildhall, High Street, Bath, BA1 5AW, or by e-mail to scrutiny@bathnes.gov.uk or by telephoning 01225 396410.