

**VALE GREEN TRAVEL PLAN**  
**PHASE ONE**

The proposed content of Phase 1 of the Vale's new Green Travel Plan is as follows:

- Travel Plan web site
- Subsidised bus travel
- Oxford/Abingdon business travel by bus
- Free cycle loans
- Increase cycle mileage allowance
- Provision of secure cycle parking
- Provision of lockers
- Promote use of Council bicycle
- Managing business journeys
- Car share club

In order to determine those measures which would be relatively easy to implement, each measure has been considered in relation to:

- Implementation issues
- Staff set-up resource requirements
- Capital costs
- Revenue costs
- Consultation feed back
- Links to the Aims and Objectives

**VALE TRAVEL PLAN WEB SITE**

Linking from the Vale's Intranet, a travel plan page will provide staff with a "home base" for all GTP information. Included on the site will be details of each of the various measures, together with such things as bus timetables and local walking/cycling maps.

**Issues** a) The site will require a commitment for on-going maintenance

b) The Oxfordshire County Council and local bus operators have web sites which fully detail bus timetables. It is proposed to provide links to these sites. This will alleviate the need for the Vale to maintain and up-date the timetables.

c) There are a number of existing base maps which show walking and cycling routes. Using this information a new Vale map can be prepared which shows routes in Abingdon together with links to local villages. This information could be made available via the Council's web site to a wider public audience

**Set-Up Resources** Planning and IT staff

**Capital Costs** Nil

**Revenue Costs** Nil

This measure require staff time only, for both setting-up the web site and for its on-going maintenance

**Consultation Feed Back** Limited support for this measure

**Links to Aims and Objectives** Aims 1a), 1b). Objectives 1a), 1b), 1c), 2b).

**Comments** It will be important to install this web site at the out-set to be both the “launch” focus point, as well as providing detailed information on each of the various measures being implemented.

This measure is therefore required at the out-set of phase 1

## **SUBSIDISED BUS TRAVEL**

Providing staff with subsidised home/work bus passes

- Issues**
- a) The travel survey undertaken in the spring 2004 showed that only 4 staff regularly travel to work by public transport.
  - b) As a guide, the current cost of an annual all zone bus pass which would cover the journey between Abingdon and Oxford is £500. The Council will offer a 20% discount to encourage staff to use public transport.
  - c) Discussions with local bus operators regarding discounts on bulk purchase of bus passes were inconclusive. They have no standard bulk discount rate, and both companies commented that bus passes by their very nature, are discounted. Both companies did however confirm that they would consider the matter further once actual numbers are known. It is likely that a fairly low take-up by Vale staff would not attract a bulk discount rate.
  - d) In order to make this measure as attractive as possible, staff could be given the options of, either purchasing their own bus pass and reclaiming the subsidy from the Council; or, for the Council to purchase the bus pass and recover the cost, less the subsidy, monthly over a year through the employee's salary.
  - e) This measure is seen as a very green initiative

**Set-Up Resources** Nil

**Capital Costs** Nil

**Revenue Costs** Assuming a take-up of 10 staff (which is probably optimistic), given a subsidy of 20% on a bus pass valued at £500, the annual revenue cost would be £1000

**Consultation Feed Back** This measure was well supported

**Links to Aims and Objectives** Aim 1a) Objective 1b)

**Comments** This measure is one of the major incentives in the GTP package. It is a quick fix measure requiring limited effort to implement. It does contribute towards the GTP Aims and Objectives and should therefore be implemented at the out-set of Phase 1. Revenue funds will need to be provided.

## **ABINGDON - OXFORD BUSINESS TRAVEL**

Staff and Members will be required to use public transport when attending meetings and other business appointments in central Oxford.

- Issues**
- a) If staff choose to use their car for this journey, then no mileage/car parking allowance will be paid. The only exception to this is where the officer returns home following the meeting (where the officer does not live in Abingdon)

- b) Consideration has been given to holding bus passes at Abbey House for use by staff and members. Neither Stagecoach nor Oxford Bus Company will offer a discount on the purchase, by the Council, of a limited number of passes. The cost of an annual pass is £500. Whilst there may be some limited convenience in the Council providing passes, it will be more cost effective for staff and members to claim the cost of their bus journey via their monthly expenses claim
- c) At a review stage, depending on the success of this measure, the Council may consider purchasing and holding bus passes for use by staff.

**Set-Up Resources** Nil

**Capital Costs** Nil

**Revenue Costs** Nil

**Consultation Feed Back** Very limited support for this measure

**Links to Aims and Objectives** Aim 1a). Objective 1b)

**Comments** This is a quick fix measure requiring limited effort to implement. It does contribute towards the GTP Aims and Objectives and should therefore be implemented at the outset of Phase 1

## **FREE LOANS FOR CYCLE PURCHASE**

Providing staff with an interest free loan for the purchase of new bicycles. The loan would be over a twelve month period with monthly repayments taken direct from salaries

- Issues**
- a) No guarantee that a member of staff will use the cycle, purchased through the scheme, for travelling to work.
  - b) A standard “small” loan agreement will need to be drawn up
  - c) The scheme could take advantage of the Government’s “Cyclescheme” initiative, which allows employees to lease a bicycle from their employer, exempt of Income Tax, National Insurance and VAT

**Set-Up Resources** Legal staff

**Capital Costs** Nil

**Revenue Costs** Deminimus

Scheme could be administered by Finance Section, as with the current car loan scheme.

**Consultation Feed Back** Very limited support for this measure

**Links to Aims and Objectives** Aim 1a) Objective 1a)

**Comments** This is a quick fix measure requiring limited effort to implement. It does contribute towards the GTP Aims and Objectives and should therefore be implemented at the outset of Phase 1

### **INCREASE CYCLE MILEAGE ALLOWANCE**

The Council currently pays 12p per mile to staff that use a bicycle for business journeys. This allowance has not been reviewed since 1999 and there are currently no staff making claims for using a bicycle. The initial draft plan proposal was to increase this allowance to 20p per mile

- Issues**
- a) It is hoped that this will be an added encouragement for staff to cycle to work, and accordingly use their cycles for local business journeys. It is however unlikely that 20p per mile will be of sufficient incentive to change peoples' habits, a higher rate in the range of 40-50p per mile would be comparable with a car mileage rate, which retains the measure as cost neutral. However, a rate of £1.00 per mile should be agreed, to provide a real incentive
  - b) A 20p per mile rate is the maximum allowed by the Inland Revenue. Any rate above this is therefore deemed to be taxable (i.e. At £1.00 per mile, 80p will be taxable)
  - c) It has to be acknowledged that cycling to an appointment may take longer than travelling by car and is only feasible up to say 3-4 miles.

**Set-Up Resources** Nil

**Capital Costs** Nil

**Revenue Costs** Deminimus

**Consultation Feed Back** Very limited support for this measure

**Links to Aims and Objectives** Aim 1a) Objective 1a)

**Comments** This is a quick fix measure requiring limited effort to implement. It does contribute towards the GTP Aims and Objectives and should therefore be implemented at the outset of Phase 1

### **PROVISION OF SECURE CYCLE PARKING**

The provision of additional secure, covered cycle parking at Abbey House.

- Issues**
- a) The current cycle parking between Old and New Abbey Houses is well used by staff and the public and is very often full.
  - b) Additional cycle parking is available in the Cattle Market car park. However, this parking is not well used and is seen by staff as remote, unsecured and uncovered.
  - c) Secure, covered cycle parking, dedicated to staff, can be provided by either: establishing new staff cycle parking adjacent to the rear entrance of Abbey House, or providing new public racks, thus enabling the existing cycle parking to be up-graded for staff use only.

**Set-Up Resources** Property and Estates have advised that they will not be able to assist in this project during this financial year. The project set up would therefore need to be resourced using Planning staff.

**Capital Costs** Not currently known, but a scheme within the overall GTP project budget of £30,000 will be achievable.

**Revenue Costs** Nil

Minor maintenance from time to time. There will be the need for a person to be responsible for the issuing and monitoring of keys.

**Consultation Feed Back** A well supported measure

**Links to Aims and Objectives** Aim 1a) Objective 1a)

**Comments** This measure is one of the major “carrots in the GTP package and does contribute towards the GTP Aims and Objectives. The scheme will require detailed design and planning consent (being within the conservation area) which will need to be progressed by Planning staff. The scheme should therefore be implemented as part of Phase 1, subject to staff resources being available, and subject to it being within budget.

## **PROVIDE STAFF LOCKERS**

The provision of lockers in the existing staff room to complement the new staff shower facility.

**Issues** a) It is difficult to assess the value of having staff lockers. However, most GTP guidance says that in order to promote cycling, an employer should provide good quality staff showers and lockers.

b) It is suggested that a bank of say 15 lockers is initially be provided. Their use would be monitored with a bid to extend the provision if necessary.

**Set-Up Resources** Property and Estates have advised that they will not be able to assist in this project during this financial year. The project would therefore need to be resourced using Planning staff.

**Capital Costs** Not currently known, but a scheme within the overall GTP project budget of £30,000 will be achievable.

**Revenue Costs** Nil

Minor maintenance from time to time and there will be the need for keys to be issued and monitored.

**Consultation Feed Back** Very little support for this measure

**Links to Aims and Objectives** Aim 1a) Objective 1a)

**Comments** This measure does contribute towards the GTP Aims and Objectives. The scheme will need to be progressed by Planning staff. The scheme should therefore be implemented as part of Phase 1, subject to being within budget limits.

## **PROMOTE USE OF COUNCIL BICYCLE**

To encourage the use of the Council's bicycle for local business journeys

- Issues** a) The Council currently has a bicycle, kept at the Guildhall, which was originally purchased as part of a "healthier staff" promotion. It is understood that the bicycle is very rarely used
- b) To make this attractive the bicycle needs to be easily accessible, and its use probably needs to be controlled by a booking system.
- c) The frequent maintenance of the bicycle needs to be arranged including issues such as ensuring the tyres are pumped up, ready for use.

**Set-Up Resources** Planning staff

**Capital Costs** The intention would be to purchase two further bicycles, giving a total of three. The cost of the new bicycles will be met from the overall project budget

**Revenue (on-going) Costs** £250 per annum for cycle maintenance and mileage costs

**Consultation Feed Back** Very limited support for this measure

**Links to Aims and Objectives** Aim 1a) Objectives 1a), 1c).

**Comments** Whilst this appears to be an easy measure to implement, it is likely to prove cumbersome to manage. The measure does contribute to the GTP Aims and Objectives and should be implemented as part of phase 1, but not as a priority measure. It should perhaps be linked to the provision of the secure cycle parking measure. The issue of cycle maintenance, eg insuring that the tyres are correctly inflated so that the cycle is ready for use, will need to be addressed.

## **MANAGING BUSINESS JOURNEYS**

A Good Practice Document to be produced for staff, managers and members, giving advice on planning and managing business journeys

- Issues** a) The Council will need to encourage its managers to embrace "managing business journeys" so that managers can promote and monitor better planning of excursions, eg. car sharing where staff are travelling to the same destination, linking a number of visits into one journey. To aid this it is proposed to produce a simple guide giving examples of good practice.
- b) Targets should be set at Service Area level to encourage and reward changes to greener/smarter travel, and a process for sharing good practice can be developed.
- c) Under this heading the Council might wish to review its policy of holding meetings at various locations throughout the district.

**Set-Up Resources** Planning Staff

**Capital Costs** Nil

**Revenue Costs** Nil

This will involve the production of a simple “good practice guide” to enable service managers to engage their staff

**Consultation Feed Back** No support for this measure

**Links to Aims and Objectives** Aims 1a), 1b). Objectives 2b)

**Comments** Whilst the production of a good practice guide may take some time and may not significantly change the habits of most staff, it will raise awareness of the GTP and show a commitment from the Council to enlist the assistance of its managers and Members, in promoting the Aims and Objectives of the GTP. The measure should be implemented as part of phase 1.

## **CAR SHARE CLUB**

Staff formally participate in car sharing for their home to work journeys

**Issues** a) This measure is always seen as high on the list in any GTP guidance, and there are many examples of Car Share Clubs, the details of which the Council could draw upon.

- b) Fundamentally, clubs need to be web site based, allowing participants to advertise and communicate directly with each other.
- c) The site/scheme needs to be designed to ensure that on-going maintenance is kept to a minimum, but realistically, it is this measure which will require the most on-going maintenance.
- d) Participants would need to formally “sign-up” to the club and undertake to car share for a minimum number of days each month. In return for staff committing to the club, participants are given preferential parking, eg a space in the Cattle Market car park.
- e) The Council would need to guarantee a free lift home for staff for circumstances such as, a home emergency, a request to work late, etc.
- f) There will be issues to consider such as staff giving a lift to a colleague who doesn't drive
- g) IT will require reasonable time to set up the site.

**Set-Up Resources** Planning and IT staff

**Capital Costs** Nil

**Revenue Costs** £750 per annum for taxi fares etc; see e) above.

Preferential staff parking at the Cattle Market may result in other customers being displaced to other town centre car parks. However, this is unlikely to have a significant effect on car park revenue income

**Consultation Feed Back** Well supported measure

**Links to Aims and Objectives** Aims 1a), 1b). Objective 1c)

**Comments** This measure does contribute towards the GTP Aims and Objectives and should be introduced as soon as possible. However, setting up the scheme will take some time. There will also be resource implications in relation to the scheme's on-going management.

As a result, it is suggested that work on preparing this measure commences immediately, but implemented in the early part of phase 2.