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Heston & Cranford Area Committee Monitoring – 29 January 2009

PERSONALISED TRAVEL PLANNING PROGRAMME IN HOUNSLOW

Report by: Director of Environment

Summary

This report summarises, for member information, the upcoming sustainable transport promotion project which is to be undertaken in Hounslow borough during spring/summer 2009. This pilot project (centrally funded by Transport for London using staff employed by the consultancy Steer Davis Gleave) involves consulting with a large number of residents in order to discuss their travel habits and identify opportunities for them to increase the use of sustainable travel methods. Encouragement and incentives to make this change will also be provided where appropriate.

1.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:

- 1.1 Notes the contents of this report.
- 1.2 Support the implementation of this initiative.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 “Personal Travel Planning (PTP) is a technique that delivers information, incentives and motivation to individuals to help them voluntarily make sustainable travel choices. It seeks to overcome habitual use of the car, enabling more journeys to be made on foot, by bike, bus train or in shared cars. PTP forms an important part of UK national and local transport policy, contributing to the suite of tools promoted under the general heading of ‘smarter choices”

Department for Transport, Making Personalised Travel Planning work, 2007

- 2.2 Personal Travel Planning is one of the many measures being deployed by the Smarter Travel Unit at Transport for London (TfL) to address the challenges of traffic congestion and transport related environmental pollution. Experience elsewhere in the UK (e.g. Darlington, Peterborough, Brighton) suggests PTP can contribute significantly to reducing demand on the road network by creating a ‘modal shift’ to cycling and walking. To date, the results using traditional PTP (effectively a large scale door-knocking exercise) in London have been disappointing; this new project in Hounslow (entirely centrally funded by Transport for London) will test out a new methodology – ‘community based’ PTP.
- 2.3 The project builds on traditional theories of ‘social marketing’ (for example stop smoking campaigns, ‘eat five a day’, the ‘slip, slap, slop’ sun awareness campaign etc) alongside new academic theories of social change, notably those pioneered by the author Malcolm Gladwell (summarised in his book ‘The Tipping Point’, 2000).

Gladwell describes how behaviour change in a community can be spread 'like a virus' from person to person - once a critical mass of people within the community have adopted that behaviour. He stresses the importance of using influential members of the community in order to tap into 'social norms' in order to change attitudes towards social issues.

- 2.4 Social marketing depends heavily on a targeted approach. For example, market research in the borough suggests an environmental message will not have much influence, but one that emphasises the cost and convenience benefits of sustainable travel may have a greater impact – although this attitude varies across the area committees. The map included as Attachment 1 illustrates these attitudes by summarising (by postcode) residents' likely attitude to car use. This is based on travel surveys linked to the Mosaic consumer database.

3.0 PROJECT METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 The project implementation will be undertaken by the consultancy Steer Davis Gleave (SDG) who will be the employer for all staff associated with the project. A key part of this project will be the employment of two part time Community Coordinators (from around February 2009). The Community Coordinators will be tasked with engaging with a wide variety of groups in Hounslow, including, but not exclusive to:
- Places of worship, including the Mosque, Gudwara, Churches;
 - Baby and children's groups;
 - Schools;
 - Gyms;
 - Youth Groups, Scouts, Cubs, Girl Guides and other groups;
 - Health centres/ GP surgeries; and
 - Older people's groups.
- 3.2 The Community Coordinators will develop links with these organisations and help advise on the best way of engaging residents through them. It is not proposed that any personal data of residents in the borough is shared with those involved in the project although assistance is to be provided with regard to identifying groups and businesses who should be involved in the consultation process.
- 3.3 Following the period of community engagement (approximately two months) Steer Davis Gleave will then employ up to four Promotional Advisors and up to 25 Local Travel Experts (from March/April 2009). The former will undertake promotional activities designed to get residents to sign up to a consultation. The latter will be the 'frontline' staff who will undertake the detailed discussions with residents on their travel options. Further details of how the Travel Experts will engage residents is included as Attachment 2. Efforts will be made to ensure that advisors reflect the community they are working in. The project will end around June/July 2009.
- 3.4 The staff will be mainly based at the Civic Centre throughout the duration of the project (approximately five months), although the majority will be out and about in the borough on a daily basis engaging with residents and community groups etc. Residents will also be able to attend the Civic Centre to have a consultation with those involved in the project. A space has been provisionally agreed with Facilities Management which could be utilised by the project staff employed by Steer Davies Gleave and which would be let at no cost, given the benefit of the project to the Council (see below). Discussions are in place with regard to the best way of facilitating this letting, providing IT support and other related matters such as safety and security to ensure the Council's interests are protected throughout the duration of the project.

4.0 POTENTIAL BENEFITS FOR HOUNSLOW

- 4.1 The initiative contributes to a number of borough policies and strategies across a variety of different departments, notably: –
- The Community Plan – particularly in regards to *‘improving our local environment so that by 2017 we are known for our carbon-neutral policies and practices’* and *‘enabling residents to move about the borough in ways that are healthy, affordable and accessible’*.
 - The Hounslow Plan – particularly in regards to *‘safeguarding and enhancing the environment’*
 - Unitary Development Plan (2003) (objective T:1) – *To promote sustainable development in the borough through integrating transport and land use policies in order to reduce the need to travel, reduce reliance on the private car and promote the use and implementation of environmentally friendly modes and initiatives.*
 - Transport Local Implementation Plan (LIP) – states we support ‘greener’ transport by *‘encouraging change towards sustainable forms of travel and the promotion of healthy lifestyles’*. The initiative can also assist in creating a more efficient transport system by reducing non-essential car-use and therefore freeing up road space (see 5.0: Network Management Implications)
 - Air quality action plan – seeks to encourage a *‘Switch to cleaner technologies – by promoting use of public transport, cycling, etc’*.
 - The initiative will link to the aims of the soon to be finalised NHS Hounslow’s Obesity Strategy.
- 4.2 The initiative will also form a part of the ‘Greener Hounslow Campaign’ and can contribute to the Council’s aspiration to attain Beacon status for Environmental Sustainability.
- 4.3 The initiative can also be useful in gaining a greater understanding from residents as to their travel behaviour and the barriers to walking, cycling and public transport. This can be used to inform and strengthen future bids for transport improvement schemes.

5.0 NETWORK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Any activity designed to promote and encourage sustainable transport methods (walking, cycling, public transport and car sharing) over single occupancy vehicle use will, by reducing overall vehicle demand on the network, improve flows around the borough.

6.0 COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

- 6.1 This scheme is centrally funded by Transport for London and the funding (and therefore any financial risk) will not pass through the borough’s accounts.
- 6.2 It is noted that the scheme represents approximately £450,000 worth of additional funding in transport schemes for the borough.

7.0 COMMENTS OF THE BOROUGH SOLICITOR

- 7.1 The Borough Solicitor has been consulted in the drafting of this report and his comments have been included in the body of the report.

8.0 EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

8.1 A relevance test has been completed for whether this project as a whole requires an EIA. This test showed that a strategy to promote sustainable travel would not be likely to have an unequal adverse impact on any particular group. There are also notable positives for people choosing sustainable travel options, particularly when they give rise to the opportunity for exercise. The project will include engagement of all borough residents, including, for example mobility impaired groups, and will provide an opportunity to advise people of particular transport options available for them (e.g. freedom pass, taxi card, travel buddy scheme etc).

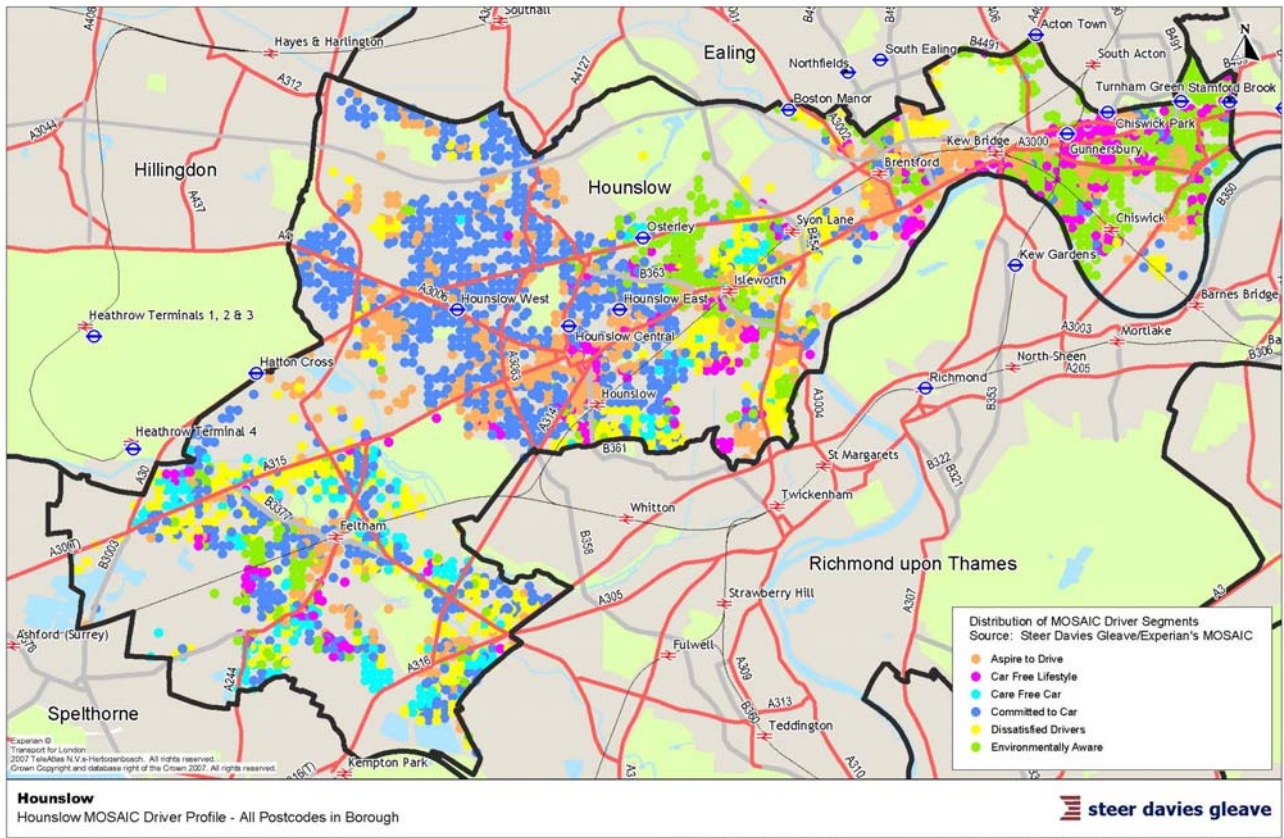
9.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

9.1 A primary rationale for this project is to reduce the damage to the environment caused by motorised traffic – notably local air pollution (from Nitrous Oxides) and CO² emissions that contribute towards global warming. The project will contribute towards the Council's bid for Beacon Status for Environmental Sustainability and can also contribute towards the Council's Carbon Management Programme, currently underway.

Background Papers:
None provided
This report has been or is due to be considered by:
Heston & Cranford Area Committee – Monitoring – 29 January 2009
This report is relevant to the following wards/areas:
Whole borough
Report reviewed and approved for submission by:
Chris Calvi-Freeman, Head of Transport Stuart Harrison – Divisional Head, Sustainable Planning

Attachment 1

Mosaic Driver – Hounslow Map



Attachment 2

Further Details of Engagement Techniques

The Local Travel Experts will be using a technique known as 'Motivational Interviewing'. This technique was developed as an approach that recognises that people are at different stages in readiness and willingness to change their behaviour. Many people have ambivalent feelings towards car use; they know that as a mode of transport it is bad for the environment and costly, yet also feel that it is a quick and convenient way to get around, and can view their car as a status symbol. Motivational interviewing explores this ambivalence, and the gap between the two views, and helps to overcome it by developing discrepancy between current ideas and beliefs and actual behaviour.

In practice a 'conversation' will generally follow the steps below:

1. Introduction / establishing a relationship
 - Motivational interviewer's name and project name.
 - State why they are calling; following up from the initial contact as requested by the resident.
 - Explain what they will be talking about.
 - Establish a working relationship with the resident.
2. Neutral exploration
 - Explore the resident's travel patterns, using open ended questions and reflective listening in a non-judgemental way.
3. Expand understanding
 - An exploration of the resident's ambivalence to their travel behaviour and highlighting some possible negative aspects of this.
4. Decision and commitment
 - The interviewer offers help and suggestions to alternatives at this stage
 - and elicits a statement of decision and commitment from the resident
5. Summary and close
 - A note of the points discussed and agreed will be left with the resident, along with any tools to help them make that change. Contact details for the project will be left if further help is required.
 - At the end of the interview, the travel advisor will provide the individual with the necessary tools and information that they need to make the changes in behaviour that they themselves have identified as being beneficial to their lives.
 - We want to ensure that the resident does not see the travel advisor as preaching to them, but rather exploring their situation in an empathetic way before presenting options for change.
 - Residents will also be encouraged to sign up to the imovelondon pledge at the end of the home visit (see www.imovelondon.co.uk for more information).