

Natural England Board



Meeting 11
Date: 25 June 2008

Paper No: **NEB PU11 05**

Title: Update on Natural England's Green Travel Policy

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1. Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this paper is to update the Board on the consultation with staff on the Green Travel Policy Options.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. That the Board:
 - notes the extensive consultation which we have conducted across the organisation on the Green Travel Policy;
 - notes the nature of the feedback received;
 - notes the opportunities and challenges we face in delivering the carbon reduction target.

3. Context of the Green Travel Policy

- 3.1. The Natural England Board was presented with the Green Travel Policy Options at their meeting on 30 April 2008.
- 3.2. The Board agreed that our credibility and authority as an environmental leader is vested in our achievement of the target to reduce the carbon emissions of our estates and business travel by 50% by the end of 2010, and endorsed the staff engagement plan.
- 3.3. In parallel with phase one of the engagement process we have undertaken an equality and diversity assessment of the options and their health and safety implications.

4. Outcomes of staff engagement

- 4.1. The staff engagement process was launched on 24 April and closed on 17 June 2008. During this period:
 - more than 1100 responses to an on-line survey were submitted
 - over 300 email responses were received from individuals and teams with comments on the options
 - almost 200 staff attended 12 interactive workshops hosted across Natural England offices
 - over 80 team responses to a questionnaire were received.

- 4.2. During this period there has been ongoing liaison with the trade unions.
- 4.3. The consistent messages from staff to the options are summarised below. In general staff:
- are committed to the 50% carbon reduction target
 - say that cars are essential to meeting customers and want more time to discuss these options before their implementation
 - feel that the greatest support should be given to those individuals and teams that produce the highest carbon emissions
 - prefer a commitment approach rather than policy compliance i.e. staff want ownership of their own individual and team travel carbon footprints as they are best placed to manage their reductions provided that Natural England gives them the 'tools' to do so. Targets could be established in PPAs and Team Delivery Agreements.
 - accept that stricter compliance to a policy may have to be introduced should we fall short of our target
 - agree broadly with the proposals on tele & video-conferencing, walking and cycling, public transport and air travel, and agreed to their implementation subject to a full and final diversity and health and safety appraisal
 - expressed concerns that significant carbon emissions from travel may have already been achieved prior to the baseline either through a personal commitment to reduce the environmental impact of their travel or a need to cut back on travel expenditure. More reductions may not be feasible without impacting other targets
 - expressed concern about the policy on Private User Scheme cars (a car leasing scheme inherited from the RDS), and mileage allowances – though this is outside the immediate scope of the policy.

5. Implications of the consultation: opportunities and challenges

- 5.1. Figure 1 (Annex 1) shows Natural England's carbon footprint baseline of 6676 tonnes. Emissions from estates accounts for two-thirds of this footprint and business travel one-third.
- 5.2. Figure 2 in Annex 1 shows the predicted carbon savings from our current and planned investment. The predicted carbon benefits of implementing tele & video-conferencing technologies, introducing incentives for walking and cycling, promoting greater use of public transport and better meeting planning are predicted to reduce our travel carbon footprint by 627 tonnes of carbon against the baseline. This figure represents a total reduction in the travel footprint of 27% whilst the planned investments in our estate will reduce emissions by 1078 tonnes (25% of the estate footprint).
- 5.3. This means that the basic implementation of this policy, together with estates activities already in train will get us to a carbon reduction of 1705 tonnes or just over 25% of the total Natural England baseline – around 1633 tonnes short of our 50% target. We will need significant ramping up of our activity to achieve the target.
- 5.4. What we have learnt from our extensive consultation is that our staff are, predictably, supportive of the principles of green travel and broader sustainable behaviours, but have not yet bought into the very significant behaviour change which this will require of many of them. This is true of all

levels of the organisation. We will need to balance carefully the principles of compliance with giving staff the sense that they must take personal and local responsibility for looking at the way they meet and travel. We effectively have three years to achieve significant change to the way we deliver our business both to customers and conduct ourselves internally.

- 5.5. We will be using the establishment of local sustainability networks – many already in place – in teams and offices, and the requirement for personal sustainability targets to drive the agenda forward. Enabling technologies, including webinar technology for remote meetings and sharing of documents and presentations in real time, are being rolled out from July. Various personal and team carbon accounting tools are also in development. The Q1 transition workshops will help us take forward discussion on greener meetings and more sustainable workplaces, as well as building networks and our fund of good practice. There is parallel work on greening the estate which we will bring to the Board later this year.

ANNEX 1

Figure 1: Natural England's Carbon Baseline (2007)

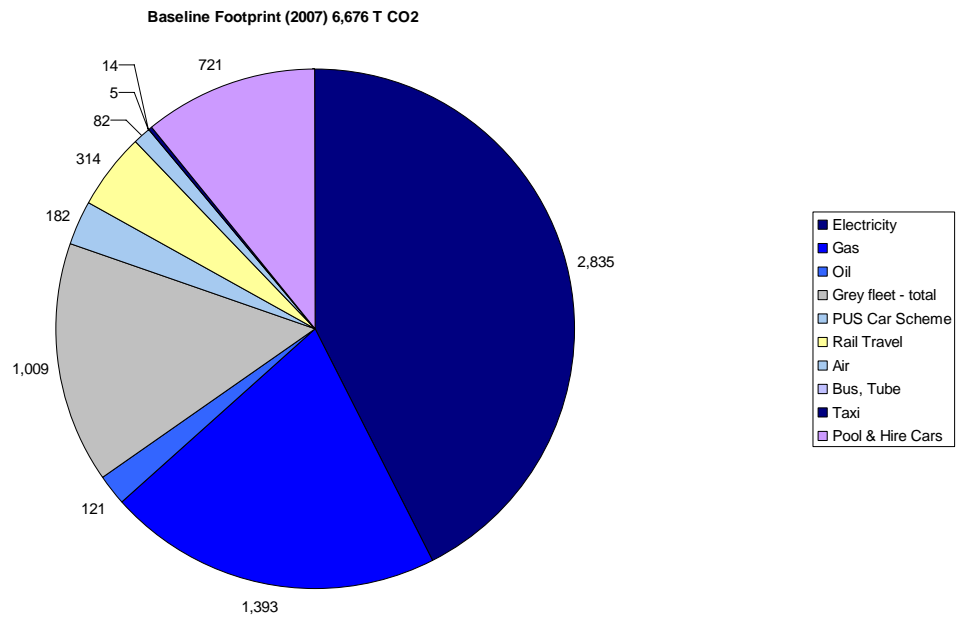


Figure 2: Predicted savings from current and planned activity

