

Natural England Board



Meeting 10

Date: 30 April 2008

Paper No: **NEB PU10 06**

Title: **Natural England's Green Travel Policy**

Sponsor: **David Young, Executive Director Strategy & Performance**

1. Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this paper is to outline the need for a Green Travel Policy and to seek the Board's views on the policy options outlined in the Green Travel Policy Options Paper (Annex 1).

2. Recommendations

- 2.1. That the Board provides comment on the purpose and options for the Green Travel Policy.

3. Context of the Green Travel Policy

Background:

- 3.1. 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.
- 3.2. Tackling carbon emissions is where Natural England can and must take the lead. We know that our staff have the willingness to make significant cuts in our carbon emissions and model to our partners, supply chains, and more widely our credibility as an environmental leader.
- 3.3. We know our challenges. We must reduce the carbon emissions of both our estate and our travel. As an organisation we can invest in new technologies but we know that key to our success is making low carbon actions feel normal in Natural England. Essential to this is giving ownership of the issue to our staff. This is why staff engagement is critical, in both achieving buy-in to the emerging policy and developing innovative solutions to the challenges we face.
- 3.4. We acknowledge that some staff have raised concerns about the level of the challenge of reducing our travel footprint, and we are aware that moving over to new lower carbon ways of working will be difficult for some staff. Some staff and teams will need to make more changes to their ways of working than others. But the introduction of a Green Travel Policy will have a significant but overall a positive impact on many of our ways of working. However, a core principle in developing our policy will be that we will not reduce the quality of service to our customers.

Action to date:

- 3.5. Our Strategic Direction sets out Natural England's commitment as a distinctive public body and environmental leader to reduce our carbon emissions by 50% by the end of 2010.
- 3.6. We have a comprehensive understanding of our current patterns of energy use and our target is achievable through reducing the carbon emissions of our business travel and through the better energy management of our premises. The development and implementation of a Green Travel Policy is an urgent priority if we are to achieve our target.
- 3.7. In reviewing the green travel policies of a wide selection of public and private sector bodies it is clear that our target requires us to go significantly further than most organisations are planning to. However setting an achievable but target-led policy demonstrates that we are committed to reducing the scale of climate change and in turn reducing the long term impact on the natural environment.
- 3.8. Staff input and support of the Green Travel Policy is essential. A summary of the staff engagement plan is outlined below. Staff will have already been presented with the policy options and the presentation of this paper to the Non-Executive Board represents the final stage of phase 1.

Phase 1: April 2008	Phase 2: May 2008	Phase 3: June 2008
Consultation with all staff and the Board on the Policy Options to get views and ideas on each specific policy area. Media: Cascade Briefing, Quarter 4 Workshops, Focus Groups	Drafting of the Green Travel Policy in partnership with Natural England Trade Union Side	Consultation on the Green Travel Policy with all staff. Presentation of the final Policy to the 24 June Board. Media: Cascade, Intranet-based discussion event, road shows.

- 3.9. In parallel with phase 1 of the engagement process we have undertaken an equality and diversity assessment of the options and their health and safety implications.

4. Summary of the Green Travel Policy Options Paper

- 4.1. Given the carbon intensity of travel, the primary driver of the policy is to reduce the overall amount of travel where practical and effective alternatives are available. A key strategy that we are already pursuing is the introduction

and increased use of video and teleconferencing. However this will not be possible or appropriate for many external meeting with our customers. The policy options therefore also seek to drive increasingly low carbon travel.

- 4.2. The Green Travel Policy will need to reduce our business travel carbon footprint. It is proposed that this is achieved through a carbon hierarchy which will promote and incentivise lower carbon ways of working, whilst reducing the use of high carbon transport modes.
- 4.3. The Green Travel Policy will cover all of Natural England's business travel by its staff and the Board, including travel to meetings and to our customers. It will not at this stage include staff commuting to and from work or excess travel arrangements.
- 4.4. The options include a range of incentives to increase the level of walking and cycling on Natural England business. The practical limitations of these modes of travel are recognised.
- 4.5. The use of public transport is the lowest carbon option for most Natural England business travel and the options seek to ensure its use wherever this is possible. The options tackle the biggest barrier to its use i.e. a lack of information on routes, timings and accessibility, particularly to our offices.
- 4.6. Car use is recognised as an important and, in many cases, the only form of travel available to staff to meet with many of our customers. The paper introduces a range of options to reduce the carbon footprint of car transport, whilst also ensuring that staff have ownership and responsibility for their own carbon footprints.