

## **Travel planning in practice at New City House, Dunfermline**

### **New building, new travel plan**

Fife Council adopted a Travel Plan in 2000, which was originally rolled out strategically from Glenrothes to the other three centres of Fife, Cupar, Kirkcaldy and Dunfermline. However recent experiences have prompted a re-evaluation and a different way of doing things has developed.

Plans to consolidate Council use of buildings within Dunfermline prompted a move to a new Private Finance Initiative Building. The building was subject to maximum parking standards in line with national government policy, resulting in a reduction in car park spaces catering solely for business operational needs.

### **Consultation**

A survey of staff moving to New City House was undertaken in May 2003 and achieved an 82% response. This was used to draft proposals for the travel plan which then formed the basis of consultations with managers before Christmas 2003. The managers then consulted with their staff. Throughout this process draft travel plan proposals were put on the intranet to keep staff informed and involved with the evolving process.

### **Individualised marketing to support change**

In May 2004 direct consultations involving individualised marketing with staff were undertaken. Every member of staff moving to New City House was invited to a focus group, and 101 of 320 attended. Each focus group of up to 12 people talked through the travel plan proposals and how these could work for them. Each person's circumstances were individually addressed. They were given individualised information on transport modes they were interested in for their work journey, such as public transport routes and fares information, walking and cycling routes and the Council's car sharing database. The intention was to remove the barrier to modal shift caused by lack of information and by people putting off researching alternatives for themselves. Many staff suggestions from the focus groups were taken on board and included in the final draft. Despite the idea of moving and lack of parking being highly emotive issues the focus groups were generally very positive.

### **Car park management**

A car park management plan was introduced as part of Fife Council's Draft Car Park Management Policy. This identified the 76 spaces for specific uses, with no spaces allocated to individual car commuters.

- Disabled users - 4 spaces
- Loading/unloading - 4 spaces
- Visitors - 8 spaces
- Pool cars - 10 spaces

- Operational users - 44 spaces
- Car sharers - 6 spaces
- Cyclists (outwith the car park next to the building entrance) - 10 spaces
- All other user groups - 0 spaces

In order to steer clear of the old term 'essential car user' which would be associated with status, the term 'operational car user' was developed and specifically defined as 'out of the office more than 50% of the time visiting sites or customers, with significant mileage'. Managers identified operational users who would gain access to the car park. Operational users were told that they may only use the car park at times when they are operational (ie using the car for business purposes at work) and if they are to be in the office for more than 2 hours they should not park in the car park. If the turnover of spaces is not high enough Services would be asked to reduce the number of operational users. Similarly, if turnover of spaces was high it would be likely that more marginal operational users could be added to the list.

### **Supporting alternative modes**

As part of the Fife Council Travel Plan measures have been developed to raise awareness about the alternatives to the car among staff in the four main towns including at New City House. To reduce single occupancy car use other modes of travel are promoted. Health messages about the benefits of physical activity are integral to the promotion of walking and cycling. Support for these options includes the development of a car sharing database on the Council's intranet and dedicated spaces for car sharers in some car parks. Cycle parking, showers and lockers have been introduced at all main Fife Council buildings. Information packs including a cycle map and public transport and walking leaflets were distributed to all staff when they moved into the building.

Further to this are the measures put in place to reduce single occupancy car use for business use at work.

- A fleet of 10 pool cars is available so that staff do not have to bring in their own car to use it for business journeys at work.
- Employee travel vouchers are available for bus journeys so that staff don't have to pay up front for their tickets and reclaim them.
- Video conferencing equipment has been installed in Dunfermline, Kirkcaldy, Cupar and Glenrothes to reduce then need to travel internally and beyond.
- Pool bikes are being purchased for use at some locations.
- The cycle business mileage rate has been increased to 20 pence per mile for use of your own bike.
- Guidance has been developed to help managers and staff decide which mode of travel is best for particular journeys internally and outwith Fife.

### **Results so far**

Staff moved into the building in August 2004. Before the move the impression gained from the focus groups was that a significant proportion of people were contemplating changing their travel habits. Although formal evaluation will only be possible following the next travel plan survey in May 2005, anecdotal evidence suggests that more people have shifted to active travel modes and to public transport and car sharing. The new bicycle park is in constant use even in cold December weather and despite hilly topography, and the enthusiasm for walking is such that a lunchtime walking group has started up. Although car parking surveys indicate a significant increase in the number of people parking in residential streets immediately around the building since the move, there is a much less extensive impact than would have been anticipated.

### **The future**

Due to the positive way that the New City House Travel Plan experience has worked out Local Travel Plan groups are being created in Glenrothes, Cupar and Kirkcaldy. The New City House Group will evolve into a Dunfermline wide Travel Plan Group.

### **Further information**

[www.fifedirect.org.uk](http://www.fifedirect.org.uk)

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