



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Cycle to Work Scheme
Date:	24 October 2008
Reporting Officer:	David Cartmill, Acting Head of Corporate Services Directorate (Ext. 6084)
Contact Officer:	Alastair Curran, Sustainable Development Manager, (Ext. 3309)

Relevant Background Information

The P & R Committee in April 2007 agreed that the Council should investigate the feasibility of establishing a 'cycle-to-work' scheme for employees. A paper was presented to the Committee the following month recommending a pilot scheme to operate for two years, on condition that the scheme was 'cost-neutral'. The pilot was based on a Department for Transport initiative which provides a tax exempt loan scheme for employees to purchase cycles and related safety equipment up to a value of £1,000. The main condition of the scheme is that cycles are used mostly for travel to work.

The Council viewed the initiative as impacting positively on the quality of life in Belfast by lessening traffic congestion; contributing to improved air quality; reducing the use of fossil fuels and improving people's health through exercise. It agreed to conduct a trial scheme in June 2007.

Based on the response to the pilot exercise, this paper seeks approval to make the cycle-to-work scheme a permanent provision for Members and staff.

Key Issues

The scheme has been progressed over 3 phases to date in consultation with cycling retailers in Belfast. The original target of between 50-80 participants has been exceeded significantly. Projected uptake, based on a Council survey and evidence from UK employers who operate cycle-to-work schemes, was estimated at around 2-3 per cent of employees. There are currently 180 members of staff who have committed to cycle to work and who lease bicycles from the Council by way of "salary sacrifice" deductions.

The Council has received positive recognition and following lobbying by Members, Belfast Health Trust introduced cycle-to-work for its 20,000 employees.

The Council has received endorsement for the initiative including its selection as a case study in "inspiration" in the 2008 Arena Network Environmental Benchmarking Survey.

Resource Implications

Financial

None - All costs to the Council are recoverable through contributions made by participants over 12-18 months.

Human Resources

None - Existing staff resources utilised. Administrative overhead recovered by sale of cycles on completion of lease agreements.

Asset and Other Implications

Minimal - Adaptation of shower facilities and provision of cycle racks paid from existing maintenance budgets.

Recommendations

The cycle to work scheme makes a small but significant contribution to the achievement of the Council's Transport, Health and Sustainable Development policies. More importantly, the scheme demonstrates leadership by the Council in setting an example and has been promoted successfully to other organisations in Belfast by Members and staff.

The Committee is asked to agree that the cycle-to-work scheme is made a permanent provision by Belfast City Council for its employees.

Key to Abbreviations

None

Documents Attached

None