



CABINET

1 AUGUST 2001

## PROPOSAL FOR A NEW FOREST TRANSPORT OFFICER POST: REQUEST FOR JOINT FUNDING

### 1 Introduction

- 1.1 The County Surveyor, in response to a request from the New Forest Committee, has proposed the appointment (initially on a **three-year fixed-term contract**) of a New Forest Transport Officer.
- 1.2 The post would be jointly funded and would be dedicated to transport matters within the New Forest (Heritage Area / proposed national park). In particular, the postholder would be expected to progress the implementation of the New Forest Transport Strategy **adopted in 1997 by the County Council, District Council and New Forest Committee. He/she would also** provide important input to related processes such as the preparation and review of local plans and other policies. It is suggested that the postholder would be based both in Lyndhurst and in Winchester.
- 1.3 The estimated cost of the appointment, based on current salary levels, is £30,920 p.a. (including on-costs at the mid-point of the salary scale). It is understood that the Countryside Agency has provisionally indicated a willingness to contribute up to 50% of the cost of the post for **the initial** three years. The County Surveyor suggests that the County Council contribute 25%, and has requested that the remaining 25% be made up by the District Council and any other appropriate partners.
- 1.4 The Forestry Commission has offered to contribute £2,000 p.a. for three years.
- 1.5 Assuming joint funding can be secured, the County Surveyor has suggested that recruitment proceed towards the end of this year.

### 2 Relationship to other posts

- 2.1 It is proposed that the postholder be employed by the County Council on behalf of the funding partners.
- 2.2 The proposed appointment should not be confused with the post of "New Forest Transport Officer" located with the New Forest Voluntary Service Council, which this Council has helped to fund since 1996 and to which it has committed £4,700 in its budget for the current financial year. Although on the face of it some overlap might be expected, the focus of the new post would be **quite different, as shown below. Before recruitment proceeds, further consideration will need to be given to the titles of the two posts.**



|                 |              | <i>NFVSC post</i>   | <i>Proposed new post</i>               |
|-----------------|--------------|---|--|
|                 | Employed by  | NFVSC   | HCC                                    |
| Winchester      | Base         | Ringwood  | Lyndhurst /                            |
| C'side          | Funded by    | HCC, NFDC, Health Authority*<br>(*previously C'side Agency) | HCC, NFDC, Agency, Forestry Commission |
| (Heritage Park) | Area covered | New Forest District   | The New Forest Area / National         |
| transport /     | Focus        | Community transport / social inclusion                      | Integrated Area Strategy.              |

### 3 Comment

- 3.1 The proposal comes at a time when not only are the profile and demands of local transport policy arguably at an unprecedented level, but in the New Forest the process of national park designation is raising questions about how to take forward established and evolving strategies within a changing administrative framework.
- 3.2 The Hampshire Local Transport Plan (LTP), through the County Council's capital programme, has brought transport investment countywide up to the point where around £1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> million of capital expenditure is proposed in the New Forest over the next four years. **This reflects the aims, objectives and targets of the New Forest Transport Strategy (see Annex), and the challenge which these present** suggests that similar levels of investment could well continue thereafter.
- 3.3 Individual projects promoted through the LTP range in scale from the recent major enhancement of Lyndhurst High St (likely outturn approaching £1m) to local improvements to footpaths and cycle routes, traffic management and the promotion of car-free tourism. The LTP embraces not only capital works but also revenue-based activities such as support to passenger transport services, demand management, the New Forest Visitor Transport Initiative and monitoring and review of all aspects of the Area Transport Strategies. The human resources of Hampshire County Council (as the local transport authority responsible for delivering the LTP) are stretched, even allowing for some assistance from district councils and the letting of a term contract with a major consultant to provide additional resource over a number of years. There is scope for improvement in both the rate of progress and the effectiveness of coordination, and both would benefit from a focused resource as proposed.
- 3.4 The appointment would **also** contribute towards the implementation of the District Council's draft Corporate Plan "The Heart of the Forest", in particular its intentions to:
- **secure a sustainable future for the District**
  - work with partners
  - protect the Forest

- support the balanced development of tourism
- **tackle social exclusion**
- enhance transport availability and choice.

3.5 In summary, the proposal would bring a welcome additional resource and focus, with appropriate involvement by this Council, to the implementation of established plans and strategies in the run-up to the creation of the New Forest National Park.

#### 4 Environmental implications

4.1 The central role of environmental quality in the New Forest Transport Strategy is clear from the Strategy's stated Vision (see Annex). The proposed appointment would be an important step towards the realisation of this vision.

#### 5 Financial implications

5.1 The cost to this Council of a contribution as set out in Section 1 of this report would be in the region of £5,730 per annum for three years.

#### 6 Crime and disorder implications

6.1 Implementation of the post of New Forest Transport Officer should make a positive contribution to Community Safety by increasing access to public transport and reducing the levels of road accidents.

#### 7 Consideration by Corporate Management Team

7.1 The recommendation below has the support of the Council's Corporate Management Team.

#### 8 RECOMMENDATION

8.1 **That a contribution of up to £5,730 per year for 3 years from 1 April 2002 towards the cost of employing a New Forest **transport officer** as set out in the foregoing report **be agreed in principle, and that a bid be put forward accordingly through the expenditure plan process.****

#### Further information:

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#### Background papers:

Letter dated 17 April 2001 from County Surveyor

Copy letter dated 20 April 2001 from Forestry Commission

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PATRICKH/REPORTS/NFNPTO  
18 Jul '01

**NEW FOREST TRANSPORT STRATEGY: VISION, AIMS, OBJECTIVES & TARGETS**

**VISION**

To seek to achieve a more sustainable future for the New Forest, a cleaner environment and an improved quality of life for local people, by reducing the use of motor vehicles without undermining the economic prosperity of the area, while respecting the special character of the area.

**AIMS**

*(insert photocopy)*

**OBJECTIVES**

*(insert photocopy)*

## TARGETS

*(insert photocopy)*