

**Devon County Council
Towards a Strategy for Workplace Travel Plans**

DRAFT

This paper sets out an approach to developing Workplace Travel Plans in Devon within the next five years.

This strategy is developed within the context of the Governments shared priorities for the next Local Transport Plan but also reflects the recently published research by the Government titled *Smarter Choices - Changing the Way we Travel*, published December 2004.

Travel plans add value to Devon's transport system by targeting work journeys primarily taking place in peak travel time. Travel plans can also incorporate measures aimed at travel during the course of work, including business and delivery travel and also travel by patients, students, shoppers, tourists and other visitor's to the employer's site.

A successful programme of travel plan delivery can improve; accessibility, positively affect modal choice for journeys to work and reduce congestion. This strategy will also provide useful reference for those making decisions on planning conditions/agreements, devising transport strategies and schemes.

The strategy will also describe how the demonstrable benefits of the travel plans in Devon will be monitored. This will help to understand how using soft measures that are incorporated in travel plans can 'lock in' the benefits of transport schemes, and potentially reduce the demand on the transport network. The most important measure of a travel plan success is its effect on employee travel behaviour for trips to and from during the course of work and also where appropriate trips made by visitors, customers etc.

Residential travel plans are a package of measures designed to reduce the number of car trips generated at the origin (home) while also supporting more sustainable forms of travel and reducing the overall need to travel.

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1. Introduction

Travel plans are an essential part of the toolkit to manage the transport challenges faced in Devon today and in the future. Travel plans address trips that do not necessarily need to be met by the car and maximise the opportunities offered by walking, cycling, public transport, car sharing and initiatives that reduce the need to travel. Travel plans are inextricably linked to other Government priorities, such as improving accessibility, social inclusion, encouraging regeneration, reducing carbon emissions and helping to increase levels of physical activity.

The Transport White paper states that “Our transport strategy has to recognise that demand for travel will increase in the future.” Encouraging work places to develop travel plans in Devon is part of recognising this. Travel plans provide an opportunity to affect behaviour change. The recently published DfT report, “Smarter Choices - changing the way we travel” concluded that when married with ‘hard’ schemes, travel plans can create the scenario to make significant cuts in traffic.

‘The Government considers that we cannot build our way out of problems on the road network. Although some limited road building will be necessary, doing nothing is not an option. Employer travel plans can reduce commuter car driving by 10-30%, school travel plans can reduce traffic by 8-15% and individual marketing can reduce travel by 7-15%.’ *Making Smarter Choices Work, Department for Transport, 2004.*

2. Policy Context

There is a number of local and national guidance supporting the need to develop travel plans. A major change, since the first round of Local Transport Plans is the stronger evidence based on the impact of traffic on soft factor interventions such as school and work place travel planning.

I. National Guidance

In the full guidance for LTP 2 submitted by the Department of Transport. the Government now expects all authorities to focus on delivering a smaller set of key outcomes, reflecting the shared priorities agreed between central and local government: improving access to jobs and services, particularly for those most in need, in ways that are sustainable: improve public transport, reduced problems of congestion, pollution and safety.

As already highlighted in this paper The Department for Transport published a significant report in sustainable transport entitled ‘Smarter measures.’ Soft measures are effective in facilitating choices to reduce car use if implemented in a supportive policy context. ‘Local authorities [should] recognise the benefits of smarter measures and make them an integral part of their transport strategies.’ *Foreword Rt Hon Alistair Darling, secretary of State for Transport.*

Smarter Choices; Changing the way we travel, (Department for Transport, 2004) describes how soft measures are effective in facilitating choices to reduce car use. 'To encourage wider and more effective implementation of Green Travel Plans there is a need to promote greater awareness of the benefits as well as, and in relation to, the costs. It is important to encourage organisations to take a more pro-active and responsible approach to transport, rather than reacting as situations arise.' This statement summarise the primary aim of this strategy and the work programme for the next five years.

II. Regional/ Local Policy

The SW Regional Plan Guidance 10 (2001) Policies TRAN 5 and TRAN 10 set out the importance of new organisations and existing major ones to reduce the reliance on the car. Travel planning is also described as an important element to be included within planning conditions.

- (1) *Policy Tran 5: Demand Management* "Highway authorities, local authorities and other agencies should actively manage urban car parking and make efficient use of highway space in order to achieve a modal shift towards more sustainable transport."
- (2) *Policy Tran 10: Walking, Cycling and Public Transport.* "Local authorities, transport operators and other agencies should, ...ensure that they provide attractive and reliable alternatives to the private car by; Seeking transport assessments and travel plans for all new major developments and encouraging major organisations to prepare and implement such plans, having regard to sustainable transport objectives set by local authorities in the local transport plan."

Also within the Devon Structure Plan 2001-2016 Written Statement it refers to the management of travel demand.

- (1) *Policy Transport 3* "The management of travel demand will be promoted by; requiring new businesses and other establishments to implement travel plans which identify specific measures to minimise private car use and promote sustainable modes of travel and encourage existing businesses to introduce similar plans."

III. Cooperate Policies

Travel plans have also be recognised by cooperate or non governmental organisations. For example BnQ, Tesco's, National Trust.

Devon County Councils 12 Point Action to Reduce Congestion

The Council have adopted an action plan to address congestion in the following four areas, Exeter, Barnstaple, Newton Abbot and Totnes. Travel Planning is one of the twelve actions highlighted to tackle congestion in

Devon. Travel planning is seen as an important tool to understand current travel patterns, adopting travel behaviour change and to also feed information into strategies.

3. Current Devon Position

The Local Transport Plan, 2001-06 (LTP1) includes the headline target that the County Council will 'support 50 employers to implement 50 travel plans by 2006.' This target has been reached and already there are two nationally recognised award winning travel plans in Devon; the Met office and EDF Energy both located in Exeter. These travel plans were requirements through section 106 obligations. Both have shown a positive effect in modal share use, the Met Office travel plan has reduced single car occupancy to 48%. The worst case scenario was assumed to be 78% with 58% being the target figure for single car occupancy.

Devon County Council has also taken an invested approach to School Travel Plans. School travel creates a significant contribution to peak hour congestion in urban areas. Many of these journeys will be combined journeys to work. There is potential to identify these sorts of journeys and collaborate some of the work of school travel plans with employer travel plans.

(Appendix A shows the current database of Employers Travel Plans in Devon).

The Current Devon Local Transport Plan 2001- 2006 has nine objectives;

1. Integrated Transport
2. Safety
3. Accessibility
4. Economy
5. Environment
6. Health
7. Lifelong Learning
8. Social Exclusion
9. Tourism

Existing Liaison Groups

In terms of delivering Travel Plans the following internal Devon County Council officer groups are already involved in the development and will continue to play an important role.

- Tackling Congestion Officers Meetings – Identifying priority areas and discussions on latest developments and progress.
- Travelwise Campaign – Awareness raising initiatives and provision of some promotional resources.
- Development Control – Securing travel plans through section 106 on appropriate new developments.

4. DCC Approach for the Next Five Years

DCC's future work on Workplace Travel Plans needs to be directly focused on the next LTP covering the period 2006-11. The LTP will be submitted to the Government in March 2006.

The LTP consultations revealed that the need to travel could be resolved through more flexible working practices: increased use of electronic communications, decentralisation and working from home.

The Government's shared priorities for the next LTP are;

1. Congestion
2. Road safety
3. Accessibility
4. Air quality and climate change.

Devon County Council has also identified an additional 3 quality of life priorities.

5. Health and wellbeing
6. Public realm and liveability
7. Economy, leisure and tourism.

6. Workplace Travel Plan Programme for 2006-2011

The programme for 2006-11 seeks to continue the momentum for travel planning by incorporating national and local best practice to;

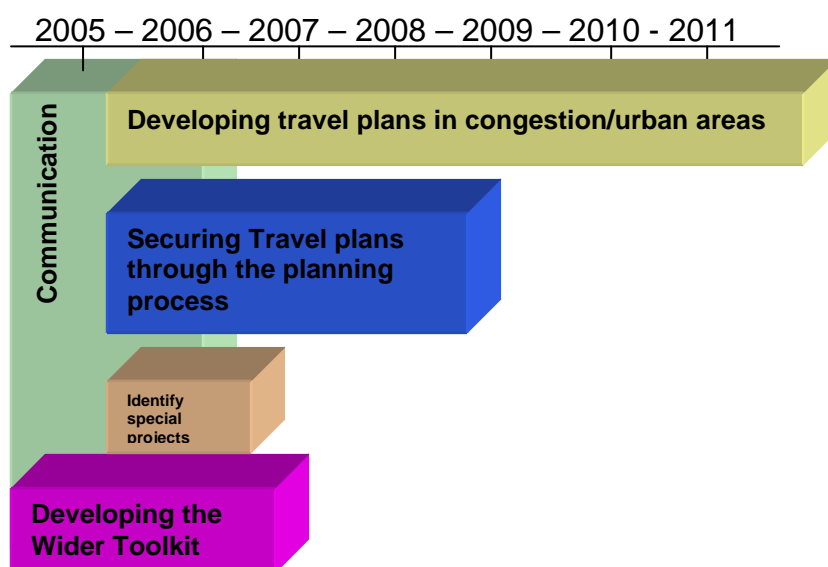
- support employers to develop travel plans
- provide guidance and enforce travel plans that emerge through the planning process and
- to ensure that existing travel plans continue to add value.

The key element is developing the travel plan communication which will support the delivery of other programmes:

1. Developing the Wider Toolkit
2. Communication
3. Developing Travel Plans with Existing Employers in Congestion Areas
4. Securing Travel Plans Through the Planning Process
5. Identify Special Projects where sustainable strategies will benefit Devon.

Below describes an approach for delivering this within the next five years. An accompanying action plan will describe in more detail how this will be achieved.

Fig 1. Developing the Devon Approach to Travel Planning



I. Developing the Wider Toolkit

Travel plans are essentially a tool for businesses to manage their travel needs. There needs to be a provision of locally relevant resources to help businesses to develop travel plans. The communications work is inextricably linked to developing the Devon toolkit to do this. It will make the provision for a Workplace Travel Plan Pack, website and so on. The option of offering personalised journey planning may also be relevant. Devon County Council has previously provided assistance to analysis survey information for travel plan work which is voluntarily developed. It would be helpful to continue to offer this assistance to maintain momentum with businesses developing a travel plan

To provide an extra incentive and support for implementing Employer Travel Plans, a funding assistance scheme could be established for co-ordination by Devon County Council. The funding would be allocated to help employers/workplaces implement measures identified in their travel plan. The money would be made available to those companies/employers that can show a commitment to developing a Travel Plan or have a working travel plan in progress. Currently this has already been done on an informal basis at North Devon Hospital where Devon County Council provided 50% of the funding for bicycle lockers. Many local authorities already implement this type of scheme to encourage employers.

Examples of types of schemes that could be considered:

- Cycle Parking
- Video/audio conferencing facilities
- Promotional initiatives
- Display Boards
- Car Park Modifications e.g. car share parking bays, pool car bays
- Purchase of pool bikes
- Bus ticket promotional scheme
- Home working facilities (laptop)

There will need to be provision for organisations to receive information on enquiry and as part of the planning application process. This type of reactive information will be developed through the communications plan.

- Discounts on public transport and spending on public transport infrastructure
- Information about public transport
- Cycle initiatives
- Walking initiatives
- Centrally co-ordinated car-sharing schemes
- Grants to develop travel plans, or to provide specific infrastructure
- Attachment of conditions to planning permissions.
- Publicity Techniques
- Networking opportunities

II. Communication

The current approach to communicating the benefits of travel plans and the assistance available is limited. Very few employers are prompted to contact Devon County Council to enquire about developing a travel plan. Devon County Council needs to provide relevant and inspiring information for employers to encourage them to;

- a) Realise the benefits of reducing unnecessary car travel,
- b) be prompted to approach Devon for further advice and support,
- c) create an awareness of the resources available for developing a travel plan, and
- d) guide employers/developers/agents towards producing a successful travel plan.

To accompany this strategy a communication plan is being developed (see Appendix B) which aims to target improvements to the information on the Devon Website, leaflets, producing a 'starter's pack' for employers and an expressions of interest resource. The ways and means of delivering the message to employers is key to promoting the benefits and needs for travel planning.

III. Securing Travel Plans through the Planning Process

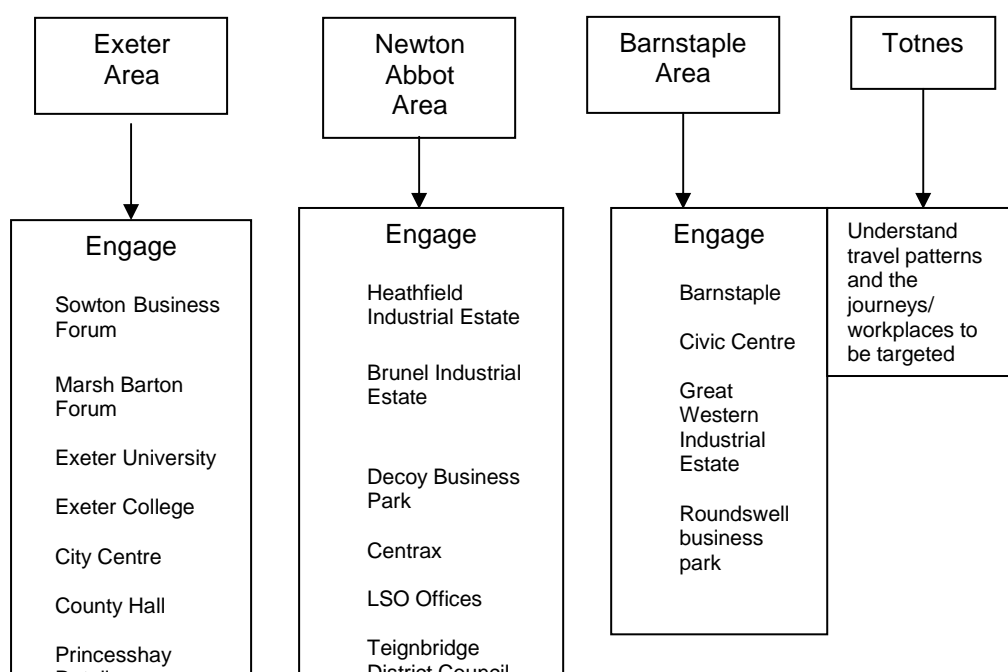
Travel plans are increasingly being required in planning conditions or obligations set in a Section 106. The guidance in PPG13 is used to indicate appropriate size thresholds for when travel plans should be required through the planning process. However travel plans can be required at the planning officers' discretion. The coordination of requiring and enforcing travel plans is not consistent across all planning authorities. A clearer approach needs to be established, possibly leading towards producing clear guidance on the expectations of a) sites that should require a travel plan and b) what constitutes a good travel plan.

In addition to this, travel plans that are required through the planning process needs to be enforced. To ensure that this happens, clear monitoring measures need to be put in place. Exploration into monitoring the implementation and successful operation of a travel plan needs to be developed, looking at the processes currently used and examples from other local authorities. Monitoring measures can also record the successes and weaknesses of travel plans and providing an opportunity to build upon these. A clear approach to enforcing travel plans based on targets will ensure the travel plan continue to positively affect modal shift.

IV. Developing Travel Plans with Existing Employers in Congestion Areas

The key output of a travel plan is to effect travel behaviour. Stimulating behaviour change through the creation of a travel plan will benefit congestion areas. In addition to this travel plans can potentially have a wider impact by increasing the provision for alternative modes for the community and informing journey decisions for individuals.

Large employers need to recognise the role that Travel Plans have to play in managing the transport network and helping them to reduce the pressures on the roads around the site. Exeter, Newton Abbot, Barnstaple and Totnes are priorities for developing this work. Already in Exeter there are groups of employers working together and this approach will be encouraged particularly for developing travel plans at larger sites. Figure 1 describes the congestion areas, as identified through Devon County Council's 'Tackling Congestion' agenda and the likely employers, or employer sites to engage.



V. Identifying Special Projects

Travel planning can be attributed as a tool for managing various transport issues. There needs to be recognition that 'special projects' may arise in which crosses over to workplace travel plan. The following three possible project themes have been identified at this stage.

I. Leisure and Tourism

Leisure and tourism are important to the economy of Devon. The industry creates employment, as well as the visitor attractions generating additional traffic pressures. Car free tourism encompasses similar aspirations to Workplace travel plans and will link well within the travel planning scope. Adopting modal change should be encouraged and made available for all trips and members of the public from outside of Devon and travelling around Devon. This work therefore will also look towards promoting travel planning within the leisure and tourism sector, as the opportunities arise. Likely projects might be the Jurassic Coast and Discover Devon Naturally - a car free tourism marketing initiative.

II. Travel Planning for the New Communities

The proposed new communities Cranbrook, in East Exeter and Sherford in the South Hams, provide an opportunity to develop communities to have a limited dependency on the car and are provided with the opportunity to travel to work, shops and leisure in a sustainable way. This will provide an opportunity to look at travel planning in a holistic sense and inviting change in modal shift for a variety of trips.

III. County Hall Travel Plan and other Devon County Council Sites

As Devon County Council are encouraging businesses to take a proactive approach to reducing car travel then they need to also be recognised as having in place a good travel plan. Currently a number of initiatives are in place to enable County Council staff to travel by alternative means. The 'car free day' being run at County Hall is considered to be working well. The travel plan principles however need to be adopted at all sites, and be included in future planning permissions associated to County Council sites. Good communications internally with the responsible bodies for the County Council sites are necessary, leading towards developing a site specific travel plans that are an example of best practice.

7. Demonstrating the Benefits of Travel Plans

As mentioned in this paper the Met Office and EDF Energy have both been recognised for good examples of their travel plans.

Both travel plans have been required through the planning process, and are able to demonstrate good modal shift. (See appendix d) All travel plans that are produced in Devon should have a measurable benefit. This information will be gathered through requiring snapshot surveys and monitoring modal shift and calculating this against estimated trip generation

8. Monitoring the strategy

It is proposed that the outcomes of the strategy are monitored by the Travel Plan Officer monthly, with a review with senior management on a sixth monthly basis. This is to ensure that the strategy continues to be relevant to Devon and that possible avenues to develop work are not overlooked.

The successes of this strategy will be determined by;

- a) The amount of Travel Plans developed in the Congestion Areas and their impacts.
- b) The creation of Transport Networks/or forums from groups of businesses and employers, in a common location.
- c) The amount of Travel Plans secured through the Planning Process and the impacts of the travel plans on effecting modal shift.