

Local Development Framework Briefing Paper Travel Plans



Devon County Council's advice to Local Planning Authorities.

This is one of a series of briefing papers prepared by Devon County Council to assist the preparation of Local Development Documents.

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Local Planning Authorities when preparing their Local Development Documents are requested set out a clear policy framework for the preparation and implementation of travel plans by:

- 1. Requiring an assessment of need for a Travel Plan to ensure that all new developments are considered for their relevance/need to require a travel plan.***
- 2. Promoting good practice by introducing travel plans in the pre application stage of a development.***
- 3. Securing developer contributions needs to ensure all travel plans and sustainable transport practices are secured through planning conditions/obligations and are enforceable.***
- 4. Achieving Targets by including an LDF policy specific to travel plans to ensure the above targets are achieved.***
- 5. Setting out policy and advise for Travel Plans by addressing;***
 - (a) When to require a travel plan (see Section 5 (a))***
 - (b) Pre application discussions (see Section 5 (b))***
 - (c) Developer contributions toward sustainable transport (see Section 5 (c))***
 - (d) Trip Rates and Targets (see Section 5 (d))***
 - (e) Car Parking guidance on car parking requirements and management. (see Section 5 (e))***
 - f) Sustainability and monitoring (see Section 5 (f))***

Partnership Working

Devon County Council wishes to work in partnership with District Councils, in further developing the above policy areas with colleagues and other organisations and would wish to be involved in any discussion relating to them.

1. Introduction

A Travel Plan is a package of measures designed to reduce the number and length of car trips generated by a workplace, residential development, attraction or school (school travel plans are not covered in this paper) whilst also supporting more sustainable forms of travel and reducing the overall need to travel.

The national sustainability agenda and modernisation of the planning system have reinforced the important role that travel planning can play in achieving a wide range of national and local objectives. These include; helping to reduce the need for car use which offers benefits such as reduced traffic, congestion and local air pollution, supporting mixed community and housing objectives; including development location, density, design and parking and provision of car clubs, Improving public transport provision for people in nearby developments, helping address the causes and potential impacts of climate change through reducing emissions, complimenting nearby travel plans and possibly assist them in achieving more, supporting social inclusion objectives, particularly through the improvement of accessibility to and from new developments and providing alternatives for those who do not have access to a car and integrating policy development through the Local Transport Plan and the Local Development Framework process.

A travel plan should include a combination of soft measures (for example, promotion and awareness raising) with hard measures (for example, improvements to design, infrastructure, and services). These should most effectively be required through legal agreements that require a developer to put in place the desired improvements. A travel plan must also include targets, monitoring and management arrangements to ensure that the objectives of the travel plan are achieved and it remains a sustainable for the life of the business/ development.

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.

This Briefing Paper set out the main travel plan issues and requirements that need to be addressed by District Councils in preparing their Local Development Documents.

2. The vision to 2021 and beyond

National and regional planning guidance stress the need to develop an integrated transportation system. They also state that provision for new development should be made in ways which would reduce the need to travel and encourage choices between modes.

Devon's overall vision and objective for a Sustainable Transport Network set out in the Devon Structure Plan High Level Policy Aim 6 seeks;

To develop an integrated and sustainable transport system, in conjunction with the land use strategy, able to meet the environmental, economic, and social needs of Devon whilst reducing the need to travel through the following objectives;

- 1. Reduce the need to travel, especially by private vehicles.*
- 2. Promote the use of alternatives to car travel such as walking, cycling and public transport.*
- 3. Guide new development to locations that can be served by a choice of transport modes.*
- 4. Increase accessibility for those not having access to private transport.*
- 5. Avoid the dispersal of new development provision – in order to reduce the need to travel and maximise accessibility to facilities and services.*

The Devon Structure Plan addresses the period until 2016 is currently saved until it is replaced by the Regional Spatial Strategy which is due to be adopted in the spring of 2008. The above objectives provide a framework for sustainable transport and therefore are appropriate beyond this.

3. Issues to be addressed

- a) **Travel Plans as part of planning process** - Travel plans should be designed into existing and proposed developments from the beginning of the planning process and supported by a long term commitment and ideally enforcement mechanisms.
- b) **Promoting sustainable travel behaviour** - The requirement of travel plans for new developments is essential to affecting travel behaviour and promoting sustainable travel choices. Travel plans require their own specific policy to ensure they are suitably considered in all planning applications. The more comprehensive the authorities' policy framework is in relation to providing a travel plan policy the easier it is to justify the requirement for a travel plan.
- c) **Clarification of form and content of travel Plans** - Consideration of requiring travel plans in all planning proposals which includes;
- Size and nature of development where a travel plan is required
 - What the travel plan should contain
 - When the travel plan should be submitted
 - Who prepares implements and monitors the travel plan.
- d) **Need for a robust policy framework** to support negotiations and to secure travel plans with developers.
- e) **The appropriate use of planning conditions and Section 106** (current legal agreement) to require travel plans or require sustainable travel measures.
- f) **The enforcement of travel plans** and the use of sanctions.
- g) **Developing shared priorities** - The Devon Local Transport Plan demonstrates its contribution to delivering a 'shared set of priorities' including; improved access to employment and services, in ways that are sustainable, improve public transport and reduced problems of congestion and pollution. The LTP guidance recognises the contribution that 'smart measures' such as travel planning has on reducing congestion.
- h) **Recognition of broader priorities of the County Council and other organisations** - Travel plans also cut across a wider range of policies and interests and therefore in achieving a LDF policy there should be appropriate input from not solely the Local Authority but also public transport operators, primary care trusts, job centres and developers.
- i) **Maximising opportunities from 'soft' measures** - The '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.
- j) **Monitoring of outcomes** - The most important measure of a travel plan success is its effect on travel behaviour for trips to and from during the course of the day and also where appropriate trips made by visitors, customers etc.

4. Key Recommendation's for LDF Policy

Local Development Documents should.

1. **Assessment of need for Travel Plan** - Ensure that all new developments are considered for their relevance/need to require a travel plan.
2. **Promote good practice** - Promote good practice by introducing travel plans in the pre application stage of a development.
3. **Developer contributions needs** - Ensure all travel plans and sustainable transport practices are secured through planning conditions/obligations and are enforceable.

4. Achieving Targets - Secure a LDF policy specific to travel plans to ensure appropriate targets are achieved.

5. Policy for Travel Plans - Local Development Documents should set out a clear policy framework for travel plans. A travel plan policy should seek to address the following five issues;

- (a) When to require a travel plan - Set a standard for when a travel plan is necessary. This should not only consider the size of the development but take into consideration the following; a) Congestion and transport management issues in the area. b) The presence of other travel plans in the area. c) Whether the area is in a 'air quality management' zone. d) The type of employment/use of the development. e) The potential to increase housing density by reducing parking needs. f) The cumulative impact of smaller developments. g) The need to ensure all development is inclusive, and therefore considers transport options for all persons including those who are not able to access a car.
- (b) Pre application discussions - The LDF travel plan policy should inform pre-application discussions to ensure sustainable travel considerations are given to; layout and access, specific transport works required as a result of the development, the necessity of a travel plan, the scope of the travel plan including targets and monitoring mechanisms, the need to involve other parties i.e. Legal Officers, in the case of a Section 106 Agreement.
- (c) Transport contributions - The policy should developer contributions towards sustainable transport for workplace, residential and visitor developments. This policy should be based on a set contribution figure per square meter of development which is to be spent on sustainable transport, for example additional bus services to improve the frequency. This practice is well used by Torbay District Council.
- (d) Trip Rates and Targets - A clear direction for modal split and public transport trips is necessary in order to set an acceptable level. This should be devised by comparing developments of a similar size and type. If a transport assessment has been required this should inform the expected trip rates and suggest a base line target for the trips. All travel plan targets should be considered in conjunction with Devon County Council Travel Plan Officer. Travel plan targets should be enforceable and in most cases the use of financial sanctions should be put in place to ensure the travel plan is honoured.
- (e) Car Parking - The Local Development Plans should provide guidance on car parking requirements and management. Car parking should follow the minimum standards set in local plans with a view to use car parking as a 'stick' to minimise or discourage car travel. As much as possible car trips that have to be made should be encouraged to be occupied by more than one person. 'Car sharing only' bays for example, would be a way of managing car park demand and reducing single car trips.
- (f) Sustainability Appraisal and monitoring - Travel plans affect travel behaviour and promote the need to reduce car trips and/ or travel by alternatives to the car. Therefore they will score highly in a sustainability appraisal. Furthermore this provides a justification for considering a travel plan in any new development. Travel plans provide a mechanism through which ongoing sustainability appraisal can be built into the planning and implementation arrangements of a development.

Partnership Working - Devon County Council wishes to work in partnership with District Councils, in further developing the above policy areas with colleagues and other organisations and would wish to be involved in any discussion relating to them.

Appendix 1

Travel Plan Statistics

Travel plans have been in existence in the UK for over 10 years within Devon there are currently 58 employers who have travel plans. School travel plans are well established within Devon and currently 51% of schools in Devon now have a travel plan.

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. 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.*

The table below shows the effectiveness of a workplace travel plan in Devon.

Modes of transport used by staff travelling to work

Mode of Transport	2004	2005
Car (solo driver)	48%	32%
Car share (driver/passenger)	29%	31%
Cycle	7%	15%
Public Transport	6%	7%
Walk	6%	10%
Motorbike	2%	3%

Appendix 2

References

National Guidance/policies

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. Planning Policy Statement 1 (2005)

Department for Transport. Securing Travel Plans through the Planning Process DfT (2002)

Department for Transport. Residential Travel Plans Best Practice Guidance (2005)

Local Guidance/policies

Devon Local Transport Plan 2006 -2011 (provisional)

A Strategy for Workplace Travel Plans in Devon (draft 2006)

Devon to 2016. Devon Structure Plan 2001-2016. (2004).

Action Plan to reduce Congestion in Exeter, Newton Abbot, Barnstaple and Totnes (2004)

LDF Briefing Paper - Travel Plans.DOC