

DGN2: Travel Plans

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Travel Plans

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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This advice sets out Warrington Borough Council's requirements for Travel Plans and identifies where they are required in support of a planning application. It is strongly advised that applicants contact the Council's Travel Plan Officer for advice before developing a travel plan as local requirements may vary from national guidance.
- 1.2. Travel Plans are an integral part of national policy on sustainable transport. The implementation of travel plans in Warrington will help to achieve national and local targets to reduce congestion, improve air quality and promote healthier travel.
- 1.3. The National Planning Policy Framework published in March 2012 requires submission of Travel Plans alongside planning applications for developments which generate significant amounts of movement. Warrington's Local Plan Core Strategy gives more local guidance and requirements.
- 1.4. In order to be effective a Travel Plan must be written in a straight forward manner that can be understood by a non-transport planning professional. The plan does not require excessive amounts of national and local planning policy to be stated, but rather should concentrate on information directly relevant to the site, should be as concise as possible, and must have a clear implementation plan including responsibilities and timetable. Further guidance is provided in sections 3 and 4 of this document.
- 1.5. The Council may be able to offer a service to prepare an appropriate travel plan, work with occupiers of the site to implement the travel plan, and to monitor the plan. If developers are interested in this service they should approach the Council's Travel Plan Officer to discuss options. Planning obligations may be entered into, where appropriate, for this comprehensive travel planning service.



2. Background Information

What is a Travel Plan?

- 2.1. A Travel Plan is a package of measures to assist in managing the transport needs of an organisation. A successful Travel Plan will offer users of an organisation or business a choice of travel modes to and from the site to encourage more sustainable patterns of movement. Local Authorities are encouraged to promote the use of Travel Plans to assist in wider aims of reducing pollution, congestion and improving health.
- 2.2. A Travel Plan must contain an action plan detailing which measures will be promoted as alternative modes of travel for commuting, school journeys (if applicable) and business trips. These may include bus, train, cycling, walking, motorcycling or car sharing. This may also apply to journeys made during the course of work or to visitors and customers to a site where a travel plan can realistically influence these journeys.
- 2.3. Travel Plans consist of two stages; development and implementation.
 - The **development** stage involves analysis of and consultation on site-specific issues, determining which measures are required, and the production of an action plan.
 - The **implementation** stage is an ongoing process, ensuring the actions are put into operation, monitoring their effectiveness, and revising where necessary.

Objectives of a Travel Plan

- 2.4. The main objective of a Travel Plan is to enable and encourage users of a development to reduce their single occupancy car travel to the site.
- 2.5. A Travel Plan is better viewed in terms of an ongoing process rather than a one-off document. A successful Travel Plan will benefit from continual monitoring (e.g. staff surveys), review and adjustment over time. It requires integration into other management procedures and demonstration of high-level management commitment.

The Benefits of a Travel Plan

- 2.6. Whilst a Travel Plan will clearly help to reduce congestion and traffic related pollution for residents in the Borough, there are also benefits to organisations, namely:
 - producing cash savings, particularly where there is a constrained or congested site, car parking costs are high, or parking areas could be put to higher value use;
 - improving competitive advantage, they can help employee recruitment and retention, create a better image and improve public relations, reduce employee stress through healthier forms of travel, encourage flexible working practices and produce a fair approach to travel subsidy; and
 - offer a wider choice of travel mode for all those travelling to and from the site.

Local Policy on Travel Plans

- 2.7. The promotion and implementation of Travel Plans is a policy objective in the Local Transport Plan (LTP) for Warrington. The LTP quotes that “the Council is concerned that proposals for new building developments take full account of the need to encourage more sustainable transport solutions.” Local and national initiatives and targets to reduce road traffic, promote public transport, walking and cycling are also set out.
- 2.8. Warrington’s Local Plan Core Strategy states...“Applications for major developments, developments that are not consistent with the Local Planning Framework or developments that raise specific issues in a locality that consist of housing, employment, retail, leisure, and service uses must be accompanied by a Transport Assessment, Transport Statement, and Travel Plan in accordance with National Planning Policy and national guidance on transport assessments.”

When is a Travel Plan required with a Planning Application?

- 2.9. In addition to the guidance in 2.8 above, developers are encouraged to consult with the Council at an early stage, preferably before submission of an outline or detailed planning application, as to whether a Travel Plan is required. This consultation is important as it may influence the design of any final scheme.
- 2.10. The Department for Transport’s Good Practice Guide outlines the four different types of Travel Plan and determines which is appropriate for which circumstance:

Area-wide travel plan
For use in rural areas or complex large developments in existing developed areas. Can ensure that proposed development creates effective, integrated, sustainable access.
Framework travel plan
For large mixed-use developments with multiple occupants or mixed uses. Overall outcomes, targets and indicators are shared and administered centrally. Sets the parameters for the individual uses/elements that should prepare their own subsidiary travel plans which are in line with the framework travel plan.
Interim travel plan
For when it is not possible to identify all the outcomes or measures and/or where the uses and end users are unknown. Covers all main elements and fixes a time-frame and commitment for completion of the full travel plan.
Full travel plan
The expected standard choice, when location, use and end users are known.
Travel plan statement
For small applications, when a full travel plan is not justified, a travel plan statement can be used to deal with any issues that arise from the transport statement.

Section 106 Agreements

2.11. A developer may be required to enter into an Agreement with the Council made under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. This could include:

- A financial contribution
- A requirement to produce a Travel Plan
- Monitoring requirements

3. Developing a Travel Plan

- 3.1. It is strongly advised that contact is made with the Council's Travel Plan Officer at the earliest opportunity as advice will be given on the best approach to take, and support may be available to assist with the development and implementation of the Travel Plan. This can save the developer time and money commissioning an alternative, and is likely to lead to a quicker decision.

Appointment of a Travel Plan Co-ordinator (TPC)

- 3.2. The Developer or Occupier must supply to the Council the name of the appointed person from within the organisation responsible for the success and running of the Travel Plan, known as the Travel Plan Co-ordinator. The post needs to be of sufficient seniority to undertake tasks associated with the post, however the appointment need not necessarily be a new one but instead a case of extending the job profile of an existing employee (this will depend on the scale of the development and size of the organisation).
- 3.3. The role of the Travel Plan Co-ordinator will be to manage the Travel Plan, liaise with the Council and provide monitoring information when agreed. Depending on the elements in the Action Plan, the job description also requires to include some or all of the following:-
- to promote and encourage the use of non-car travel modes, including publicity;
 - to ensure that all relevant information is provided to all users of the site, and that up to date information is clearly displayed on the noticeboards or via the intranet if applicable;
 - to arrange and record surveys of car park usage as required by the Council;
 - to co-ordinate car sharing arrangements in whatever manner the organisation has decided upon;
 - to arrange for either full or snapshot travel surveys to be undertaken of all users of the site, at intervals agreed with the Council;
 - to liaise with public transport operators and officers of the Planning and Transport authorities and arrange regular meetings with all interested parties;
 - to organise the flow of information to educate existing and new staff.

(NOTE: Support and advice will be available from relevant WBC officers throughout)

- 3.4. The following are suggested steps to be taken when developing a Travel Plan. For ease of assessment it is recommended that the applicant sets out the Travel Plan as shown below. Best practice suggests that a panel be set up to advance travel plan development and its future implementation. This should consist of the travel plan co-ordinator, decision-makers and any other interested parties.

STEP 1 – Site Audit

- 3.5. This is an essential part of preparing a Travel Plan. It is a tool for methodically assessing transport facilities on the site and transport links to it. In the process of carrying out a site

audit, a list of actions to make it easier and more attractive to travel to the site on foot, by public transport and bicycle is drawn up for use in a Travel Plan.

STEP 2 – Travel Survey

- 3.6. A survey of travel modes of users of the site (usually staff but may include others such as patients/students/pupils depending on type of development) should be undertaken. The aim of the survey is to collect data on current transport methods and determine which alternative modes are required and are likely to be acceptable and most effective. The survey should include the following questions:
- How far do you travel to work (one way)?
 - How long does it normally take you to get to work?
 - How do you usually travel to work?
 - Why do you currently travel to work in this way?
 - If driving, is there anything that would make you change how you travel?
 - Please enter your full home postcode
 - Any other aspect of travel the organisation might require information on.
- 3.7. The most effective method of conducting the survey should be selected, and an attempt should be made to ensure maximum return by offering, for example, entry into a prize draw for participants. Thought should be given as to whether electronic or hard copy distribution will elicit the highest return.



Our travel patterns are complex;
help us understand them better.

STEP 3 – Drafting the Travel Plan

- 3.8. The Travel Plan should then be drawn up and relevant measures included, based on the survey data collected. Components required in a Travel Plan are outlined below.

STEP 4 – Submission and Evaluation of a Travel Plan

- 3.9. The Travel Plan will be evaluated by the Council's Travel Plan Officer, and when approved the Travel Plan will be passed to the Planning Case Officer for discharge of the planning condition.

4. Components of a Travel Plan

- 4.1. It is recognised that a Travel Plan will be unique to any site and a variety of initiatives may be adopted. However the following list gives an idea of what should be included in a quality plan to make it as effective as possible.

NOTE: The Council does not require excessive national and local policy to be outlined within the Travel Plan. The Plan needs to be as concise and user-friendly as possible as it will often be implemented by non-transport professionals.

Introduction

- 4.2. Purpose of travel plan (one to two paragraphs are sufficient). This should provide an overview of the site and introduces the organisation. It should set out reasons for the travel plan and refer to the relevant national and local policy background.

Audit: Facts and Figures

- 4.3. A table or bullet points including site address and location, building size, site opening date, employee numbers, shift patterns or business hours, purpose of site, number and location of car parking spaces, cycle parking spaces, shower and locker facilities, bus facilities, rail facilities, motorbike parking, etc.

Travel Survey

- 4.4. Show the results preferably, or an outline of how and when one will be undertaken.

Promoting Travel Choices – package of measures

- 4.5. A clear description of the measures planned to enable and encourage cycling, walking, bus and train use, car sharing, etc. This should only include items that WILL be done, not that could be done. It should include measures with tangible outputs – e.g. cycle storage if necessary.
- 4.6. A useful tool is a personal travel induction pack for each staff member moving to the new site which could include a site-map, cycle map, and appropriate bus or train timetable. Research suggests that the most successful plans incorporate a broad range of measures, both ‘carrots’ and ‘sticks’ with incentives introduced first.

Aims and Targets

- 4.7. Sets out in broad terms what the above measures are seeking to achieve and how these will be evaluated or measured to demonstrate success or a need to adjust to ensure future positive outcomes.

Marketing Strategy

- 4.8. Describe how the plan will be implemented on an ongoing basis including how the plan will be funded, together with a strategy for communicating the travel plan to all site users, including:
- raising awareness of sustainable travel options;
 - promoting individual measures and initiatives;
 - distribution of travel information from the outset (or even in advance if workforce is already in place elsewhere) and on an ongoing basis.
 - a monthly promotional event in a communal area such as the staff canteen

Management Strategy

- 4.9. Specifically to show commitment and buy-in from the developer or occupier. The travel plan must have a robust strategy for its implementation that is appropriate for the location and which considers the long term sustainability of the plan. This should include:
- details of who is responsible for implementing and managing the travel plan, both before and after occupation;
 - appointment of a travel plan coordinator, time allocated to this position, when to be appointed and how the coordinator will be managed, full contact details if available or interim contact details where applicable;
 - other management arrangements to steer the plan, both before and after occupation
 - a systematic approach to monitoring and review, at least annually.

Action Plan

- 4.10. The most important section: usually in a table format with the minimum headings of 'Action', 'Who leads', 'Timescale', 'Budget'. Generally a 12 month plan will be appropriate, to be reviewed and updated annually following annual survey results. The Plan will set out the actions to be implemented to reduce single occupancy car travel. They should be realistic and achievable but also stretching enough to drive progress.

Commitment

- 4.11. The implementation of initiatives within the Action Plan above is the most essential part of the process. Without effective implementation of initiatives, a travel plan is likely to be no more than a paper exercise, hence it is important to name those responsible for the implementation and to ensure they understand their duties.

Evidence of commitment to the Travel Plan by the occupier of the site is essential. The document should be signed off by someone in authority in the organisation it is written for to give confidence that it will be implemented.

5. Assessment Criteria

- 5.1. The Travel Plan will be assessed by the Council based upon the inclusion of the components above and the potential to lessen the transport implications of the development and bring about a change in modal share.
- 5.2. Any plans that do not include realistic measures and management criteria to enable implementation will be rejected and returned with suggested improvements.
- 5.3. Travel Plans which are considered credible will be accepted, added to the Council's database for monitoring and offered practical support to help with the implementation stages.