

Making Residential Travel Plans Work





Printed copies of this document are available from:

DfT Publications,
PO Box 236,
Wetherby LS23 7BJ.

14 A5 pages including illustrations.

Product code: 781NE02829.

Price: Free.

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Meeting the Challenge

Because of the current demand for housing throughout England a substantial level of growth is expected in the next few years. In the east of England, between now and 2021 there are plans to build 25,400 homes and in the south east a further 28,000.

Integrating new homes into our existing towns and cities and minimising the impact on our transport system will be a key challenge. Success will mean thinking about the appropriate location and design of new housing developments so that people are able to live there in a sustainable way from the outset.

The locations chosen need to have good access to local services. Designs need to include high quality open areas that encourage walking, cycling and recreational use of public space. Sites also need to have access to public transport, so that reliance on the use of a car for transport can be reduced.

But good design on its own will not necessarily change people's travel behaviour. There is a need to provide real incentives so that individuals benefit from changing their travel behaviour and sustain these changes long term. We need to achieve better access for everyone to employment opportunities, education, health and leisure facilities whether they have a car or not.

The issue of climate change is a growing priority on the planning agenda and there is an increasing need to cut carbon emissions. The Government is currently exploring how the planning system can contribute to tackling climate change, particularly as 'the location, design, construction and siting of built development and economic and social activity can significantly affect the level of greenhouse emissions'.¹

1 Climate Change: the UK Programme, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), page 108, 2006.

Residential Travel Plans

Travel planning is one of a range of measures known as **smarter choices** which have been found to be effective in reducing traffic and improving accessibility in residential areas. Other smarter choices include car clubs, car sharing schemes, travel awareness and individualised marketing campaigns, and measures to reduce the need to travel such as promoting tele-working and video-conferencing.

An intensive smarter choices programme over 10 years could cut urban peak-hour traffic by 21% and off-peak traffic by 13%. Nationally, traffic volumes could fall by 11%.²



² *Making Smarter Choices Work*, Department for Transport (DfT), 2005.

A **Residential Travel Plan** is a package of measures designed to reduce car use originating from new housing by supporting alternative forms of transport and reducing the need to travel in the first place. They are an important tool to help deliver accessible, sustainable communities and offer clear benefits to all the parties involved – public, private and the community. They involve meeting the access needs of residents in a new way and require partnerships between developers, local authorities, local communities and new residents.

The value of travel plans in reducing car use to workplaces and schools is widely recognised and many local authorities and developers have experience in their design and implementation. However, until recently, little attention has been given to tackling the origins of journeys from people's homes. Now, forward-thinking developers and local authorities are developing packages of smarter choices to both reduce the traffic generated by new housing developments and increasing the travel choices available to residents. These smarter choices are being set out in Residential Travel Plans.

'As a Travel Planning Officer, I believe the message of sustainability being built into the fabric of our residential developments is key. Residential travel plans aim to build in accessibility to all members of the community, allowing those who live there to be able to access their homes and services in a more supported way. This is central to the creation of sustainable communities and my ability to do my job.'

Rose McArthur

*Development Travel Plan Advisor
Surrey CC*

The Residential Travel Plan (RTP) Recipe

As with other travel plans, the actual content of a Residential Travel Plan will be tailored to the site in question. It should address all aspects of life that create a need to travel and result in a reduction in the number of car journeys.

The travel plan pyramid



The travel plan pyramid helps demonstrate how successful plans are built on the firm foundations of a good location and site design. A Plan should also combine hard measures – such as new bus stops and cycle ways, and soft measures – such as discounts on season tickets and help with individual journey planning. All measures should be integrated into the design, marketing and occupation of the site. In addition, parking restraint is often crucial to the success of the plan in reducing car use.



Promotional Strategy: Welcome packs, public transport discounts and cycling incentives can all help introduce the travel plan to residents and build enthusiasm.



Services & Facilities: Good public transport and a car club can help reduce the need for on-site parking. Other measures, such as broadband internet access and home deliveries can reduce the need to travel off site.



Coordinator: Successful travel plans need people. The Coordinator plays a crucial role in developing the plan and working with residents and developers to ensure the plan meets their needs for access and evolves over time.



Built environment: Low density developments are hard work to get round by bike and foot. Encouraging compact development that is walking and cycling friendly, with low parking allowances, is crucial in encouraging sustainable travel choices.



Location: Residents need to be within easy reach of shops and services – so that walking or cycling becomes the natural choice.

Key Benefits of Residential Travel Plans

When faced with a new development, local communities are often concerned about the level of traffic that may be generated and parking problems that may arise. Residential Travel Plans can help overcome such concerns by finding new ways of addressing residents' travel needs and demonstrating how to influence their travel choices.

Additionally, Residential Travel Plans offer genuine benefits.

For developers these include:

- enabling higher densities of housing development, and therefore increased profit margins;
- potentially reducing the need for expenditure on new transport infrastructure.



For new occupiers the benefits include:

- better access to essential services and jobs;
- improved travel options;
- opportunity for a healthier lifestyle; and
- more vibrant communities to live in.

For local authorities, they can help address broad range of key objectives:

- residents' needs for access to shops, schools, jobs, health facilities and recreational activities.
- reduce traffic generated by the development.
- create sustainable, vibrant local communities and promote healthy lifestyles.
- reinforce the need for good urban design.
- address local issues about how to provide good access to and from the site by walking, cycling and public transport.

Residential Travel Plans should help developments overcome problems of accessibility and ensure they perform better in terms of walking, cycling and public transport access.

‘Although there were significant costs in the travel plan, the benefits commercially were that we were able to increase the density of the site, and socially, that we remain confident we will significantly reduce reliance on the car by use of the car club, subsidised public transport and cycle facilities.’

John Terry

*Special Projects Director
David Wilson Homes*

Making Residential Travel Plans Work

The following case studies highlight two developments where local authorities and developers have pioneered Residential Travel Plans and are reaping the benefits.

Grand Union Village, West London

Grand Union Village is a mixed development with 705 residential units. The travel plan is firmly based on the provision of local facilities and strong parking restraint. To ensure good access, the travel plan includes:

- a car club, with membership costs subsidised by the developer for the first period;
- access to Transport for London (TFL)-funded West London car share journey matching service;
- a local bus service will be diverted through the new housing development, and will run more often;
- development designed to create a ‘home zone’ style atmosphere;
- walking and cycling on site, linked to existing routes, and a 20mph speed limit across the area;
- providing every new resident with a Welcome Pack, containing a high quality map of the neighbourhood, showing cycling, walking and public transport routes to key local facilities, plus timetables for local buses;
- marketing and promotional activities, including a website with travel information pages, sales office publicity, newsletters for Grand Union Village residents and the surrounding area, and fun days that include promotion of the Travel Plan; and
- a Travel Plan coordinator, a service provided by an external contractor, that includes the provision of personalised journey planning.

One of the innovative aspects of the development is the formation of the Grand Union Village Community Development Trust involving local residents. Subject to the approval of the Trustees, the trust will oversee the implementation of the Travel Plan. This is intended to encourage direct involvement by residents in its delivery.

'I believe the Green Travel Plan is an excellent example of good practice in terms of encouraging residents to use public transport, bicycles and walking and when you do need to use a car then the Car Club is there for your use. As a business working in the Village I am delighted to be part of this wonderful initiative and see the benefits towards making the Village a vibrant community for children and adults to live, work and play.'

Julie Clifford

Trust Director

Grand Union Village Community Development Trust

Queen Elizabeth Park, Guildford Surrey

Developers Laing and Linden Homes overcame local authority concerns about traffic generation resulting from their redevelopment of the former Guildford Barracks by implementing a Travel Plan for the proposed 525 residential units.

The Travel Plan, prepared by consultants Colin Buchanan, included:

- welcome packs, newsletters, a website and other marketing material which was made available to residents;
- public transport provision through upgraded bus services and the offer of a £200 bus travel voucher for each household;
- walking and cycling provision through new footways, crossings and advanced stop lines for cyclists;

- a £30 cycle voucher was offered to all households and a bike user group proposed;
- the 234 car Car Share scheme for residents and employees on site; and
- a travel plan coordinator who was available from construction through to habitation of the site.



Getting the most from Residential Travel Plans

Getting the most from Residential Travel Plans depends on getting the process right from the outset. Experience of residential travel planning to date provides some of the following lessons:

- developers and local authorities need to discuss the transport aspects of the site as early as possible, before submitting an application. The access requirements of the site need to be built into the design process. Once all the travel plan needs are identified they should be clearly set out in a Section 106 agreement.
- residential Travel Plans are generally developed in advance of site occupation, and travel plan targets and monitoring arrangements should also be agreed from the outset. As soon as residents move in, the developer should work with them to make sure that the commitments of the plan are understood and can be implemented.
- the plan needs to be reviewed in light of the practical reality on the ground. This helps ensure that the plan is regularly updated, and that targets are met. The developer has the prime responsibility for the plan until a satisfactory outcome is achieved.

- in the long term, the success of Residential Travel Plans depends on ensuring that ownership for the plan ultimately rests with the residents who recognise the benefits and are aware that the plans are in their best interest. There needs to be an agreed mechanism for the handover of responsibility for the travel plan from the developer to residents. A residents' committee or a management company may be the best way to take forward the plan in the future.



Where to find out more

The Department for Transport (DfT) has published comprehensive advice on delivering travel plans for residential developments including the choice of measures, management arrangements, targets, monitoring and enforcement in its publication ***Making Residential Travel Plans Work: Good Practice Guidelines for New Development.***

This can be downloaded from the DfT's website at:
<http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/sustainable/travelplans/rpt/>

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Published by the Department for Transport
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Printed in Great Britain 2007 on paper containing
at least 75% recycled fibre

June 2007

Product Code: 781NE02829

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