

Good Practice Guidelines: Delivering Travel Plans through the Planning Process

Summary of Main Report



April 2009

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Introduction and summary of the main guidelines

The separate document *Good Practice Guidelines: Delivering Travel Plans through the Planning Process* sets out actions that can be taken to produce high-quality, robust travel plans. The suggested steps are recommendations only, and are not additions to Government policy or law on travel plans.

Travel plans have been used successfully for many years, whether secured through planning or prepared on a voluntary basis. They are an important tool for promoting sustainable travel, e.g. walking, cycling, public transport, and help to reduce single occupancy car use. They also encourage effective use of current transport networks and support their enhancement. Travel plans are now being used to secure the provision of sustainable travel choices, both to new developments and to extensions of existing sites, whatever their use. But there is scope to make travel planning still more integral to the activities of local authorities and developers alike.

Requirements for when travel plans should be submitted are set out in paragraph 89 of *Planning Policy Guide 13: Transport* (PPG 13) and local authority requirements in local policies. PPG 13 and local planning documents, along with the advice in Circulars 11/95 and 05/2005, should be read prior to preparing a travel plan.

Definition: A travel plan (TP) is a long-term management strategy for an occupier or site that seeks to deliver sustainable transport objectives through positive action and is articulated in a document that is regularly reviewed.

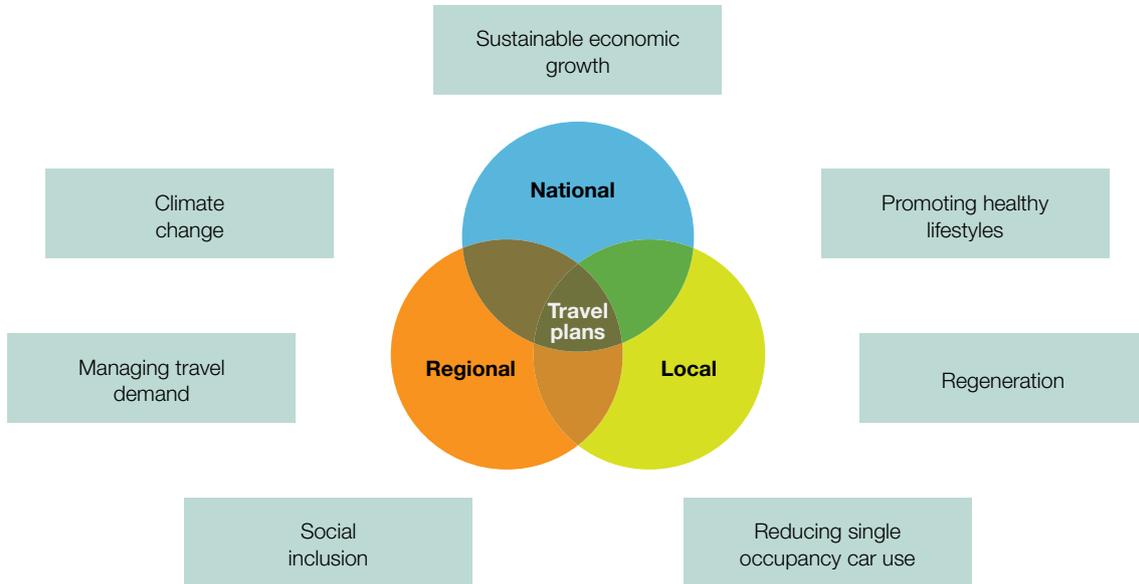
The full version of *Good Practice Guidelines: Delivering Travel Plans through the Planning Process* aims to help all those involved in creating and implementing travel plans – local authority planners, transport and travel plan officers, developers and consultants – understand the processes involved and good practice steps for achieving *successful and sustainable* travel plans. Through suggested policies, processes, procedures and good practice examples the main report highlights how to secure effective travel plans that are successful, sustainable and enforceable.

Travel plans can be a key tool in achieving national, regional and local objectives to manage the demand for movement and improve accessibility for everyone.

This summary outlines the benefits of travel plans, the key aspects within all stages of the planning process and how to ensure they are maintained.

Why seek a travel plan linked to the planning process?

Figure 1: The benefits of travel plans at national, regional and local level



The planning process provides the key opportunity to ensure that new development can be effectively accessed by everyone who needs to get to and from a site, minimise the impact of developments on the transport infrastructure and help to reduce CO₂. It is important therefore to use this opportunity fully.

Travel plans are important for major new developments in order to:

- support increased choice of travel modes;
- promote and achieve access by sustainable modes;
- respond to the growing concern about the environment, congestion, pollution and poverty of access;
- promote a partnership between the authority and the developer in creating and shaping 'place'.

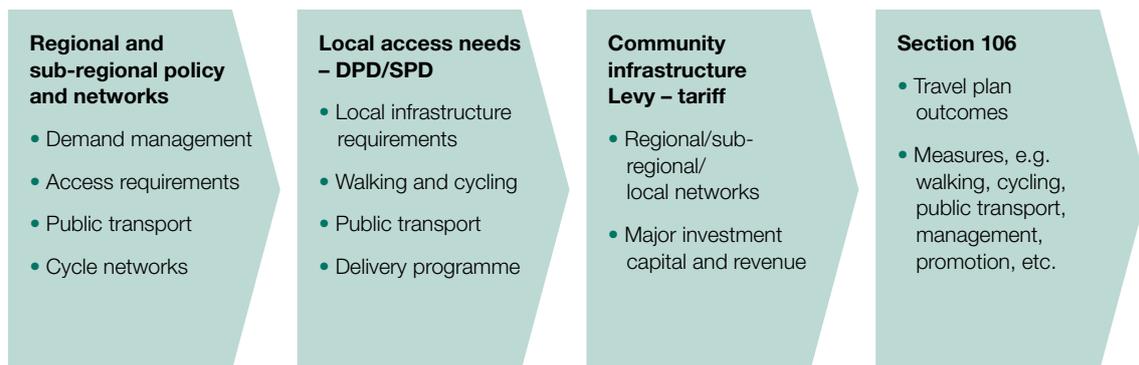
As Figure 1 shows, the benefits of effective travel plans are far-reaching, potentially feeding into aims and goals across a wide range of policy areas. For developments, a travel plan can be a means to demonstrate that they will contribute effectively to economic, social and environmental aims at local, regional and national level. A travel plan can also result in a development that is more attractive to potential occupiers, for example through environmental credentials or improved accessibility.

How do travel plans fit into the planning process?

Getting the correct ‘building blocks’ in place is key to securing successful travel plans: robust, clear local policies are needed which build on national and regional policy. Local Development Frameworks, a series of Development Plan Documents (DPDs), including a core strategy, encourage development in accessible locations. Accessibility will be part of the ‘place shaping’ role of these core strategies. Detailed policies will help to clarify when and where travel plans are required. Further detail on how travel plans in the area should be prepared, delivered and monitored can be contained in Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs). These may be prepared in partnership with other authorities to give increased consistency and weight.

For effective travel demand management, there needs to be consistency between policies developed at the different levels. Figure 2 shows how policy themes should be picked up at each level.

Figure 2: How policy themes should be picked up at each level



If the process is ‘front loaded’ – if policies are clear, procedures set out, required outcomes and schemes understood and agreed – then it will be easier for all parties involved to prepare good plans and agree them as part of the determination of an application.

To achieve clarity, local authorities should publish guidance stating the nature and scale of new development that will require travel plans, what type of travel plan is needed in different situations and the broad objectives they are seeking. These objectives are more effective when linked to the wider spatial planning objectives of achieving effective use of existing transport networks, supporting sustainable accessibility to sites and encouraging more efficient use of land. In order to ensure that travel plans operate effectively, it is important to choose locations for development that are capable of being accessed by a range of modes of transport. These choices need to be based on robust evidence.

What is the link between transport assessments and travel plans?

A transport assessment sets out the transport issues relating to a proposed development (in the case of smaller developments, a transport statement will be adequate). Travel plans are often a primary outcome from these assessments. Considering the assessment and travel plan as an integrated package of information and proposals to deal with the transport impacts of the development is the most effective approach. They should be submitted together with the planning application wherever possible. To make the process effective, developers and local authorities can agree at an early stage the scope of the assessment and outcomes sought through the travel plan. This will ensure a smoother process when considering and determining the planning application.

Are there different types of travel plan?

There are a number of different types of travel plan, depending on the size of development, the location and context, and the use or uses of the proposed development, described below.

Area-wide travel plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Useful in, for example, rural areas or very complex large developments in existing developed areas.• Can ensure that new and existing development produces effective and integrated accessibility outcomes.
Framework travel plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• For large mixed-use developments with multiple occupants or mixed uses.• Overall outcomes, targets and indicators are joint 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
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Produced if it is not possible to identify all the outcomes or measures and/or where the uses and end users are unclear.• Covers all main elements and fixes a time-frame for completion of the full travel plan.
Full travel plan
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Produced when end user(s) or end use(s) are known.• Important to ensure continued implementation when passed on through occupiers.
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.

What is involved in ensuring a successful travel plan?

The process of preparing a good travel plan is likely to be iterative. Each site is unique, and all those involved will have to think through what is the best approach in the particular circumstances. The outcomes agreed need to be clear and measurable, with monitoring arrangements for and after implementation.

Local authorities should consider whether they have policies in place, and the procedures, to guide the process from effective pre-application discussions through application determination to implementation, monitoring and review.

Developing a successful travel plan can be viewed as a pyramid, as shown in Figure 3. If the location of the site is wrong, the subsequent measures of design, identifying a co-ordinator, establishing services and facilities and promotion and awareness-raising will be less effective.

Figure 3: The travel plan pyramid

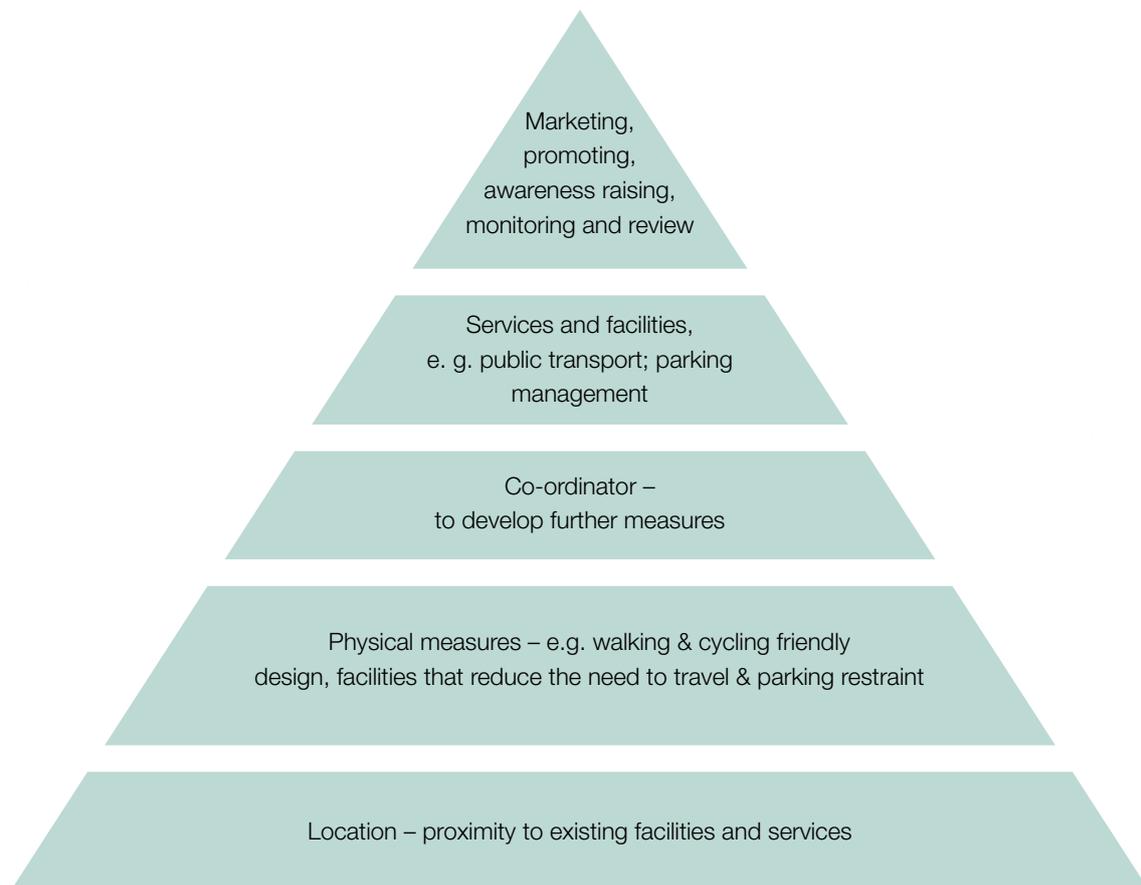
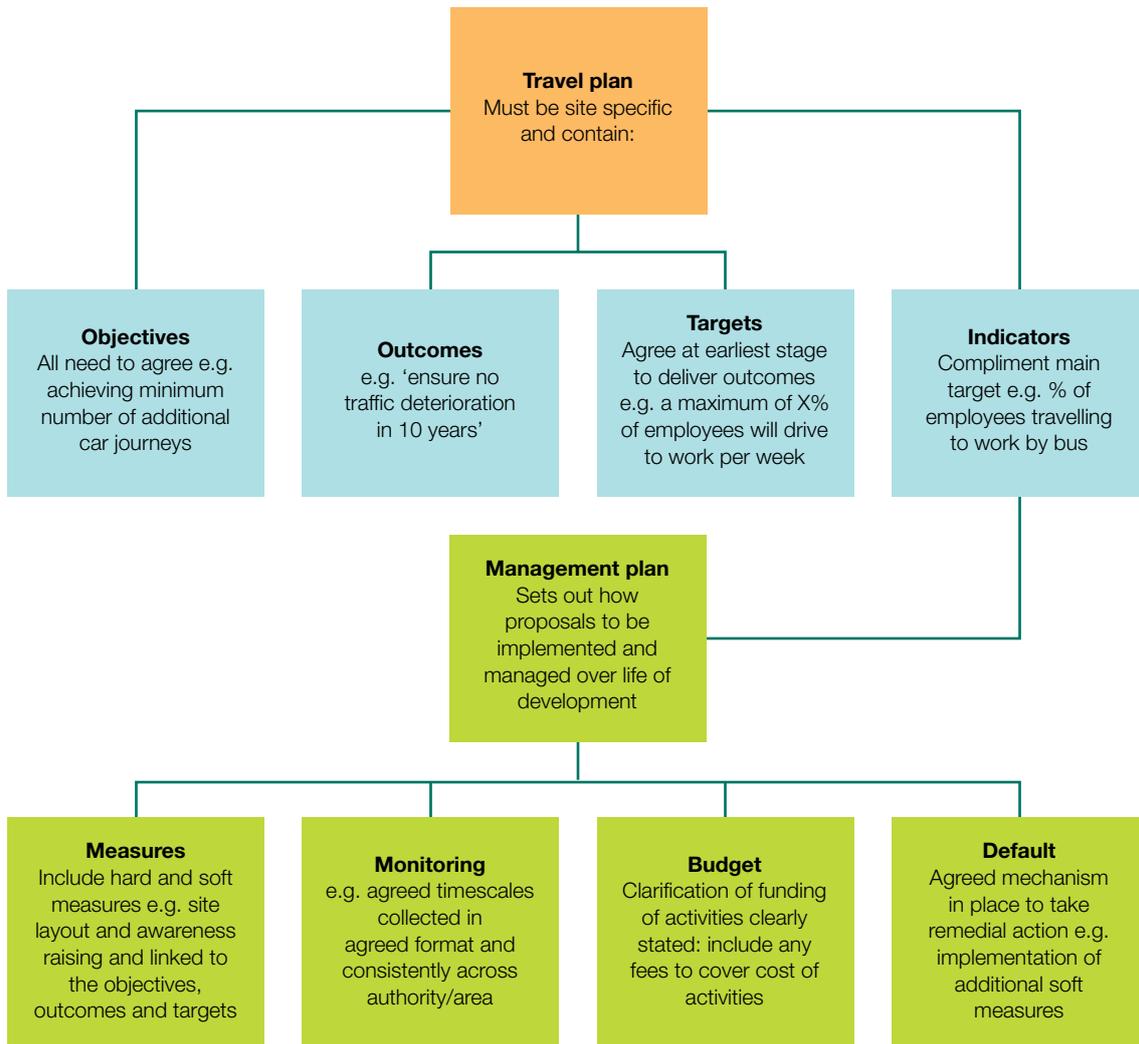


Figure 4 shows the elements of an effective travel plan, including a management plan to identify how the travel plan proposals will be implemented and managed.

Figure 4: The elements of an effective travel plan



For best results, the initial focus should be on establishing the outcomes required; a range of measures can then be identified and agreed as the best way of achieving those outcomes.

The measures are likely to include both ‘carrots’ and ‘sticks’ to encourage changes in travel behaviour. This may require incentives, such as travel discounts, and movement restraint, such as restricting car parking or charging for its use.

Putting together good plans, collecting the necessary information and monitoring the results all costs money. It can be helpful if local authorities set out clearly in published documentation the responsibilities of each party. Where they intend to charge for services, there should be clarity about the costs and what will be provided.

It may be appropriate for authorities to work together to provide a travel planning resource centre to undertake the work of preparing policies, collecting data, negotiating with developers and monitoring the effects of travel plans over time.

Who is involved in a successful travel plan?

For travel planning to be successful, people and organisations need to work in new ways and over many years. Early involvement of all parties – local authority, developer, transport operators, Highways Agency, the community – will help ensure that the travel plan is integrated fully into the preparation of the development and is an integral part of the implementation. Continued involvement will help to ensure the success of the travel plan. Examples of the groups that might be included are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Examples of groups to be involved in travel plans

Local authority	Developer/occupier	Interested parties
Planning Transport Highways Legal Education Housing	Applicant Developer Site owner Development occupier (business/residents/ school)	Local community Public transport operators

Effective travel plans put in place arrangements for long-term management of implementation and updating over time. In some cases, Transport Management Associations can assist with all these processes, particularly the long-term sustainability.

How do you secure a travel plan through the planning process?

Travel plans can be secured by a condition or planning obligation (Section 106 agreements). The complexity of most travel plans will mean that a planning obligation is the most effective means of securing its delivery.

Planning conditions may be appropriate with smaller developments or when the range of measures required is simple. Conditions are not appropriate when payments are required.

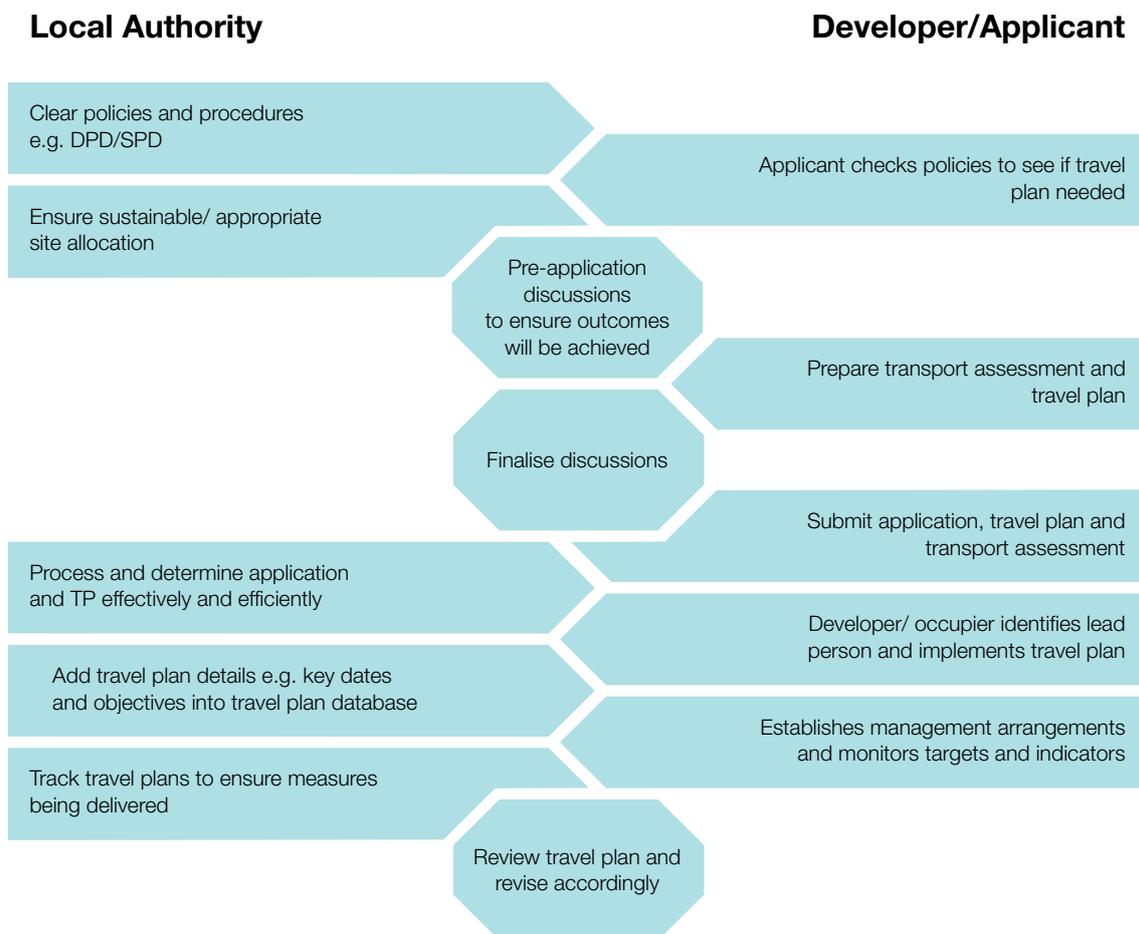
More detail on the legal mechanisms that can be used is available in Circulars 11/95 and 05/2005. The full report includes suggested standard approaches.

Wherever possible, the content and form of the travel plan should be agreed **before** the grant of planning permission. Even in circumstances where some details cannot be agreed until occupiers are known, it is important to agree outcomes and targets early. Flexibility about the measures to be employed can be retained until later.

How do you ensure the sustainability of the travel plan itself?

Figure 5 shows good practice to ensure a travel plan is sustainable itself, starting at the top.

Figure 5: Good practice in ensuring sustainable travel plans



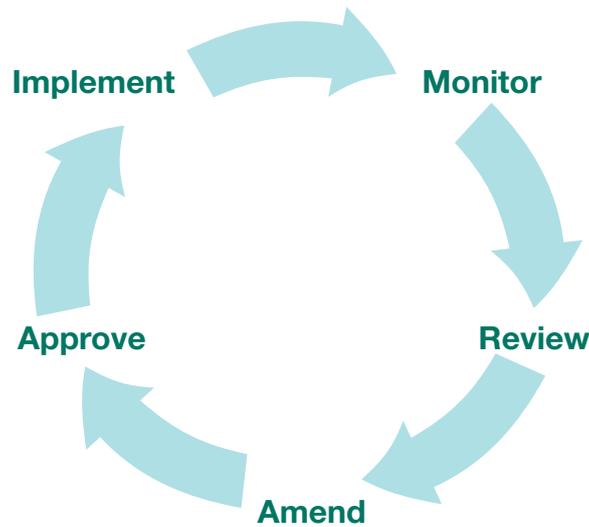
Authorities should examine travel plans to ensure they are fit for purpose under the authorities' requirements. To be effective, this is needed as early in the process as possible, ideally before conditions are verified as completed. As each site is different, each travel plan needs to be examined individually. If the assumptions within it are not robust, then the travel plan will not succeed.

Quantitative and qualitative tests are needed to evaluate travel plans, to ensure they:

- **C**over the key elements;
- **A**ddress the site specific issues;
- **T**ip the balance in favour of sustainable travel.

Publishing the authority's methodology will assist developers in producing acceptable travel plans. Once the travel plan is 'fit for purpose', it can then be considered alongside the planning application.

Figure 6: The iterative process of updating a travel plan



Travel plans need to be seen as ‘living documents’. To stay relevant, and remain effective, they need to be regularly updated as part of an iterative process (Figure 6).

The setting of targets is crucial for all parties to monitor the travel plan and ensure it is meeting the desired outcomes. To be effective, the number of targets will be small, easily understood and measurable. The targets may be achieved through a range of different measures that may be amended over time.

Following implementation, regular monitoring of the targets and indicators will inform parties of the progress made by the travel plan. To ensure follow-up, the travel plan needs to detail when/what/by whom and who is paying. The type of targets will link to the outcomes sought, the type of use/s, and the location.

The authority will be able to look at the wider effectiveness of its travel planning policy where all monitoring data collected is comparable. Authorities can then pinpoint good practice and adapt actions and policies accordingly – as can developers and occupiers of the sites. During the lifetime of the travel plan, different actions at different times will help to secure its sustainability.

Table 2 shows the tasks and considerations during and after construction and following the occupation of the site.

Table 2: Travel plan tasks during and after construction and after site occupation

During construction	Post construction	Post full occupation
Implement the measures	Complete implementation	Monitor effectiveness
Set up on-going management arrangements for post construction	Establish management arrangements	Review effectiveness of arrangements
Design marketing information	Train and/or inform personnel	Maintain information
Establish benchmark data and monitoring	Undertake surveys and database	Undertake impact assessments and review
Secure effective dialogue with key parties	Maintain effective dialogue	Maintain and evolve effective dialogue

What happens if the outcomes and targets are not met?

To be effective, a good review process should be set up in a systematic way, involving all parties. An iterative collaborative review process allows for adjustments to be made over time to reflect changing circumstances. Negotiation and amendments to the plan are likely to be the most effective tools for setting new outcomes if the initial ones are not being met.

Planning obligations provide the opportunity to agree default mechanisms. Sanctions can include payments, access controls and/or implementation of additional measures, including infrastructure. The aim of any default mechanism should be to secure long-term sustainable access to developments.

Quick tips

Use the planning system – understand what travel plans can do: Many authorities use travel plans and require them with the planning application to help improve accessibility, minimise congestion and reduce pollution. Developers preparing effective travel plans can make sites more accessible, minimise local conflicts and speed up the application’s determination.

Be prepared: Local authorities need to allocate accessible sites in their Local Development Framework and have clear policies and processes to assess travel plans. Developers need to assess the current and projected transport situation, maximising non-car movements as required, submitting travel plans for determination with the application.

Talk to key people: To be effective, travel plans need to engage a number of people – developers, users, local people, local authority transport and planning professionals, lawyers and transport providers. This will assist the planning application process.

Follow through: Effective travel plans are monitored to ensure they are implemented and stand the test of time. This is best done through the planning system.

Further guidelines can be found in the main report, *Good Practice Guidelines: Delivering Travel Plans through the Planning Process*.

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