

Travel Plans

Purpose

1. To inform the Committee of the work that has taken place with regards to Travel Plans.

Background

2. Travel Plans are strategies aimed at tackling the travel needs of sites, businesses or other organisations by managing demand and boosting alternatives to single person car trips. They have proven benefits for the organisations that support them, as well as for employees, local areas and residents, and the wider environment.
3. Many larger employers and over 100 other organisations in the West of England have Travel Plans either as a response to specific issues or as part of their wider business plans. Some even employ full time Travel Plan Co-ordinators to work across their organisations.
4. Travel Plans employ a range of measures to encourage greener modes of travel rather than the use of single-occupancy cars. They include measures such as increased cycle parking, restricted workplace parking, provision of changing and shower facilities for cyclists and walkers, and setting up and maintaining car-sharing schemes. Marketing of all travel options is also a key part. Tax-free schemes to obtain a cycle and for bus travel are increasingly popular, and larger employers may also provide their own means of transport from strategic points.
5. There are two main types of Travel Plan:
 - 'Voluntary Travel Plans' which aim to lock in the benefits of tackling travel at a site; and
 - 'Developer Travel Plans' which are a requirement of planning permissions

This report seeks to outline how the four authorities are implementing and managing Travel Plans.

Travel Plan Overview

6. Travel plans largely exist for places of employment, schools, and large attractors of visitors such as health services and tourism destinations, although residential and larger attractions such as stations are increasingly being developed. These are organised through the employer, school or building management. Personalised travel planning exists which advises individuals of their travel options from their residence, however these are resource intensive to implement.

7. Each Unitary Authority manages and monitors travel plans differently, with varying methods of monitoring and ensuring compliance over their life span.

School Travel Plans

8. School travel plans across all four authorities have been the most successful, with each authority working hard to try and achieve 100% compliance. Each authority has at least 75% compliance. The Department for Children, Schools and Families set a 100% school travel plan completion target for all schools in each authority to have a travel plan in place by February 2010.
9. School travel plans have implemented a number of schemes to encourage more sustainable methods of travel. Schemes such as “Walking Bus”, “WOW” (“Walk On Wednesday/Once a Week”), “Walk to School Week/Month”, “Bike Week”, and “Bike Breakfast” are some of the schemes that are undertaken. A number of schools participate in Sustrans’ “Bike It” scheme, which through activities and education promote and encourage cycling.
10. Bath and North East Somerset Council has a dedicated “Bike It” Officer and offers ongoing support in the continued development of Travel Plans and in meeting set targets. It also has capital funding for highway improvements to support and encourage sustainable travel to school (mainly walking and cycling).
11. Bristol City Council has recently appointed a Cycling City Events Co-ordinator, with approved funding until 2012.
12. North Somerset Council has active school travel plans linked to the annual school travel health check, which is incorporated into sustainable schools delivering sustainable communities. North Somerset Council is taking part in a pilot project with InfoMapper ViewFinder for the promotion of travel plans.
13. All of South Gloucestershire Council’s schools are now part of the School Travel Health Check initiative and this work is linked to annual reviews on travel plans. They provide 1:1 support to schools developing a plan, provide survey and analysis to schools, and implement a walking incentive scheme “Going For Gold”.

Workplace Travel Plans

14. Many travel plans are secured through Section 106 legal agreements and planning conditions. Some employers also develop voluntary travel plans. This has many advantages to the company including reducing the provision of parking, improving corporate image, and benefits to improving staff’s health through walking and cycling. Financial savings in relation to business travel can also be high.
15. Where a number of employees are located in close proximity to each other, area travel plans can be effective. These are where several employers join together to produce a single travel plan. This is particularly useful for helping arrange car-sharing schemes, and assists smaller employers implement their travel plans. Effective sites that have area travel plans are Bristol Harbourside and Temple Quay. Area travel plans can be difficult to implement as it involves a number of employers agreeing to participate and manage. Aztec West is one such area where it has proved difficult to implement one.

16. All four authorities assist with employer travel plans offering advice and limited resources. South Gloucestershire Council holds regular travel forums with large employers to sustain interest and momentum in their travel plans.

Other Travel Plans

17. Travel plans are also used for other active locations such as railway stations and residential areas. South Gloucestershire are progressing the Bristol Parkway travel plan.
18. Bath and North East Somerset Council and North Somerset Council are considering completing station travel plans for Bath Spa, Weston-super-Mare and Worle (if it becomes a 'Parkway' station).
19. Bristol City Council would like to investigate a station travel plan for Temple Meads but are concerned the plan would be very large and difficult to implement and monitor. The Association of Train Operating Companies (ATOC) has initiated the scheme, so Bristol City Council will be liaising with them on any future work.
20. Residential travel plans exist for newer developments where it is considered there will be a significant transport implication, and for all major developments. They are normally submitted with the planning application.
21. Residential plans exist in Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol, and South Gloucestershire, particularly with regard to student residencies such as Bath University and throughout Bristol. North Somerset has secured none to date but plans on securing them for all developments of over 80 units or more, and particularly for larger developments.
22. Residential travel plans, particularly for areas that are just exclusively residential and not mixed use, are difficult to monitor and sustain. A main element of residential travel plans is the use of supplying welcome packs to all new homeowners that provide information on the local public transport services, health benefits and financial benefits of sustainable travel.
23. Personalised travel plans are increasingly popular where funding exists. This involves a travel plan co-ordinator going through travel habits of families or individuals both at home and in the workplace and suggesting alternatives. This however is very costly and time consuming.

Grants

24. Some grants are available for workplace travel plans to companies however this varies between each authority.
25. Bath and North East Somerset Council will assess any contributions following the budget review.
26. Bristol City Council allocates up to £5,000 per workplace travel plan, with up to £20,000 match funded for any Cycling City plans for the project's life.

27. North Somerset Council allocates a total of £10,000 per annum, offering 50% towards travel plan initiatives, but take up is low.
28. South Gloucestershire Council also offers 50% toward travel plan initiatives, but again take up is low. Schools in the area with an active travel plan are eligible to apply for a Cycle Storage Funding programme per year to assist with the installation of new cycle storage. Cycling City grants of up to £20,000 are available in the form of Community Grants, with match-funded grants available to businesses up to £10,000.
29. Take up generally of grants is fairly minimal, with recognition that new initiatives are needed to increase this. The 'Smarter Choices' section in the forthcoming Joint Local Transport Plan 3 (JLTP3) will seek to establish new ideas, or establish plans of how the money may be better spent.

Monitoring

30. All four authorities monitor travel plans through the school census. In addition to this, Bristol City Council also carries out interviews with parents and children.
31. Recently a piece of software entitled iTrace has become available and is designed to help monitor and implement travel plans. It will enable a wide range of outputs to be monitored, including CO2 emissions. Bristol City Council and North Somerset Councils have purchased licences for the software and are in the process of beginning to use it.
32. Bath and North East Somerset Council and South Gloucestershire Council will be utilising their own in-house database, but will consider purchasing an iTrace licence in the future.
33. Annually, the West of England hosts the travel plan awards, rewarding progress on travel plans within the West of England area.

Evaluating Effectiveness

34. All four authorities use the Travel Plan Awards as one method of monitoring the effectiveness of plans. Entrance to the awards scheme is on a voluntary basis so not all travel plans in operation can be monitored this way.
35. Bristol City Council and South Gloucestershire Council carry out a snapshot survey annually. The results of this survey can be analysed and related back to particular travel plans to evaluate the effectiveness of them.
36. South Gloucestershire Council holds regular travel forums that enable businesses to discuss their travel plans in an informal environment.
37. North Somerset Council is aiming to adopt their Development Control Guidance in 2010, which details how best to ensure travel plans secured through the planning process should be enforced. The scale of measures set in the travel plan depends on the scale of development, with larger developments being set stricter targets. If the targets are not being met they will need to try new measures.

38. Bristol City Council and North Somerset Council currently use TRICS software to help monitor the effectiveness. As reported in paragraph 31, this will shortly be replaced by iTrace, which will automatically send reminders to the employer and authority that a survey to monitor the effectiveness needs to be carried out. Employees can then complete an online survey that ensures a consistent approach to monitoring.

Good Practice

39. A number of travel plans throughout the sub-region are being conducted successfully and have shown some modal shift. The University of the West of England and Bath University both have successful schemes which have promoted more sustainable modes of travel reducing the number of cars on campus and increasing cycling and walking.
40. Recent winners at the Travel Plan Awards include DAS Legal Insurance Services Ltd and Norwich Union, who have both seen positive changes in staff travel patterns due to effective travel plans. Others who are progressing and committing to their travel plans include The Environment Agency and Rolls Royce PLC.

Recommendation

That the Joint Committee gives its views.

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