



ISLINGTON

Green Travel Plans

ISLINGTON COUNCIL
Planning Service

Approved June 1999

ISLINGTON'S UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN

supplementaryplanning**guidance**

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Green Travel Plans are now widely recognised as a key tool of effective land use and transportation planning and an important element of a Sustainable Transport Strategy.
- 1.2 The Council recognises the opportunity afforded by the planning system to encourage and promote good practice for the benefit of the planning applicant and Islington as a whole.
- 1.3 The Government encourages both major employers and small enterprises to contribute to easing traffic congestion by helping employees to use alternatives to driving to work and by addressing travel in the course of business.
- 1.4 A national 'Association for Commuter Transport' was launched in October 1997 with the aim of developing and promoting ideas and initiatives which reduce car dependency for commuter journeys - including car-sharing, public transport, walking, cycling and alternative working practices. In Nottingham, 30 large local employers have formed the Nottingham Commuter Planners' Club. Thirty-three employers have full-scale green commuter plans with targets. For example, Boots plc aimed to reduce car commuting to its Beeston site by 10% by 2000 and a further 10% by 2005.
- 1.5 Examples in London include a planning consent for a school extension in Camden which was linked to a travel plan and specific traffic reduction targets. In Haringey, a new health and fitness club agreed a green travel plan covering its employees and customers.

2. What Is A Green Travel Plan?

- 2.1 A Green Travel Plan is a means by which businesses and other organisations such as hospitals and local authorities can manage the transport needs of their staff in order to reduce the environmental impact of their travel to and from work. A Green Travel Plan is essentially a package of measures developed in conjunction with staff and unions, designed to promote the use of public transport, cycling, walking and shared cars for commuting and work related journeys. Green Travel Plans also represent an important means by which organisations can fulfil the objectives in accordance with the 'Local Agenda 21' by contributing towards the development of sustainable transport.

Benefits

2.2 For your Organisation and its staff a travel plan:

- strengthens environmental performance and improves environmental image;
- offers substantial savings by reducing the need for workplace parking. This can also mean the release of land or buildings for more productive uses;
- makes worksites less congested and more accessible, improving relations with neighbours and enabling deliveries and essential car users to move more freely;
- helps all staff arrive on time and with less stress by improving travel arrangements;
- includes attractive benefits and savings to employees and offers wider travel choices which enhance the staff recruitment package;
- promotes equal opportunities by providing travel perks which are available throughout the organisation, rather than incentives for a few, and by supporting those staff without access to a car;
- helps staff to be healthier, fitter and more productive. It is now widely agreed that 30 minutes a day of moderate exercise, such as cycling or brisk walking, protects against many forms of ill health.

2.3 For Islington a travel plan can assist the achievement of:

- cleaner air and less traffic clogged streets;
- better public transport;
- a better environment for pedestrians and cyclists and fewer road casualties;
- a place which is better to live in, work in and visit and which attracts investment.

3. Developing a Green Travel Plan - Promotion and Consultation

3.1 Green Travel Plans are a relatively new concept and potentially could lead to fundamental changes in both attitudes to travel and individual travel behaviour. It is therefore crucial that the Plan is presented in order to emphasise the long-term benefits to both the staff and the wider community and is promoted as a positive measure.

- 3.2 The success of a Green Travel Plan will be dependent upon support by staff and their union representatives. This is likely to involve extensive consultation in relation to both the objectives of the Plan and also in developing its detailed components.

Staff Awareness

- 3.3 Good communication is vital for building a consensus. Face-to-face discussions, staff meetings and a questionnaire are important ways of preparing and introducing a Plan and gaining feedback.

Collecting Information

- 3.4 An understanding of existing travel characteristics is an important first stage in the development of a successful Green Travel Plan. A staff travel survey provides an audit of travel patterns to enable the establishment of a database for both journeys to work and work related travel. This could also cover specific questions on attitudes to changing towards 'greener' modes of travel. An attitude survey is an important element in identifying the constraints and barriers to change and also how some of the practical difficulties could be overcome.
- 3.5 It is recommended that a comprehensive travel survey be conducted prior to the development and implementation of a Green Travel Plan. Periodic surveys may, in addition, be required in order to monitor the effectiveness of the Plan over a period of time. Other surveys required include the use of car parks, the extent of subsidies to car use, the cost and terms of public transport and cycle support to staff.

Choosing the Right Package

- 3.6 The success of the Green Travel Plan will depend upon striking the right balance between the introduction of incentives, supporting sustainable transport and reducing incentives for car use (e.g. mileage allowances, free parking provision, etc.). Any change to existing benefits which encourages car use needs to be carefully considered, given that a significant reduction in benefits could undermine support for the Plan. This is further discussed below. For this reason, it is recommended that the development and implementation of a Green Travel Plan should be carried out over a time period of up to three years. It is likely that it will take time for the initiatives to be widely adopted and for changes to be accepted. The full benefits of the scheme are thus likely to be realised over an extended timescale, perhaps a period of longer than five years.

Work Area Travel Plans

- 3.7 In large organisations the development of special work area travel plans is one way of facilitating the close involvement of staff in accessing options and producing solutions tailored to specific circumstances. Many organisations are complex with departments varying in size, location, staff composition and working practices. Work area travel plans offer the flexibility for individual teams or departments to take into account their specific circumstances and requirements within an overall Green Travel Plan framework. This avoids the problems of a centrally imposed solution and promotes active staff involvement. Work area travel plans could also provide an opportunity to test initiatives and measures which can serve as models of good practice for the rest of the organisation. This could be seen as an important part of testing and developing the overall strategy.

Financial Implications

- 3.8 The development and implementation of a Green Travel Plan will require a financial commitment. For example, budgets will need to be identified for a Staff Travel Co-ordinator, a staff travel survey, publicity and marketing.
- 3.9 Funding is also likely to be required for specific initiatives within the overall package, but the extent of financial support will be dependent on the scope of the Green Travel Plan. However, the scope for re-allocation of existing resources to support new initiatives could ensure that the package of measures is revenue neutral. For example, the financial incentives which support car use could be re-directed to provide subsidies for public transport and cycle users.

4. Specific Initiatives

- 4.1 There is a range of initiatives designed to promote sustainable travel, many of which have been successfully applied by local authorities and businesses. These measures vary from more efficient use of the car, financial incentives to promote alternative modes, car parking management and changes in working practices.

The following section describes a number of green travel initiatives, examines the factors which need to be considered and assesses their effectiveness.

A. Reducing Car Journeys

- 4.2 The Department of Transport's National Travel Survey 1993/95 found that commuting is the most important single purpose of travel, accounting for 19% of all journeys made. 69% of these commuting journeys were by car. Given these high proportion of car journeys, a key element in any Green Travel Plan will be to reduce the number of car-based journeys, either to and from work or in the course of work. The alternative measures by which this can be achieved are outlined below.

Car Sharing

- 4.3 A car share scheme could either be promoted informally, by encouraging employees living near to each other to share cars for journeys to work, or could be organised on a formal basis, by matching potential participants by address, route to work and time of travel.
- 4.4 A fully developed scheme will require the establishment of a database of willing participants to include location and normal time of departure from home/work. The list should be readily accessible, e.g. through electronic mail with a designated member of staff responsible for regular updating.
- 4.5 For a car sharing scheme to be successful, it has to be well publicised and flexible, ranging between the encouragement of informal car sharing by line managers, and through a central database of participants. Offering incentives to support a scheme can be a vital factor in its success. For example, a guaranteed ride home by taxi in the event of emergencies or preferential parking could attract interest.
- 4.6 The advantages to be gained from car sharing schemes include:
- local environmental benefits by reducing levels of traffic on site and in the local area and the demand for parking;
 - savings in fuel and running costs;
 - promotion of social interaction and positive and production working atmosphere.
- 4.7 Organisations with car sharing schemes tend to be fairly large with many employees. However, smaller units could consider a car sharing scheme in partnership with other local organisations.

Workplace Car Pool Schemes

- 4.8 Where there is a need for employees to have access to a car for work-related journeys on a regular basis, a car pool scheme could prove to be viable.
- 4.9 A central pool of vehicles, based on an estimated amount of use among employees will be required. In practice this could be a very small number of vehicles which would be maintained by the employer or a contracted company. The type of vehicle should be carefully considered, ideally pollution-free or low emission vehicles should be adopted. For the scheme to be successful, an efficient booking system will be required to ensure vehicle availability.
- 4.10 The main disadvantage of a pool scheme is the initial start-up costs of purchasing a fleet of vehicles. However, where there is a lease car scheme in operation, it could be possible to utilise returned vehicles to provide the pool of vehicles. The main drawback is that it would not be possible to guarantee the number of vehicles which could be made available. As a further alternative, contracts with taxi hire firms can be negotiated at preferential rates in place of individual car journeys for work-related journeys.

Car Park Management

- 4.11 The management of car parking is an effective way of influencing the number of commuting journeys by car. The management of planning spaces can be achieved through the allocation of parking permits or the imposition of parking charges. The development of a car park management plan would be required in order to assess the present number of available spaces, their use and the costs of maintenance. Allocation of spaces should be targeted at specific users, based upon operational need. Priority parking should be given to pool cars or car sharers or to staff who genuinely need to bring their cars to work.
- 4.12 The use of equipment to prevent unauthorised access into the car park needs to be considered. This can be achieved through the use of barriers, gates, tyre flaps and automatic smartcard systems.
- 4.13 A parking management system could also enable the real costs of parking needs to be allocated to specific work areas instead of being hidden in overheads. These costs will include loans, maintenance and management. By allocating parking costs to specific departments, managers will be able to exercise control and thereby make choices about alternatives.

- 4.14 The main advantage of the car park management strategy is that car usage can be directly influenced by providing a disincentive for non-essential car users. The generation of revenues could also result which could be used to fund measures to promote public transport usage.
- 4.15 However, it is important to ensure any strategy designed to control and regulate parking should take account of location, the range of public transport services serving the locality and cater for the needs of staff who are genuinely dependent upon driving to work. The strategy must be seen as fair and equitable and acceptable by members of staff.

Car Subsidies

- 4.17 Many employers offer subsidies which make the ownership and use of a car more attractive and affordable. These benefits may take the form of purchase loans, leasing schemes and mileage allowances for car users.
- 4.18 The reduction or withdrawal of car-based subsidies could potentially cause a considerable resentment amongst staff thereby undermining the success of the strategy unless such a move were to be accompanied by financial compensation for the loss of benefits.
- 4.19 A review of car-based subsidies could be used as an opportunity to switch support to measures supporting sustainable transport, e.g. allowances given to travel by pool cars, public transport or cycling.

B. Public Transport Initiatives

- 4.20 The promotion of public transport should be viewed as a key element of a Green Travel Plan which is designed to reduce car dependency. This can be achieved either through the improvements to the provision of services, facilities and information or through financial subsidies.

Bus Services

- 4.21 Improved or enhanced bus services could be achieved through the development of partnerships with bus operators to achieving better services to serve the worksite. These improvements could include more frequent services or route alterations/ diversions to bring vehicles closer to the site.

4.22 The survey of staff travel characteristics will enable the identification catchment areas and patterns of travel to/from the workplace. This information could be used to identify potential demand for new and innovative public transport services, such as dedicated buses.

Public Transport Information

4.23 The provision of up-to-date information on bus services within the workplace is an important factor in promoting public transport use. This information could take the form of route maps, timetables and information on fares and ticket bargains.

4.24 A number of larger operators provide interactive public transport information systems which enables information to be readily accessed via a network. This could be provided in the workplace.

Discounted Fares and Subsidies

4.25 By working with bus companies, discounts may be negotiated by employers. Workplace staff discount schemes can encourage staff to take travelcards by making journeys by public transport more convenient and cheaper.

4.26 The bulk purchasing of tickets by employers is also another method whereby tickets could be offered to staff at discount as an inducement to travel by public transport.

4.27 The subsidies of season ticket loans for public transport could be offered to those staff who regularly commute by public transport and could substitute existing schemes which benefit the car, e.g. car loans.

C. Cycling

4.28 Cycling is considered to be the most environmentally friendly mode of transport. There are many factors why employees may not cycle to work, such as lack of safe cycle routes, or lack of facilities at the workplace.

4.29 The measures which could be adopted to encourage cycle use are the provision of pool cycles, cycle facilities, improved cycle links to the workplace and financial incentives. These are described below.

Workplace Bike Pool Schemes

- 4.30 A managed bike pool with modern bikes, safety equipment, carriers and secure storage with a supply and maintenance agreement with a local supplier can be effective in encouraging staff who undertake local journeys whilst at work to use a bike.

Parking and Storage of Cycles

- 4.31 This includes cycle stands or racks for short-term parking, locking stands operated by coins or wall mounted loops which provides storage up against buildings where space is limited. Cycle lockers are suitable for long-term parking, comprising a box which affords weather protection and space for clothes storage. Cycle sheds and communal stores, comprising a compound containing covered stands of racks are suitable for long-term parking and other protection from the elements. It is important that cycle parking is sited in well-lit areas within the boundary of the workplace in a location which is not isolated or hidden from view, with a safe and well-lit pathway linking the parking area to the main buildings.

Showers and Changing Rooms

- 4.32 The provision of showering and changing facilities is an important factor in encouraging cycling. These should be located in the main building, but close to cycle parking.

Cycle Access

- 4.33 The provision of safe cycle routes, ideally linked to a wider network to the workplace will be a crucial factor in promoting cycling. Safety in the vicinity of the workplace is of paramount importance. Where the workplace is poorly served, the scope for providing links to a cycle network or local safety improvements should be carefully considered.

Financial Incentives

- 4.34 The package of financial support and incentives to encourage cycle use could be achieved through the provision of cycle loans or grants whereby employers purchase a stock of cycles to loan to employees on the same basis as car leasing or parking. Alternatively, financial loans at preferential rates could be made available to assist with cycle purchases.

4.35 Cycle travel allowances for work related journeys could be offered to employees on the same basis as car allowances. These rates should be comparable with those offered to car users.

D. Reducing the Need for Travel

4.36 The measures outlined so far have focused on changing travel behaviours by altering the mode shift away from the car in favour of alternative modes. This section examines the ways in which the total demand for travel particularly in peak hours, can be reduced.

Teleworking

4.37 Many organisations are increasingly looking at more flexible working practices made possible by advances in technology.

4.38 Instead of travelling to the workplace, employees are permitted to work from home, communicating with the workplace via a computer, modem and phone.

4.39 Teleworking offers numerous benefits for the company in terms of cost savings. The provision of traditional office accommodation accounts for high overhead costs, e.g. floor space, energy consumption and office equipment. The benefits to employees include a reduction in travel costs and savings in travel time.

4.40 For teleworking to be successful, it will need to be tailored to suit specific circumstances and requirements. Teleworking is not applicable to all employees and may be most suited to white collar employees. There could be difficulties associated with isolation from colleagues and the office environment. Supervision and monitoring of staff who telework is a further issue to be taken into consideration.

Flexible Working Hours

4.41 The introduction of flexible working hours by helping to reduce peak demand for travel can lead to a reduction in peak time congestion and assist bus services to run more freely.

Staff Retention Packages

4.42 Where financial packages are offered to assist with the relocation of new recruits, these could be tailored to influence travel behaviour or support sustainable transport.

Preferential packages to employees willing to locate closer to the place of work or a sliding scale of reduced benefits to those relocating further from the workplace could be used to influence location choice and minimise the demand for travel.

5. Implementation and Review

5.1 The success of a Green Travel Plan will be dependent upon effective planning and management. This will ensure that both the environmental, social and financial benefits of the Plan are optimised. A total of five elements are identified which should form an essential part of the implementation and review process. These are described in the following paragraphs.

Initial Review

5.2 An initial review will be important in order to provide base information from which a Green Travel Plan can be developed. A survey of staff travel as described in paragraph 3.4 will provide crucial information on existing travel characteristics and attitudes. This will be important in identifying both opportunities and barriers to change. Information on mileage claims and the costs of financial incentives on subsidies to car users will also be required. The above data will enable the scope for cost re-allocation and the extent of financial support for the Green Travel Plan to be determined.

Establish Objectives and Targets

5.3 The definition of objectives and the establishment of targets is an important element in the development of a successful Green Travel Plan. This will enable the performance of the measures to be assessed.

5.4 Specific targets could include:

- reduction in mileage for work-related travel (and mileage claims);
- balance of modal split for journey to work in favour of walking, cycling and public transport;
- financial subsidies paid to car users;
- changes in attitude towards travel behaviour and acceptance of a Green Travel Plan.

Consultation

- 5.5 Effective implementation of the Plan should begin with communication of the specific objectives and methods to all employees. An appreciation of the benefits to be gained for both the organisation, wider community and individual employee will be important to establish ownership of the policy. The active involvement of the workforce is the whole process will be crucial for an understanding of best practice and ensure full commitment. Once the Plan has been implemented, it is important to ensure adequate feedback so that any shortcomings can be identified.

Evaluation

- 5.6 Monitoring of the Plan will be necessary in order to assess the extent to which the targets are achieved and the effectiveness of each of the components of the Plan. This will also enable modifications or refinements of the Plan to be identified. It should be recognised that the development of a Green Travel Plan represents a long-term programme and benefits may not be immediate.

Reporting

- 5.7 The extent of the success at meeting target and objectives should be openly reported to all members of staff. This should not only add impetus to the implementation of the strategy but facilitate in the development of a dialogue and exchanging ideas of best practice with other interested parties such as other local employers or neighbouring local authorities.

Further Reading

Transport 2000 'Changing Journeys To Work' 1997

Dtp / Ashden Trust / London First 'Companies and Cars: The Way Forward' 1997

CILT 'Green Commuter Plans - London Boroughs Progress' May 1997

TP/02/400 Bob Hawkes June 1999