

Travel Plans Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

Planning Committee

Date: 13th August 2019

Author:	Service Manager – Transport Planning, Development & Street Works Management
Wards:	All
Locality Affected:	All
Parishes Affected:	All

1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 The Council requires that new developments exceeding given thresholds mitigate the transport impact of their operation through the production and implementation of a travel plan. This is a long term management strategy secured through the planning process by condition or obligation, based on evidence of the anticipated transport impacts of development. The Travel Plan outlines measures to promote and encourage sustainable travel (such as promoting walking and cycling) to maximise the opportunity of the infrastructure measures the developer will also be providing.
- 1.2 In the absence of implementation of the travel plan over the long term, it results in ineffective travel plans, with potential implications on the local residents in terms of congestion and / or parking problems. It is proposed therefore to adopt a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for Travel Plans, which will inform and enforce development planning and design.
- 1.3 This SPD will guide how we require Travel Plans to be delivered. It will give developers the option to pay a contribution to Swindon Borough Council, which will fund the resources required to implement the travel plans. This gives long term security that the travel plan will be implemented effectively.
- 1.4 A consultation with officers and other LPAs has therefore been undertaken, leading to the preparation in draft of a Travel Plans Supplementary Planning Document (hereinafter referred to as the **Travel Plans SPD 2019**).
- 1.5 This report seeks Committee's approval of the draft **Travel Plans SPD 2019** as a basis of a Public Consultation exercise. The results of that consultation exercise and a Final Draft of the document will be reported to Committee later this year, with a request that the document is, subject to any required amendments, finalised and formally adopted as a Development Management document.

2. Recommendations

That Committee:

- 2.1 Approves the draft **Travel Plans SPD 2019** attached at Appendix 1 for the purpose of public consultation and authorises the Service Manager – Transport Planning, Development & Street Works Management to undertake a public consultation exercise to secure feedback from the public and a range of stakeholders.

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- 2.2 Authorises the Service Manager – Transport Planning, Development and Street Works Management to make minor typographical and factual corrections to the document if required in advance of publication, in consultation with the Chair of the Planning Committee.

3. Context

Planning Policy Framework

- 3.1 The Swindon Borough Local Plan 2026, at Part 4, includes a range of policies aimed at enabling sustainable development.
- 3.2 The Plan includes policies targeted at minimising the impact of new development on amenity and highway safety, with Policy TR2 specifically requiring that new development should make provision for the promotion of sustainable travel choices through the submission of a Travel Plan.
- 3.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2019) supports new development where it does not compromise the effective or safe operation of the highway network (para. 108). Chapter 9 requires that new development schemes provide a travel plan.

Council Aims and Objectives

- 3.4 The Vision for Swindon 2019 – 2032 has four main priorities, two of which are:
- Improve infrastructure and housing to support a growing, low-carbon economy
 - Ensure clean and safe streets and improve our public spaces and local culture
- 3.5 The adoption and application of **Travel Plans SPD 2019** will support these overarching objectives by ensuring that new development is fit for purpose and without impact on the amenity or safety of the communities within which it lies and specifically by promoting and facilitating a move towards active lifestyles.

4. The Review Process

- 4.1 A cross-discipline Officer Working Group was set up to develop new guidance, taking account of the following:
- Officer experience of travel plan successes and failures;
 - Prevailing Transport Policy Guidance;
 - Benchmarking from other Local Planning Authorities
- 4.2 The emerging **Travel Plans SPD 2019** was presented to the lead Member for Highways and the Environment on 17th June 2019 and to the Leader Advisory Group on Thursday 25th July 2019.

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5. Proposed Travel Plans SPD

- 5.1 The outcome of the review process has been the Draft **Travel Plans SPD 2019** attached at Appendix A. The key elements of the document include:

Developer Options

- 5.2 The guidance offers the opportunity to the developer of paying a contribution to have the Travel Plan implemented by Swindon Borough Council on their behalf. The level of contribution reflects the cost that the developer should already be allocating for the implementation of a plan, and therefore is not an additional cost.

Securities

- 5.3 If the developer chooses not to pay the contribution, they will be required to pay a bond to secure delivery of the Travel Plan. The bond will be returned once the developer has fulfilled their obligation as per the agreement with Swindon Borough Council.

Online submission

- 5.4 The SPD supports the submission of travel plans through an online portal (Modeshift Stars). This aims to reduce the amount of paper entering the organisation, and aids monitoring of the travel plan across time.

Dwelling thresholds

- 5.5 Currently the Department for Transport threshold for submitting a residential Travel Plan is at 80 dwellings. The SPD proposes to reduce this threshold to 60 dwellings to account for multiple developments in the same geographical area having a cumulative impact on the highway network.

6. Alternative Options

- 6.1 The alternative to the adoption of **Travel Plans SPD 2019** would be to continue to rely on the provisions made within our unadopted guidance document (2017) in assessing new development proposals. The consequence would be a continued reliance on a document that carries limited weight, with an increasing risk that challenges by developers to its requirements could be successful.

7. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

- 7.1 The adoption of the Travel Plans SPD will have no financial implications beyond those associated with the Officer time required to manage the consultation exercise and to develop the document. The SPD provides that the owner / developer funds the costs of a Travel Plan through the options set out.

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Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 7.2 Legal and Human rights implications have been considered in preparing this report. It is considered that the report is compatible with the Convention Rights.

All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

- 7.3 By adopting new Travel Plan guidance that is more fit for purpose and robust than those currently relied upon, Officers will feel more confident in the application of those standards, which will carry greater weight as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

Diversity Impact Assessment

A Diversity Impact Assessment (DIA) has been undertaken and has been reviewed and approved by Officers within the Learning & Development team. The DIA, has assessed the implications of the change in travel plan requirements for all those who might be affected and concluded that the policy document supports diversity by making provisions for all sectors of the community.

8. Consultees

- 8.1 The Board Director, Resources (Section 151 Officer) and Chief Legal Officer (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.

9. Background Papers

- 9.1 The relevant background documentations:
- National Planning Policy Framework (2019)

10. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Travel Plans SPD 2019

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