

Travel Plans Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

Planning Committee

Date: 11th February 2020

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

1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 The Travel Plan Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) has undergone a recent public consultation exercise between 2nd September 2019 and 14th October 2019.
- 1.2 This report summarises the comments received following public consultation on the document and recommends adoption of the SPD by Planning Committee, subject to a number of changes in response to comments received.
- 1.3 The SPD and associated appendices will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications in the Borough. The SPD in conjunction with the Swindon Borough Local Plan 2026 seeks to contribute towards the Council's Strategic Objectives and is in line with the Council's Vision, priorities and pledges.

2. Recommendations

That Committee:

- 2.1 Adopt the Travel Plans Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and associated appendices, and to make publicly available in accordance with the arrangements set out.
- 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
- 2.3 Authorises the Service Manager – Transport Planning, Development and Street Works Management to review the SPD as appropriate and update and amend the content if necessary and publish the amended and re-adopted document.

3. Detail

Planning Policy Framework

- 3.1 The Swindon Borough Local Plan 2026 (2015), 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

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choices through the submission of a Travel Plan. The emerging Local Plan 2036 is currently being prepared for adoption mid-2021, and whilst policies TR1 and TR2 are likely to be replaced, the requirement to promote sustainable travel choices will remain in any future revisions.

- 3.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2019) supports new development where inter alia 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
- 3.4 The adoption and application of **Travel Plans SPD 2020** 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.

Background

- 3.5 The SPD, which can be found at **Appendix 1** of this report, has been prepared following discussion with a range of stakeholders including delivery partners. It sets out how the Council will ensure a consistent approach to delivering travel plans across the Borough.
- 3.6 The SPD also offers developers the opportunity to pay a contribution to the Council to fund and undertake a number of initiatives as part of the implementation of the travel plan. Although not compulsory, committing to this contribution would remove the requirement for any further travel plans to be submitted. Site specific travel plans for schools would still be required.
- 3.7 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.
- 3.8 Some of the key benefits a travel plan brings include:
- Improving site accessibility and travel choice;
 - Supporting and encouraging the establishment of sustainable communities;
 - Providing choice and quality to access key services;
 - Increasing business efficiency and equality;

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- Delivering local and global environmental improvements through reduced congestion, reduced pollution and noise;
- Providing opportunities for safe, active, healthy travel, supporting Central Government's health agenda.

Consultation

- 3.9 A public consultation exercise was undertaken, with the SPD available for public comments for 6 weeks from 2nd September 2019 and 14th October 2019. A total of 26 responses were received.
- 3.10 A number of themes and issues are highlighted in the consultation responses, including:
- Overall support for the principles of the SPD. Over 80% of respondents to the online questionnaire were in favour of the proposed charges, bonds and monitoring fees.
 - Discussion around the threshold at which a residential travel plan is triggered. Some consultees felt that 60 dwellings was still too high, some felt that it should remain at 80.
 - The need to include infrastructure provision requirements in the SPD. However, infrastructure requirements are generally negotiated under separate legal agreements as part of the planning process rather than in a travel plan.
 - The need to recognise the emerging Local Plan 2036

Key Amendments

- 3.11 As a result of the consultation exercise, a number of amendments were made to the draft Travel Plan SPD including:
- Update policy section to reflect the emerging Local Plan 2036;
 - Tweak wording to clarify that travel plans are not just required for new developments, but may include change of use and extensions.
 - Addition of DfT thresholds that trigger a Travel Plan Statement (omitted from draft);
 - Include promotion of rail in residential welcome pack
 - Include car club vehicle in car club requirements for developments over 500 dwellings, and remove reference to town centre only.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 The alternative to the adoption of **Travel Plans SPD 2020** would be to continue to rely on the provisions made within the unadopted guidance document (2017)

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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.

5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 The financial implications arising from publishing the SPD are to be met from the planning budgets for 2019/20. The SPD provides that the owner / developer funds the costs of a Travel Plan through the options set out.

Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.2 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)

- 5.3 There are no immediate staffing implications of such a document. As detailed within the SPD – Appendix A, a commitment from developers to the council to produce a travel plan may result in a number of travel plan coordinators being recruited to fulfil the role. The financial implications of this however would be provided for through S106 contributions.
- 5.4 The Council has a duty to ensure that the preparation of the Travel Plan SPD is in accordance with the sustainability principles of the NPPF.

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.

6. Consultees

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

7. Background Papers

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

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8. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Travel Plans SPD 2020