

New Eastern Villages Framework Travel Plan

Supplementary Planning Document

Planning Committee

Date: 11th October 2016

Author: Head of Planning, Regulatory Services and Heritage

Parish / Wards Affected: All, but particularly those in the east of the Borough

Purpose

- The New Eastern Villages (NEV) Framework Travel Plan Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) was subject to public consultation between 12th May 2016 and 22nd June 2016.
- This report summarises the comments received following public consultation and recommends adoption of the SPD by Planning Committee, subject to a number of changes in response to comments received.
- The SPD seeks to provide further guidance on the Swindon Borough Local Plan 2026, in particular Policies NC3, IN1, TR1 and TR2 which provide a framework for the delivery of the NEV and successful implementation of an infrastructure network encouraging sustainable modes of transport.
- If adopted, the SPD and associated appendices will be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications in the NEV. The SPD in conjunction with the Swindon Borough Local Plan 2026, seeks to contribute towards the Council's Strategic Objectives and is line with the Council's Vision, priorities and pledges.

Recommendation

That the Planning Committee agrees to:

1. Adopt the New Eastern Villages (NEV) Framework Travel Plan Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and associated appendices, and to make it publicly available in accordance with the arrangements set out in paragraph 6.1.
2. Authorise the Head of Planning, Regulatory Services and Heritage, in consultation with the Director of Law and Democratic Services to make minor changes to the content of the document, if required, prior to publication.
3. Authorise the Head of Planning, Regulatory Services and Heritage, in consultation with the Director of Law and Democratic Services to publicly consult on any subsequent reviews of the document that might be required, prior to consideration of any changes.

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1 Reasons

- 1.1 Policy NC3 of the adopted Swindon Borough Local Plan 2026 ('Local Plan') allocates a new mixed use development of about 8,000 new homes with associated employment, education, retail and leisure uses to the east of the A419. It sets out the overall requirements for the New Eastern Villages ('NEV') including Rowborough and the expansion of South Marston village. Central to the development of the NEV are the proposed sustainable transport links detailed within the policy which will connect the proposed villages together as well as integrating them with the existing communities of Swindon and the surrounding villages.
- 1.2 The NEV Framework Travel Plan SPD ('SPD') supports the principles brought forward within Policies TR1 and TR2 of the Local Plan. Policy TR1 seeks to deliver a high quality transport network throughout the Borough, which supports economic growth, regeneration and housing growth. Furthermore, Policy TR2 seeks to ensure new development is located and designed to reduce the need to travel and to encourage sustainable modes of transport. It also requires a Travel Plan to be submitted with applications which are likely to have a significant transport impact. Any submitted Travel Plan should assess and mitigate the impact of development and promote sustainable travel choices.
- 1.3 The SPD provides a strategic overview for the NEV development, and forms one stage in promoting sustainable transport measures across the site. It will provide a coordinated approach across all development islands, to ensure consistency for developers and future occupiers of the NEV.
- 1.4 The SPD supports the Council's Corporate vision and pledges, the core principles of the Local Plan, and the stated objectives of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2012).

2 Detail

Background

- 2.1 Adopted in March 2015, the Local Plan "provides the policy framework to deliver sustainable growth to 2026 and beyond." The Framework Travel Plan (FTP) seeks to provide further guidance on the Local Plan policies that relate to the NEV and in particular Policies NC3, IN3, TR1 and TR2.
- 2.2 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 a Framework Travel Plan across the NEV. It will provide a package of measures to promote

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sustainable travel within the context of a mixed use development with multiple developers and occupiers on site.

NEV Framework Travel Plan SPD

- 2.3 The SPD outlines the principles and suggested management mechanisms to reduce the number of car trips within and to the NEV. A well connected layout to enhance pedestrian and cyclist permeability, as well as providing priority to public transport vehicles, are some of the primary approaches to reduce car dependency and to achieve sustainable development.
- 2.4 The SPD also offers developers of residential schemes the opportunity to pay a “per dwelling 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 residential travel plans to be submitted. Site specific travel plans for school and employment uses would still be required.
- 2.5 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;
 - 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

- 2.6 A public consultation exercise was undertaken, with the SPD available for public comments for 6 weeks from Thursday 12th May to Wednesday 22nd June 2016. A total of 21 responses were received, generating 116 comments. A Statement of Consultation (July 2016) setting out a summary of comments and Officer responses can be found at **Appendix 2** of this report.
- 2.7 The SPD, which can be found at **Appendix 1** of this report, has been amended to reflect changes following revised draft consultation on the SPD.
- 2.8 Developers were also made aware of the draft FTP, prior to public consultation through a presentation at the Developers Forum Meeting in 2015. Comments were welcomed on the draft SPD, which was included within the minutes of the meeting. Unfortunately no comments were forthcoming at this stage.

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Edward Snook, New Eastern Villages Planning Team, Planning Department, Direct Dial 01793 466427, nev@swindon.gov.uk.

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Key Amendments

2.9 As a result of the public consultation exercise ending June 2016, a number of amendments were made to the draft FTP including:

- Removal of Workplace Contributions table;
- Amendments to the Global Mode Share Targets table;
- Additional evidence to justify Car Club costs;
- A reference to indicate the potential for other interested parties to be involved within the NEV Travel Plan Group;
- Further clarity with regards to the preferred design specifications for travel routes;
- Additional information provided to clarify the role of the Framework Travel Plan and how it links in with individual site specific travel plans for residential, workplace and school uses;
- Amendments to the timing of the required contributions;
- An additional explanation to clarify the roles of primary and secondary roads;
- An additional reference to the canal and associated pathways and how they could be utilised by pedestrians and cyclists.

3 Alternative Options

3.1 The Council could choose to rely solely on the policies within the Local Plan to guide the detailed delivery of the NEV. Policies NC3, TR1 and TR2 of the Local Plan set the strategic policy framework for sustainable transport within the NEV; however these policies alone are not considered to provide the detailed mechanisms and initiatives to reduce dependency on cars.

3.2 Delay to the publication and adoption of the SPD is likely to prejudice the Council's ability to establish a comprehensive sustainable transport framework with the potential to compromise the successful implementation of a infrastructure network that encourages sustainable modes of transport. This would result in a missed opportunity to coordinate both the strategic and local transport network at the NEV.

4 Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

4.1 The financial implications arising from publishing the FTP are to be met from the planning budgets for 2016/2017.

Legal and Human Rights Implications

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- 4.2 Human rights legislation has been considered in the preparation of this report and it is considered to be compatible with convention rights.
- 4.3 The preparation and adoption of the SPD is a process covered by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and associated regulations and amendments.

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

- 5.1 There are no immediate staffing implications of such a document, which provide further guidance to Policies NC3, IN1, TR1 and TR2 in assessing proposals for development at the New Eastern Villages. As detailed within the FTP – Appendix A a commitment from developers to the Council to produce a strategic framework travel plan would 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.
- 5.2 The Council has a duty to ensure that the preparation of the FTP is in accordance with the sustainability principles of the NPPF.
- 5.3 The FTP conforms to the policies in the Local Plan which has already been subject to a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) incorporating SEA and Health Impact Assessment (HIA) to ensure that the impact of proposals can be minimised with the least negative impact possible.
- 5.4 The coordination of the strategic travel network at the New Eastern Villages proposals, including the expansion of South Marston village will make a significant contribution to the demographic and economic needs of the Borough.

Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.5 The FTP conforms to the policies in the Local Plan which has already undergone a DIA and no negative impacts were predicted. However, an additional DIA has accompanied the SPD throughout the consultation and has been amended to reflect the final SPD. The DIA is available on request.

6 Risk Management

- 6.1 Delaying the adoption of this SPD carries less risk in the short term, but much higher risk over the medium-long term, as it would result in the lack of adequate tools necessary through the Planning System to uphold the detailed aspects of the policy and the Council's strategic objective to deliver sustainable development at the New Eastern Villages.

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7 Consultees

- 7.1 The Board Director, Resources (Section 151 Officer) and Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.

8 Next Steps

- 8.1 If Planning Committee approve the recommendations of this report, the SPD will be printed as soon as reasonably practical. Copies of the SPD will be distributed to the Borough's libraries and the Borough's Town and Parish Councils. Hard copies of the document would also be made available for inspection at the Civic Offices and will be available online on the Council's website.

9 Background Papers

- 9.1 Appendix 1 – New Eastern Villages Framework Travel Plan SPD (October 2016)
9.2 Appendix 2 – Statement of Consultation (October 2016)

An electronic copy of all documents, including consultee comments and Officer responses, is available on the Council's Website and hard copies of the documentation have been made available to the Political Groups and copies are also available in the Members' Room.