

Appendix 5

Avoiding the activation of safeguards: a travel plan risk assessment

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Why might a travel plan delivered through the planning process fail to deliver?

There are various reasons why a travel plan may fail – that is, fail to implement measures, or be ineffective at encouraging modal shift towards smarter travel choices.

The risks of this happening can be introduced, or minimized. The following stages can influence the level of the travel plan's performance against its targets:

- when the travel plan is designed,
- during the operation of the travel plan.

Influences can be internal to the organization (the way it is set up to deliver the travel plan), external to the site (involving third parties outside of the organization), or may be technical in nature (related to the process of implementation, or example the setting of targets or monitoring of the travel plan).

Travel plan troubleshooter

10 top barriers are listed below. These are common issues slowing progress towards achieving effective travel plans as introduced as part of the planning process. Similar barriers may also be applicable to travel plans implemented voluntarily by businesses.

Ways to avoid these pitfalls are suggested – to speed up the effective delivery of travel plans and their associated outcomes to reduce levels of car use and encourage more responsible patterns of movement.

1. Design: refusal, disinclination or reluctance to comply with travel plan process:

Some planning applicants may see the requirement for a travel plan as an imposition, or the travel plan has been produced at a late stage when site design or highways details have already been put forward or agreed, or at a time when urgency or time constraints dictate the process rather than a focus on achieving outcomes.

Meet with local authority at an inception meeting to discuss the approach and what is required, and what the rewards are in terms of the design and ongoing management of the site. Early (pre-application) production of the travel plan, alongside the Transport Assessment and Design & Access Statement, ensures that effort is not duplicated and travel plan requirements are met. Financial and operational implications of the travel plan need to have been taken account of early on in the design and planning of the proposals.

For the developments for which travel plans are requested, the requirements will have to be fulfilled in accordance with this guidance.

A **checklist** for developers to ensure they include the required contents for a travel plan in Somerset is available from the Resources Centre for travel plans on www.movingsomersetforward.co.uk/new-developments.

2. Operational/delivery of targets: perceived lack of control over targets:

The owner of the site does not have total control over targets, either because:

- a) the site will be occupied by a separate organisation
 - b) the site owner does not feel they have control over how staff or visitors travel
 - c) the measures in the travel plan are in the hands of third parties, e.g. bus companies
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- a) the site owner needs to transfer the responsibility of achieving the targets and implementing the travel plan onto the occupier as part of the lease or tenancy agreement for the site, in order to comply with the planning permission which the travel plan forms part
 - b) the purpose of the travel plan is to influence the way people travel. Without aspirations for achieving a defined and managed level of car use it will not be a worthwhile exercise to have a travel plan in place. The travel plan needs to be designed to achieve these targets with appropriate measures to influence travel behaviour
 - c) the travel plan should take account of the fact that it may involve the help of third parties such as transport providers to achieve some measures or targets. However, it can contain its own measures to counteract any adverse actions by bus operators (e.g. bus fare subsidies to counteract increasing fares), and in the same way take advantage of any unexpected opportunities (e.g. new bus and cycle routes) as part of the travel plan.

A good travel plan will identify these risks and the proposed impact they may have on the travel plan.

3. Operational/delivery of targets: low level of behaviour change - People refuse to, or unable to, change their travel behaviour:

“Some members of senior management may even feel threatened by the travel plan, concerned about losing benefits.”

(Travel plan resources pack for employers, p45)

The travel plan should concentrate on targeting those willing or able to support change, and rewarding those already using travel alternatives. It should set realistic targets, and should not expect everyone to contribute strongly towards the achievement of the travel plan goals in the short to medium term.

Longer term targets should be set out for challenging the culture of an organization which does not take reducing car use seriously. Staff should be encouraged to take advantage of alternative transport choices as their life circumstances change (where they live, children growing up, changes in income etc.) and external drivers (costs of car use etc.) change. Better planning of journeys may allow for car journeys to be substituted by alternative modes, at least on an occasional basis to begin with if people are competent in planning or arranging trips by alternative modes.

Check that the perception of lack of alternative transport options matches up with reality through offering personal journey planning, or feeding back on questionnaire answers on the basis of information collected from the site audit.

Additionally, alternative measures should be proposed (should external schemes not be delivered or the package of measures in the travel plan not be as effective as anticipated).

4. Operational/delivery of targets: travel solutions do not fit into social norms or travel context:

The culture of travel choice favours the use of the car, and as such the travel plan has not been effective in encouraging and enabling the use of alternative options.

Ensure that the travel plan offers quality alternatives which bring rewards over the use of the private car, so that any sacrifices people make in terms of time, money or lifestyle are balanced with longer-term rewards. These rewards need to be communicated, and a sense of community and shared purpose or responsibility built around the ideals of the travel plan.

Further interventions and promotions or re-engagement in the travel plan may be necessary. Sometimes a figurehead in the organisation may be used effectively to win staff around who are sceptical about the goals of the travel plan, or unwilling to change their travel behaviour until they see somebody else going out of their way to do so.

Further advice on **changing behaviour** is given in the Exemplify and Encourage sections of the Menu of Measures, available as part of the Manual for Travel Plans via www.movingsomersetforward.co.uk.

5. Design: late articulation of travel plan measures:

Delayed articulation in terms of the details of the site design, measures, targets, or supporting information to be used in the formulation of the travel plan.

This causes a low level of confidence in the travel plan being effective. This can particularly be the case where outline applications have not included a travel plan or the travel plan is a condition, post planning consent.

“...deferred submission of a travel plan detracts from the local authority’s ability to secure certain elements. It also risks a delay in the travel plan implementation that may allow a pattern of car use to become established in new developments.”

(Using the planning process to secure travel plans, p56)

Government advice encourages as much information as possible to be included in travel plans submitted with all types of planning application (including outline and full applications). This includes modal split targets.

Specific commitments should be made to putting measures in place on a defined timescale, rather than hazy statements promising investigation of various proposals.

Applicants must **ensure** that a table of modal split (outcome) targets are included in the travel plan, along with a schedule of actions to show clearly the planned implementation of various measures.

6. Design and operational/delivery of targets: lack of ongoing management or site-specific management detail in the travel plan:

Organisational structures and processes are not put in place to ensure the effective delivery of the travel plan.

The travel plan needs to name the person responsible for coordinating the travel plan. This person should be employed, or allocated the time, to influence the design of the travel plan and coordinate the delivery of the various elements within the organization, across the various different departments and stakeholders that may be involved. The overall reporting lines within the organization should be stated, ensuring that problems can be addressed at the appropriate level.

The travel planner should be allocated a budget or source of funding with which to manage the travel plan and make improvements to the travel conditions on site – as well as offer incentives for smarter travel.

It is important that the site owner and/or occupier understands and owns the travel plan (the travel plan coordinator), and that it is not an on-the-shelf document used solely to gain planning permission for the site. The travel plan should be integrated into other corporate policies and management frameworks such as ISO14001 and health & safety to emphasise its wider organisational goals.

Carrying out a full site audit and survey will ensure that the travel plan is tailored to the site in question, and is not too vague to be of real use in developing solutions to travel problems. The context, aims and deliverables in the travel plan should be clear to any reader – particularly where the person charged with delivering the travel plan may not have been involved in the development of the travel plan itself. Steering groups should be set up to formalize the delivery of the travel plan, and identify any remaining tasks to complete the travel plan or develop its content. These should be monitored over time and achievement compared to the targets for modal split set out in the travel plan. An annual survey should be carried out and progress reported to senior management as well as Somerset.

Further advice on about **employing a travel coordinator** is given in the Exemplify section of the Menu of Measures, available as part of the Manual for Travel Plans via www.movingsomersetforward.co.uk.

7. Operational / delivery of targets: general failure to implement the travel plan:

Lack of an action plan or clear understanding of responsibilities and timescales for delivering measures in the travel plan.

Set out a clear action plan in the travel plan, assess risks, manage risks, and implement according to the timetable in the travel plan. Plans for accurate, complete and continuous monitoring should be included in the travel plan.

The planning process will be used to ensure the enforceability of the travel plan. This sets out remedies or financial safeguards should the travel plan not be implemented as planned.

Revisit the travel plan to decide what is realistic. Add measures to the travel plan to focus on the weakest links, or quick wins which can be used to kick-start progress.

Further advice about **achieving quick wins** for your travel plan is given in the Quick Wins section of the Menu of Measures, available as part of the Manual for Travel Plans via www.movingsomersetforward.co.uk.

8. Design: modal share targets not included in the travel plan:

The consultant drawing up the travel plan cannot devise modal share targets for the delivery of the travel plan in the longer term.

The concept of a site-wide, mixed used travel plan does not fit in well with the traditional approach to individual site specific travel plans. Commercial factors may be major issues.

Meet with local authority to discuss the approach and what is required, and what the rewards are in terms of the design and ongoing management of the site. Discuss the wider policies in the local transport plan and how all sites and travel plans are subject to the same technical evaluation and modal shift requirements.

Carry out a survey and use the accompanying advice and evidence to set appropriate modal share targets, to be measured annually on an ongoing basis in order to track progress.

Further advice on **target setting** is given under the Target Setting section of the Monitoring Guidance, available as part of the Manual for Travel Plans via www.movingsomersetforward.co.uk.

9. Operational/delivery of targets: travel plan targets not achieved despite willingness of organization and staff to be involved in the process:

People do not feel that the wider context supports the delivery of the travel plan, e.g. fear of, or levels of, crime/antisocial behaviour, intimidation by car drivers, lack of adequate transport alternatives.

Set the travel plan within wider local strategies to address these important issues. Engage with Somerset and third parties to publicise and address any inadequacies through collecting evidence in the travel plan.

Get involved in local community and employer groups/forums to raise begin to find solutions to these problems.

10. Design and operational/delivery of targets: perverse incentives which fuel car use:

Parking levels and restrictions are not considered early enough as part of the travel plan, so cannot be used to reinforce the incentives and alternative travel options developed in the travel plan.

This is particularly the case in residential developments and mixed-use employment sites.

“The choice of elements must work together as a package – elements and the way they are structured could undermine or increase the success of others.”

(Using the planning process to secure travel plans, p73)

Conflicting corporate policies, such as reimbursement rates for driving at work where staff make a profit from using their car or company cars. The design and levels of car parking should contribute towards reduced use of the private car, in combination with other measures to persuade people to use alternatives as part of the decision making process used to determine the wider planning application.

Unless barriers are removed, no matter how good incentives are they will fail to be effective.

"...removing obstacles to public transport ought to run in tandem with actions to ensure that your company does not encourage driving to work with cheap company cars, unlimited free parking or by requiring employees to drive to site just in case they have to use their car for work purposes."

(Essential guide to travel planning, p36)

An audit of organizational policies should be carried out to ensure all company policies and decisions are contributing to the travel plan rather than working against it. This will require high-level support for the travel plan within the organization.

Further advice on smarter travel policies is given in the Encourage section of the Menu of Measures and as a worksheet in the Site Audit and Design Guidelines, available as part of Manual for Travel Plans via www.movingsomersetforward.co.uk.