

A Briefing Note on Travel Planning by the Institution of Highways & Transportation (IHT)

IHT welcomes the merger between the Association of Commuter Transport (ACT) and TravelWise as we believe that combining the resources of these two organisations will improve the opportunities for spreading a travel-planning culture throughout the UK.

Research has shown that travel planning can provide major benefits in reducing the amount of car travel and so also reducing the congestion and global-warming emissions created by car travel. When referring to "travel planning" we mean workplace, school and personalised travel plans typically provided with other "soft" measures such as car clubs, travel information and travel awareness campaigns.

The Department for Transport (DfT) report "Smarter choices - changing the way we travel" (July 2004) showed that car travel can potentially be reduced by 11% nationally, if best travel-planning practice is adopted, with a much higher percentage reduction achievable in congested urban areas. The report also showed that typically for every £1 spent on travel plan measures some £10 of benefit can be achieved through improved travel times, with a much greater benefit being achievable in congested areas.

Since 2004 we have seen employers throughout the UK starting to tap into this travel-planning culture. Often leadership is provided by regional and national bodies such as the Highways Agency with its Influencing Travel Behaviour (ITB) and Transport for London (TfL) with its Travel Demand Management (TDM) programmes. DfT's document "The Essential Guide to Travel Planning" (October 2007) commences with quotes from a variety of blue-chip organisations that have discovered the benefits of travel plans.

IHT offers a few key messages as we move forward to a more widespread implementation of travel plans:

1. corporate social responsibility
2. partnership working and ownership
3. agreeing objectives
4. recognising constraints on achieving objectives
5. measures and outcomes
6. safe travel
7. sustainable distribution of goods
8. monitoring and forecasting

Local authorities should draw to the attention of employers that it is their corporate social responsibility to prepare, maintain and monitor the effectiveness of their travel plans. This message can be reinforced by employees. This applies to both large and small employers who can join together to provide a travel plan through organisations such as a traffic management association.

We should all acknowledge the need for a partnership approach in developing a travel plan, involving employers who are occupiers of a site as well as applicants for a planning consent and, on the other hand, local planning and highway authorities. The travel plan is prepared and owned by the applicant/occupier and agreed or approved by the local planning authority. Approval is normally necessary if the travel plan is prepared as part of a planning application.

The applicant/occupier will have a set of pre-eminent objectives that could potentially include factors such as environmental (minimising carbon footprint), social (good access for all employees allowing for their personal needs), business (good access for visitors and for business trips by staff) and deliveries (efficiency and reliability). The local authority will want to draw the attention of the applicant/occupier to the need to reduce congestion through a reduction in car travel and, particularly in the case of school travel plans, to the link between obesity and lack of exercise in the context of travel to and from school.

There are constraints on the actual achievement of objectives because of factors outside the control of the applicant/occupier such as:

1. actual quality of public transport service provided by operators
2. quality of pedestrian and cyclist access provided by local highway authority
3. fiscal and regulatory changes imposed by Government

4. land-use changes nearby
5. changes in the occupant's business (often forced by external pressures) and staff (e.g. where they live)

Each travel plan should have both a set of outcomes (recording anticipated achievement of objectives) and a set of measures to be implemented to achieve these outcomes. It is important to monitor both measures and outcomes.

Nearly 40% of road casualties are associated with travel to or from work and travel on business. The travel plan should include measures to reduce risk to employees whilst travelling.

Travel plans should include the movement of goods as well as the movement of people. Where appropriate, for example for a retail or industrial occupier, the travel plan should include the promotion of the sustainable distribution of goods and, for a new development, should include a construction logistics plan.

Travel plan measures and outcomes need to be regularly monitored and reviewed. Monitoring information should be stored in a database defined by the local authority so that current best practice can be recorded and better forecasts of outcomes for specific measures can be established reflecting local conditions.

Notes to editors

IHT, founded in 1930, has over 11,000 members concerned with the design, construction, maintenance and operation of transport systems and infrastructure across all transport modes in both the public and private sectors. The IHT promotes excellence in transport systems and infrastructure.

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