

## ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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COMMITTEE	Development Management Sub Committee
DATE	13 <sup>th</sup> June 2013
DIRECTOR	Gordon McIntosh
TITLE OF REPORT	Travel Plans
REPORT NUMBER:	EPI/13/103

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### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to respond to 17th January Development Management Sub-Committee request that officers review Green Transport Plans requirements, to include how effective the Plans are and how to implement them and report back to a future meeting.

### 2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that Members:

- a) Note the current policy context for Travel Plans;
- b) Note existing City Council processes and expectations for Travel Plans;
- c) Note how effective Travel Plans are when implemented correctly;
- d) Note the current aspects of monitoring and enforcing Travel Plans; and
- e) Note that officers are currently preparing further guidance on Travel Plans as part of the Local Development Plan process.

### 3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no implications for approved PBB options.

### 4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

The development of Travel Plans via the Planning process is currently undertaken by Applicants. The review of submitted Travel Plans and any further monitoring and enforcement is undertaken by officers within Planning and Sustainable Development.

## 5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

### 5.1 Travel Plans

A Travel Plan is a package of measures, both physical and behavioural, tailored to the needs of an individual site and its occupants, which aim to promote more sustainable travel to and from that site, with a particular emphasis on reducing reliance on the private car, thereby lessening the impact of the site and wider environment in terms of congestion, carbon emissions and air quality.

### 5.2 Current Policy Context

Travel plans have been constituted in their current form for at least 25 years and have been a feature of planning conditions in Scotland since the Town and Country Planning Act 1997. The Scottish Government's Scottish Planning Policy (2010) states that:

A Travel Plan is a package of measures aimed at promoting more sustainable travel choices and reducing reliance on the car, and should be encouraged for all significant travel generating developments. Development plans or supplementary guidance should explain when a Travel Plan will be required in support of an application for planning permission.

The Aberdeen Local Transport Strategy 2008-2012 and Aberdeen Local Development Plan (ADLP) reflect and reinforce this position:

*Policy T2 – Managing the Transport Impact of Development*

New developments will need to demonstrate that sufficient measures have been taken to minimise the traffic generated.

Transport Assessments and Travel Plans will be required for developments which exceed the thresholds set out in the Transport and Accessibility Supplementary Guidance. Planning conditions and/or legal agreements may be imposed to bind the targets set out in the Travel Plan and set the arrangements for monitoring, enforcement and review.

### 5.3 Current Aberdeen City Council Requirements

Aberdeen City Council currently applies *Policy T2 – Managing the Transport Impact of Development* to the thresholds as set out by the Scottish Government for the requirement of Transport Assessments (TA). TA's are required for 'all significant travel generating developments'. Current Council guidance has Travel Plan reflecting TA requirements, see Table 1. However, even developments falling below these thresholds are encouraged to prepare a Travel Plan in support of a planning proposal and there may be instances where developments below these thresholds are required to submit a Travel Plan, for example:

- For smaller developments comprising jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services which would generate significant amounts of travel in or near to Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs); or
- Where a Travel Plan would help address a particular local traffic problem associated with a planning application, which might otherwise have to be refused on local traffic grounds

As with any planning condition/ legal obligation, their use requires to meet the relevant tests set out by the Scottish Government, which includes consideration of reasonableness, and requires to be considered on a case by case basis

**Table 1: Travel Plan Threshold Requirements**

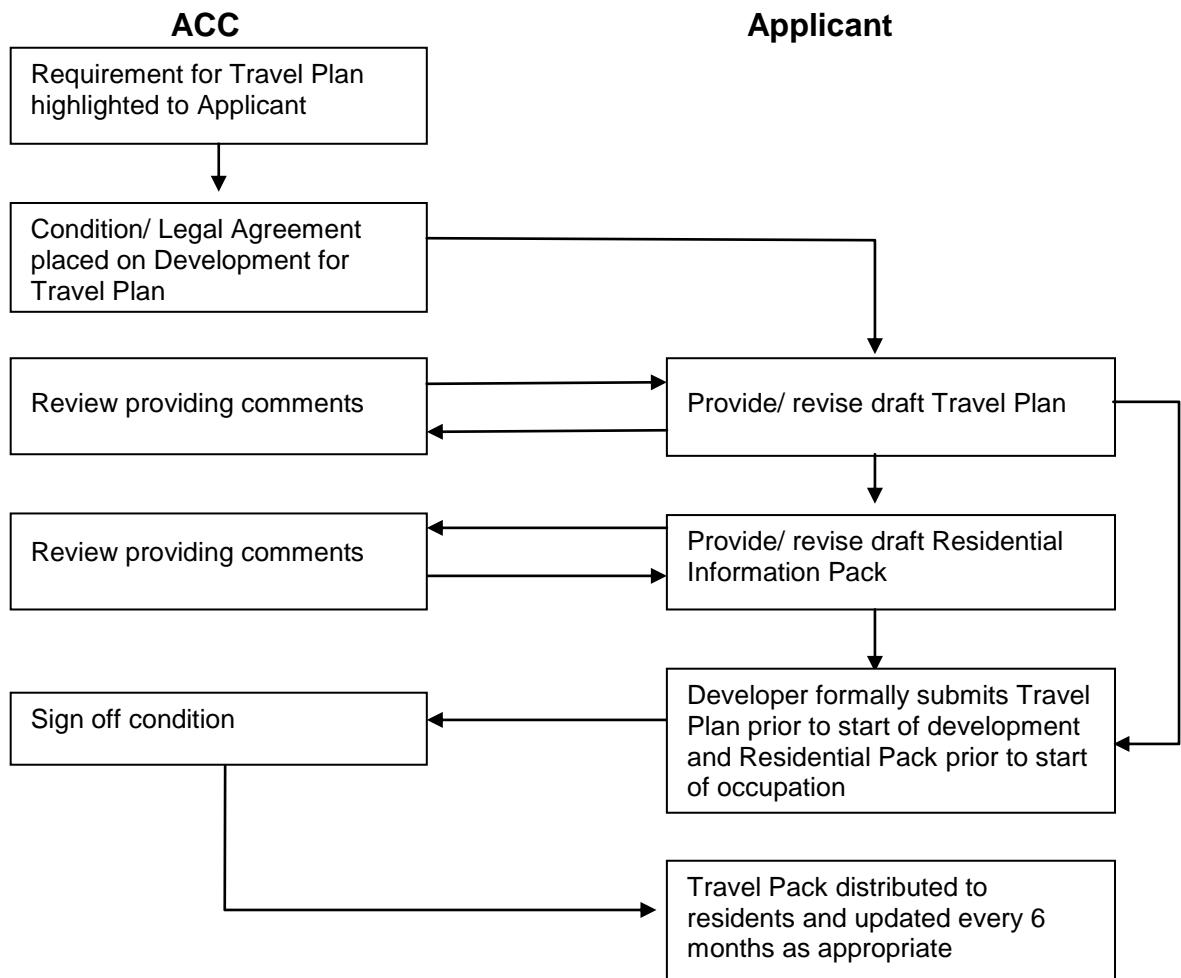
Land Use	Description	Threshold (Gross Floor Area)
Food Retail	Retail sale of food goods to the public such as food superstores, Supermarkets and convenience food stores.	> 1000m <sup>2</sup>
Non Food Retail	Retail sale of non-food goods to the public; but includes sandwich bars – sandwiches or other cold food purchased and consumed off the premises, internet cafés.	> 1000m <sup>2</sup>
Cinemas and Conference Facilities	Cinemas and conference facilities.	> 1000m <sup>2</sup>
Leisure Facilities	Dance and concert halls, sports halls, swimming baths, skating rinks, gymnasiums, bingo halls and casinos. Other indoor and outdoor sports and leisure uses not involving motorized vehicles or firearms, museums, public libraries, art galleries, exhibition halls, training centers, places of worship, religious instruction and church halls.	> 1000m <sup>2</sup>
Business	Offices, financial services – banks, building societies and bureaux de change, professional services (other than health or medical services) – estate agents and employment agencies.	> 2500m <sup>2</sup>
Industry	General industry (other than those classified under 'Business') and specialised industrial uses.	> 5000m <sup>2</sup>
Distribution and Warehousing	Storage or distribution centres - wholesale warehouses, distribution centres and repositories.	> 10,000m <sup>2</sup>
Hospitals	Medical and health services – clinics, hospitals and health centers, day centers and consulting rooms (not attached to the consultant's or doctor's house),.	> 2500m <sup>2</sup>
Higher and Further Education	Educational establishments for young people and adults.	> 2500m <sup>2</sup>
Stadia	Stadia	> 1500m <sup>2</sup>
Housing	Dwellings for individuals, families or not more than six people living together as a single household. Not more than six people living together includes – students or young people sharing a dwelling and small group homes for disabled or handicapped people living together in the community.	> 100 dwellings
Schools	Educational establishments for infants and children.	All Schools

## 5.4 Current Process

When a Planning Application for development in Aberdeen is proposed and exceeds the thresholds, as outlined in Table 1 above, the requirement for a

Travel Plan is highlighted to the Applicant by either Development Management or Roads Development Control officers. Depending on the proposed landuse the applied process is slightly different. Given the Members questions regarding the application of Travel Plan policies in relation to the 550 housing units at land to the south of Shielhill Road, Dubford, Bridge of Don officers have focused the current process on residential developments. The current steps are as follows:

**Figure 1: Flowchart of Current Responsibilities and Process**



Below are the excerpts from the residential section of the Travel Plan Guidance currently being drafted:

*Production of a Residential Travel Plan (RTP)*

As with other travel plans, the actual content of a Residential Travel Plan will be tailored to the site in question. However all submissions will have a similar content combining both hard measures – such as new bus stops and cycle ways, and soft measures – such as discounts on season tickets and residential travel information packs.

A RTP should be developed before site occupation, and will set out how specific measures to encourage sustainable travel to and from the site will be

applied, accompanied with how persuasion, publicity, advice and promotion techniques will be deployed by the developer to ensure new residents understand and take advantage of these measures. The outcome will be to achieve specific targets agreed in advance by Aberdeen City Council.

A Travel Plan Coordinator for the development should be nominated by the developer with responsibility for developing, implementing and monitoring the RTP and liaising with Aberdeen City Council. The TPC must be in place early in order to start developing quality travel information (mainly in the form of a Travel Information Pack) to all potential residents as they consider purchasing property off plan.

#### *Content of a Residential Travel Plan*

- Background/ Context/ Site Assessment
- “SMART” Objectives
- Measures/ Actions Plan
- Targets, Timeframes, Remedial Measures
- Responsibility/ Ownership
- Monitoring and Review
- Communication Strategy

#### *Developing a Residential Travel Information Pack (RTIP)*

The Residential Travel Plan differs from the Residential Travel Information Pack as one contains the measures the development will implement to ensure car use within and from the site is reduced, while the Travel Pack offers information and incentives for residents on travelling sustainably.

A Residential Travel Information Pack (RTIP) will be delivered to each dwelling on a new development as part of the house purchaser’s welcome pack. The RTIP should include localised information about walking, cycling, public transport and car options with information on how to travel to and from the site by a range of modes. The layout of the pack should be user friendly and professionally produced. The Pack is intended to be a community guide to the local area with particular emphasis on how to travel sustainably.

Measures to promote sustainable travel should be in place from day one of occupation of the site. All information should either be integrated ‘leaflet style’ or be made available as a ‘pull out’. The format of the Pack is flexible, but developers may find following a mode based presentation simpler.

### **5.5 Effectiveness of Travel Plans**

Residential Travel Plans are relatively new in their application and limited results have been published on their effectiveness. They are however acknowledged as best practice as when people move house they are more likely to rethink/ change their lifestyle, particularly when new opportunities present themselves. However, a number of projects have involved ‘Smarter Choices’, or ‘Stepchange’ interventions where areas have been targeted for individualised journey planning (which can be directly compared to Residential

Travel Information Packs). These have been extremely successful at making people aware of alternatives to solo car use. The Stepchange pilot project in Aberdeen was funded the Scottish Executive's Integrated Transport Fund in 2004. It aimed to encourage a more efficient use of cars and an increase in alternative modes of travel at a local level by providing material such as information leaflets to individuals. The results of the Stepchange project demonstrated that 35% of households contacted after the project had made at least a small change in their travel patterns linked with information they had been provided with (full report linked below in Background Papers).

There is also a great deal of evidence on mixed use or commercial developments, where car journeys and commuter trips are demonstrated to have a positive impact on behavioural change. Table 2 provides some examples.

**Table 2: Sample of Literary Evidence**

Case Study	Conclusion
Cairns et al (2002)	A selection of good practice travel plans reduced commuter car driving by an average of at least* 18%. Plans which included parking management measures achieved an average reduction of car driving of >24%, compared with >10% for those that did not.
Dft (2002)	Making Travel Plans Work: Lessons from UK Case Studies. These demonstrated a median of 15% reduction in commuter trips across 21 case studies
Surrey CC (2011)	A mixed use development in Queen Elizabeth Park, Guildford, Surrey saw a 12% reduction in commuter trips between 1999 and 2011

Notwithstanding the above, it should be noted that the existence of a travel plan does not obviate the need for proper assessment of the appropriateness of the location of development in land use planning terms at the planning application stage.

## 5.6 Enforcement Issues

Where developments which raise issues regarding likely generation of vehicle traffic are simple and of a relatively small scale Travel Plan obligations are generally imposed through a Planning Condition. If a Travel Plan is not produced or implemented enforcement action can be taken through the standard breach of condition process.

As Travel Plans are live documents which require routine monitoring and review of their ongoing implementation Legal Agreements are viewed as the most appropriate mechanism for securing obligations for large or complex developments. Legal agreements enable the placing of binding targets set out in the Travel Plan and set arrangements for monitoring, enforcement and review. They also allow the opportunity for the imposition of financial bonds

which would provide additional incentive for the occupants / developer to ensure that the objectives of the plan are met. Agreements regarding possible sanctions for breaches of the Travel Plan conditions can be imposed at this stage. Sanctions could include, but are not limited to, requirements to undertake additional off site works or make further monetary contributions. If a Travel Plan is not produced or implemented enforcement action is taken through the standard breach of legal agreement process. No enforcement has been taken so far in relation to this issue, as there have been no breaches of conditions which warrant taking action.

## 5.7 Potential Improvements

Officers are developing new travel plan guidance as part of Supplementary Guidance associated with the emerging Local Plan and this will be reported to E,P&I Committee as a draft as and when workload priorities allow. This will give clearer guidance to Applicants on process, contents and delivery of travel plans. Aberdeen City Council is on the SCOTS TA (Society of Chief Officers of Transportation in Scotland) group which has set up a working group to review travel plan process and policy across Scotland and is reporting to the Scottish Government on findings.

## 6. IMPACT

The contents of this report link to the Community Plan vision of creating a 'sustainable City with an integrated transport system that is accessible to all'.

Travel Plans contribute to delivery of the Smarter Mobility aims of *Aberdeen – The Smarter City*: “We will develop, maintain and promote road, rail, ferry and air links from the city to the UK and the rest of the world. We will encourage cycling and walking”, and “We will provide and promote a sustainable transport system, including cycling, which reduces our carbon emissions.”

The Local Transport Strategy (LTS) and Aberdeen Local Development Plan (ADLP) which contain policies related to travel plans have been subject to Equalities & Human Rights Impact Assessments.

## 7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Stepchange Results: Policy & Strategy Committee 14<sup>th</sup> June 2005

[http://committees.aberdeencity.gov.uk/acc\\_data/committee%20reports/cs\\_pol\\_r6b\\_050614.pdf](http://committees.aberdeencity.gov.uk/acc_data/committee%20reports/cs_pol_r6b_050614.pdf)

Cairns S, Sloman L, Newson C, Anable J, Kirkbride A & Goodwin P (2004) Workplace 'Smarter Choices – Changing the Way We Travel'

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/+/http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/sustainable/smarterchoices/ctwwt/chapter3workplacetravelplans.pdf>

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