

Report to **Lead Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment**

Date **28 July 2008**

Report By **Director of Transport and Environment**

Title of Report **Travel plan Guidance at New Development**

Purpose of Report **To seek approval to the “Guidance on Travel Plans for New Development” as adopted policy for developers and their agents.**

RECOMMENDATION:

The Lead Member is recommended to approve “Guidance on Travel Plans for New Development” as a document of the Highway Authority for applicants seeking to minimise traffic impact of development proposals in East Sussex.

1. Financial Appraisal

1.1 Securing Travel Plans in line with the proposed guidance is likely to generate a fee income of approx £81,000 in 2008/09 and an estimated £30,000 in 2009/10, although it is likely that incomes for future years will reflect those for 2008/09. The cost of employing a Travel Plan Officer to manage their implementation would be up to £31,000 and a business case for this will be considered as part of Phase 2 of the departmental restructure.

2. Supporting Information

2.1 Government transport guidance on planning applications seeks to reduce the need to travel especially by car from development sites with the aim of reducing congestion, improving the environment, increasing social inclusion and improving health. As part of planning applications, applicants are expected to assess the transport impact of their development proposals and mitigate the impact of any material increase in traffic on our roads.

2.2 The government has produced guidance documents on the use of Travel Plans including PPG13 and most recently Guidance on Transport Assessment (TA) published in March 2007. The interdependence of Travel Plans and TA's has been strengthened and Highway Authorities are encouraged in consultation with Local Planning Authorities to develop their own local guidance where necessary. As a result, developers' agents and consultants often seek guidance from highway officers on the specific Travel Plan requirements in East Sussex.

2.3 A Travel Plan is required by East Sussex County Council (ESCC) for large development proposals in accordance with the DfT Guidance for Transport Assessments. This Travel Plan guidance document also recommends the use of Travel Plan Statements (TPS) for smaller developments where a full Travel Plan would be inappropriate. The use of TPS seeks to encourage the sustainable travel choices and the use of measures commensurate with the scale of the development.

2.4 The proposed Travel Plan guidance will help to meet four of the six key objectives identified in the second Local Transport Plan :

- improve access to services by providing greater travel choices and influencing land-use decisions
- manage demand and reduce the need to travel by private car
- reduce congestion and improve the efficiency of the transport network
- protect, promote and enhance the environment

Prolonged negotiations, mainly due to applicant uncertainty over East Sussex requirements, are a strain on officer time. This guidance is aimed at assisting applicants in meeting their planning application requirements and will give them better understanding of Highway Authority requirements for Travel Plans. It also suggests a methodology for meeting subsequent planning obligations if planning consent is granted.

2.5 This guidance also sets out ESCC fees for auditing the Travel Plans. The fees of £4,500 and £6,000 are dependent on the scale of development and will be used to cover the cost of administering the whole Travel Plan process, including pre-application discussions and assessment of the survey results. These Travel Plan fees reflect those of other Highway Authorities in the South East.

2.6 Travel Plans are monitored for 5 years from occupation. If targets for non car use are not met applicants will be expected to implement pre-agreed measures or contribute pre-agreed sums towards ESCC sustainable transports measures to ensure the Travel Plan targets are met.

2.7 The Highway Authority secured 7 Travel Plans in 2007/08 and this number is increasing year on year. We expect to secure at least 14 Travel Plans in 2008/09, and are aware of 5 large development sites likely to come forward in 2009/10 that will require Travel Plans. Securing Travel Plans in line with this guidance, therefore, means a fee income of approx £81,000 in 2008/09 and so far at least £30,000 in 2009/10. An additional team member is likely to be required to appraise, negotiate and assist in the monitoring of Travel Plans. The fees secured will allow for a dedicated travel plan officer to be funded to manage the use of development Travel Plans in the county.

3. Comments/Appraisal

3.1 Managing travel, by car in particular, associated with new development is an integral part of the planning system. Use of this guidance will allow and encourage developers to consider a range of measures i.e. both "hard" and "soft" measures to mitigate the traffic impact of the development and produce site specific Travel Plans with appropriate targets, improvements to travel choice and promotion of changes in travel behaviour.

3.2 While this guidance aims to set out the Highway Authority requirements in relation to Travel Plans, it is important that any ESCC guidance document remains flexible and allows scope for developers to implement site-specific measures to achieve desired outcomes.

3.3 The Local Planning Authorities in East Sussex have been consulted on this document. As a result, comments have been received and the document amended to reflect these.

3.4 ESCC is not able to adopt such guidance as Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) in full at this time, due to the changes to the planning system. However, it is suggested it would be adopted as guidance and the County Council will recommend to the Local Planning Authorities that it should be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document by Planning Authorities as part of their Local Development Frameworks.

4. Environmental and Health Issues

4.1 The effective use of this guidance for Travel Plans will contribute to the management of travel demand and will therefore have a positive effect on the local environment through reduced traffic emissions and improvements to air quality. Managing demand in this way and using Travel Plans to change travel behaviour will assist in improving the health of a development's users/occupiers etc by increasing activity levels.

5. Conclusion and Reason for Recommendation

5.1 Travel Plans are an integral part of TA's, planning applications and the management of development traffic. Government guidance recommends that Highway Authorities compile their own local guidance in this respect. As such, the guidance fits with national and local transport policy. The use of this guidance document by developers will meet this requirement and allow the Highway Authority to secure a fee income and monitor development Travel Plans effectively helping to reduce unnecessary car use in East Sussex.

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17 July 2008

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BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Guidance on travel plans for new development; guidance on transport assessment; ppg13