The Highland Council
Comhairle na Gàidhealtachd

Roads and Transport Guidelines for New Developments
Stiùiridhean Rathaidean is Còmhdhalach airson Leasachaidhean Ùra

Appendix 4
Eàrr-Ràdh 4
Travel plans – guidance
Planaichean còmhdhalach – stiùireadh

Travel plans – guidance

Travel plans are tailored to the specific circumstances of a location and should reflect the nature and type of development. As a minimum, a travel plan should include:

- A clear statement of targets and objectives;
- An assessment of existing transport infrastructure and facilities on site;
- An assessment of the travel needs that are, or will be, generated on site. This is achieved by answering five key questions – who? where? why? when? and how?
- A programme of appropriate measures that will improve accessibility and promote
- sustainable travel options;
- A programme for the implementation of the travel plan, detailing the dates by which the various measures will be put in place;
- The identification of who is responsible for actions of the implementation plan;
- The identification of how required funding will be provided;
- A firm commitment to implement the measures identified; and
- Monitoring mechanisms to ascertain progress towards achieving targets.

In terms of the five key questions, the travel plan should clearly answer and set out measures to address the following:

Who?
Who will travel to the development? Staff, customers, users, residents, etc. this should include how many, and the Travel Plan should consider the most significant flows.

Where?
First, where will people travel from to the development? The catchment area for users, customers and staff should be defined.

Next, for the catchment area, where are the most accessible sites? This should be asked – and answered – at the first stage in the planning process, and an accessible location chosen. If the catchment is a town or suburb, the most accessible site may be in a residential area, to minimise walking distances, but if the catchment includes the surrounding countryside, it is more likely to be the town centre or on a key radial route, to maximise accessibility by bus.

There will obviously be constraints in many cases which will prevent use of the most accessible site but this should be understood and mitigated.

Why?
What are the journey purposes? Obvious in many cases perhaps (e.g. staff to work, customers for shopping, visitors, residents, etc) but what are the consequences for travel decisions and what is the likelihood of multi-purpose journeys in which the development is one of a few destinations? Answers to these questions will influence the type of transport provision and the likelihood of people to take up public transport and cycling options (and therefore the practicality and success of the Travel Plan).

When?
This includes what time of day/week and how often. It should include full time and part time staff and whether there is flexitime or shift working. For a retail development (and many other types e.g. hospitals and health centres) it will include opening hours and expected peak hours/seasons for business. Will the travel be frequent (e.g. daily), infrequent (e.g. monthly) or irregular?

How?
When all the above questions have been answered, it is possible to answer (a) how will people travel if no special measures are put in place? (i.e. a transport assessment), and (b) what special measures are likely to be desirable and effective? Such measures may be to the business advantage of the development (e.g. increasing footfall or turnover in a shop or reducing "no shows" or home visits from a medical centre) as well as having a broader social benefit (improved health, limiting congestion etc).

The Council will normally request that a travel plan be prepared and agreed, as part of the planning process, when a transport assessment has been required. In such cases, a travel plan framework should form part of the transport assessment. The Council may also request a travel plan be prepared for a smaller development that may not meet the criteria for a transport assessment, as set out in Chapter 2 - Section 2.2, but which could generate significant amounts of traffic within areas of specific concern.

In certain circumstances, for example in the case of a speculative development for which no final occupier has yet been established, the Council will request the developer prepare a framework travel plan, which shall set out the general objectives and requirements of a travel plan and acknowledging that future occupiers will be required to sign up to these and subsequently provide a more detailed travel plan, tailored for their specific needs.

For residential developments, the developer will be asked to follow the principles of a travel plan and take actions to encourage future occupiers to consider and use sustainable modes of travel.

It will normally be the case that the requirement for a travel plan to be developed and implemented shall be a specific condition of a legal agreement between the developer and the Council.

It is important for a developer to understand that the production of a travel plan or travel plan framework is not simply a one-off requirement necessary to obtain planning consent. A travel plan is an evolving document that requires regular monitoring, review and up-dating. A travel plan will normally set certain targets, normally for two years after the start date of the travel plan, as well as agreeing to implement measures if the targets have not been reached. Subsequent monitoring will be required to assess if these measures have been successful or not.

The requirement of a travel plan should not be seen as an additional "burden" in the planning process, but as a tool for helping to deliver more sustainable development that can make good business sense.

Further advice and details is generally available and following are likely to provide a developer with useful information:

- "Annex E – Travel plans."
- "Making residential travel plans work: guidelines for new developments",
- "Transport energy best practice – a guide on travel plans for developers", Department for Transport
- "Good Practice Guidelines: Delivering Travel Plans through the Planning Process."
- "ACT Travelwise is a network of organisations that promote sustainable travel and provides information and support."