



## DEVELOPING TRAVEL PLANS



Commuters are a main target group when a city plans to reduce car travel. Since travel patterns are very similar and since the trips are carried out always at the same time of the day and mostly with the same means of transport a permanent change towards more sustainable modes than as solo car drivers has significant impacts

## CONTEXT & CHALLENGES

As part of the Scottish Government's Smarter Choices, Smarter Places programme, Aberdeen City Council has been working in key employment areas within the City to progress travel planning. This work has involved establishing contacts (travel plan coordinators) within companies through the process of travel plans which are submitted to the Council's Planning Department when planning permission for new developments is requested. This has



enabled joint travel planning activities such as promotional events and car sharing schemes. As part of the planning permission process, the Council has also been requesting travel packs/mobility plans, detailing travel options to the site, to be given to all new staff.

Aberdeen City Council wanted to expand this programme to include additional companies within the areas of Altens/Tulloch and North Dee to enable more collaborative working. The roll out of targeted travel packs/mobility plans to new staff, as well as those affected by infrastructure improvements was especially important when new infrastructure was impacting on congestion in an area.

The two areas were chosen due to their largely commercial nature and proximity to the main transport route to the harbour from the south. It was thought that reducing car dependency by commuters in this corridor could bring positive benefits to the movement of goods and people to the harbour.



The following steps were undertaken:

- Review of how organisations have progressed currently approved travel plans and the level of success associated with the travel plans;
- Engagement with organisations in the mentioned areas to approach travel planning on a collective basis by bringing the business community together;
- Survey employees to gain a better understanding of what influences their choice of mode;
- Development of a range of measures with employers to meet their employees aspirations with respect to travelling to work and

## CONTEXT & CHALLENGES

available options for travel; among these measures are:

- dropped kerbs
- the ability to use a car club car for work when they get there, meaning they don't have to commute by car
- the introduction of ride sharing schemes
- the handing over of sustainable transport guides which have been produced by the project
- Promote the measures to employers and those who are not currently progressing travel planning

- Each business received either a road-show event at their premises where staff could provide feedback on their journeys and discover more about sustainable travel options or took part in a phone interview.

## RESULTS - FINDINGS - LESSONS LEARNED



A list of “Quick wins” for implementation has been developed.

The focus of the measure became less about travel planning but more about better understanding the needs and travel patterns of employees in the area and finding ways to make sustainable transport more attractive to them.

- **Lesson 1:** The “knocking on doors” approach of the Consultants to obtain business contacts in respect of travel planning in companies within the target areas has proved problematic. This has been attributed mainly to more stringent data protection regulations meaning that many companies will no longer put you in touch with a member of staff unless you have a name or contact details for them but also to the consequences of the oil-price crash in that: (i) there is less pressure on parking, following several rounds of redundancies; and (ii) dedicated travel planning officers are no longer as frequently seen in companies
- **Lesson 2:** Holding focus groups and drop-in sessions with employees to better understand the challenges proved difficult. Lunchtime engagement events in a central location in North Dee did not attract takers.

For South Dee, the decision was therefore taken to hold a business breakfast instead, to save people taking time out of their working day and to attract them with food which worked much better.

- **Lesson 3:** Rather than trying to attract all businesses in the area it would be more sensible to engage more meaningfully with three or four businesses in each area.
- **Lesson 4:** When finding a contact with a specific responsibility for travel planning proved difficult, using the users who already used sustainable transport (such as the Bicycle User Groups) proved a really great “way in”. Although they might not have the power to bring about organisational change, they were enthusiastic and could use their network to promote events and information to colleagues.

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