Linking active travel and public transport to housing growth and planning

Part 1: Aligning housing growth and planning with active travel and public transport

Active Travel Toolkit Slide Pack

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Linking Active Travel and Public Transport to Housing Growth and Planning Part 1: Aligning housing growth and planning with active travel and public transport
Part of the Active Travel Toolbox, written by Sustrans with support from Dr Adrian Davis, Living Streets and The TAS Partnership Limited.

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What is this slide pack for?

This slide pack provides a summary of the toolkit: Aligning housing growth and planning with active travel and public transport.

The Active Travel Toolbox slide packs are designed to demonstrate the benefits of sustainable transport and help LEPs and local delivery partners strategically invest in walking and cycling schemes.

This slide pack provides:

- Key messages
- Statistics and evidence
- Signposting to tools and case studies

Contents

This slide pack covers:

- How spatial planning can help us to integrate housing and transport policy and practice
- Planning policy context
- The potential of sustainable transport and the transport policy context
- Overview of approaches to integrate housing growth and sustainable transport
- Funding mechanisms that can be used to support sustainable transport in the context of new housing developments.

Key messages

- The UK population will rise significantly over the next 25 years and much of this increase is likely to be concentrated in and around urban areas. This is where transport networks are close, to or at, capacity.
- It is therefore essential that we align our objectives for housing growth and sustainable transport to meet mobility needs whilst creating attractive, economically vibrant places for people to live.
- This will be dependent on land use planners and transport planners working together to enable more sustainable, efficient and healthy forms of transport in the future, such as walking, cycling and local public transport.
- Local bodies should work together to access funding to align their sustainable transport and housing growth goals within the context of their strategic economic plans.
- The planning of new developments, and transport planning more generally should aim to deliver two objectives if transport is to be sustainable:
    - Reduce the need to travel: people make fewer and shorter trips
    - Encourage modal shift: walking, cycling and public transport are the preferred and most convenient forms of transport

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The role of spatial planning

As the UK population continues to rise it will put even greater pressure on transport networks close to or at capacity. It is therefore essential that we align our objectives for housing growth and sustainable transport to meet mobility needs whilst creating attractive, economically vibrant places for people to live.

Spatial planning can help integrate sustainable transport and housing growth by overlaying competing needs to:

- Reduce the need and distances required for people to travel
- Maximise the efficiencies of the existing transport network
- Increase provision and capacity for travel modes that are the most sustainable (walking, cycling and public transport)
- Create better places, where people and employers want to live and work
- Consider the needs of both present and future generations to access affordable transportation through a holistic approach to place-making
- Design healthy weight environments that encourage walking and cycling

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Planning policy context

Planning area	Description
Green Belt Policy	Helps to prevent urban sprawl ensuring more compact geographical settlement patterns that support journeys by walking, cycling and public transport.
Travel Plans, Transport Assessments/Statements	Designed to assess and mitigate the negative transport impacts for specific developments in order to promote sustainable development.
Local Plans	Set out a vision and a framework for future development of an area to address the needs of present and future communities and opportunities in relation to the economy, housing, community services and infrastructure.
Neighbourhood planning	Intended to 'give communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the growth and development of their local area.
Planning Obligations	Used to mitigate the adverse effects of a development. Conditions stipulated should be fair, reasonable and practicable.
Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 requirements	Tools for local planning authorities to deliver infrastructure to support the development of an area and help fund infrastructure, for works that are directly related to a particular development.
Local Supplementary Planning Guidance	Local planning authorities may develop their own additional supplementary planning guidance that builds upon and provides more detailed advice or guidance on the policies of the Local Plan.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is broadly supportive of integrating local housing growth and sustainable transport objectives.

NPPF core planning principles include to:

"actively manage patterns of growth to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling, and focus significant development in locations which are or can be made sustainable"

"take account of and support local strategies to improve health, social and cultural wellbeing for all, and deliver sufficient community and cultural facilities and services to meet local needs"

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The potential of sustainable transport

Cycling, walking and public transport offer more efficient modes of travel for many local journeys whilst reducing pressure on the road system from private vehicle use.

Studies show that private vehicle use is an inefficient use of space and encouraging modal shift to public transport, cycling and walking is a more efficient means of moving people.

In our towns and cities where space is most constricted encouraging sustainable transport and managing private vehicle use has the potential to solve congestion whilst increasing health and making our cities more attractive and liveable.

Great potential exists for increasing cycling and walking:

- The British Social Attitudes survey (2014) found that 41% of people who made journeys of less than 2 miles by car said they could just as easily cycle and 39% said they could just as easily walk
- Sustrans' Bike Life survey (2015), the largest survey of its kind across residents in seven UK cities - found that nearly a third (28%) of people say that whilst they do not currently ride a bike, they'd like to
- Nearly eight in ten (79%) people however said they wanted improved safety for people riding bikes
- When safe, continuous and attractive cycling infrastructure is implemented usage can be high, for example on the Victoria Embankment cycle modal share is now at 52% during rush hour periods (TfL, 2016)

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Cycling and walking policy context

The Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy

Under the Infrastructure Act 2015, the government is required to set a cycling and walking investment strategy (CWIS) for England. The first ever CWIS for England was published in April 2017. It sets out a long-term vision for walking and cycling to 2040.

The CWIS sets the following aims and targets, to 2025:

- Double cycling, where cycling activity is measured as the estimated total number of bicycle stages made each year, from 0.8 billion stages in 2013 to 1.6 billion stages in 2025;
- Increase walking activity, where walking activity is measured as the total number of walking stages per person per year, to 300 stages per person per year in 2025, and will work towards developing the evidence base over the next year;
- Increase the percentage of children aged 5 to 10 that usually walk to school from 49% in 2014 to 55% in 2025.

Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans

Alongside the national CWIS, the government will publish non-statutory guidance and support to assist local authorities develop Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs). Developing LCWIPs are important to guiding the delivery of local improvements in walking and cycling infrastructure.

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Approaches to align housing growth and sustainable travel

There are many practical approaches to align housing growth and sustainable travel.

Some of the common success factors include:

- Effective leadership and whole-system policies to connect housing, health and sustainable transport
- Integration of health, transport and planning teams
- Assessing planning applications to ensure transport and health outcomes

The following slides include a number of case studies to highlight some of the approaches being used.

Case Study: Healthy New Towns Programme

Healthy New Towns is a new demonstration programme set up by the NHS to shape the health of communities and rethink how health can be delivered. The programme includes ten housing developments of over 76,000 new homes in total. The programme encourages local leadership from councillors and senior officials to ensure that the planning and health objectives align through the new developments.

A wide variety of activities will be tested through the HNTs programme including encouraging everyday physical activity.

One example in the first phase of development is North West Bicester (known as Elmsbrook). The Elmsbrook development includes:

- a dedicated bus service has been provided to link the new housing to the town centre,
- new cycle routes have been created, and Brompton Bike Hire stations have been provided.

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Case study: Stoke City Council - Ingraining health psychology in planning

To improve public health Stoke-on-Trent recognised the need to better integrate spatial planning, health and transport through recruiting a Health Psychologist to:

- provide evidence for the inclusion of health in the Local Plan and planning decisions
- act as a planning specialist and consultant throughout the development management process

Signs of success include implementing the Healthy Urban Planning SPD and ensuring large scale developments undertake Health Impact Assessments (HIAs).

Developers are also liaising with the Healthy Urban Planning Officer in pre-application stages to identify ways to promote health benefits.

Enhancing sustainable transport considerations in new developments is a significant part of the Healthy Urban Planners role to enable environments to support an increase in physical activity and reduction in air pollution through walkability, permeability and cycling infrastructure.

Photo from Dr Dan Masterson, Stoke-on-Trent City Council

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Case Study – Transit Oriented Development

Principle	Objectives
Walk - develop neighbourhoods that promote walking	The pedestrian realm is safe and complete; active and vibrant; temperate and comfortable
Cycle - Prioritise non-motorised transport networks	The cycling network is safe and complete; cycle parking is ample and secure
Connect - Create dense networks of streets and paths	Walking and cycling routes are short, direct and varied, and are shorter than motor vehicle routes
Transit - Locate development near high quality public transport	High quality accessible transit is accessible by foot
Mix - Plan for mixed use	Trip lengths are reduced by promoting diverse and complementary uses for all income groups
Densify - Optimise density and transport capacity	Residential and job densities support high quality transit and local services
Compact - Create regions with short commutes	The development is in an existing urban area and Travelling through the city is convenient

Transit oriented development (TOD) is an urban planning principle widely used in the USA and increasingly used in Europe.

TOD helps authorities align housing development, wider regeneration and sustainable transport goals.

The Transit Oriented Development Standard provides an accreditation to incentivise developers and local planning authorities to link new developments to sustainable transport to create vibrant, attractive, liveable and sustainable communities.

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Case Study: Hammarby Sjostad, Stockholm

Hammarby Sjostad in Stockholm is a development that when complete, will house 11,000 residential apartments, along with comprehensive provision of new public transport links, leisure facilities and green public spaces. It holds a TOD Gold Standard.

The area used to be an industrial site and so far 6,600 homes have been built, primarily aimed at young families and to alleviate housing pressure in Stockholm.

Hammarby Sjostad, Source Wikipedia Creative Commons

A comprehensive Masterplan was developed around eco-principles including:

- cycling and walking provision
- transport targets for an average car ownership of 0.5 cars per unit,
- two new bus routes, a car sharing scheme,
- a free ferry service, and
- a new tram line.

Almost 80% of commuter journeys are made by public transport, cycling or walking in this new Swedish development.

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Funding opportunities

A variety of funding opportunities exist to better align sustainable transport and housing growth:

- The CWIS
- The Local Growth Fund and devolution deals
- Community Infrastructure Levy
- The integrated transport block

Nottingham's tram system, Source Geograph: Creative Commons

Case Study: Nottingham City Council – Workplace Parking Levy

So far Nottingham City Council is the only local authority to have introduced a WPL. This is an annual charge paid for by employers in the city with more than 10 parking spaces.

The WPL was set up in 2012 to tackle problems associated with traffic congestion.

The levy provides around £9m each year in funding for local transport including rail, bus and tram infrastructure and simultaneously acts as an incentive for employers to manage and reduce workplace parking.

Satisfaction from customers of Nottingham City Transports Bus network, at 97%, is the highest in the UK.

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