

Travel Plan Case Study: Wichelstowe, Swindon

Developer: Wichelstowe LLP

Planning Application: 2013

First Occupation: Summer 2020

Size of development: 3000 dwellings over multiple phases

Development Overview

Following on from the 800 dwelling development at East Wichel, the development of the Canalside area, and subsequently West Wichel, is being led by Wichelstowe LLP.

As part of the S106 agreement, the developer has signed up to the travel plan contribution for Swindon Borough Council to resource the travel plan, and implementation of the residential travel plan (RTP) has started under the banner of Swindon Travel Choices.

Swindon Travel Choices have assigned a dedicated resource to be the face of the travel plan on the development, which adds to the successful implementation.

Travel plan elements

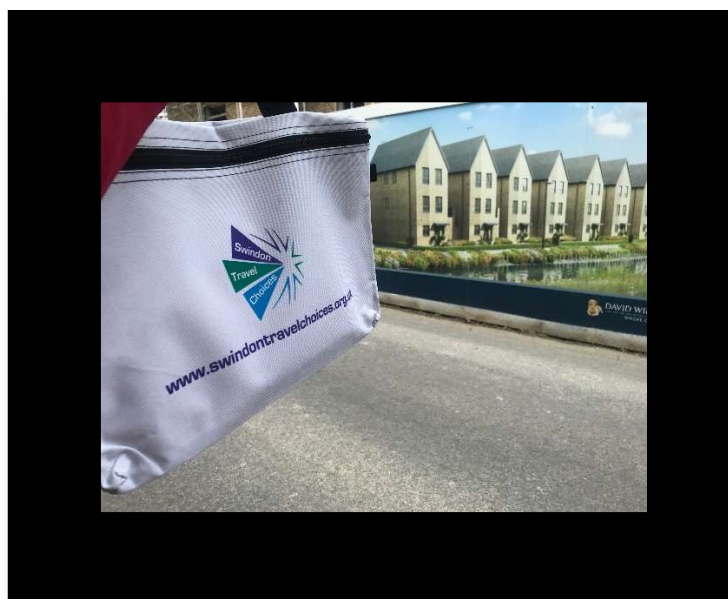
The RTP commits to the following:

Engagement Events

Held twice a year, events for residents piggy back national themes such as “Bike Week” or “Walking month” and offer roadshows, led bike rides or walks etc. The events are used as opportunities to engage residents, increase uptake of the offers and address any questions or concerns they have regarding sustainable travel.

Travel Information Packs

The Travel Information Packs are given to every household as new occupants move in. The packs include details of free bus and rail taster tickets, the borrow a bike scheme, plus hard copies of resources such as Swindon cycle maps, the Get Walking magazine and bus timetables for the area. There is also an overview booklet and free pen and bus ticket wallet. Everything is presented in a reusable document bag.



Training Sales Staff

Time is set aside to meet sales office staff and ensure they are aware of the travel plan, the information packs and the incentives available to new residents.

Cycle Incentives

There is a “borrow a bike scheme” available to residents for them to have free use of a bike for up to six weeks to see whether a bike would help them get around. The scheme has folding bikes, electric bikes as well as ladies and gents hybrid cycles. Child trailers can also be borrowed, and bikes come equipped with lights, locks, pannier bags and optional helmets.

Local family run bike shop, Mitchell Cycles, offer 10% off any purchases of new bikes, clothing and accessories for Wichelstowe residents. The flyers with the offer are in the travel information packs.

British Cycling’s “Let’s Ride” programme utilises the good traffic free cycle infrastructure in the area, and provides regular guided rides that residents can join.

Walking Incentives

A competition in the summer of 2022 sought to find the best walking routes around Wichelstowe. Residents submitted nominations, and the local school, developers and walking guru formed the judging panel to select the winners. The winners received a £50 Waitrose voucher, and their walk was featured in a new “Get Walking Wichelstowe” magazine. The magazine was printed up and available for free from the library, and a PDF as well as interactive versions are downloadable from <https://www.swindontravelchoices.co.uk/home/wichelstowe-interactive>

Bus and rail incentives

Free bus taster tickets are offered to each household, tailored to the individuals that may want to use them. Residents fill in a survey about who needs the bus travel (adults / children / pensioners) and whether this is for ad hoc journeys or a block of time. Tickets or passes are then sent to the household.

New occupants are also offered a £20 digital voucher off any Great Western Railway train journey. This can be redeemed against any journey – leisure or commuting to enable residents to try out the train service from Swindon.

Web information

A dedicated section of the Swindon Travel Choices website has been created especially for the new residents at Wichelstowe. The site – whilst basic – takes people to quick links to download the information in their household information pack, and makes announcements. The web address is:

<https://www.swindontravelchoices.co.uk/newdevelopments/wichelstowe/>

Working group

A working group has been established to meet every six months and discuss progress, issues and successes. The group comprises the developer, both bus companies that serve the site, the travel plan co-ordinator and a representative from the new school. The local ward councillor is also invited. In the future, a resident will be invited to join, along with any management company that have been appointed.

Monitoring

The travel plan is being monitored by the travel plan co-ordinator and a monitoring report submitted to the developer and highway authority annually. This report gives an update on progress made

with the elements outlined above. A modal survey will be carried out online annually, with the baseline survey taking place one year after the first occupation.

The baseline survey revealed a low level of trips undertaken by solo occupancy car (52%) so the target is to retain this low base as the development grows. The survey also revealed an appetite for walks and bike rides to get to know the local area better. These results will shape travel plan activity going forward.

Infrastructure

In the resident survey, 100% of respondents from the Canalside and West Wichel area said that the “quality of the local environment” attracted them to move to the area.

The canal is a central feature, with amenities such as Waitrose and a canalside pub being built ahead of the housing. Dwellings are equipped with infrastructure for charging electric vehicles, and visitor charging points are available. The “Southern Flyer” – a 2-mile traffic free cycle route connects the development to the town centre, with The Old Town Railway Path providing a popular leisure route between the development and Old Town.

As the development grows, bus gates, green bridges and segregated active travel routes will continue to connect the parcels of land and the local amenities.

Upon the 500th occupation, a car club will be introduced to the site, with additional cars service every 500 dwellings.

Impact of Covid

The Covid-19 Pandemic has significantly impacted the implementation of all travel plans during 2020 and Wichelstowe was no different, where some of the measures would have been unsafe to carry out. As a result, events were postponed, and there was little face-to-face interaction between the travel plan co-ordinator and the sales staff.

The shortage of building materials and slowdown of the planning process also meant that the housing roll-out has become unpredictable, causing a change in momentum of travel plan activity.

The 1st lockdown in April 2020 saw a nationwide ‘cycling boom’, with an average 300% rise in journeys being made by bike and cycle sales up by 60%. Amid the continuation of social-distancing measures the greatest gains in modal shift are likely to be towards cycling, and to a lesser extent, walking.

Going forward, the travel plan will capitalise on the active travel boom, and evolve to take account of the changed environment, with more use of digital communications.

Successes

Three years on since first occupation, the travel plan at Wichelstowe is deemed to be a success so far. Whilst many travel plans measure their success by outcome (usually a modal shift to sustainable transport), Wichelstowe is successful in its outputs.

These include;

Dedicated resource

An enthusiastic and committed individual is the public face of the travel plan and works hard to embed a sustainable culture in the development. The role is funded through the S106 agreement, so will continue throughout the development build out and for at least 5 years beyond.

Good communication

At the heart of the travel plan is good communication with the sales staff, the residents, the working group, and liaison with the local authority and stakeholders, such as the local bike shops and cycling campaign group.

Adaptation

The travel plan adapts to maximise opportunities. The take up of schemes is monitored, and when it was found to be low, the travel plan co-ordinator put on highly visible events and undertook more promotion via website and social media to ensure the residents were made aware of the offers. The impact of Covid has also led to the adaptation of the offers and events.

Accreditation

The travel plan achieved silver (“very good”) accreditation from Modeshift STARS in autumn 2023, and progress is underway to work towards achieving gold accreditation (“excellent”) by the end of 2025.



LIGHT UP SWINDON

Visit our winter safety roadshow

Wednesday 26th October 2022, 10am - 2pm

What's on offer?

Free goodies and advice to help keep you safe in the dark Discover ways to keep active through the winter
Win a prize with our lucky dip Pick up free cycle maps and walking magazines

www.swindontravelchoices.co.uk



WAITROSE
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Wichelstowe

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What are your normal travel patterns?

As part of the Canalside Travel Plan, we need to understand the travel patterns of the residents, and try to establish ways to help all users of the development to travel sustainably.

We would be grateful if you could take part in a short travel survey. Your answers should be based on your 'typical' travel habits.

www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/Canalside2020/
Closing date: 1st Dec 2021

Visit www.swindontravelchoices.co.uk to help you travel sustainably.

All responses will be entered into a prize draw to win a **£100 Waitrose voucher**



 Wichelstowe



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D3045

Wichelstowe Family Walk

Tue, 23rd August 2022
10am

Be the
change



Come and join in this free leisurely 1-hour walk
around the many green spaces in the Wichelstowe area

Meet outside Waitrose main entrance.

- All are welcome but please wear suitable footwear for uneven surfaces and bring water for hydration
- Free refreshments for all participants after the walk



www.swindontravelchoices.co.uk

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Get Walking Wichelstowe

You are invited to the launch of "Get Walking Wichelstowe", a new free magazine of walks around Wichelstowe.

Tuesday 30th May 2023

Local walk leader **Grahame Lee** will host an hour-long walk at 2pm

All welcome!

Refreshments afterwards at Hall and Woodhouse at 3pm. Collect your free copy of the magazine and other maps and goodies.



