

Technical Note

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Note title	2023/1105 Travel Plan Comments - Bus and Cycle Voucher Contribution		
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1. Introduction

1.1 Commission

Hydrock Fore are commissioned by Equites Newlands (Goldthorpe) Ltd ('the Applicant') to provide transport advice in relation to a hybrid planning application¹ for a proposed employment development on land to the south of Dearne Valley Parkway, near Goldthorpe, Barnsley.

Hydrock Fore prepared a Transport Assessment (TA)² and Framework Travel Plan (FTP)³ for submission with the planning application. Subsequent dialogue has been held with BMBC (Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council) Highways Development Control (HDC) regarding both documents.

1.2 Background

This Note sets out a response to BMBC regarding their request for additional measures to be included in the Travel Plan, namely the provision of bus tickets/cycle equipment vouchers for employees.

In their response (dated 16 August 2024), BMBC HDC requested that the following Travel Plan measures are considered:

- » *"For the life of the Travel Plan, the occupier will commit to providing £50 of bus tickets per employee per year to encourage the use and uptake of public transport.*
- » *"For the life of the Travel Plan, the occupier will commit to providing each employee with a minimum £100 pound contribution/voucher towards the purchase of cycle equipment."*

In response to this, the Applicant proposed an alternative methodology for determining a contribution for providing bus tickets to employees, which has been agreed in relation to a comparable scheme elsewhere in the UK, as follows:

"We have also given further consideration to the Council's request for additional measures to be included in the Travel Plan. Whilst we consider the request for passenger transport bus tickets and the cycle equipment measures are excessive given the range of other transport related works and measures that are also being sought, we propose a counter offer that is based on another of Newlands scheme at Thrapston.

Essentially, we would agree a fixed pot of money within the S106 Agreement that can be drawn down to purchase passenger bus tickets. The pot of money would be capped based on the cost of a monthly

¹ Planning Ref: 2023/1105.

² Transport Assessment, Land South of Dearne Valley Parkway, Goldthorpe, Issue v1.0, Fore Consulting Limited, 30 November 2023.

³ Framework Travel Plan, Land South of Dearne Valley Parkway, Goldthorpe, Issue v3.0, Fore Consulting Limited, 27 June 2024.

mega ride ticket and 10% of future employees calculated/predicted across the entire development. To ensure an even distribution across all the plots, the methodology below from the Thrapston example demonstrates how this can be achieved.

Bus Passes

Within one month of the Occupation of each Unit to offer all Unit Employees employed in that Unit a Monthly Megarider Ticket free of charge for the Bus Pass Period applicable to that Unit Employee, such offer to be open for the Offer Period

Subject to paragraph 5.3 below, in the event that any Unit Employee accepts the offer within the Offer Period then they shall be provided with a Monthly Megarider Ticket for the Bus Pass Period

The number of Unit Employees to be provided with the Monthly Megarider Tickets for the Bus Pass period shall be limited to:

In respect of Unit 1 shall be limited to a maximum of 71 (26% of 273) in respect of the Outline Units shall be based on the following formula:

$$A/B = C \times D = E$$

where

A = Total amount of permitted floorspace

B = Amount of floorspace of the Unit concerned

C = Proportion of total permitted floorspace of the Unit concerned.

D = 273 (being 10% of anticipated number of employees in the entire development)

E = maximum number of Unit Employees to be provided with the Monthly Megarider tickets

5.4 Upon written request from the Council the Occupier of the relevant Unit shall provide documentary evidence to the Council that Monthly Megarider Tickets have been supplied to Unit Employees pursuant to paragraphs 5.1 to 5.3 above."

Comments on the suggested methodology from BMBC's Transportation team were forwarded to the Applicant on 12 November 2024. In their response, BMBC 's Transportation team confirmed that they are willing to explore the suggested methodology but require further details, clarification, or alterations.

Section 2 provides responses to each of the comments received.

2. Responses to BMBC Transportation Comments

BMBC Transportation Comment 1

The example given mentions an Offer Period for the Employees to be eligible to claim the Megarider tickets. We would like to clarify that the Offer Period should be defined as being for the duration of the Travel Plan.

Response 1

In the Applicant's alternative offer, the "Offer Period" refers to the first year of occupation of each unit. This ensures that employees are incentivised to travel by bus early in their employment at the development, representing the critical time in forming travel habits.

It is proposed that a fixed sum is provided within the Section 106 Agreement, to be used flexibly between the purchase of a Silver 28-day Megarider bus ticket **or** a voucher towards the purchase of cycle equipment, with the fund capped based on the cost of the Silver 28-day Megarider bus ticket and 10% of employees anticipated across the entire development.

The offer will be open for the entire Travel Plan period (which will vary by unit depending upon the timeframes for occupation) **or** until the capped pot of money (per unit) has been reached.

The request to offer the tickets/vouchers to employees each year of the Travel Plan period is considered excessive given the range of physical sustainable transport interventions to be delivered, as summarised below:

- » Contribution to deliver a footway/cycle link along the southern side of the A635.
- » Funding for bus service changes.
- » Funding for bus stop improvements.
- » Improvements to Public Right of Way (PRoW) Footpath 15 to Billingley View, connecting to the development.
- » A635 Bus stops:
 - » Eastbound stop - upgrade road markings and bus shelter (including real time travel information) at the existing stop.
 - » Westbound stop - provide an improved bus stop to the west of site access roundabout in accordance with South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA) bus stop infrastructure standards.
 - » A new section of footway from the A635 access roundabout to the westbound bus stop.
 - » Provision of a crossing on the western splitter island of the A635 site access roundabout, to access the footway / cycleway route along the northern edge of the A635.
 - » Wayfinding signage for level access / alternative route for PRoW Footpath 15.

It is considered that the physical sustainable transport interventions listed above, along with the other measures included in the FTP and the Megarider/cycle vouchers to be provided, are suitable to ensure that the Travel Plan targets (as set out in the FTP) are achieved.

BMBC Transportation Comment 2

As there are several Megarider ticket products available, it requires clarification that the eligible monthly Megarider ticket should be at least the Silver 28 day Megarider ticket (worth £75). This is necessary to define as the Barnsley Megarider does not cover the ES10 site area.

Response 2

This is noted and accepted – see response to comment 3.

BMBC Transportation Comment 3

The suggested funding provision based on only 10% of the total employees however would not be sufficient to drive the necessary mode share targets and should be increased to 16%. This is based on the Travel Plan Baseline mode share (5.9%) + 10% uplift. The BMBC Transport Strategy which we are working towards across the borough outlines an ambition to reach 33% public transport mode share, and therefore a notable uplift would need to be facilitated.

Response 3

Noting the Council's ambition to increase public transport mode share across the district, the mode share targets set out in the Travel Plan seek to reduce the proportion of employees travelling to the development as car or van drivers by 10%. This target is 'SMART' (Site-specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timebound), and is therefore represents an appropriate target in the context of this planning application.

The interpretation of the mode share targets in the BMBC response is not correct. Specifically, the travel plan target is to reduce the proportion of journeys made as car or van drivers alone by 10% (equating to reducing the proportion of people driving a car or van alone from 67.3% to 60.5%), with a corresponding increase in journeys to the development by active travel and sustainable modes.

To illustrate this, the target changes in journeys by relevant modes are illustrated in the following table.

Mode	Baseline Mode Share (% of journeys)	Target Mode Share (% of journeys)	Change (% of journeys)
Bus	5.9%	7.6%	+1.7%
Bicycle	1.2%	2.9%	+1.7%
On foot	14.5%	16.1%	+1.6%
Driving a car or van	9.1%	10.8%	+1.7%
Subtotal	30.7%	37.5%	+6.8%
Passenger in a car or van	67.3%	60.5%	-6.8%

Consequently, alongside implementation of the physical infrastructure measures identified above, provision of funded incentives in the form of bus tickets or cycle vouchers for 10% of employees is sufficient to deliver the targeted modal shift, and also allows for some flexibility to allocate these incentives for staff commencing employment in future, beyond initial occupation.

It should be noted that the trip generation analysis based on the target mode share scenario has been agreed with BMBC HDC.

Given the above, there is no justification for basing the funding provision on 16% of the total employees, as suggested by BMBC Transportation. Basing the funding on 10% of the total employees is an appropriate approach, and is more ambitious than necessary to assist delivery of the targeted modal shift.

BMBC Transportation Comment 4

The Megarider tickets should be offered to employees each year of the duration of the Travel Plan.

Response 4

As set out in Response 1, the offer will be open for the entire Travel Plan period (which will vary by unit depending upon the timeframes for occupation) **or** until the capped pot of money (per unit) has been reached.

It should be noted that the FTP measures require future occupiers of the development to consider offering annual season ticket loans to staff through salary sacrifice arrangements. This represents a suitable option for staff based at the site to obtain discounted public transport tickets in future, beyond the developer-funded bus tickets / cycle equipment vouchers to be offered (as set out in this note).

BMBC Transportation Comment 5

The methodology suggested does not include any mention of the Cycle mode share, but there is an opportunity to include it within the suggested example: The S106 fund for the bus ticketing should also be made available for employees to acquire a one off £100 voucher towards cycle purchases in lieu of the Megarider ticket.

- » *This would be available to employees for the duration of the Travel Plan.*
- » *To be made as a one-off offer instead of claiming a Megarider bus ticket for that year.*
- » *This would not require additional an S106 fund, and instead be drawn from the fund calculated above, but defines an additional option for its use to deliver these interventions.*

The S106 funds established for this purpose will need to be made available for the duration of the Travel Plan.

Response 5

It is accepted that the Section 106 fund for bus ticketing is also made available for employees to acquire a voucher towards cycle equipment, in lieu of the bus ticket.

As with the bus ticket, the offer will be open for the entire Travel Plan period (which will vary by unit depending upon the timeframes for occupation) **or** until the capped pot of money (per unit) has been reached.

BMBC Transportation Comment 6

Additionally, some clarification is needed regarding the statement: "The pot of money would be capped based on the cost of a monthly mega ride ticket and 10% of future employees calculated/predicted across the entire development". The S106 funding for this purpose would need to cover the cost of providing the Megarider tickets for 16% of employees for each year of the travel plan. This would ensure that the Travel Plan measures can be consistently applied throughout the duration of the Travel Plan. Provision of funding for only one year of 16% would not be sufficient for the implementation of the Travel Plan.

Response 6

As set out in Response 3, given the Travel Plan targets, there is no justification for basing the funding provision on 16% of the total employees. Basing the funding on 10% of the total employees is appropriate and exceeds the initial bus mode share target of 7.6%. This is therefore an ambitious approach.

This, along with the range of sustainable transport interventions to be delivered (see Response 1), is sufficient to ensure that the Travel Plan targets are achieved.

BMBC Transportation Comment 7

It is not clear at this stage how many employees are to be expected at this site, from which to calculate the amount. Will this methodology be using the number of employees expected as stated in the Transport Assessment?

Response 7

The number of employees expected at the development is as per that set out in the "Land Requirement, Labour Supply and Economic Benefits Report"⁴ submitted with the planning application. The expected number of employees has been derived using the Employment Density Guide, 3rd Edition⁵, for two assessment scenarios, as summarised below:

- » 100% B8 Scenario: 2,260 jobs.
- » 70% B8 and 30% B2 Scenario: 3,282 jobs.

Given the end occupiers, and the specific use class split, are not yet known, it is proposed that the bus ticket fund is calculated based on an average of the two scenarios presented above (2,771 jobs).

On this basis, it is suggested that contribution of £20,782.50 is provided, calculated as follows:

- » 10% of predicted employees = 277.1.
- » 277.1 x the cost of a Silver 28-day Megarider bus ticket (£75) = **£20,782.50.**

⁴ Land Requirement, Labour Supply and Economic Benefits Report, Land South of Dearne Valley Parkway, Stantec, November 2023.

⁵ Employment Density Guide, 3rd Edition, Homes & Communities Agency, November 2015.

3. Suggested Methodology

This Note has provided a response to BMBC regarding their request for additional measures to be included in the Travel Plan, namely the provision of bus tickets/cycle equipment vouchers for employees.

Responses have been provided to comments received from BMBC's Transportation team regarding a methodology proposed by the Applicant for determining a contribution for providing bus tickets to employees. BMBC's Transportation team confirmed that they are willing to explore the suggested methodology but require further details, clarification, or alterations.

Given the responses presented in this Note, it is considered that the below suggested methodology is appropriate for determining the contribution to be provided:

- » A **fixed sum of £20,782.50** will be provided within the Section 106 Agreement, to be used flexibly between the purchase of a Silver 28-day Megarider bus ticket **or** a voucher towards the purchase of cycle equipment.
- » The sum will be split proportionately by unit at the development based on the below methodology:
 - » $A/B = C \times D = E$
where
A = Total amount of permitted floorspace
B = Amount of floorspace of the Unit concerned
C = Proportion of total permitted floorspace of the Unit concerned.
D = 277.1 (being 10% of anticipated number of employees in the entire development)
E = maximum number of Unit Employees to be provided with the Monthly Megarider tickets or cycle equipment.
- » The offer period will commence within one month of the occupation of each unit. The offer will be open for the entire Travel Plan period (which will vary by unit depending upon the timeframes for occupation) **or** until the capped pot of money (per unit) has been reached.

The above methodology is considered appropriate for the following reasons:

- » The request by BMBC's Transportation team to offer the tickets/vouchers to employees each year of the Travel Plan period is considered excessive given the range of sustainable transport interventions to be delivered.
- » It is considered that the range of physical sustainable transport interventions to be delivered, along with the other measures included in the FTP and the Megarider /cycle vouchers to be provided, are suitable to ensure that the Travel Plan targets (as set out in the FTP) are achieved.
- » Given the Travel Plan targets, there is no justification for basing the funding provision on 16% of the total employees, as suggested by BMBC Transportation. Basing the funding on 10% of the total employees is appropriate and exceeds the initial bus mode share target of 7.6%. This is therefore an ambitious approach.

We request confirmation from BMBC that the proposed methodology is accepted.