



Walking



Cycling



Car Sharing



Public Transport

Case Study Lakeside Travel Plan

This is an example of good practice in developing and implementing a voluntary travel plan in a retail/leisure context. Since 2006, Lakeside has welcomed the opportunity to promote alternative ways of travelling to the site for both its staff and visitors. As a result, Lakeside has built strong relationships with local stakeholders, allowing them to work in partnership towards shared objectives.

Lakeside: the background

Lakeside opened in 1990, and was the first regional shopping centre in the south of England. Together with the adjoining retail park, it now forms the largest shopping area in Europe. The shopping centre offers a comprehensive selection of retail brands a wide range of cafes and restaurants and a multi-screen cinema, attracting users throughout the day and late into the evening.

Lakeside is an 'out-of-town' shopping centre situated at junction 30/31 of the M25. It has a catchment of 11.3 million shoppers within a 70 minute drive and offers 13,000 free car parking spaces, but is also well served by public transport; it is adjacent to Chafford Hundred rail station, and has its own on-site bus station with 14 bus stands.

Why was a travel plan developed?

Lakeside's owners decided to develop a travel plan to support their corporate responsibility policy, which seeks to ensure that sites under their management have a positive impact on the communities in which they operate. In the transport and travel planning context, this means recognising the potentially negative impact of Lakeside's staff and visitor car travel on the environment and on the wider transport network.

Developing and implementing a travel plan was attractive commercially too. Promoting travel choice and raising awareness of different travel options for staff and visitors meant that demand for car parking – a finite resource – could be better managed. This would help to ensure that visitors choosing to travel by car would be able to do so when they wished, and potentially costly extensions to existing parking provision could be avoided for the foreseeable future.

Lakeside's travel plan has four objectives:

1. To ensure that on-site facilities are provided to support sustainable travel choices.
2. To provide travel information to all Lakeside users to enable them to make informed choices about how they travel.
3. To establish and develop partnerships with Thurrock Council, transport operators, businesses in the wider West Thurrock area and others in promoting sustainable travel.
4. To work more closely with tenants and service providers in promoting sustainable travel including working with public transport operators and other external bodies to reduce the number of staff driving alone to Lakeside.



How is the travel plan delivered?

The travel plan is managed by a Sustainable Travel Manager who covers a number of other shopping centre sites on behalf of Lakeside's owners. Since 2011, there has been additional support from another member of Lakeside's staff to help with the plan's implementation. The time commitment varies by week and by month and can be scaled up or down according to the number and nature of projects that are 'live' at any one time. Having a flexible level of resource is critical to meeting the needs of this initiative.

Data to help the Sustainable Travel Manager monitor the effectiveness of the Travel Plan is collated in a number of ways:

- The **registration system** for the **Staff Discount Card** records how employees travel to work.
- Twice yearly **customer surveys** provide information on how customers travel.
- These data sets are complemented by **passenger data** from **bus and train operators**.

The travel plan is reviewed quarterly by Lakeside's management and the Sustainable Travel Manager.

What initiatives have been delivered?

Since the travel plan's objectives were first set out in 2006 there have been over 20 separate supporting measures put into place. Highlights include:

- Improvements to Lakeside bus station, including repainting, an improved cleaning regime and security, and new signage and information boards.



- A new Travel Information Office, operated by Ensign Bus.
- New cycle shelters for staff and visitors.



- Installation of two electric car charging points for visitors.
- Development and launch of new travel information for Lakeside's website, including dynamic journey planners.
- Development of partnerships with a wide variety of local, regional and national stakeholders including Ensign Bus, Thurrock Council, Sustrans, Essex County Council and the Highways Agency.



What has the travel plan achieved?

Those involved with the implementation of the plan consider the positive relationships built with local stakeholders to be the most important achievement of the travel plan.

Lakeside's partnership with Ensign Bus, the main local bus operator, has meant that Lakeside and Ensign Bus can work together to improve services for staff and visitors travelling to and from Lakeside. Lakeside's Sustainable Travel Manager, Steve Beverley, explains: "If staff raise any issues about service provision, we know who we can approach to try and work out a way forward. We work throughout the year with Ensign Bus and, when we get to our busy period over Christmas,

they will always help us to try and make sure their services are in line with our extended opening hours."

Taking the lead on travel issues and enabling staff and visitors to make informed choices about how they travel means that Lakeside makes a positive contribution to the community and to the region as a whole. Whilst the commercial benefits of developing a travel plan were attractive to Lakeside (managing car parking and ensuring a pleasant journey experience for visitors), it is ultimately Lakeside's desire to meet and exceed their 'good citizen' responsibilities which drives the travel plan forward.

To find out more about workplace travel planning in Thurrock,
please contact travelplan@thurrock.gov.uk