

# Travel Plan



Birchwood Park

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## Travel Plan

This travel plan provides the strategy and actions which will facilitate travel to and from the Birchwood Business Park in a sustainable and environmentally responsible way.

This document demonstrates Birchwood Park's continued investment to encourage sustainable travel for everyone using the site, commuters in particular. This forms part of the core mission of Birchwood Park as a leading example to the industry, providing first class service, creating an excellent environment to work in and a strong commitment to corporate social responsibility.

*K Skinsley*

Signed by Katie Skinsley, Park Facilities Manager, Birchwood Park

*Martin O'Rourke*

Signed by Martin O'Rourke, Commercial Director, Birchwood Park



often between  
roundabout congestion  
lane service always difficult two parking  
towards leaving park journey routes area  
times Faraday turn lanes junction flow  
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using additional minutes because

## 1. Introduction

Birchwood Park covers 123 acres in the north east of Warrington. The Park has 165 occupiers, with approximately 6,000 people working on the site daily, and it has previously been the flagship site for sustainability in the business park portfolio owned by MEPC. In October 2014 Birchwood Park was sold by MEPC to a joint venture of PATRIZIA and Oaktree Capital management. In September 2017 the Park was bought by Warrington Borough Council, PATRIZIA continue to manage all aspect of the Park.

This document sets out how travel to and from the site will be co-ordinated, in order to continue to grow the Park to become the leading out of town business destination in the North West. By using the travel plan to support and influence the travel behaviours of those on site Birchwood Park will achieve:

1. Better road use, resulting in better journey times, allowing for continued growth of businesses on site
2. Improved air quality, further enhancing the site as an enjoyable workspace
3. Enhanced employee experience, reinforcing the site as the best place to work.
4. A framework for reviewing and planning travel in the future.

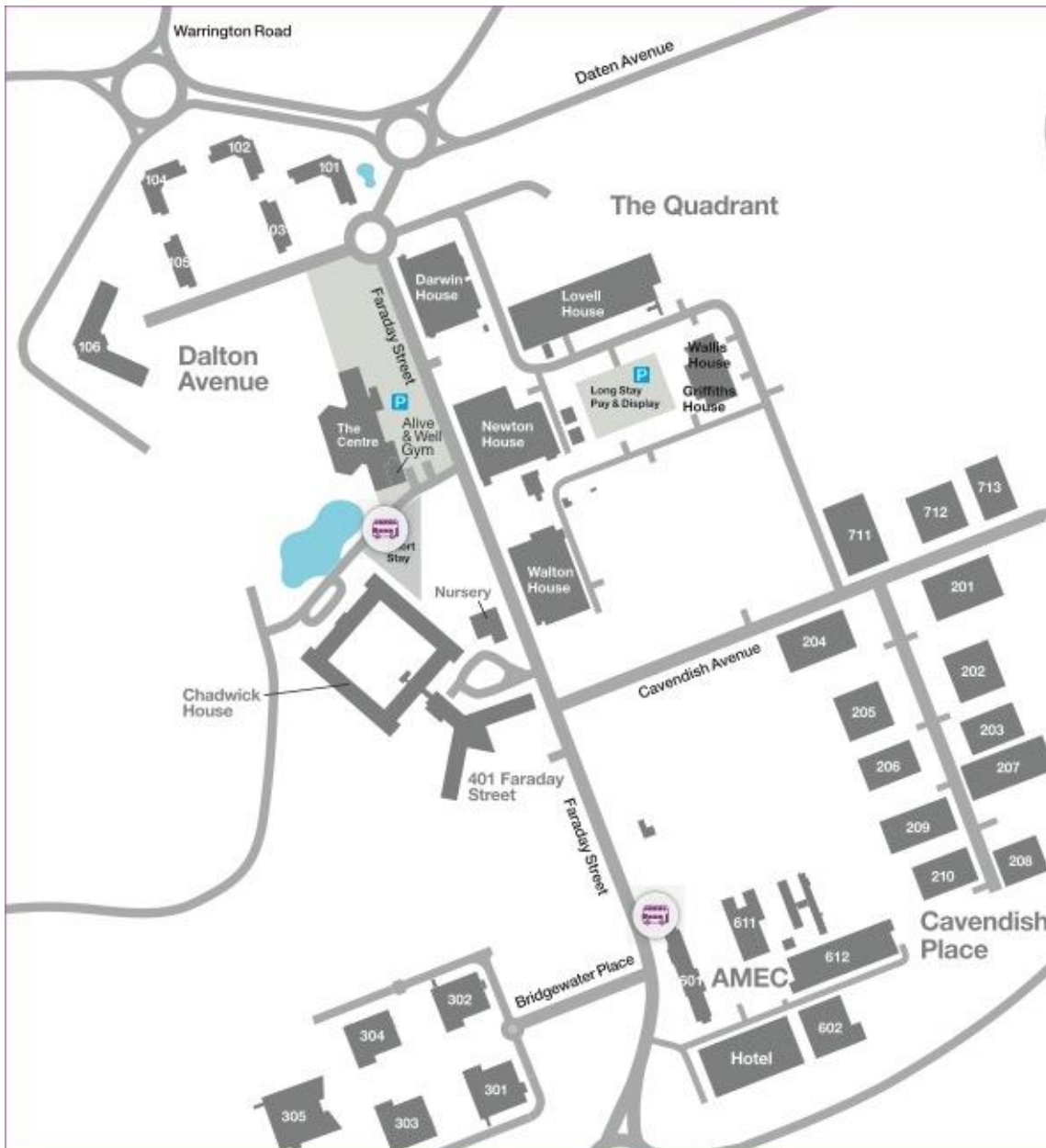
### Benefits:

A successful Travel Management Plan can bring a number of benefits for companies, their staff, the local community and the environment.

- Staff can benefit from improved health, cost & time savings and reduced commuter stress.
- Companies can benefit from increase productivity generated by a happier, healthier, more motivated workforce, a reduction in costs by reducing car park spaces, enhanced staff recruitment and retention, improved access for employees, visitors and deliveries, and an enhanced company image.
- The local community can enjoy reduced congestion, improved public transport and improved cycling/walking routes.

## 2. About the site

The image below shows the layout of Birchwood Park with buildings, roads and public parking areas.



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Birchwood Park is a privately owned estate and includes 4 roads, connecting to the local road network through the 5 entrances / exits for road users. Its location close to M62 J11 and M6 J21 makes road access to the wider northwest extremely viable.

In addition to the road access points, there are 6 for pedestrians.

The Park also offers a peak time shuttle bus service free to occupier employees, which runs between the site and Birchwood Train station. A number of Warrington Network buses also stop on Birchwood Park.

### i. Parking

There are 37 buildings on site, including 3 new industrial units and plans to further develop

the north east section of the site. There are 15 cycle parking areas, of which 5 are locked sheds / stores. All formal cycle parking areas have some form of covering or shelter. There are also 25 car parks identified and detailed in the Car Parking Policy 2019. This policy outlines that these are actively managed to make the best use of the spaces available. The spaces are allocated to customers according to the Council's car parking standards, balancing size of building and number of spaces. Overflow parking is available but at a charge which may deter those who could possibly travel by a cheaper mode.

## ii. Traffic Issues

There continues to be a pressure between the highly skilled engineering and consultancy companies recruiting from a wide catchment area, making single car commuting the most likely transport choice. This highlights the issues with the capacity of the national and local road network, parking and its effects on the environment.

In 2014, traffic models showed there was significant congestion at peak time along Birchwood Way (A574) and the M62 around junction 11. Birchwood Park approached Warrington Borough Council with an initial investment offer to help kick-start the Birchwood Pinch Point project, a joint venture between the business park, Warrington Borough Council, Cheshire and Warrington LEP, Mott MacDonald transport consultancy and Balfour Beatty, raising a total of £5.23 million of funding to improve the local infrastructure.

Following the Pinch Point's completion in 2016 a traffic survey to test the success of the initiative compared journey times and automatic traffic count sites from 2015 and 2016 across two major routes to and from Birchwood Park, including the notoriously busy A574 corridor linking Birchwood Park and Junction 11 of the M62.

An overall time saving of approximately 21 minutes, 44 seconds has been recorded across both routes during the peak morning and evening hours, with an impressive average time saving of 9 minutes, 9 seconds recorded during the peak evening commute time along the A574 corridor. There has also been a 17 per cent reduction in traffic across the eleven automatic traffic count sites on the routes. Following the success of this project there is currently a second phase of further infrastructure improvements currently in progress; due to complete Summer 2020.

## iii. Rail links

Birchwood Railway station which lies on the east/west line is approximately a mile from the Park. This allows commuter rail travel from Liverpool, Manchester and beyond. The Park provides a private shuttle bus service to and from the station at peak times, and also as far as Birchwood shopping centre at lunchtimes. This railway station has recently been upgraded with a lift to allow non-stair access to both platforms.

## iv. Local bus links

Commercial bus services better serve localised journeys rather than meeting needs of commuters from outside the immediate area. There are 3 services that link the Park with Warrington town centre, one of which also links with Culcheth and Leigh.

## v. Site travel survey

The park management undertakes a park wide travel survey annually, which covers a set of travel to work related questions. Prizes are offered to encourage completion of the survey, which are advertised through posters, e-mails and the ParkLife website

- 954 staff responded to the staff survey in 2018, which was slightly down on the previous year. This equates to a 17% response rate as opposed to a 24% response rate in 2017 (based on 6,000) There were 5,500 people working on the Park at the time of the 2018 survey.
- 75% of staff travel to site alone by car in 2018, this compares with 78% in 2017.
- In 2018, 8% of staff commuted by rail and the shuttle bus, 2% by bus, 5% cycle and 4% walk.
- In 2018, 32% of those who responded travelled over ten miles to the Park, 40% within 10 miles, 20% between 2 and 5 miles and 8% less than 2 miles.

## vi. Future developments

A site master plan has been used to map out the future development of the park, including offices, light and general industrial and warehouse units and car parking.

There is outline planning permission to build a pay and display car park with approximately 550 spaces on site. In addition there are three areas of the park with permission for additional buildings which will bring parking spaces created up to approximately 2000 across the site. The number of parking spaces is limited by the Council's car parking standards but implementing this Travel Plan enables a greater ratio to be applied.

## 3. Outcome Objectives:

The scope of this plan includes the entire Birchwood Park site, including all existing companies, with due consideration given to future expansion. With key pressure on the infrastructure at peak hours, the park owners seek to influence the commuting journeys as the first priority. However this also includes those who require access across the 24 hour spectrum and, to a lesser extent, business travel.

Although the park is open to the public, non-commuter/leisure trips are not considered here. Should future evidence show a significant number of leisure journeys being made to the Park, future revisions to the Travel Management Plan will reflect this as needed.

### i. Strategic:

This travel plan and action plan will enable the future development of the site, by addressing the demand for car parking and network capacity. The continued investment in travel choices will enable recognition of Birchwood Park as a national flagship and example of best practice in terms of sustainability, including commuter travel arrangements. This in turn will be reflected in low customer (and employee) turn over due to accessibility, an enjoyable place to work and enhanced reputation and revenue for the park owners.

### ii. Local:

The travel plan will be reviewed annually, with the action plan updated and survey results shared with the Local Planning Authority.

This will encourage individuals to avoid single car commuting as their only form of transport, encouraging an uptake of sustainable modes at least 1 day a week.



## 4. Targets and Indicators

To ensure the park meets its aim to be a flagship site for sustainable travel, the success of the plan can be shown in the following details:

### i. Potential New Occupiers

Potential new occupiers are aware of the benefits the Birchwood Park travel plan offers their business

Evidenced by

1. An understanding of the benefits of the travel plan for new occupiers (by those responsible for advertising and letting the site)
2. Information materials supplied to potential clients
3. An uptake in the Birchwood Park Car Share scheme, cycle parking, shuttle bus passes and engagement with travel related events by new occupiers as appropriate to the number of employees.

### ii. Existing occupiers and staff

Recognition from existing and new occupiers that the plan applies to all occupiers, with each having responsibility for encouraging sustainable travel choices by their staff.

Evidenced by:

1. A reduction of single car commuting, unless required for health or safety reasons.
2. Induction processes including knowledge and understanding of support for commuters (i.e. bus passes, cycling facilities, public transport options)
3. Engagement with the travel co-ordinator or persons undertaking such role.
4. Increased participation in annual travel surveys and feedback for on site facilities.

To reduce traffic congestion on the local road network, particularly at peak times.

Evidenced by:

1. Traffic counts / congestion data on site
2. A reduction in car journeys recorded through the annual staff survey

### iii. Local authority

Engage with the local authority to mutually enhance the growth potential and sustainability of Birchwood Park

Evidence by:

1. Partnership working on infrastructure upgrades, such as support for funding bids.
2. Open dialogue on issues of sustainable commuting and support for the travel plan.



## 5. Management Strategy:

Overall responsibility for the travel plan will be with the Park Facilities Manager, including travel updates as a standing agenda / report item on annual reports to the investors.

The facilities management staff will have responsibility for annual review and delivery of the travel action plan.

In addition all park staff will be expected to lead by example, with specific requirements on the following roles:

The Commercial Director will be responsible for ensuring there is sufficient budget available to meet the investment required in travel related activities. As well as to ensure the travel plan supports business development and vice versa.

The Park Facilities Manager will ensure the travel plan is referenced and supported by other relevant policies, such as (but not limited to) the car park management plan, health and safety strategy and energy efficiency policy.

Building Managers, Assistant Building Managers and Receptionists will have responsibility for liaising with occupiers and ensuring day to day management of travel actions.

## 6. A package of measures to encourage sustainable travel

### i. Shuttle Bus

Birchwood Business Park funds a shuttle bus between the site and Birchwood Railway Station for all occupiers. In addition some neighbouring businesses contribute financially and their employees can also use the service. The latest timetable is available on the website at <https://parklife.birchwoodpark.co.uk/travel/shuttle-bus/> and shows the additional option for lunchtime journeys to Birchwood Shopping Centre and leisure facilities.

Previously an express bus was available between Warrington Bank Quay station and the business park, but this was not an efficient use of resources due to under occupancy. However this could be reviewed if sufficient interest was raised.

### ii. Car Share / Buddy Scheme

A free to use car share scheme is available to all employees, accessed online with a tenant company e-mail address. This links potential car sharers as well as matching partners for cycling, walking, running and public transport. In order for a company to lease additional car parking space (should there be availability) there must be evidence of staff utilising the buddy scheme.

### iii. Cycle Facilities

The central public area at the park; The Centre restaurant and conference facilities has a premier area for cyclists, including showers, drying room and lockers. Across the park is a mixture of secure and publicly accessible cycle parking as well as lockers and showers in most buildings.

An active Birchwood Park Cyclist Forum is led by the Travel Co-ordinator and invited to meet twice a year, e-mailing in the interim, to consult on issues for cyclists. Warrington Borough Council is invited to attend in order to address concerns outside the park boundary.

Cycle paths run along the main access road (Faraday Street) connecting with an off-road cycle network to the south (parallel with Ordnance Avenue) and Daten Avenue in the north.

#### **iv. Pedestrians**

The paths are kept well lit and paths are maintained to be clear of debris and gritted in the winter.

#### **v. Car Parking:**

The management strategy encourages car share with allocated parking in some car parks. Limiting the number of spaces available to occupiers ensures consideration is given to alternative transport modes.

#### **vi. Information:**

There is a dedicated section on both the main website and ParkLife website for travel, including contact details for the Travel Co-ordinator. This gives information about travel options to enable informed decision making, as well as links to further information.

Induction procedures for new occupiers and staff includes information about the above package of measures.

Reception desks have information materials such as timetables and maps. Receptionists have travel training to ensure they can give directions or information as required. Plasma screens in all main reception areas also display travel news and events information.

## **7. Marketing Strategies**

#### **i. Events:**

Sustainable travel will be marketed through a series of events aimed to raise awareness and target different modes.

These will be established as an annual plan with regular activities, where possible to coincide with national event days, such as European Mobility Week, National Walking Month / Week, National Cycling Month / Week / Day, Climate Change Awareness day etc.

The events will be timed and located in places relevant to the target audience, in some instances this will be a repetition of the same events in different locations on site.

#### **ii. Travel information:**

The website, screens and reception literature will be kept up-to-date with travel information and incentives to try different modes.

#### **iii. The travel survey:**

Awareness of the travel plan will be raised through the annual travel survey. Advertising the results of the survey will be combined with details of the available travel options and more information / updates on the package of measures (as outlined earlier).

#### **iv. Press Releases and challenges**

From time to time companies or individuals may participate in activities which raise the profile of sustainable travel. This could include park investment in infrastructure (e.g. electric vehicle charging points or fundraising cycle rides). These will be promoted with a mention of or links to the sustainable travel material as appropriate.

### **8. Monitoring & Review**

Quarterly reports on the action plan will be submitted to the investors by the Park Facilities Manager.

The action plan will be updated annually following the results and analysis of the travel survey. This will be undertaken by the Travel Co-ordinator with sign off by the Park Facilities Manager.

Issues raised from other policies, strategies or day to day management issues should impact both the action plan and the review for the travel plan.

Warrington Borough Council will be kept informed of the survey analysis and updated travel plan as a minimum. However, the council is likely to be able to be supportive of the action plan and therefore will be kept updated with general progress via the smarter choices / sustainable travel / transport planning team (or equivalent).

## 9. Action plan and budget – 2019

Theme	Action / Task	Detail	Responsible	Timescale	Comment
Action plan Implementation	Monthly Travel Plan Meeting	To agree actions to implement travel plan, review and monitor progress	Building Manager/Travel Coordination Team	Monthly	
Quarterly Travel Plan review meeting	Review progress / invite relevant stakeholders	To carry out a quarterly review of the travel coordination works to date	Park Facilities Manager	Quarterly	
Raise Awareness of travel options	Prospective and new tenant site tour and induction / welcome pack	<p>To introduce all new occupiers to the travel options using the following methods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supply maps of facilities available for cyclists, walkers and public transport users (i.e. bus stops)</li> <li>• Information packs with all travel information</li> <li>• Highlight park life website travel section alongside information available at reception desks</li> <li>• Highlight car share website</li> <li>• Highlight bus shuttle service</li> <li>• Highlight Travel Warrington website BPs commitment to the Travel Plan</li> </ul>	Building Manager	On Occupation	Review 6 monthly
Raise Awareness of Travel Plan	Direct engagement with tenants / occupiers management	Visit existing occupiers to discuss needs (see also tool box training)	Building Manager/Travel Coordination Team	6 monthly	
Monitor and evaluate progress	Run travel survey	Run travel survey annually – check and follow up initial email to check survey received and staff can access link	Building Manager/Travel Coordination Team	Spring	
Evaluate and promote travel plan progress	Create and send out an annual review	Base on survey results (compare with previous survey ) review of progress, highlight achievements and any area of development	Building Manager/Travel Coordination Team	Annually	



Training and development	Tool box training	Training on travel options to all reception staff, with refresher training as appropriate	Building Manager/Travel Coordination Team	Quarterly (check any changes in public transport and train times) December for end of year train times	
Promote Travel Choices and Raise Awareness	Plan annual events calendar	Plan and promote an events calendar to provide travel choices to occupiers and encourage more people to think about active and sustainable travel, car sharing and public transport	Building Manager/Travel Coordination Team	Annually	
Raise Awareness	Identify and liaise company Travel Champions	Re-engage with existing travel champions and encourage additional travel champions with new or recently expanded organisations	Building Manager/Travel Coordination Team	Quarterly	LR research to support this
Bus promotion	Ensure correct usage Monitor bus usage and add results into annual review	Update bus passes and have checks Regular monitor of bus usage	Building Manager/Travel Coordination Team	Monthly	
Bus promotion	Ensure shuttle bus times match train times	Check bi-annual train time changes and re-schedule shuttle bus accordingly	Building Manager/Travel Coordination Team	June / December	
Walking Promotion	Run lead walks	Ensure all staff are aware of shower, changing and drying facilities available alongside promotion of Walkit application	Travel Coordination Team	Throughout year	
Run	Engage with running clubs onsite	Look at potential of creating a running group	Building Manager/Travel Coordination Team		
Cycle promotion and support	Birchwood Cyclists Forum	Meet quarterly to address issues support existing cyclist and encourage more cycling	Building Manager/Travel Coordination Team	Quarterly January	
Cycle support	Maintain cycle storage	Check usage of cycle storage and keep records	Travel Coordination Team	Quarterly	
Car parking management	Record car park usage and road survey	Keep records of car park usage	Building Manager	Daily	

Car	Install electric vehicle charging points	Install electric vehicle charging points, arrange launch and promote			
Encourage car sharing	Encourage car sharing scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Actively market the car sharing programme at regular events</li> <li>Check car share database is fit for purpose (ask certain occupiers to check it out)</li> <li>Monitor numbers (particularly after events)</li> </ul>	Building Manager/Travel Coordination Team	Event dates to be confirmed	Some companies have their own car share databases, might be worth noting who
Improve Facilities	Access to facilities	Create more drying rooms / spaces and lockers	Building Manager	Throughout year	
Communicating travel choices	Update website	Ensure travel sections of website are regularly updated and maintained	Building Manager/Travel Coordination Team	Throughout year	
Improve Facilities	Budget and Role	Ensure travel is a clarified element of role description and adequate budget /resource is allocated to engage with businesses	Building Manager/Travel Coordination Team/Landlords	Throughout year	