

UNIVERSITY OF BEDFORDSHIRE

TRAVEL PLAN OVERVIEW

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FOREWORD BY THE VICE CHANCELLOR

This is the University of Bedfordshire's Green Travel Plan, which has been prepared as part of the University's Carbon Management Programme, in response to recent pressure on car parking, and in support of the University's plans for development in Luton, Bedford and Aylesbury.

Nationally and locally, over-use of cars for transport is causing increasing congestion, local air and noise pollution, and contributing to climate change. These problems can only be solved by putting real effort into supporting alternative transport choices and investing in encouraging more sustainable forms of travel.

The University has long supported practical measures for easing travel to and around the University, for example the shuttle buses that run to our out-of-town sites. By expanding this into a full Green Travel Plan, we can make a real difference to the members of the University and to the local environment.

Les Ebdon
Vice Chancellor, University of Bedfordshire

SUMMARY

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 UNIVERSITY OF BEDFORDSHIRE

The University of Bedfordshire was formed in August 2006 from the merger of two institutions; the University of Luton and the Bedford campuses of De Montfort University.

The University is based across five campuses: in central Luton; at Polhill, in Bedford; at Butterfield Park, on the outskirts of Luton; at Putteridge Bury, just outside Luton; and a new site in Aylesbury, opened in January 2009, and formed from the merger of the University's hospital sites in Buckinghamshire, formerly at High Wycombe and Stoke Mandeville Hospitals.

The University is short of space, and many of the current facilities are old and in need of up-grading. Better and more modern space for teaching is needed if the University is to continue to attract students. There is also growing awareness of the need to reduce the University's impact on the environment. The University has therefore embarked on a major programme of re-development, involving both new build and refurbishment.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO DEVELOPMENT OF THIS PLAN

In 2007, the University measured its carbon footprint for the first time. Of the total footprint of 8430 tonnes of carbon dioxide in academic year 2006-07, over 10% was from staff commuting and business travel. If the University is to meet its target of cutting its footprint by 15% in three years, its car use will need to be addressed.

The University has developed site-specific travel plans for its sites in Luton, at Polhill, Bedford, and in Aylesbury. These plans were all prepared in support of planning applications for development.

Both this and the site specific travel plans are working documents and once adopted will be reviewed on a regular basis as part of the University's commitment to ensuring that the transport impacts of its activities are minimised.

1.3 POLICY BACKGROUND

Current national and local transport policy is firmly aimed at encouraging sustainable travel patterns, in order to help minimise congestion, reduce local air pollution and reduce greenhouse gases, which cause global warming. The Government's key objectives for transport are to: -

- promote more sustainable transport choices for both people and for moving freight;
- promote accessibility to jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services by public transport, walking and cycling, and
- reduce the need to travel, especially by car.

The Government's 1998 Transport White Paper stressed the importance of the preparation of Travel Plans by major employers in changing travel patterns and behaviour.

The Transport Act 2000 also allows local authorities to introduce a workplace charging levy.

The April 2001 revision to Planning Policy Guidance Note 13 (PPG 13) also stresses the importance of Travel Plans in raising awareness of the impacts of travel decisions.

Government policy is to cut the UK's carbon emissions by at least 60% by 2050, from 1990 levels. The 2008 HEFCE funding letter proposed a link between University reductions in carbon emissions and future capital allocations. The University therefore has a clear financial interest in achieving its carbon reduction targets.

1.4 TRAVEL PLAN CO-ORDINATOR

The University's Travel Plan Co-ordinator is Sarah Wells, Travel Plan Co-ordinator and Energy and Environment Officer, based in Luton. Sarah Wells was appointed in August 2006, works full time on environmental issues including transport, and reports to Graham Blake, Director, Facilities and Estates. Before working for the University of Bedfordshire, she was Travel Plan Co-ordinator to De Montfort University.

The travel plan co-ordinator's role includes control of the budget; liaison with the Carbon Management Group and other University organisations with input into the travel plan; conducting site audits, travel surveys and other data collection; and furthering development of the University's travel-related facilities and policies.

1.5 DEVELOPMENT OF THIS PLAN

This plan is derived from work conducted by the University's Carbon Management Group, a cross-department advisory group. The Carbon Management Group includes academic and support staff, Finance, Facilities and Estates and the Student Union, and was formed in 2007 to analyze and find ways of reducing the carbon footprint of the University. The project is sponsored by two members of the Core Management Team, Professor James Crabbe (Dean of the Faculty of Creative Arts, Technology and Science) and Graham Blake (Director, Facilities and Estates).

The travel plan was informed by surveys of staff and students in April 2007 and November 2008, and by study of staff home postcodes.

It also pulls together a number of existing initiatives concerned with improving access to the University, such as the University's shuttle bus network and car parking policy.

Elements of this plan (proposed initiatives such as the tax-free bicycle loan scheme) have been developed in consultation with the trade unions.

1.6 DRIVERS, OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS

The University has set itself a target of cutting its carbon footprint by 15% between 2008 and 2011. By doing this the University hopes to improve its corporate social responsibility, its financial footing and its reputation. This travel plan aims to contribute to this goal.

If successful in reducing car use, this plan will also lead to lower pollution and congestion locally, improving air quality and reducing traffic noise in Luton, as well as reducing greenhouse gas emissions with their damaging consequences globally.

Encouraging staff and students to pursue more active modes of transport such as walking or cycling will also lead to greater fitness and wellbeing.

By its nature as a University, the University has an opportunity to encourage awareness of the environment and the importance of reducing man-made damage to the environment. A successful travel plan will not just affect its own staff and students but it will set a local lead by example.

By supporting a variety of modes of transport, this travel plan will benefit members of the University by enabling more choice and flexibility, improving staff recruitment and retention.

The Travel Plan has the principle objective of altering the current modal split of travel to the University in favour of more sustainable modes of transport than the private car. The main objectives are:

1. To define a transport strategy for the University of Bedfordshire in support of the University's development plans and in accordance with the wider transport strategies of the local authorities and the region;
2. To minimise the need to travel, where practical;
3. To minimise the current level of car use associated with the University, aiming to reduce the proportion of staff driving to work by 10% in 3 years, and also aiming to reduce the area devoted to car parking as and when this target is achieved.

The University is setting itself the following targets:

1. To reduce the proportion of staff travelling to the University of Bedfordshire by single-occupancy car by 10% by 2010/11, by discouraging car use, limiting the availability of permits, charging for parking, and encouraging the use of other forms of transport.
2. To increase the proportion of staff travelling to Campus by public transport by 100% by 2010/11, by promoting existing services.
3. To increase the proportion of staff cycling to the Campus by 10% by 2010/11, by increasing provision of secure parking for bikes and providing improved facilities for cyclists, including showering and changing areas and lockers, and by holding events to promote cycling.

4. To increase the proportion of staff walking to the Campus by 10% by 2010/11, by improving the layout of the campus to improve pedestrian safety, by improving signage, and by promoting the health benefits of walking.
5. To increase the level of car sharing by staff by 10% by 2010/11, by providing incentives to carshare, by promoting car sharing, and by providing software to find travel partners.

Consideration must also be made of the variety of needs of members of the University, including, but not limited to, people with disabilities or with family commitments that limit their choice of modes of travel.

2 CURRENT SITE INFORMATION

2.1 UNIVERSITY OF BEDFORDSHIRE SITES

The University has large campuses in central Luton and in Bedford. It also has two academic sites on the edge of Luton, Putteridge Bury Conference Centre and Butterfield Park, and has recently consolidated its Buckinghamshire hospital sites with a new campus in Aylesbury.

2.2 LUTON CAMPUS

The University currently occupies ten sites in central Luton.

The main campus, comprising buildings around Park Square and on Vicarage Street, lies immediately east of the town centre and half a mile from the train station. This area also includes two halls of residence, College House and University Hall. College House was mothballed in 2008, and the site is being reviewed for development as a new hall of residence.

The main campus, between Park Street, Church Street, Vicarage Street and St Mary's Road, is the base for much of University's teaching and research and its main administrative centre. Faculties and teaching departments based here include the undergraduate Business School; Creative Arts, Technology and Science; and Social Sciences. University departments based in Luton include Finance; Facilities and Estates; Communications and Marketing; Registry; Student Services; Learning Resources; and Information Services.

A map showing the main campus and its relationship to central Luton is given in Appendix **One**.

Also in central Luton, within walking distance of the main campus, are eight sites with halls of residence, and a new printing facility in Albert Road. The residences are in: Bute St; John St; Eaton Green; Guildford St; James Court; Manor Court; Rutland Hall; and Wellington Court. All are within two miles of campus.

A list of Luton halls of residence is given in Appendix **Two**.

Further details of transport facilities and travel plan measures specific to Luton are given in the Luton Travel Plan Supplement.

2.3 BUTTERFIELD PARK

Butterfield Park is located on the north east outskirts of Luton. It is the home of the University's Bedfordshire- based medical (nursing and midwifery) courses. Students studying at Butterfield Park are also required to attend hospitals (Bedford Hospital and Luton and Dunstable Hospital) for practical placements. There are no halls of residence associated with the site, but student accommodation is available at the hospitals.

Further details of transport facilities and travel plan measures specific to Butterfield Park are given in the Hitchin Road Travel Plan Supplement.

2.4 PUTTERIDGE BURY

Putteridge Bury is a grade one listed mansion, built around 1910. It is currently used as a conference centre and by the postgraduate Business School. It is located just outside Luton, not far from Butterfield Park.

A map showing the locations of Butterfield Business Park and Putteridge Bury Campus in relation to central Luton is given in Appendix **One**.

Further details of transport facilities and travel plan measures specific to Putteridge Bury are given in the Hitchin Road Travel Plan Supplement.

2.5 AYLESBURY

The new campus at Oxford House, Aylesbury, is the base of the University's Buckinghamshire nursing and midwifery courses. It has been formed from the merger of the two Buckinghamshire hospital-based sites, at High Wycombe and Stoke Mandeville, Aylesbury. Students studying in Aylesbury also attend placements at High Wycombe and Stoke Mandeville; accommodation is available at the hospitals.

Further details of transport facilities and travel plan measures specific to Aylesbury are given in the Aylesbury Travel Plan Supplement.

2.6 BEDFORD

Polhill Campus in Bedford is home to the Faculty of Education and Sport, and to the Department of Performing Arts and English within the Faculty of Creative Arts, Technology and Science. Polhill Campus is located to the east of Bedford, approximately one mile from the town centre and two miles from the railway station. There is also a sports facility, the Alexander Sports Centre, approximately half a mile from the railway station and two and a half miles from Polhill Campus.

The Bedford Travel Plan has been running since 2003, when Polhill Campus was still part of De Montfort University.

Further details of transport facilities and travel plan measures specific to Bedford are given in the Bedford Travel Plan Supplement.

2.7 STAFF NUMBERS

Total staff numbers (as of October 2008) are as follows:

Luton;	628 staff
Putteridge Bury:	73 staff
Butterfield Park	47 staff
Bedford	227 staff, and
Aylesbury / High Wycombe	35 staff

Staff were surveyed about their travel habits in November 2008. The survey, and responses received, are given in Appendix **Three**. Further analysis is given in Appendix **Four**.

2.8 STUDENT NUMBERS

The University is attended by approximately 16,000 students. Of these, in 2008/9, **1,500** were based abroad and / or were distance learners, so never come onto campus. 3,400 are based in Bedford, and 300 are based in High Wycombe and Aylesbury.

31% of all students are part-time. 44% are over 25.

Appendix **Five** shows students home postcodes. The University also recruits international students, with noticeable numbers coming from India, China, Nigeria, and Eastern Europe. Not all of these come to the UK to study; the University maintains partnership arrangements with colleges in Oman and India for over 200 students studying for MBAs while living and working abroad.

The University arranges transport to and from the airport for international students, and provides accommodation within walking distance of campus.

2.9 STUDENT TRAVEL TO UNIVERSITY

Although the November 2008 travel survey was aimed at students as well as staff, very few students responded. A follow-up survey was therefore placed on the Students' Union website, with the assistance of the Students' Union. This asked only how respondents normally travelled to the University, with no further questions.

94 responses were received. Of these, 18 students (19% of respondents) normally came by car as driver; 2 (2%) as passenger; 50 (53%) on foot; 2 (2%) by motorbike; 9 (10%) by bus; 12 (13%) by train; and one cited Other.

Owing to the nature of the survey, it is impossible to break this down by campus.

2.10 STUDENT RESIDENCES

Student accommodation is available in central Luton for 846 students, and in Bedford for 684 students.

Nursing and midwifery students can arrange accommodation at any of the four University hospital sites.

16% of students in 2008/09 had an LU (Luton and area) home postcode, with a further 21% coming from adjoining areas including St Albans and Milton Keynes. The University's strong emphasis on local recruitment means that many students are able to live at home while studying.

3 ACCESSIBILITY

3.1 CAR PARKING

Car parking is available for staff at all sites (though lack of space in Luton means that most staff are in fact parked on off-site public car parks, arranged through the University). There is no student car parking on the main campus in Luton, other than for blue badge holders, although there are some spaces in Luton halls of residence, and students can park at all other campuses.

The University has recently revised its car parking charges, following the closure of most of its central Luton car parks, and leading to price increases for most staff. Charges vary according to pay scale and to campus.

Car parks are patrolled regularly, and cars parked in violation of the car parking policy are ticketed, with a penalty charge of £80.

Further information on staff car parking charges is given in Appendix **Six**.

3.2 CYCLE PARKING

Bicycle parking is available at all campuses, though the extent provided varies.

3.3 CYCLE PROVISION

The University has recently agreed a scheme with Sustrans, whereby reconditioned second-hand bicycles are lent, free of charge, to members of the University in financial difficulty or wanting a bicycle for short-term use. The University is also currently in the process of developing an assisted purchasing scheme for staff.

Further details of the Sustrans bicycle loan scheme are given in Appendix **Seven**.

3.4 SHUTTLE BUSES

The University provides a network of free term-time shuttle bus links in Bedford, between Luton, Putteridge Bury and Butterfield, and a reduced holiday service to Putteridge Bury, for the use of staff and students.

Bus timetables are given in Appendices **Eight, Nine** and **Ten**.

3.5 CAR SHARING

There are currently no University-wide measures provided in support of car sharing. Bedford provides free permits for carshare groups of three or more.

3.6 STAFF BUSINESS TRAVEL

Staff mileage claims are recorded. In 2006/07, staff business travel came to 410,000 miles. By 2007/08, that had risen to 419,000.

The University reimburses drivers of private cars on University business at a rate of 40p per mile for up to 10,000 miles per annum and 25 per mile thereafter.

There are currently no measures in support of car sharing or bicycle use for business travel.

International business travel has not been included in this travel plan. However 52 flights were arranged through the University's approved supplier of international travel tickets, Key Travel, covering a total of 770,000 km. Key Travel has a carbon offset policy.

3.7 FLEXIBLE WORKING POLICY

The University supports flexible working where appropriate, including working from home and working flexible hours.

The University's Flexible Working Policy was adopted in May 2007.

3.8 DELIVERIES

The University's environmental purchasing policy emphasises the importance of working with suppliers to minimise deliveries.

3.9 TAXIS AND HIRE CARS

The University permits the use of hire cars for business travel where public transport is unsuitable.

3.10 FLEET

The University owns or leases a small fleet of vans for work use, as well as three minibuses, (two based at Bedford), which are available for use by Luton-based groups. Other group travel is arranged by hiring coaches as and when needed.

3.11 PUBLICITY & TRAVEL DIRECTIONS

The University's website has a section dedicated to travel. The "getting here" instructions for visitors encourage the use of public transport. The travel section has several pages of advice for members of the university encouraging sustainable transport choices. It also includes links to a number of public transport services.

Facilities available for use by students are promoted by the Students Union, and are described in the Students Union Handbook 08/09 (given in Appendix **Eleven**).

4 PROPOSED ACTIONS FOR REDUCING CAR USE

4.1 TRAVEL REDUCTION

The University will promote the use of video-conferencing and conference calls to reduce the need for travel, where suitable.

The University will continue to support flexible working practises, including working from home.

4.2 CAR SHARING

Car sharing will be encouraged by publicising its advantages and by assisting potential car sharers to meet (for example by providing software).

The University will consider introducing further incentives for car sharers, such as a guaranteed ride home system, providing a journey-matching service, and / or giving priority in any system of allocating permits.

4.3 PEDESTRIAN ACTIVITY

The layout of all Campuses will be designed to maximise pedestrian activity both on and off site. Good signage and lighting will be provided throughout the Campus and adjacent area.

The University will, through the nominated Transport Co-ordinator, encourage staff and students to walk to work, where practicable, and encourage discussion of the health benefits of walking to work.

The University will ensure that all pedestrian routes and associated facilities are adequately maintained at all times. This will be assured through a programme of regular internal health and safety audits.

The University is working with Sustrans to find other ways to promote walking as a mode of transport, including a programme of lunchtime walks for staff and students.

4.4 CYCLES

The layout of all Campuses will be designed to ensure appropriate, easy access by bicycle to the main areas of activity.

The University will provide adequate changing room and shower facilities within new developments, including lockers and drying facilities, for staff and students.

The University will, through the nominated Transport Co-ordinator, encourage staff to cycle to work, where practicable, and encourage discussion of the health benefits of walking and cycling to work.

The nominated Transport Co-ordinator will regularly monitor cycle usage and facilities with particular emphasis on safety.

Maps will be made available on-site of the strategic and local cycle route facilities in each area.

The University will look at ways of promoting the use of bicycles for business use, including the payment of a mileage allowance on expenses for staff who use their bicycles on business trips.

The University is exploring introducing a tax-free bike loan scheme.

The University will encourage events to promote cycling, where practical tying in with city and national events (such as National Bike Week when these fall within term time).

Longer term, the University will look at providing facilities such as an on-site repair service and / or pool cycles for occasional use and local business trips.

4.5 MOTOR CYCLES

Sufficient motorcycle parking spaces will be provided for motorcycle users. The motorcycle spaces will be designed so that cars will not illegally park on them.

The University will provide adequate changing room and shower facilities within new developments, including lockers and drying facilities, for staff and students.

4.6 PUBLIC TRANSPORT USAGE

A key element of the transport strategy is to increase the use of public transport.

The University will, through the Transport Co-ordinator, encourage the use of public transport. Information regarding bus, rail and taxi services will be readily available at key locations on site (and is available in electronic form through the intranet site), and will be regularly updated in liaison with local operators.

The University is reviewing other means of encouraging public transport use, such as re-launching the season ticket loan scheme. The University is negotiating with public transport providers for season ticket discounts.

4.7 SHUTTLE BUSES

The University will continue to promote the use of the shuttle buses for travel between campuses and where appropriate to the town centre and stations. The timetables will be reviewed annually to ensure that they fit well with lecture times and train times.

4.8 BUSINESS TRAVEL

The University will consider introducing mileage rates for car sharing and for bicycle use on University business.

4.9 FLEET

The University will review its fleet of vans and minibuses annually.

5 PARTNERSHIPS

These travel plans have been drawn up with input from Bedfordshire County Council (for Bedford); Luton Borough Council (for Luton); Bedford District Council (Bedford); and Buckinghamshire County Council (Aylesbury). The Bedford Travel Plan was also developed with assistance from the Institute for Energy and Sustainable Development (IESD) of De Montfort University, Leicester. The travel surveys were designed with help from the IESD and Sustrans.

The University is represented on the Bedfordshire Local Area Agreement Carbon Reduction Working Group, which brings together key partners in order to develop an action plan to achieve carbon reduction in Bedfordshire. It is also represented on the steering group of the Bedfordshire Climate Change Forum, which aims to raise awareness and promote measures to maximise energy conservation.

In addition, it is working with Sustrans to promote active travel to members of the University and locally through their “Active Lives, Healthy People” scheme.

6 IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND REVIEW

The Bedford travel plan was launched in March 2003. The Aylesbury and Luton travel plans were implemented in September 2008.

Provision of parking spaces is being reviewed annually, and this should be done in conjunction with consideration of the targets for car use.

The University will conduct a site audit and survey into travel choices annually.

A budget has been set in 2008/09 of £170,000 for environmental initiatives, including the travel plan.

In addition to the university-wide transport survey conducted each year, the University will monitor levels of usage of the car parks, numbers of permits issued annually, and numbers of carshare permits issued annually. Records will also be kept of the numbers of members of the University using the University shuttle bus service.

Car parking, cyclists’ and other facilities will be inspected annually to ensure that they are in good condition and to see if further improvements are needed.

The University will undertake an annual review of this Travel Plan and make amendments and/or additions where appropriate, to reflect: -

- a. Progress/success towards achieving the targets set out here, and to set fresh targets if appropriate.
- b. The impact of external factors or measures off-site, or beyond the University’s control.
- c. The Impact of the University’s Masterplan developments.

The review will be compiled by the Travel Plan Co-ordinator.

Both this travel plan, and the annual reviews, will be made available to the public. Annual reviews will be undertaken until at least two years after occupation of the new development.

Acknowledgements, References and Further Reading

Many of the policies described in this travel plan were suggested by “A Travel Plan Resource Pack for Employers”, TransportEnergy, Harwell, 2002.

The Bedford Travel Plan was developed with assistance from Bedfordshire County Council and Bedford Borough Council.

The Aylesbury Travel Plan was developed in consultation with Buckinghamshire County Council.

The Luton Travel Plan was developed in consultation with Luton Borough Council.

1998 Transport White Paper: available at
<http://www.dft.gov.uk/about/strategy/whitepapers/previous/anewdealfortransportbetterfo5695>

Transport Act 2000: available at
http://www.opsi.gov.uk/ACTS/acts2000/ukpga_20000038_en_1

Planning Policy Guidance Note 13 (PPG 13): available at
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/planning/planningpolicyguidance/planningpolicystatements/planningpolicyguidance/ppg13/>

Further information about local travel issues, policies, availability and infrastructure can be found on the Luton Borough Council web site at:
http://www.luton.gov.uk/internet/transport_and_streets

The University’s Carbon Management Programme is published at:
<http://www.beds.ac.uk/aboutus/strategic/hecmp-strategicplan240408.pdf>