

UNIVERSITY OF BEDFORDSHIRE

TRAVEL PLAN AYLESBURY SUPPLEMENT

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1. INTRODUCTION..... 3

| | | |
|----------|--|-----------|
| 1.1 | UNIVERSITY OF BEDFORDSHIRE | 3 |
| 1.2 | BACKGROUND TO DEVELOPMENT OF THIS PLAN | 3 |
| 1.3 | POLICY BACKGROUND..... | 3 |
| 1.4 | OBJECTIVES OF THE PLAN | 3 |
| 1.5 | TRAVEL PLAN CO-ORDINATOR..... | 4 |
| 2 | CURRENT SITE INFORMATION | 4 |
| 2.1 | UNIVERSITY OF BEDFORDSHIRE SITES | 4 |
| 2.2 | NUMBERS AND UTILISATION | 4 |
| 2.3 | STAFF COMMUTING..... | 5 |
| 2.4 | STUDENT RESIDENCES | 5 |
| 2.5 | STUDENT MOVEMENTS | 5 |
| 3 | ACCESSIBILITY | 5 |
| 3.1 | LINKS TO AYLESBURY..... | 6 |
| 3.2 | LINKS TO HIGH WYCOMBE AND STOKE MANDEVILLE | 6 |
| 3.3 | CAR PARKING..... | 6 |
| 3.4 | CAR SHARING..... | 6 |
| 3.5 | MOTORCYCLE PARKING..... | 6 |
| 3.6 | BICYCLE PARKING | 6 |
| 3.7 | CYCLE ROUTES | 7 |
| 3.8 | WALKING..... | 7 |
| 3.9 | PUBLIC BUS SERVICES..... | 7 |
| 3.10 | SHUTTLE BUSES..... | 7 |
| 3.11 | RAIL..... | 8 |
| 3.12 | PUBLICITY & TRAVEL DIRECTIONS | 8 |
| 4 | PROPOSALS FOR REDUCING CAR RELIANCE | 8 |
| 4.1 | JOURNEY REDUCTION | 8 |
| 4.2 | CAR PARKING AND ROAD TRANSPORT | 8 |
| 4.3 | CAR SHARING..... | 8 |
| 4.4 | BICYCLES | 8 |
| 4.5 | PEDESTRIAN ACTIVITY | 9 |
| 4.6 | PUBLIC TRANSPORT USAGE | 9 |
| 4.7 | SHUTTLE BUSES..... | 9 |
| 5 | TARGETS, MONITORING AND REVIEW | 10 |

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 also has nursing and midwifery courses currently based in High Wycombe and Stoke Mandeville Hospitals, Buckinghamshire. These are due to be relocated to the University of Bedfordshire's Buckinghamshire Campus at Oxford House, Aylesbury by the beginning of term 2 in the academic year 2008/09.

1.2 BACKGROUND TO DEVELOPMENT OF THIS PLAN

The current accommodation for teaching at both the High Wycombe and Aylesbury Education Centres is no longer adequate for today's approaches to teaching. The move to new premises will ensure state of the art teaching facilities and provide appropriate facilities in which to provide support for students.

This travel plan relates to students and staff currently based at High Wycombe and Stoke Mandeville hospitals.

This Travel Plan has also been prepared in support of a planning application for development of a dedicated site in Aylesbury. However, it is intended to be a working document 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.

Buckinghamshire County Council's Local Transport Plan 2 for 2006 to 2011 also emphasises the need to tackle congestion and air quality without damaging accessibility, and supports the use of sustainable modes of transport, including public transport and active, healthy modes such as walking or cycling.

1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE PLAN

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 single-occupancy 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 increase the level of pedestrian activity;
4. To increase the use of cycle activity;
5. To increase the current levels of public transport use associated with the University; and
6. To minimise the current level of car use associated with the University.

1.5 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 works full time on environmental issues including transport, and reports to Graham Blake, Director, Facilities and Estates.

On-site, implementation of the Travel Plan is the responsibility of Dr Barbara Burden, Head of Department of Community Services. Barbara Burden is responsible for liaising with staff and students on matters relating to the move to Oxford House, including transport.

2 CURRENT SITE INFORMATION

2.1 UNIVERSITY OF BEDFORDSHIRE SITES

The University's Buckinghamshire- based nursing and midwifery courses are currently based at two sites in Buckinghamshire: the Lovelock-Jones Education Centre in High Wycombe and the Aylesbury Vale Education Centre at Stoke Mandeville Hospital, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire. These two sites are due to close and are planning to move to the University's new Buckinghamshire Campus at Oxford House, Aylesbury.

Students studying at these sites are also and will continue to be required to attend hospitals (High Wycombe and Stoke Mandeville Hospitals) for practical placements.

2.2 NUMBERS AND UTILISATION

The Aylesbury campus will be home to a total of 300 students and 38 staff.

At any one time, at least half of the students will be on placements in partner hospitals (High Wycombe or Stoke Mandeville). The actual number on site is therefore unlikely ever to exceed 150.

Lecture times are staggered between 09:00 and 19:00 to avoid large numbers arriving and leaving at once.

Staff are encouraged to work from home when not required on site. The faculty has a home-working arrangement in place to support this.

2.3 STAFF COMMUTING

Of the 35 current members of staff expected to transfer to Oxford House, 17 will have their daily commute shortened by more than one mile, with 7 having their daily commute lengthened by more than one mile.

The largest cluster of staff residences is in Aylesbury, where 8 out of the total of 35 staff live. Of the remainder, 6 live near stations with direct trains to Aylesbury. The move is therefore expected both to reduce the overall mileage travelled, and to make commuting by train more attractive than at present.

A map showing where staff live in relation to Oxford House is given in Appendix Fourteen.

2.4 STUDENT RESIDENCES

30% of all students live in hospital accommodation based at the partner hospitals, High Wycombe and Stoke Mandeville, equally split between the two. The remainder are housed in private accommodation or still live at home.

A map showing where local students live in relation to Oxford House is given in Appendix Fifteen.

2.5 STUDENT MOVEMENTS

Student facilities, including social facilities, are available on-site or in partnership with Aylesbury college. Student movements are therefore chiefly concentrated between accommodation, the hospitals, Oxford House and central Aylesbury.

When student transport is required to Luton for larger University events, coaches are normally arranged.

As part of the package of support available to assist new students in financial need, the faculty may offer help with the cost of paying for bus tickets, or (where public transport is not available) mileage to carshare groups. This support is not available for single occupancy car drivers.

3 ACCESSIBILITY

3.1 LINKS TO AYLESBURY

Oxford House is just off Oxford Road, Aylesbury (the A418) on the junction with Fowler Road. It is within easy walking distance (less than one kilometre) from the bus and train stations and less than one and a half kilometres from the town centre. It is also very close to Aylesbury College (just across Oxford Road), where further student facilities will be available.

Oxford Road is a main road; however good pedestrian crossings, including a toucan crossing by Aylesbury College, are available.

3.2 LINKS TO HIGH WYCOMBE AND STOKE MANDEVILLE

Aylesbury has good transport links to High Wycombe, including both bus and train services.

Stoke Mandeville's nearest train station is Aylesbury; it is linked to both Aylesbury station and Oxford House by regular buses, and is about two kilometres from Oxford House.

Consultation with student representatives as part of the planning of this move has indicated that most students will plan to travel between sites by public bus or by hospital shuttle bus.

3.3 CAR PARKING

Car parking is available at Stoke Mandeville and High Wycombe Hospitals. A limited car park will be available at Oxford House, Aylesbury. The University will have use of 76 spaces.

3.4 CAR SHARING

There are currently no measures provided by the University in support of staff car sharing. Study of the staff postcode map (Appendix Fourteen) suggests that there is not much potential for car sharing. However, car sharing is popular among those few students who do own a car as a means of reducing the cost, and reflecting the tendency of students to share houses.

Buckinghamshire County Council run a carshare journey-matching scheme, Bucks CarShare.

3.5 MOTORCYCLE PARKING

There is currently a little specific provision for motorcycle parking at Oxford House. Covered stands are available with space for up to four motorbikes.

3.6 BICYCLE PARKING

There is currently little provision for safe bicycle parking at Oxford House. Covered stands are available with space for six bicycles; further bikes could be stored in the motorcycle area.

3.7 CYCLE ROUTES

Aylesbury has good cycle links, with dedicated cycle paths to Wendover, Watermead, Quarrenden, Bierton, Hartwell and Stone. The Hartwell to Aylesbury cycle path (Pearl Way) goes directly past Oxford House, with a Toucan crossing on Oxford Road. The Emerald Way (Queensgate to Southcourt Bridge) passes very close to Oxford House.

Aylesbury became a Cycling Demonstration Town in 2005, and Cycle Aylesbury run events promoting cycling as well as organising a bike buddy scheme.

3.8 WALKING

Oxford House is within easy walking distance (about one and a half kilometres) from the town centre. Roads adjacent to the campus have pedestrian crossings, with a toucan crossing on the A418 between Oxford House and Aylesbury College.

3.9 PUBLIC BUS SERVICES

Oxford House, Aylesbury is within reasonable walking distance of the bus station. Several buses stop on Oxford Road, next to Oxford House; these include local services, the Number 9 to Stoke Mandeville, and buses towards Oxford.

Regional and long distance services from central Aylesbury include:

- Bicester
- Buckingham
- High Wycombe
- Leighton Buzzard
- Milton Keynes
- Oxford
- Stevenage
- Stoke Mandeville
- Watford

Public buses between High Wycombe and Aylesbury also stop at Stoke Mandeville, providing further direct links between the hospitals as well as to central Aylesbury. These run three times an hour between 6am and 9pm on weekdays.

3.10 SHUTTLE BUSES

Buckinghamshire Hospitals NHS Trust runs an hourly bus service between its sites in High Wycombe and Aylesbury / Stoke Mandeville, which students are eligible to use.

3.11 RAIL

Aylesbury has regular train services to both Stoke Mandeville and High Wycombe (direct at peak time; with a change of trains outside peak time), as well as London. Train services are provided by Chiltern Railways. The station is about one kilometre from Oxford House.

3.12 PUBLICITY & TRAVEL DIRECTIONS

The University helps to promote public transport to campus.

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.

4 PROPOSALS FOR REDUCING CAR RELIANCE

4.1 JOURNEY REDUCTION

The University will continue to support home working by staff when not required on site.

4.2 CAR PARKING AND ROAD TRANSPORT

The University will continue to provide some car parking for the foreseeable future, but given the limited supply, will discourage car use. The extent of provision of car parking, any charges and any direct form of rationing will be reviewed annually.

4.3 CAR SHARING

Car sharing will be encouraged by publicising its advantages, by assisting potential car sharers to meet (for example by providing software, through events, or by organising students into groups for travel to placements).

The University will promote the use of the Buckinghamshire County Council car sharing scheme, Bucks CarShare.

The University will consider introducing further incentives for car sharers, such as giving priority parking.

4.4 BICYCLES

The University, in liaison with the landlords, will ensure that the layout of the Campus will be designed to allow appropriate, easy access by bicycle to the main areas of activity, integrated into the wider County Council cycling strategy.

The University will review provision of cycle storage annually, and in liaison with the landlords, will ensure that sufficient suitable stands are made available.

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 the area.

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

4.5 PEDESTRIAN ACTIVITY

The University will, in liaison with the landlords, ensure that the layout of the Campus is 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.

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 local 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 will be reviewing other means of encouraging public transport use, such as re-launching the staff season ticket loan scheme and negotiating with public transport providers for discounts and/or student season tickets.

4.7 SHUTTLE BUSES

The University will continue to promote the use of the hospital shuttle buses for travel between sites.

5 TARGETS, MONITORING AND REVIEW

The University has commenced elements of this Travel Plan from September 2008, including dialogue with staff and students affected; analysis of facilities already provided; liaison with landlords to negotiate improvements to facilities provided; liaison with public transport providers to improve service; and support for working from home and journey reduction.

The University has set itself University-wide targets as part of its Carbon Management programme to reduce the proportion of staff travelling to work by car by 10% on 2008 levels by December 2011, of which at least 3% shall be met by December 2009 and a further 3% by December 2010.

The University will conduct surveys into travel choices annually, starting in November 2008.

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. Actions taken as part of the Travel Plan.
- b. Progress/success towards achieving the aims set out here.
- c. The impact of external factors or measures off-site, or beyond the University's control.
- d. The impact of the University's Masterplan developments.

All evidence of travel plan activity will be collected and provided in an annual progress report.