

The Open University  
**TRAVEL PLAN**  
2011 Revision

***EXECUTIVE SUMMARY***

The University Travel Plan was first published in 1999, and then refreshed and re-launched in 2006 and 2008. This current plan reviews progress to date and updates the plan to align the Travel Plan with the University Carbon Management Plan.

The Travel Plan concentrates mainly on Walton Hall as the site generating the largest single source of staff commuting but does include initiatives aimed specifically at improving travel to work options in the Regional and Nation offices.

The primary objective of the Travel Plan is to improve the travel to work choices for staff and visitors to Walton Hall including colleagues from the Regions.

This plan has revised the two specific measurable targets included in the earlier versions of the plan. Those two targets are:-

1. To reduce single car occupancy commuting by 15% by 2013 (base year 2005).
2. To reduce carbon emissions from staff commuting and business travel by 5% by 2013 (base year 2005).

The revisions to the base year from 2006 to 2005 is a requirement to meet the absolute reduction targets set by the Higher Education Council for England (HEFCE).

This plan sets out specific implementation strategies designed to improve:-

1. The provision and promotion of car sharing.
2. The dissemination and provision of travel to work information.
3. The promotion of public transport.
4. Specific enhancement of bus services to Central Milton Keynes.
5. Campus bicycle parking and facilities.
6. The improvement of direct pedestrian and cycle routes to East Campus.

This plan is constrained by the provision of public transport infrastructure within the wider city of Milton Keynes. This is particularly so in relation to buses. The success of this plan does rely upon the commitment of significant funds by Milton Keynes Council and the bus operating companies to improve and enhance the public bus services to and from Walton Hall. This very significant factor is external to the University and out of our hands but has a direct and fundamental impact upon the success of our plan.

A staff and visitor travel survey will be conducted to coincide with the Carbon Management Plan interim target years of 2012, 2013, 2017 and 2020. Specific data will be gathered periodically on travel to work patterns including cycle parking, car share scheme membership and public transport use. The plan, as a whole, will be reviewed formally every two years.

## ***THE TRAVEL PLAN***

This Travel Plan follows the Department for Transport guidelines for Travel Plans that specify an organisation's Travel Plan should cover:

- Background
- Objectives
- Scope of the Plan
- Actions
- Marketing
- Targets
- Monitoring
- Dissemination

## ***BACKGROUND***

### **The need for a Travel Plan**

The development of the University's original 1999 Travel Plan was associated with a Section 106 planning agreement set by Milton Keynes Council.

The re-launch of the Travel Plan in 2006 and 2008 was driven by the University's environmental and campus development goals in particular carbon management. These remain valid for this revision and are primarily

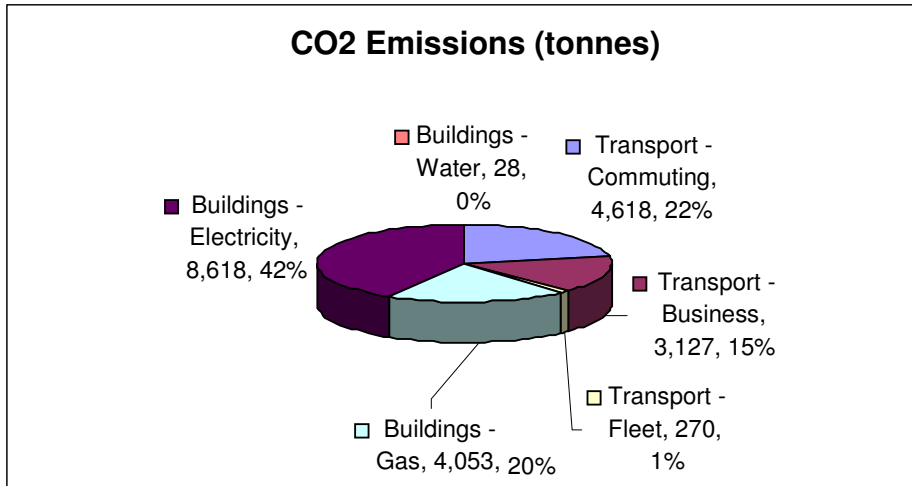
- Participation in the Higher Education Carbon Management Programme (HECM)
- The University Estate Strategy (2006)
- The Race Equality Screening Exercise (2006) (RESE)
- The Disability and Gender Equality Action Plan 2007 & 2008

The University has adopted a Carbon Management Plan. This reinforces the University's commitment to reducing its carbon emissions, in particular energy and water use and those arising from commuting and other transport emissions. It is now a requirement of HEFCE that the University Travel Plan is aligned to the Carbon Management Plan and consistent with it.

The University Carbon Management Plan sets a target in line with HEFCE requirements for absolute reduction in carbon against a 2005 baseline of 36% by 2020. Interim targets have been set at 10% by 2012, 14% by 2013, 23% by 2017 and the full 36% by 2020. Whilst this Travel Plan is not required to mirror

these targets it is required to set a 'realistic' target to contribute towards the overall carbon reduction target.

Guidance is awaited from HEFCE as to the methodology of calculating the carbon emissions in both the 2005 base year and subsequent interim target years. The University has some 2006 data (shown below) but this will be revisited in the light of the HEFCE guidance.



**The Open University's CO<sub>2</sub> Emissions** (Tonnes and % split)

Source: Open University Carbon Management Implementation Plan, 2006.

1. The Estate Strategy includes key objectives with a direct impact on the Travel Plan in the areas of:
  - Sustainability, limiting carbon emissions and reduced overall energy consumption runs through the Estates Strategy and highlights the Travel Plan as a key activity in setting targets for reduced single occupancy of cars, better use of public transport and promotion of cycling and walking.
  - Consolidation of space across the University estate and the generation of income from diversified sources including the letting of surplus space will assume greater importance.
  - The Estates Strategy contains the known refurbishment and new building programme up to 2011 when the capital framework concluded. The document recognises via its link to the travel plan the increased difficulty encountered in simply providing more parking for new developments.

The actions arising from the 2006 RESE are reflected in the review of progress and the Disability and Gender Equality Action Plans have been added.

The stringent targets set in the University Carbon Management Plan and the direction from the Estates Strategy means transport management is increasingly important. However, as well as Estate development the Travel

Plan relates to a number of other strategic planning issues for the University. These include

- 1) Staff access, recruitment and retention – this was highlighted in earlier versions of the plan but with the current economic climate it is of less significance as a risk. Although the policies of MK Council combined with car dependent access could inhibit recruitment and increase costs to the University. Even for higher income staff, the Travel Plan can offer attractive staff benefits that would aid recruitment and retention.
- 2) Car Parking Management Review – The University recognises that parking and the ability to park is business critical as well as recognising its impact on employment highlighted above. Car parking management will be kept under review. The prospect of an emerging Workplace Charging Schemes and the wider impact of planning policies will also be kept under review.
- 3) Research Student recruitment - The Research School already notes that poor public transport access to Walton Hall is a serious problem for our research student population.
- 4) Teaching credibility - Environmental issues and environmental management have become key areas for the development of the Open University's teaching, including materials and courses on travel planning. It is a matter of teaching credibility that the University demonstrates its ability to practice what it teaches in terms of environmental management and standards.

### ***The Walton Hall Site***

The University has approximately 5246 staff, of which about 4068 (this figure includes 128 temp staff) are at Walton Hall<sup>1</sup>. To this number need to be added some 284 full-time postgraduate research students and about 150 other contract and BBC staff on the campus<sup>2</sup>. As of November 2011 there are 2389 car parking spaces for the 4068 people working at Walton Hall (a ratio of 0.58 car parking spaces to each person). For the purposes of the Travel Plan, it is assumed that the number of people on the site will not increase in the next 5 years. In reality the staff numbers may actually fall.

The site has good road access although the entrances can be congested at peak hours. The campus is also well linked to Milton Keynes' Redway network of foot/cycle paths.

Bus services are poor. The geographical position of the campus away from the City Centre and off core bus routes does mean that, whilst the University is committed to widening the travel to work choices available for staff and visitors, our contribution to improved provision of choice across MK as a whole will be limited. To some degree the success of our travel plan is reliant on the provision of better public transport provision in the wider city of MK.

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<sup>1</sup> As at July 2011

<sup>2</sup> There are also between 50 and 200 building contractor staff on campus at any one time

The capital framework completed a programme of new build and refurbishments. The last building to open being Building 12 that opened in January 2011. It is not anticipated that other major projects will follow in the foreseeable future.

## OBJECTIVES

The Travel Plan objectives are to:

- Improve travel choices for those based at the Walton Hall site;
- Improve travel choices for visitors and regional staff travelling to the site;
- Reduce the adverse environmental impacts of travel generated by the University;
- Reduce dependency on single-occupancy car travel;
- Contribute to the University's Carbon Management and any other relevant programmes;
- Provide improved access that will support the development of Walton Hall as a venue for income generating events and letting of space to commercial tenants;
- Provide better access for travel within the Walton Hall site;
- Enhance the perception of the environmental performance of the University;

## REVIEW OF PROGRESS ACHIEVED UNDER 2008 REVISION

<b>Actions/Specific Measures</b>	<b>Achieved</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Provision and promotion of car sharing via intranet based database	✓	Launched in July 07. Membership has grown from 480 in 2008 to 750 currently. Ongoing regular promotions.
Review of Travel Advice intranet site	✓	'Travel Advice' web page updated regularly. Links from the main OU internet for visitors to use this.
Promotion of public transport	X	Promised inclusion in the MK Real Time project failed to materialise. No firm dates on its roll out to include Walton Hall Campus
	✓	Employer Travel Club launched 2011 giving discounted bus tickets for staff.
Enhancing bus services to Central MK station	✓	OU shuttle bus provides 3 runs in the morning and 2 runs in the evening to/from CMK station. Use monitored regularly.
Enhancing bus services to Bletchley	X	No improvement . Indeed services worse. Carry forward to current plan.

Enhance bicycle parking and facilities	✓	New secure bike sheds added at: Building 12 Cardiff Manchester Cycle shelter extend at Jennie Lee Building Cycle shelter extended RAF Hut Cycle shelter extended r/o Berrill Building Additional facilities at Library Cycle facilities provided at Belfast and Edinburgh Nation Centres
Providing direct pedestrian and cycle routes to East Campus	X	V10 crossing rejected. Some upgrades to paths and underpasses proposed by MKC but not a full crossing. Project programme awaited from MKC.
Assess need for further covered motor cycle parking	✓	New covered shed provided at Wimpey hut site and new drive through facility at Inner East Car Park
Provision of priority spaces for car sharers	✓	71 Spaces converted on Campus. Regular reviews and measurement of utilisation in place.
Consider viability of charging staff and visitor for parking and monetary incentive schemes such as 'cash out' aimed at reducing demand for parking	X	No appetite for introducing car park charges by University Senior Management. Feasibility study presented but decided not to take any further.
Diversity	✓	Regular assessment completed of the diversity of the local population against review of bus routes to ensure equal access.

### **Baseline**

In order to develop its Travel Plan, the University needs to have data on how travel to Walton Hall occurs and is changing. Four detailed travel surveys have been held since 1997. These have included information on commuting origins, transport mode, times of travel and travel options available to staff. The following is a summary table of travel by mode for the surveys between 1997 and 2009. A survey will be completed in 2012 and thereafter at intervals to match the HEFCE interim targets.

### Percentage split of Travel to Walton Hall

	1997	2002	2006	2009	iTrace 2011
Car driver	83	80	60	63	65 + 8%
Car passenger	7	6	14	6	7
Train	1	2	4	7	3
Bus	2	3	8	8	4
Cycle	6	5	8	9	8
Motorcycle	-	-	-	-	-
Walk	1	2	4	7	4
Taxi	-	-	1	-	-
Other	-	1	-	-	1
Total	100	100	100	100	100
Sample	1364	2065 (58% response rate)	1334 (39% response rate)	1470 (36% response rate)	392 (7%)

A dash (-) indicates under 1%

We had reservations that the lower response rate of the 2006 survey under represented car commuters. However the 2009 survey reinforces the results of the 2006 survey. The 2012 survey will be used to measure further progress.

A full report on the 2012 Travel Survey will be made on the Travel Advice Website: <http://www.open.ac.uk/travel-advice/>

### **TARGET**

The key target remains measures to reduce car usage on Campus. Achieving this target would mean that dependency on single occupancy car commuting will have been reduced. However during implementation it may be appropriate to develop other targets, particularly those that measure improvements in the quality of alternatives to car commuting as well as targets relating to the provision of spaces to staff/visitor numbers.

The two primary targets are:-

(1) to reduce single car occupancy commuting by 15% in 2013 (base year 2005)

(2) to reduce carbon emissions from staff commuting and business travel by 5% by 2013 (base year 2005)

### **ACTIONS: Specific Measures**

#### **Travel Co-ordinator and resources for the Travel Plan**

The Travel Co-ordinator post is currently vacant and is being covered for within Estates. Resources for Travel Plan initiatives are mainly provided within the Estates Environmental Improvement Budget.

#### **Assess baseline and interim target year data**

The 2005 and interim target year carbon emission data requires calculation in line with HEFCE guidelines when these are published. The interim target years are 2012, 2013, 2017 and 2020. Staff travel surveys will be conducted during these years to assist this process.

Timescale: during 2012.

Resources: External survey assistance from IET may be required.

### **Provision and promotion of Carsharing**

Promote the Carshare database to include the University Nation/Regional network

Timescale: in progress.

Resources: Estates Environmental Improvement Budget

### **Provision of Travel Information**

Maintain, review and develop the 'Travel Advice' intranet site for staff and a companion internet site for visitors. Maintain paper-based information for OU Reception and at bus stops.

Timescale: Continuous review and development of site at <http://www.open.ac.uk/travel-advice/>

Resources: Estates budget (variable cost)

Review: Every 18 months



### **Promotion of Public Transport**

Enhancing direct bus services to the campus and getting the campus bus stops fitted with real time displays plus Real time information for buses and trains on web site.

Timescale: 6 monthly review meetings with bus operator  
3 monthly updates required from MK Council on Real Time

Exploring if the campus can be included in proposed public transport developments . Review service regularly with Arriva and MK Council.

Timescale: continuous

Review: Every 18 months

### **Enhancing bus services to Central Milton Keynes Station.**

Review campus to Milton Keynes Central Station shuttle service to ensure offers value for money and identify any scope for improvement.

Review: Annually

Resources: Estates Budget

### **Bicycle Parking and facilities**



Ensuring that all buildings, wherever possible, have cycle parking close to the main entrance and the provision of further secure cycle parking compound(s).

Timescale: Ongoing  
Resources: Estate Minor Works Budget  
and Environmental Improvement Budget

To include cycle parking in new building and refurbishment projects, wherever possible, and also showers where possible (particularly when toilets are refurbished).

Timescale: incorporate in all newbuild and refurbish specifications from now onwards

### **Providing direct pedestrian and cycle routes to East Campus.**

To include improvement of pedestrian and cycle route across to East Campus.

Timescale: Ongoing and in hand.  
Review proposed footpath improvements with MK Council and oversee implementation by March 2012.  
Resources: to be assessed.

### **Motorcycle Parking**

To assess the need for further covered motorcycle parking.

Timescale: Ongoing  
Resources: Within refurbishment budget

### **Car Parking Management**

Car parking management will be reviewed periodically including a consideration of the role of car parking provision in income generation for events and commercial letting of campus space. Car parking management actions include:

Provision of priority spaces for carsharers.

Timescale: Ongoing review of utilisation and add/remove spaces as required  
Resources: Estates budget

To provide, for a fee per space, dedicated car parking for any commercial users of University premises.

Timescale: Part of any commercial letting contract

### **Provide Electric Vehicle Charging Point at Walton Hall Campus**

Assess the feasibility of providing an electric vehicle charging point at the Walton Hall Campus to ensure such a facility offers practical charging options and value for money.

Timescale: Feasibility study to report by March 2012

Resources: To be assessed

### ***Dissemination and Information Provision***

Intranet and Internet 'Travel Advice'

Other publicity (including at Receptions, Library and bus stops)

Staff Induction

Postgraduate Student Induction

Submission to appropriate University Committees

Travel Fairs and Travel Plan Briefings

Timescale: Continuous.

Materials prepared for postgraduate induction in October each year;

Cycle to Work Day annually

MK Cycle Challenge

Dr Bike Event

Employer Travel Club Promotional Events

Bike Security Marking Events

Car Share Day

Contribute towards Learn at Work Day

'Green Network Events'

Carbon Management Events

### ***Reporting structure and management of the Travel Plan***

The Open University Travel Plan is the managerial responsibility of the University's Head of Property & Regions (currently Dorian Holloway). The Travel Plan Co-ordinator and others working on the University Travel Plan report to the Head of Property & Regions. He then reports to Director of Estates, overseen by the University's Estates Committee.

A Transport Management Group may be formed to consult with other interested parties in the University.

The Travel Plan will be implemented through an *Action Plan* for each of the areas listed above. These action plans will identify responsibilities, timescale, resources and costs for specific measures in each area.

### ***Constraints***

Dramatic improvement in the city wide public transport infrastructure particularly the bus services is the major constraint external to the University. The commitment of significant resources by both the Council and bus operating company is seen as fundamental to delivery of our Travel Plan.

Failure to do so may also have a prejudicial effect on the University business and our long term commitment to Milton Keynes as the chosen location for our current and future activities.

## ***Monitoring and Evaluation***

A staff and visitor Travel Survey will be conducted to match the interim target years in the Carbon Management Plan. The next survey will be in 2012.

Data will also be gathered on specific factors, including:

- Carbon generated by staff commuting
- Car park useage
- Cycle census
- Number of people using carshare database
- Public transport use

The University will prepare review of the Travel Plan every two years. Once approved, the Travel Plan will be available on the University's intranet and internet sites.