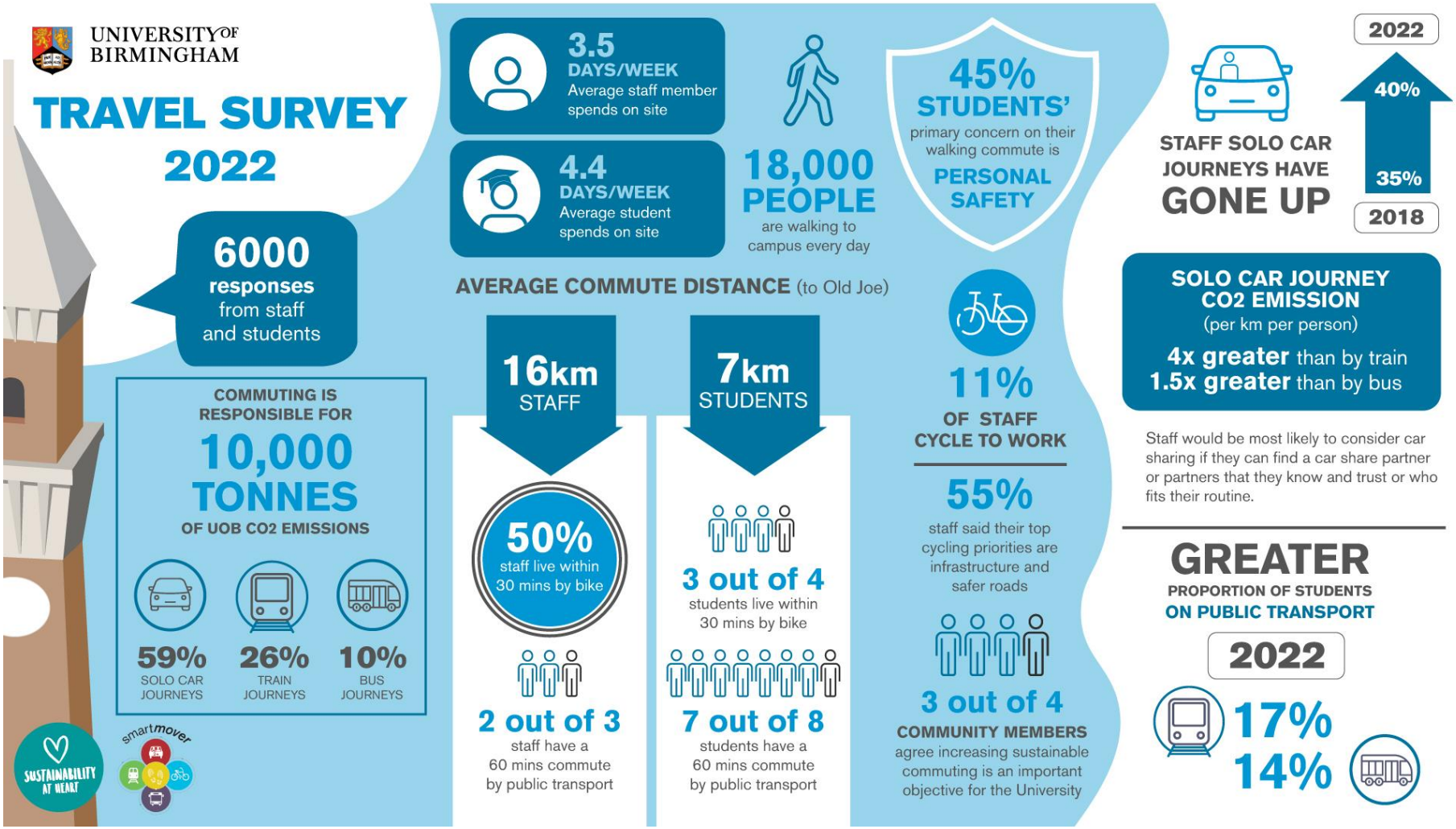
UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

Sustainable Travel Action Plan

2023

Survey Results 2022



Action Plan

1. The University of Birmingham is seeking to reduce the number of single occupancy commutes by car.
2. The University of Birmingham is targeting net zero for scope 1 and 2 carbon emissions by 2035, and net zero for scope 3 carbon emissions by 2045, which includes commuting. These targets will be reached by three changes
    - Reduction in the volume of travel
    - Changing from more polluting modes of transport to less polluting modes
    - Upgrading to zero-emission technologies and renewable energy
3. The university can take steps to bring about these changes, but its influence does have limits. For example, the university can provide an attractive bus season ticket scheme for staff, but bus companies are responsible for upgrading to low and zero-emission buses falls and national energy planners must switch over to renewable electricity. This travel plan aims therefore to do everything feasible to enable and encourage behaviour change, by making sure that:
    - campus facilities are excellent and support sustainable choices;
    - sustainable travel incentives are available and operate optimally;
    - staff and students know about the facilities and schemes available to them;
    - barriers to uptake of sustainable travel modes are addressed;
    - the university makes best use of its local, sectoral and national influence to effect positive changes for sustainable travellers.

4. This document sets out the actions and resources required to reduce carbon emissions from commuting. That means reducing solo car driving and increasing the uptake of active travel and public transport modes: namely walking, cycling, scooting, bus travel, train travel and carpooling.

Commuting Needs and Barriers to Sustainable Travel Choices

5. Transport choices are dictated by practical questions of feasibility, cost, time-efficiency, flexibility, safety, security, convenience, agreeableness, and wellbeing. Increasingly UoB commuters are aware of the environmental impact of their actions, and cite it as a commuting need. A commute is viable if it meets the needs of a given individual. There are certain barriers to sustainable travel choices. The pre-eminent barrier to all sustainable modes is habit: changing from a routine that ‘works’—even if it is not perfect—to a new commute takes a bit of thought, effort, and planning, and potentially some costs and some new skills (particularly in the case of cycling).

Walking

6. Walking can be time efficient for short journeys of up to 1-2 miles and 30 minutes. At these distances, walking commutes are convenient and flexible as it is a door-to-door

journey and the commuter can leave at any time. Public transport users are likely to combine their commute by bus or train with walking. This form of active commuting is to be actively encouraged. Walking can be safe, agreeable and health-promoting if and only if there are good routes. Walking costs nothing more than a new pair of shoes every now and again and a good raincoat Beyond 1-2 miles, walking commutes can be matched less flexibly with other daily commitments, leisure and errands and the time and effort taken becomes a barrier for many.

7. Assuming a feasible and time efficient distance, the main barriers then are 1) road safety and 2) personal safety. These factors rise and fall in their prominence depending on the time of year. Personal safety is of greater concern during the dark winter months.

Cycling

8. Cycling commutes can be some of the most time efficient in Birmingham, as cyclists can avoid queueing cars and buses and are not beholden to timetables. Again, a commute of around five miles or 30 minutes is feasible for most, and the rise of e-bikes is making longer commutes possible for more and more people. Cycling commutes are flexible and can combine well with individual commitments, errands and leisure activities. It costs to keep a bike on the road year round, and most keen cycle commuters choose to upgrade their kit over time, but cycling remains very good value. Commuting by bike raises fitness levels.
9. Assuming that cycling is viable for a member of staff/student (she lives close enough to campus and is fit and able to cycle), the main barriers to cycling are: 1) security of bikes on campus, 2) safety of route to campus, 3) being able to shower, change, and organise cycling kit to start the day, and 4) starting out. The cost of cycling is not a particularly great barrier, but it is something that the university can help with, particularly at the stage of trying out cycling.

Train travel

10. UoB is served by a University station, so the proximity and accessibility of the local station decide whether a train commute is time-efficient and convenient. Once aboard, trains are generally an efficient way to travel. Flexibility is dictated by the frequency of the services. Currently there are four trains per hour on the cross-city line, and long distance trains serve University station in addition. This is lower than the six trains per hour pre-pandemic, and therefore makes the train commute less flexible and convenient. On the other hand, capacity on the cross-city line has increased to six carriages on all services. Greater capacity on trains is more agreeable for commuters.
11. Colleagues wanting to travel by train are impeded by 1) cost of tickets, particularly for long distance commutes and 2) capacity on cross-city line to University station.

Bus travel

12. Some bus journeys are time efficient, particularly where there are good bus lanes on the route, but, compared to a car journey, commuters must factor in getting to the bus stop in time. The more frequent the buses on a route, the more flexible the commute. While many of our local routes have good frequency, some services from key areas are too infrequent, reducing convenience and flexibility. The 48 from Bearwood/Harborne is half hourly and the direct 41 service from Acocks Green and Moseley is hourly. Birmingham's bus system has a broadly radial design, meaning that many bus journeys require changing bus, often in the city centre. The cost of Birmingham bus travel improved significantly in 2022 when National Express West Midlands reduced prices of many tickets, but the cost is still high compared to other options.
13. Colleagues wanting to travel by bus are impeded by 1) cost of tickets. 2) frequency of services, and 3) agreeableness of the experience on the bus.

Car pooling

14. Car sharing saves money and can offer some social benefits. However, sharing a car journey is not standard practice currently because it reduces some of the attractiveness of solo car journeys. It requires coordinating arrival and departure with someone else so the pick up and drop off will likely add a little extra time. Carpooling is likely to be less time efficient, convenient and flexible, unless steps are taken in mitigation, like closer, more convenient car parking on arrival, or, on a municipal level, priority lanes on large roads. Many colleagues would not consider sharing their car as they consider their personal space. Others would only consider carpooling with someone they already know and may be concerned by personal safety if sharing with strangers.

Travel Plan updated April 2023

Area	Strategic Objective	Action	Detail	Ownership	Status	Rating
Measurement, Performance and Insight	**Undertstand how staff and students commute to the university**	Survey staff and students	Large scale survey every 2-3 years; smaller surveys every year	STO	Project	
	Estimate carbon emissions from commuting and business travel	Evaluate and report emissions	HESA reporting yearly; carbon accounting undertaken by consultants	STO, MG	Project	
	Measure how staff travel for funded business trips	Combine Clarity and expenses data	Reports to allow comparison of booking across university and within colleges	STO, MG	Project	
	Identify and record KPIs for sustainable travel at UoB	Create spreadsheet and identify data sources	See further detail in five-year plan	STO	Project	
Communications	**Promote importance and benefits of sustainable travel**	Deliver communications plan	Presentations, internal comms, events, intranet	STO	Project	
	Explain how the university supports sustainable travel choices	Deliver communications plan	Presentations, internal comms, events, intranet, social media	STO	Project	
Alternatives to Travel	**Enable staff and students to avoid long distance travel by remote study and work**	Provide remote working software and hardware to staff and students	Teams, Zoom, laptops	IT Services	Service	
		Support working from home where operationally possible	Hybrid working strategy	HR and line managers	Policy	
Commuting on Foot	**Make walking to campus safer**	Improve campus roads, pavements and pedestrian areas	Map areas that require attention and highlight areas to prioritise	STO/CSTG	Project	

Key: *STG*- Sustainable Task group, *STO*- Sustainable Travel Officer, CS- Campus Services, DFS—Director of Facility Services D *BUBUG*- Birmingham University Bicycle Users Group, *CSTG*- Campus Safer Transport Group, *BCC*- Birmingham City Council,

		Advocate for improvements to local roads, pavements	Focus on South Gate and Somerset Rd/Edgbaston Park Road	STO	Project	
Commuting by Bicycle	**Make cycling to campus safer**	Raise skills and confidence of campus cyclists	Cycling skills training classes and group rides through Green Heart Riders community	STO	Service	
		Advocate for improvements to local roads	Focus on South Gate and North Gate	STO	Project	
		Improve campus roads and cycle paths	Map areas that require attention and highlight areas to prioritise	STO/CSTG	Project	
	Combat bike theft on campus	Provide D-locks for staff and students	Free locls available from Security/ hireable locks from Sustainable Travel	Security/STO	Service	
		Remove abandoned bikes from campus bike racks	Quarterly	STO/Security	Project	
		Patrol campus and educate cyclists	As part of daily operations	Security, STO	Service	
	Provide excellent facilities on campus for cyclists	Increase the number of secure cycle shelters on campus	Deliver new facilities on an annual basis	STO, Estates	Projects	
		Support the operation of a successful independent bike repair shop on campus	Shop managed by social enterprise Gear Up	Gear Up, STO	Service	
		Map where there are cycle racks/shelters and showers for commuters on campus.	Audit and update yearly	STO	Project	
	Ensure that cycling to work is good value for money	Provide and administer Cycle-to-Work scheme	Scheme provied by Cycle Solutions	Payroll and STO	Service	

Key: *STG*- Sustainable Task group, *STO*- Sustainable Travel Officer, CS- Campus Services, DFS—Director of Facility Services D *BUBUG*- Birmingham University Bicycle Users Group, *CSTG*- Campus Safer Transport Group, *BCC*- Birmingham City Council,

		Provide and administer staff bike loan scheme	4-6 week free trials for staff to see if cycling is for them	STO	Service	
Commuting by Train	**Ensure that staff and student rail travellers get the best available value for money**	Provide and administer interest free loan for staff annual season tickets	Through TfWM's corporate Swift scheme	Payroll and STO	Service	
		Inform staff and students of other ticket options and how to get value for money	In particular, Flexi Season tickets, point-to-point season tickets, evening and group fares	STO	Service	
	Support the redevelopment of University station	Attend steering meetings and support project managers as required	MG to attend regular meetings	Director of Facility Services and Estates	Partnership	
	Advocate for improved rail services to University station: more frequent, more reliable, and higher capacity	Develop closer partnership with West Midlands Railway		STO, Director of Facility Services	Project	
Commuting by Bus	**Ensure that staff and student bus travellers get the best available value for money**	Support and part-fund discounted staff monthly bus passes	Through National Express West Midlands' portal	Payroll and STO	Service	
		Advocate that NX retain a £1 fare for university staff and students	Key contacts at NX: Richard Cawton and Stacey Pollard;	STO	Partnership	
		Inform staff and students of other ticket options and how to get value for money	In particular, contactless, weekly and monthly fares, group tickets, £1 hop, flexible bundles and other bundles	STO	Service	
	Advocate for improved bus services to campus: more frequent, more reliable, and with excellent user experience	Ensure The Hop! fare remains available on m-Tickets app;		STO	Partnership	

Key: *STG*- Sustainable Task group, *STO*- Sustainable Travel Officer, CS- Campus Services, DFS—Director of Facility Services D *BUBUG*- Birmingham University Bicycle Users Group, *CSTG*- Campus Safer Transport Group, *BCC*- Birmingham City Council,

Commuting by Car	**Enable and encourage staff to drive lower-emitting vehicles**	Provide and administer a ULEV car lease scheme for staff	Delivered by Tusker	STO, Procurement, Payroll	Service	
		Provide EV charging on campus, review and improve provision		Car Parking	Service	
	Ensure car drivers on campus comply with parking regulations	Administer and enforce permit system	Car parking dept of manager, administrator and 4 traffic officers	Car Parking	Policy	
	Provide car sharing/ride pooling service	Recruit new provider of service and relaunch		STO, Car Parking Manager, Director of Facility Services	Project	
Commuting by Light Motor Vehicles	**Support the excellent operation of the scooter trial on campus**	Monitor and make improvements to parking and riding zones of campus	Scooter rental delivered by Beryl, work in partnership to make changes	STO	Partnership	
		Promote safe use of e-scooters		STO	Partnership	
	Provide motorcycle parking spaces on campus	Map where motorcycle spaces are available		STO	Project	

Key: *STG*- Sustainable Task group, *STO*- Sustainable Travel Officer, CS- Campus Services, DFS—Director of Facility Services D *BUBUG*- Birmingham University Bicycle Users Group, *CSTG*- Campus Safer Transport Group, *BCC*- Birmingham City Council,