University of Reading

TRAVEL PLAN
2024-2029

INTRODUCTION AND VISION

INTRODUCTION

The University of Reading Travel Plan 2024–2029 outlines the University's commitments to supporting and encouraging more sustainable travel behaviour by our staff, students and visitors.

The University of Reading is a recognised leader in reducing its operational carbon emissions and its climate change research is world leading. Environmental sustainability is at the heart of the University's identity and is one of four key principles in the Strategic Plan, with a commitment to:

" *...play our part in tackling climate change and are recognised as a University that leads on global environmental sustainability.* "

2020-2026 Strategic Plan

The University takes its environmental responsibilities seriously and aims to manage its operations in ways that are environmentally sustainable, economically viable and socially responsible. This Travel Plan and its predecessors form a key part of our ISO14001 certified Environmental Management System, which alongside our Carbon Management Plan help us work towards our sustainability vision:

'To be a leader in reducing our impacts on the local as well as global environment, by embedding a culture of sustainability throughout our teaching, research and operations.'

Considerable progress has been made since our first University Travel Plan in 2000. In 2022, the University met its last headline sustainable travel target, for 87% of its staff and student population to travel to and from its campuses by sustainable modes.

TRAVEL PLAN STRUCTURE

This Travel Plan is set out in the following way:

1. The Plan supports the Estates Strategy and is underpinned by the Strategic Plan Principle 3 and the Sustainability Vision;

2. The Plan has a key aim: to reduce the environmental impacts of travel and transport associated with the University. Wherever possible, this will be achieved through encouraging travel by the most sustainable modes, in turn reducing reliance on the least sustainable modes;

3. Four Travel Plan Principles have been set out to build upon the Strategic Plan principles and to guide the targets and objectives;

4. The Plan sets specific targets for commuter travel, and details five objectives which will help to meet these, along with other travel associated with the University;

5. An Action Plan has been developed to detail each specific measure which will be delivered over the five-year Travel Plan period to help the plan meet its targets;

TRAVEL PLAN SCOPE

THIS TRAVEL PLAN COVERS OUR THREE MAIN UK CAMPUSES.

Whiteknights and London Road campuses are well located to the south of Reading town centre and benefit from good sustainable transport links as well as being in fairly close proximity to the strategic road network. Greenlands campus is located approximately 4km north east of Henley-on-Thames and has more limited travel options, particularly by sustainable modes.

This Travel Plan does not specifically cover tenanted buildings as operations are managed by individual tenants. However, the physical travel-related measures (such as cycle parking, access and routes and bus services) still benefit tenants. The University also work closely with UPP (Universities Partnership Programme) who are responsible for our halls of residence and help to manage the travel impacts of the halls.

For future on-campus development, Travel Plans (or Statements) will be required that are specific and directly relevant to the development that they serve. This document acts as the overarching 'Framework', setting out the overall targets for the University campuses and the campus-wide initiatives which would benefit future development.

There are some strategic sites that interact with the campuses, including Thames Valley Science Park (TVSP) and CEDAR Farm, though cross-travel is limited. TVSP has its' own Travel Plan, whilst CEDAR Farm has limited associated travel. Again, the Travel Plan seeks to consider these sites when developing off or cross-campus measures.

As such, the Travel Plan involves:

- *University of Reading staff and student commuter travel to, from and within our UK campuses;*

- *University fleet and operations travel*

- *Visitors and deliveries to and from the University, where travel can be managed; and*

- *Business travel by our staff and students*
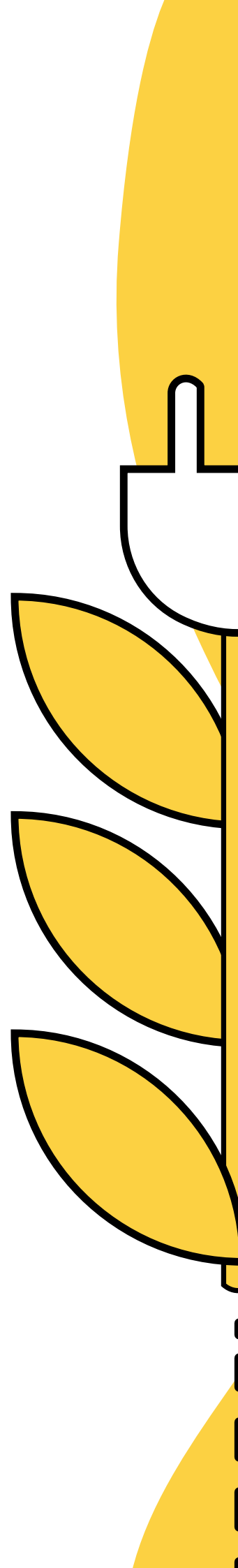
TRAVEL PLAN CONTEXT

INTRODUCTION

The University of Reading is one of the largest employers and the largest education body in the area, with almost **4,000 UK-based staff** and over **16,500 students** in the 2023/24 academic year.

Whilst we may be aware of the negative impacts of the most polluting forms of transport, our travel choices are often dictated by practicalities surrounding time, caring responsibilities, cost, convenience, security and accessibility. Change can be possible for many, but it is vital to have a plan in place to manage this. As such, a Travel Plan should be:

- **Realistic:** Travel Plan targets and actions should be able to be achieved given budgets and timescales which are continuously monitored and updated;

- **Flexible:** The Travel Plan and actions must be flexible, considering the potential for changes in priorities, finances and timescales based on known and unknown factors. They should also be able to adapt to the rapidly changing world of transport and technology;

- **Supported:** Sustainable modes should be made as attractive as possible to drive change, and this requires support from all levels at the University;

- **Accessible and Fair:** Sustainable travel should be accessible to all who want to use it and fairly available compared with the least sustainable modes.

A Travel Plan should focus on sustainable modes wherever possible, but cannot ignore the role of Internal Combustion Engine (ICE) vehicles and other high polluting modes and should recognise that some such journeys will not be possible to remove altogether

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

National and Global Reach

The University has a long history of climate action, working with the United Nations (UN), governments, businesses and communities to make best use of our resources to ensure our long-term sustainability.

Climate Change

Transport produced **26%** of the UK's total greenhouse gas emissions in 2021 and remains the largest emitting sector in the UK. **91%** of emissions from domestic transport came from road vehicles, of which **52%** are cars and taxis.[1]

The University is committed to helping to tackle climate change; in practice and in our research and education. We are a leader in the sector and have already achieved a **61%** reduction in carbon emissions compared to the 2008/09 baseline and have an ambitious target to achieve Net Zero by 2030.

The University was ranked as the number one University in the 2023/24 People and Planet University league, rising from 4th place in 2022/23.

University of Reading
1st place
UNIVERSITY LEAGUE 2023/24
people & planet

1. Transport and environment statistics 2023 - **gov.uk/government/statistics/transport-and-environment-statistics-2023**
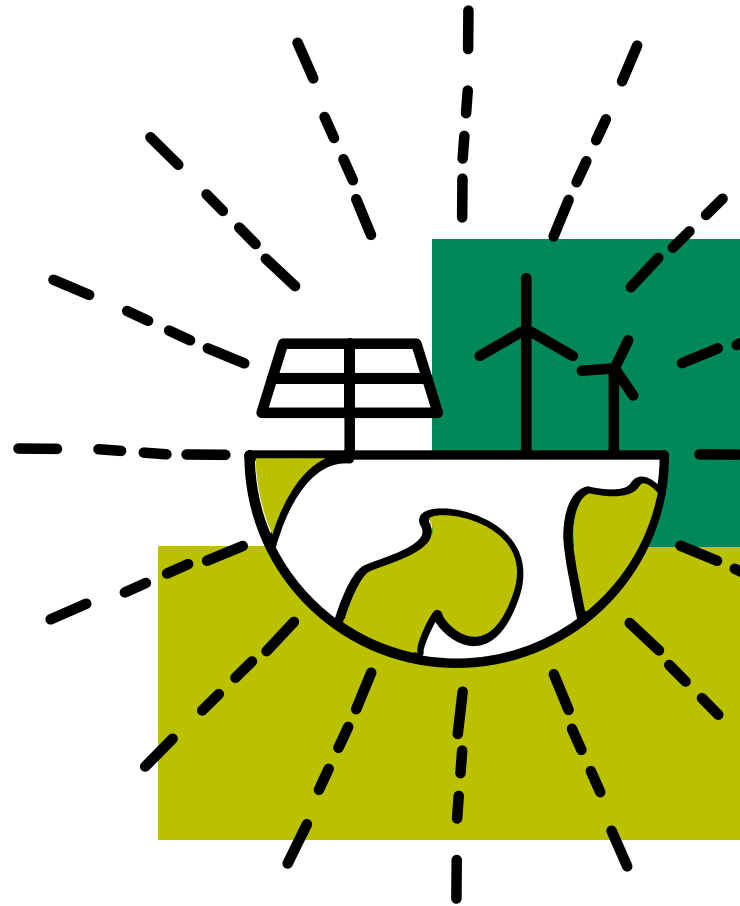
UN Sustainable Development Goals

The University is committed to the UN Sustainable Development Goals, of which many align with the Travel Plan, including:

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

4 QUALITY EDUCATION

9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

11 SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES

13 CLIMATE ACTION

17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS

Planning Requirements

This Travel Plan acts as a 'framework' document, setting out the principles which all new development should seek to achieve, ensuring a consistent approach across the University.

Any new planning application will provide a Travel Plan or Travel Plan Statement to detail any site-specific travel plan measures and should refer to this wider strategy.

Regional and Local Reach

As one of the largest employers and education facilities in the region, our travel behaviours have an impact on the towns and communities beyond our campuses.

It is vital that the University continues its close relationship with local and regional authorities and other bodies, as well as the various stakeholders and the local community, and this needs to be at the forefront of any Travel Plan and its actions.

Reading

The London Road campus and much of Whiteknights Campus is situated within the Borough of Reading. Reading Borough Council (RBC) declared a Climate Emergency in 2019.

RBC's 2050 Vision envisages that, by 2050, "Reading will be an internationally recognised and economically successful city region, where low carbon living will be the norm and where people will be able to easily move around the town by foot, cycle and public transport."

The University plays a key role in the town's present and future, with a well-qualified workforce, vibrant student population, key landholdings and major development opportunities.

Wokingham

Part of Whiteknights campus spans into the Borough of Wokingham.

Wokingham Borough Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2019 and have an active Action Plan. Their fourth progress report (September 2023) details transport as the first of 10 priorities, targeting a 50% reduction in ICE private car mileage by 2030.

Henley-on-Thames

The Greenlands campus is located to the north-east of Henley-on-Thames and falls within the county of Buckinghamshire. Buckinghamshire are currently targeting for carbon Net Zero by 2050.

Henley-on-Thames Town Council itself (within the neighbouring district of South Oxfordshire) have established a Climate Emergency 2030 Working Group, seeking to reduce the carbon footprint of the Council and the town.

UNIVERSITY PROGRESS TO DATE

The University has made significant progress in implementing successful measures to support sustainable travel since the introduction of our first Travel Plan in 2000. Our progress can be built upon to seek to achieve the goals set within this next five years.

DISCOURAGING SINGLE OCCUPANCY VEHICLE (SOV) USE

Overall SOV use has decreased from around **50%** (staff) and **11.3%** (students) in 2012 to **33.5%** (staff) [1]and **10.6%** (students) in 2024.

Reductions in SOV use have primarily been achieved by an increase in working from home, followed by improving the attractiveness of alternative modes. This includes providing good information and support to students prior to arriving on campus at the start of the academic year.

It is important to recognise however, that of staff travelling to campus, 46.6% still travel by SOV.

1 Taking into account 'Work from Home'. See full data in **UoR Report** (**reading.ac.uk**)
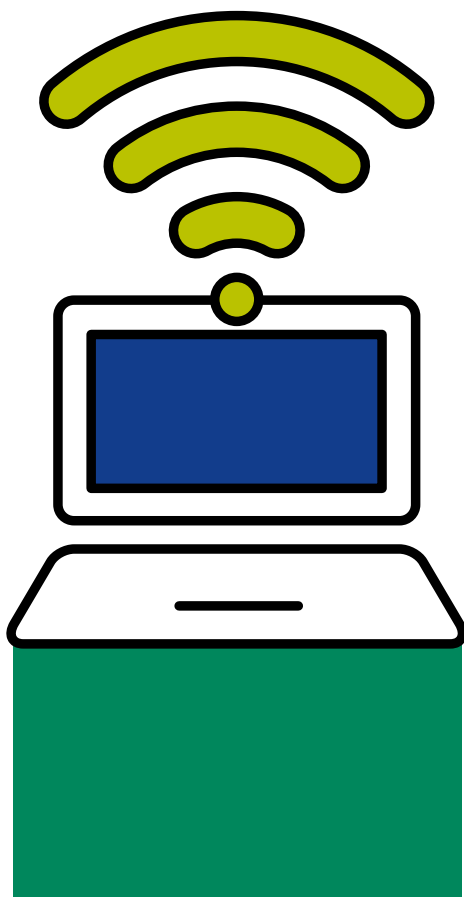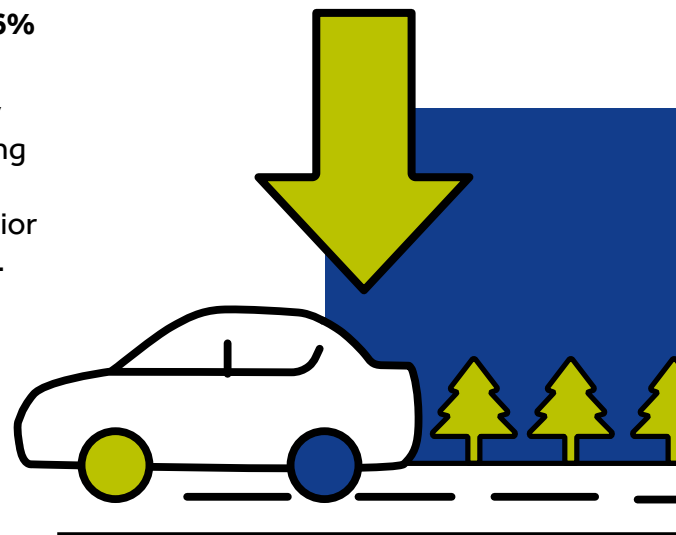
REDUCING THE NEED TO TRAVEL

Since the COVID pandemic significantly impacted the way we live, work and travel, flexible working practices have become embedded into our working policies.

The last two travel surveys have sought to monitor the impacts of working from home and flexible working on travel patterns, leading to a new approach in assessing the overall impact of staff and student commuting travel.

The 2024 travel survey revealed that staff respondents spent an average of **28.1%** of their week working from home.

BUSINESS TRAVEL

The University introduced a new business travel policy in September 2023 which aims to reduce business travel carbon emissions by 30% by 2026 (compared to pre-COVID levels) and by 50% by 2030. The policy requires that:

• Air travel is not permitted within the UK mainland and is to be economy only;

• For destinations reachable within 8 hours by train from London St Pancras, travel by train is required (other than in exceptional circumstances).

Additionally, the University has introduced a more robust analysis system for understanding the carbon impacts of business travel and has set annual targets for each School and Directorate, which are monitored and reported each quarter.
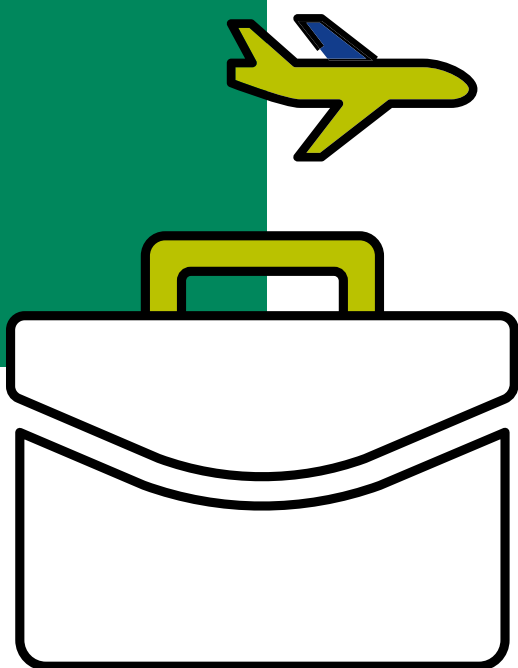
WALKING AND CYCLING

The University's cycle campaigns, run by a third party, are hugely successful, with free Dr Bike and training provided on a weekly basis during term time and second hand, low cost bike hire available throughout the year. Additionally, regular larger events are held including second-hand bike sales, additional safety campaigns and information provision in partnership with local charities and stakeholders.

Previous Travel Plans have supported improvements for walking and cycling, including the widening of paths around Whiteknights Campus. A Routes Strategy has identified further areas for potential improvement. Some improvements to cycle storage have also been made, including new cycle shelter designs and installations including at the library.

The 2024 travel survey demonstrated that, when taking account of 'Work from Home', almost **15%** of staff and over **53%** of students walk to campus, and almost **8%** of staff and **4%** of students cycle.
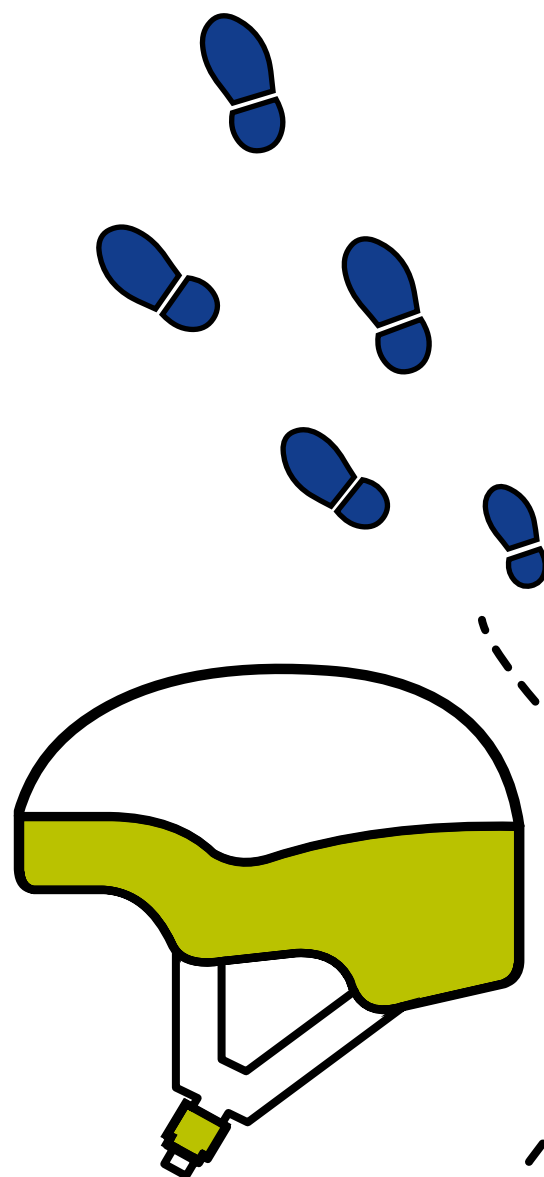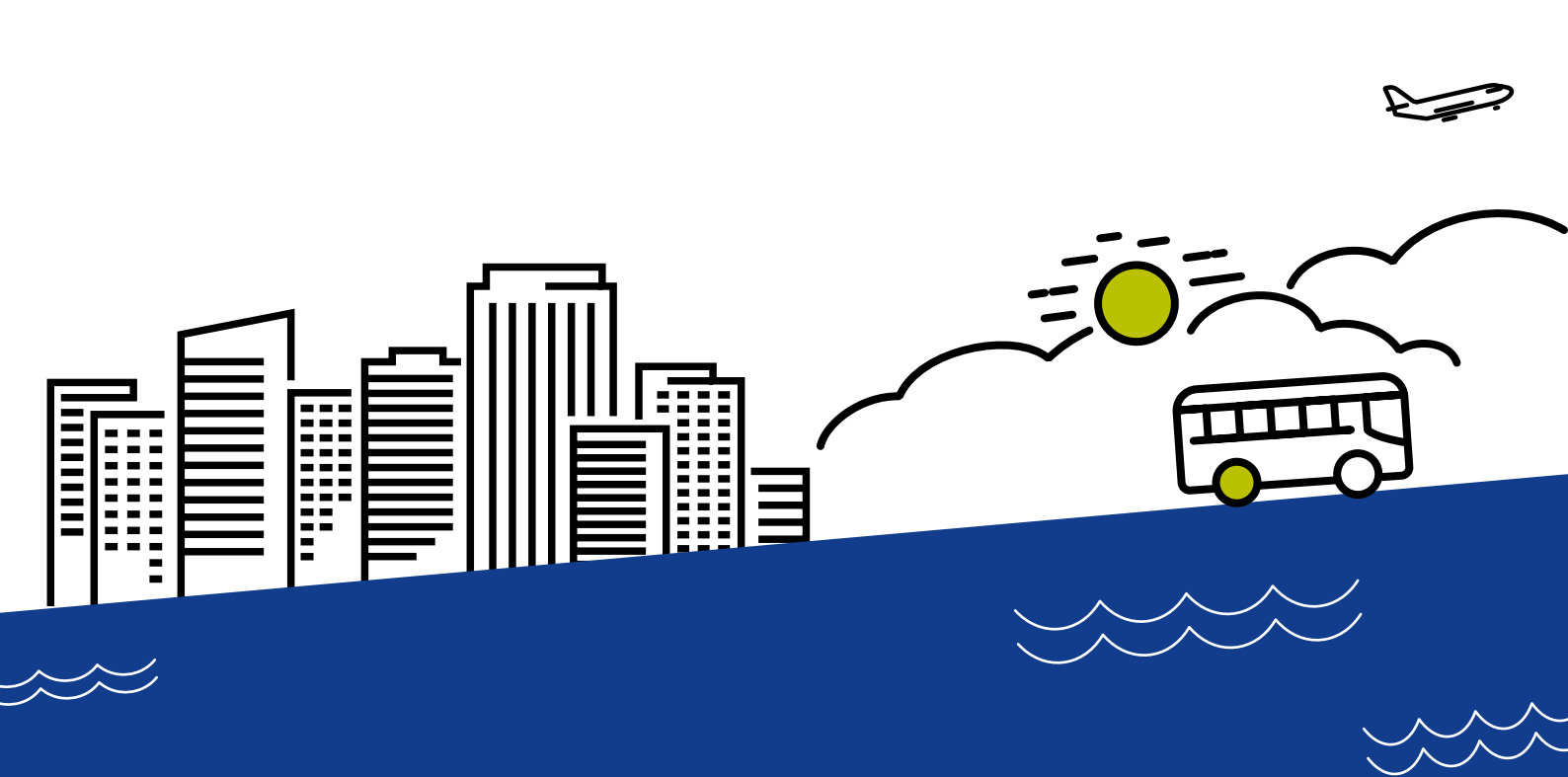
PUBLIC TRANSPORT

The University has a good relationship with Reading Buses and regularly meet and provide feedback to one another to continue to improve the service. Local bus services are used extensively; in 2022/23 the 21/21a saw almost **1.5 million** passengers (a **14%** increase from the previous year). The 19a, b and c services saw almost **500,000** passengers; a **43%** increase since the previous year. Whilst not all passengers are University staff and students, these two routes are the most popular routes serving the University.

In 2022, a free Park & Ride offer was introduced to all staff and students from Mereoak Park & Ride. Take up of this offer is increasing each month as awareness improves, with almost **550** journeys made per month on average during the Autumn Term 2023, compared with just **14** per month in Autumn 2022.

Great Western Rail (GWR) have developed a specific portal for the University which enables people attending our Open, Visit and Graduation days to access discounted fares. **32** people utilised this offer from April 2022 to July 2023.

The 2024 travel survey demonstrated that, when taking account of 'Work from Home', around **7%** of staff and **15%** of students take the bus to campus, and almost **5%** of staff and **14%** of students travel by train.
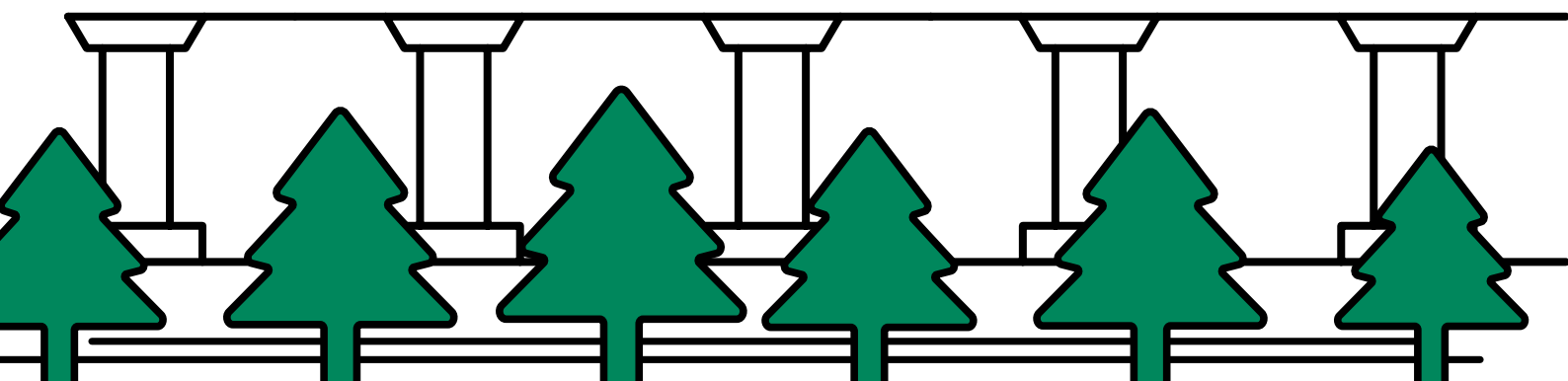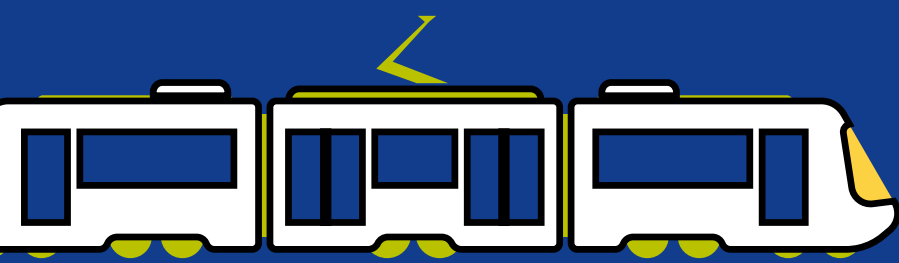
UNIVERSITY PROGRESS TO DATE

Lift Sharing

The University currently uses a lift-share platform on our Doing UoR Bit App to help lift sharers match. Due to low uptake on the platform, it is being discontinued at the end of the Summer 2024. The 2024 travel survey reveals that the majority of those who lift share (8.6% of staff and 4.8% of students) do so on an informal basis.

There is clearly potential to increase the number of staff and students lift sharing, including exploring alternative platform options and further encouraging informal lift sharing.

Electric Vehicles

EV take-up is on the rise, with a Government policy in place to end the sale of new petrol and diesel vehicles by 2035.

Whilst EVs are currently understood to have a reduced carbon impact at the point of use when compared to an ICE, the manufacturing process does have a carbon impact and the lithium in batteries is difficult to dispose of. Additionally, electric vehicles do not 'solve' congestion issues which are significant in Reading.

Nonetheless, there is considered a place for electric vehicles at the University amongst other modes. There are currently 12 chargers across our campuses (including 10 at Whiteknights and two at Greenlands), though some are for use by fleet vehicles only (such as catering and estates vehicles).

There is a clear increasing demand for EVs, with almost **30%** of staff and over **20%** of students stating in the 2024 travel survey that they are likely to buy or lease an EV in the next c.3 years. The University will need to consider and respond to this demand.

Car Clubs

Car club vehicles are 'pool' vehicles which can be booked an used by anyone who has signed up to the platform. At present, the University has arrangements with Co-Wheels for two car club vehicles which are based at Whiteknights campus; at Dunsden Crescent and St Patricks Hall.

Demand for these vehicles is fairly consistent, with approximately 12-14 bookings per month on each vehicle. It should be noted that both car clubs are available for public use as well as for staff and students, therefore some of these bookings are likely unrelated to the University.

There is certainly opportunity to increase the number of both car club vehicles and car club users through the Travel Plan.
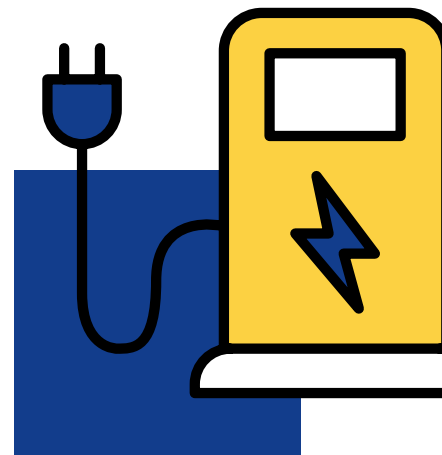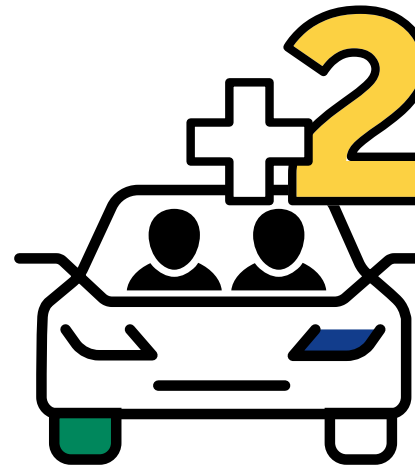
ENGAGEMENT

Engagement with staff and students is key to communicating our sustainable travel offers and achieving our objectives. We use the following methods of communication:

Sustainability Newsletter – 'Sustainability Matters' e-newsletter sent each month during term time, giving updates on sustainability related news across our campuses

Website – Dedicated sustainability website including specific travel pages which provide information, updates, incentives and more for staff and students travelling to, from and between our campuses. The pages also give information on how our travel policies relate back to the Travel Plan, Environmental Strategy and UN Sustainable Development Goals and provide links to the Travel Plan, travel survey results and other regularly updated information.

Social Media Platforms – Including Instagram, X (Twitter) and Facebook

Staff and Student News Portals – which are kept up to date with blogs, news stories and information, including information on getting to and from campus at the start of term

Sustainability Champions – A group of staff who represent each School & Directorate. Training is provided which is then disseminated within their own teams. Sustainability champions attend regular meetings and workshops and are able to provide input and feedback into the University's sustainability initiatives

Events – The sustainability team host events throughout the year including Green Festival, 'On Your Bike' days and monthly 'Smile with Sustainability' drop in sessions. Dr Bike and bike training sessions are held every Wednesday during term time. The team also supports many other events including Welcome Week and Show Your Stripes Festival.

HR Benefits – Staff have the option to be enrolled in various discount and incentive schemes to encourage sustainable travel. These include Cycle 2 Work, Bus 2 Work and season ticket loans for rail travel.
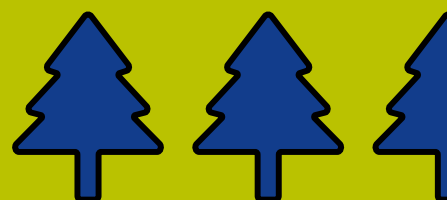
MONITORING

The progress of our sustainable travel measures are constantly monitored using various methods; including:

Monitoring of Travel Plan Incentives and Measures – Each measure introduced by the University is monitored, usually on a monthly basis to consider their impact and demand. this includes those identified above, such as take-up of the Mereoak Park & Ride offer, car club use, car sharing database sign-ups etc.

Travel Surveys - The biennial survey is open to all staff and students, asking questions relating to commuter travel patterns and their choices for using these modes. The survey provides opportunity for people to give feedback and suggestions to improve options, the attractiveness and incentivise switching to more sustainable modes. The Travel Survey is used to inform development of the Travel Plan and many of the measures committed to within this Plan have been developed as a direct result of the responses from the latest survey. The full analysis of the 2024 survey can be found **here**.

Feedback from Staff and Students –
The University's sustainability team engages with staff and students incl-uding in person (events, lectures) our online platforms and through our sustainability inbox which gives the opportunity for feedback on any initiatives, including travel related.
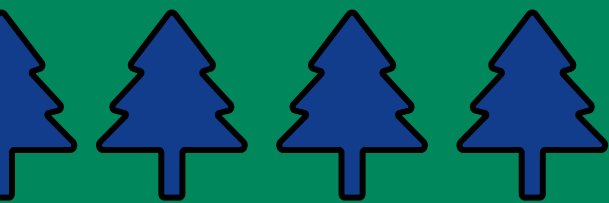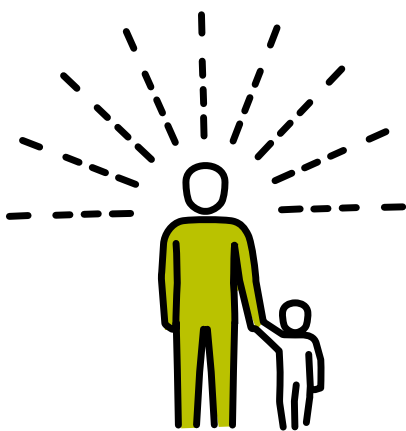
UNIVERSITY AND TRAVEL PLAN PRINCIPLES

The University Strategic Plan 2020-2026 sets out four guiding principles that underpin the University's aspirations, which are:

- **COMMUNITY - Putting our people first**

- **EXCELLENCE - Aspiring to the Highest Standards**

- **SUSTAINABILITY - Managing our resources for today and tomorrow**

- **ENGAGED UNIVERSITY - Impact beyond our campuses**

The Estates Strategy 2022-2032 has been developed to facilitate and enhance the delivery of the Strategic Plan and its' principles, creating a 10-year vision of a 'University in a Park'. It presents five strategic drivers; student experience, staff experience, growth, sustainability and risk and compliance.

The Travel Plan has been informed by both the Strategic Plan and the Estates Strategy, with four Travel Plan principles developed as follows:

TRAVEL PLAN
PRINCIPLE 1:

SUPPORT THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING OF OUR COMMUNITY

- Equal opportunity for sustainable travel options;

- Incentives are diverse to suit individual needs

- Priority given to solving existing issues that limit the ability to, or the attractiveness of, travelling sustainably.

ASPIRATION

Support sustainable travel opportunities for the whole University community in an inclusive, diverse way

ASPIRE TO ACHIEVE EXCELLENCE AND INNOVATION IN TRAVEL

- Plan for known and unknown changes in travel and habits with flexibility in measures and targets;

- Actively explore opportunities in innovation and the future of sustainable transport; including shared mobility, micro mobility and digitisation;

- Work with stakeholders and other partnerships to drive change and be at the forefront of innovative techniques

ASPIRATION

Be at the forefront of innovation in the transport sector; not just in research, but in practice at our campuses.
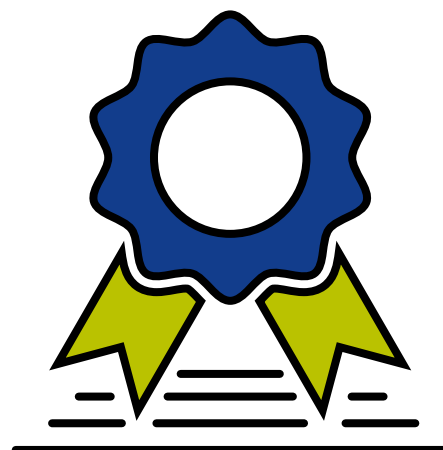
TRAVEL PLAN
PRINCIPLE 2:

A TRUE FOCUS ON ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

- Sustainable travel should be safe, flexible, inclusive and diverse to encourage take-up over higher carbon modes;

- Travel actions should be cost efficient to ensure viability

- Support is required from all levels, demonstrating the University's commitment to sustainable travel;

ASPIRATION

For travel to be truly sustainable, with full support in demonstrating this to our University people and community

TRAVEL PLAN
PRINCIPLE 3:

EXTEND THE REACH OF THE TRAVEL PLAN BEYOND UNIVERSITY GROUNDS

- Work with local partners to ensure a coordinated approach;

- Active engagement with the community in all measures;

- Continue to nurture existing relationships with sustainable transport providers and with local charities

ASPIRATION

To ensure our sustainable travel initiatives benefit, not harm, the surrounding community

TRAVEL PLAN
PRINCIPLE 4:

TRAVEL PLAN TARGETS

The Travel Plan targets for the next five years are ambitious. We have already made significant progress and need to keep this momentum to achieve our vision and the wider University aims; which includes a commitment to reach Net Zero by 2030.

The targets and objectives set out in this Travel Plan have been partly structured around the sustainable travel principles, where alternatives to SOV are prioritised in terms of their carbon costs as follows:

- *Reducing the need to travel (including between campuses)*

- *No carbon modes (walking and cycling);*

- *Low Carbon Modes (public transport, e.g. train and bus);*

- *Car Sharing and Responsible Car Use (including lower emission vehicles); and*

- *Reducing the need to travel at peak times.*

TRAVEL PLAN TARGETS – COMMUTING TRAVEL

The headline focus of the Travel Plan for commuters (staff and students) is to continue to reduce travel to and from our campuses by SOV.

In the past, both separate and combined targets for staff and students have been set, though use of combined targets has at times masked individual progress. Given this, and considering that staff and students have entirely different travel patterns, wants and needs, only separate targets have been set in 2024.

The targets are based upon the results of the 2024 Travel Survey. They consider the number of respondents who live within two miles of the University who currently drive and that the vast majority of these indicating that they would consider other modes. Of those living over two miles away, there was still some inclination to switch from car driving, though they were more likely to face practical barriers.

Staff Targets

The 2024 Travel Survey was the first time in which Work from Home has been considered separately to both SOV and sustainable modes. It is effectively a measure of 'reducing the need to travel' which is a key priority within the carbon hierarchy. However, as the Travel Plan does not have direct influence on the ability for staff to work flexibly or Work from Home, this has been grouped alongside sustainable modes for the purpose of establishing targets.

Mode	2024 Travel Survey	2029 Target	Target Difference
SOV	33.5%	27%	-6.5%
Sustainable Modes including Work from Home	66.5%	73%	+6.5%

*Sustainable modes includes walking, cycling, public transport, Park & Ride, car-sharing and car clubs.

Student Targets

The results of the 2024 travel survey have also been used to establish a baseline from which student targets are set.

Mode	2024 Travel Survey	2029 Target	Target Difference
SOV	10.6%	9.5%	-1.1%
Sustainable Modes including Work from Home	89.4%	90.5%	+1.1%

The first four objectives of the Travel Plan (in the following chapters) relate to seeking to meet these headline targets.

TRAVEL PLAN TARGETS – BUSINESS TRAVEL

The University has already put in place a Travel Policy relating to Business Travel, adopted in September 2023.

The Travel Policy's target is that business travel emissions are reduced by at least **30%** by 2026 (compared to pre-COVID levels) and by **50%** by 2030. This includes:

- A **60%** reduction in emissions for travel within Europe by 2026

- A **50%** reduction in emissions from non-economy class flights by 2026.

This Travel Plan supports the targets already set out and puts in place measures and actions which aim to help meet these.

OBJECTIVE 1:
## DECREASE SINGLE OCCUPANCY VEHICLE USE

CONTEXT

Reducing travel to the University by SOV underpins Principles 1, 3 and 4 of the Plan, including health and wellbeing, environmental sustainability and benefiting our local community.

Driving is often considered the most convenient, attractive option for travel, particularly for those who have responsibilities which can limit the use of other modes, or where other modes are not realistic options (such as distance being a barrier).

Travel by car is not always the most convenient mode, however. Congestion is a major frustration, leading to unreliability in journey times. Parking is another stress; both cost and availability. Many simply cannot afford a car, and running costs can be significant.

The negative impacts on car travel extend beyond the user and are felt by:
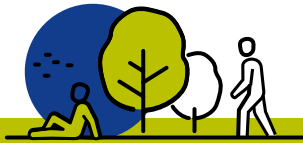
PEOPLE AND ESTATE

Vehicle dominated campuses reduce safety and security

Valuable estate covered by parking impacts on the look and feel of the campuses and land availability for other things (including open space, landscaping and natural habitats). Any increase in parking would be contradictory to the University's sustainability commitments

Pollution contributes to the poorer health of community and our campus ecosystems.

OUR LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Congestion and pollution negatively impact on the health and wellbeing of our local communities

The University plays a key role in ensuring ongoing viability of our transport networks. Over-reliance on car reduces viability of other modes, with knock on impacts to the community.

Parking issues extend beyond campus, impacting on the safety and attractiveness of surrounding streets.

WIDER UNIVERSITY REACH

The University is at the forefront of climate change research and our campuses are a direct reflection of that. We must ensure that we lead by example by providing alternatives to the private car.

Car travel plays a large part in our carbon footprint. In order to achieve Net Zero, we must consider the impacts that car travel has on achieving this goal

Ensuring the safety and capacity of our road networks forms a 'key test' in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF); thus supporting sustainable modes over SOV is a planning requirement

TARGETS

The overall target is that by 2029, SOV use for commuting is decreased to **27%** for staff and **9.5%** for students by 2029; a decrease of **6.5%** by staff and **1.1%** by students.

Reducing single occupancy vehicle use will require some difficult decisions. We may need to review our policies and processes to ensure that sustainable travel options really are the most attractive; and this could mean de-incentivising car travel for those that can travel in other ways alongside incentivising alternative options (as per Objective 2).
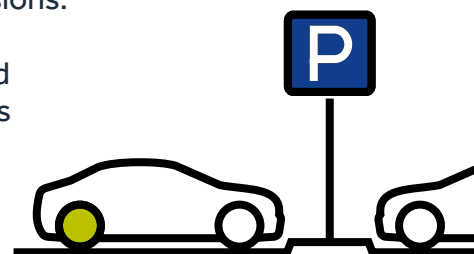
Challenges and Opportunities/Measures

Some of the challenges associated with reducing SOV are listed below, along with examples of opportunities and potential Travel Plan measures (or Actions).

Further measures and detail are included within the Action Plan in Appendix A.

CHALLENGES	OPPORTUNITIES/MEASURES
Lots of on-site parking and comparatively low prices compared with public transport (and other benchmarking Universities) leads to unfair pricing for those who cannot afford the cost of buying a car.	Review parking policy and charges, also considering/comparing with prices of other modes. This will need to be undertaken with transparency and discussion with key stakeholders.
Unfair parking charges for occasional users and for part time staff. This can lead to otherwise 'occasional parkers' obtaining an annual permit (and therefore driving much more than they otherwise may)	Review charges for part time and occasional parking to ensure that they are fair. Review process to ensure occasional permits are as flexible and easy to obtain as possible. Promotion of car clubs also provides an opportunity to reduce occasional parking.
At Whiteknights, Pay & Display parking is available, however departments are given a number of free permits per month and so many visitors do not pay for parking.	If free parking is provided, visitors are extremely unlikely to use sustainable modes. The policy should therefore be reviewed.
There is no eligibility criteria for staff parking. Criteria for students is not always effective or fair.	Review and seek to agree fair parking eligibility criteria.
There is no way of recording traffic movements or parking on-site, leading to safety concerns and those surrounding policing any illegal or unpaid parking.	To enable monitoring of traffic and use/demand of car parks, the travel plan supports the introduction of an ANPR system.
Additionally, there are known issues of rat running through Whiteknights campus by non-University traffic seeking to avoid congestion on surrounding roads.	This system should also be used in car parks to help to monitor any existing and/or new system put in place for parking management.

OBJECTIVE 2:
INCREASE SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL USE

CONTEXT

This objective supports all four principles of the plan and covers all modes of sustainable transport. It also considers emerging and future transport influences. For staff, 'Work from Home' is included within the overall target, though the Travel Plan itself has no direct influence on work from home policies or practices .

Encouraging sustainable travel does not mean forcing people to give up their car altogether. But in terms of travel to and from our campuses, it means putting in place attractive, realistic and convenient alternatives which encourage the more sustainable options over SOV (particularly ICE) travel when and where possible.

TARGETS

The overall target is that by 2029, sustainable travel for commuting is increased to **73%** for staff and **90.5%** for students by 2029; an increase of **6.5%** by staff and **1.1%** by students.

OBJECTIVE 2.1:
## Innovation in Shared Transport Opportunities

The future of transport is changing. People increasingly want multiple travel options and complimentary, supporting measures in one accessible place, giving greater flexibility and freedom in how they travel.

Considering this alongside Principle 2 (aspiring to achieve excellence and innovation in travel), this objective considers innovative ways to ensure access to all modes in one place (be it physical or digital). This includes:

MOBILITY HUBS (ALSO CALLED TRANSPORT INTERCHANGES)

Where modes are combined in one physical place alongside improvements to public realm and, where relevant, community facilities. Benefits include:

- Concentration of facilities promoting a range of modes;

- Provided that they are well located, they will be highly visible and attractive; incentivising use;

- By concentrating people, with CCTV and lighting and potentially a physical presence, they are safe places for meeting, waiting and securing cycles.

- Hubs can include digitisation and other measures such as MaaS, interactive wayfinding, electric charging, delivery points etc.
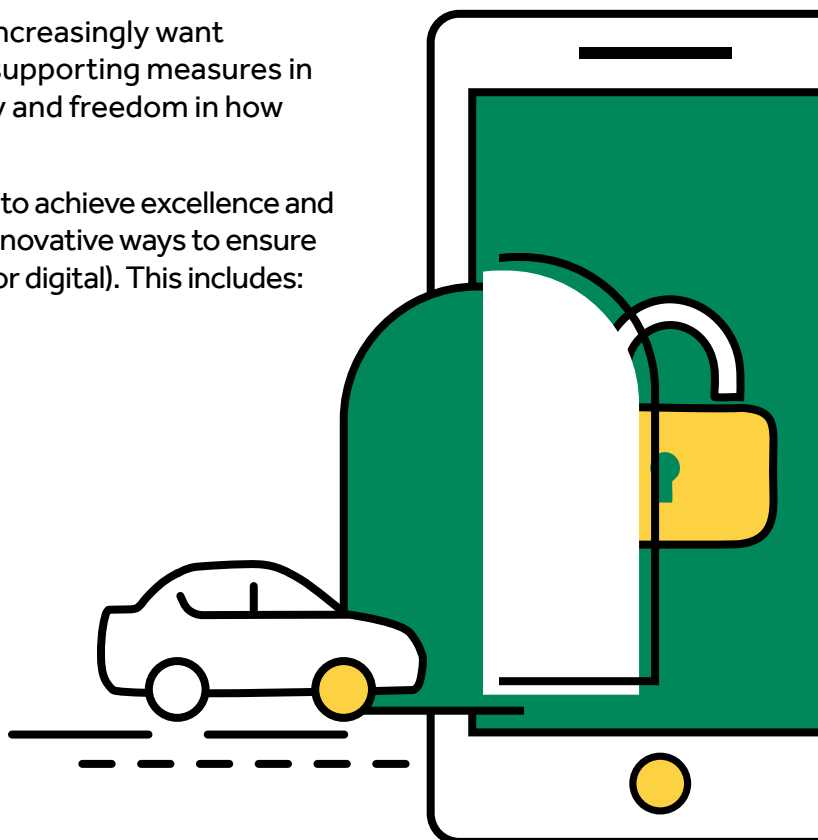
MOBILITY AS A SERVICE (MAAS)

A digital platform (usually an App) to enable users to access, pay for and get real time information on a range of public and private transport options. This may include:

- Booking and tracking public transport, timetables and accessing discounts;

- Secure access to cycle stores, E-bike charging, lockers and shower access;

- Booking of private hire vehicles; such as car clubs, bike hire etc.

- Accessing news or updates affecting travel or from the University (for example travel survey results, details of car park closures);

- Managing and booking parking;

- Reporting issues to Estates or security through the App.
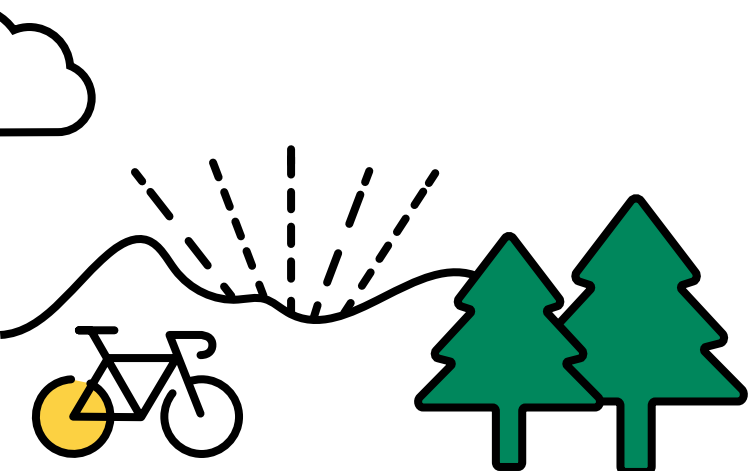
Challenges and Opportunities/Measures

Some of the challenges and opportunities/measures (or Actions) associated with supporting innovation in shared transport are listed below. Further measures and detail are included within the Action Plan in Appendix A.

CHALLENGES	OPPORTUNITIES/MEASURES
Effectively catering for multiple mode options in a 'hub' requires innovation, finance and a physical space	Trial a transport 'hub' or similar to establish demand and feedback. This could include non-transport elements (such as recycling points).
Similar digital Apps are available, however often cater to individual modes and associated with specific organisations	Explore MaaS options, including with RBC, as they are also considering MaaS as part of their Transport Strategy
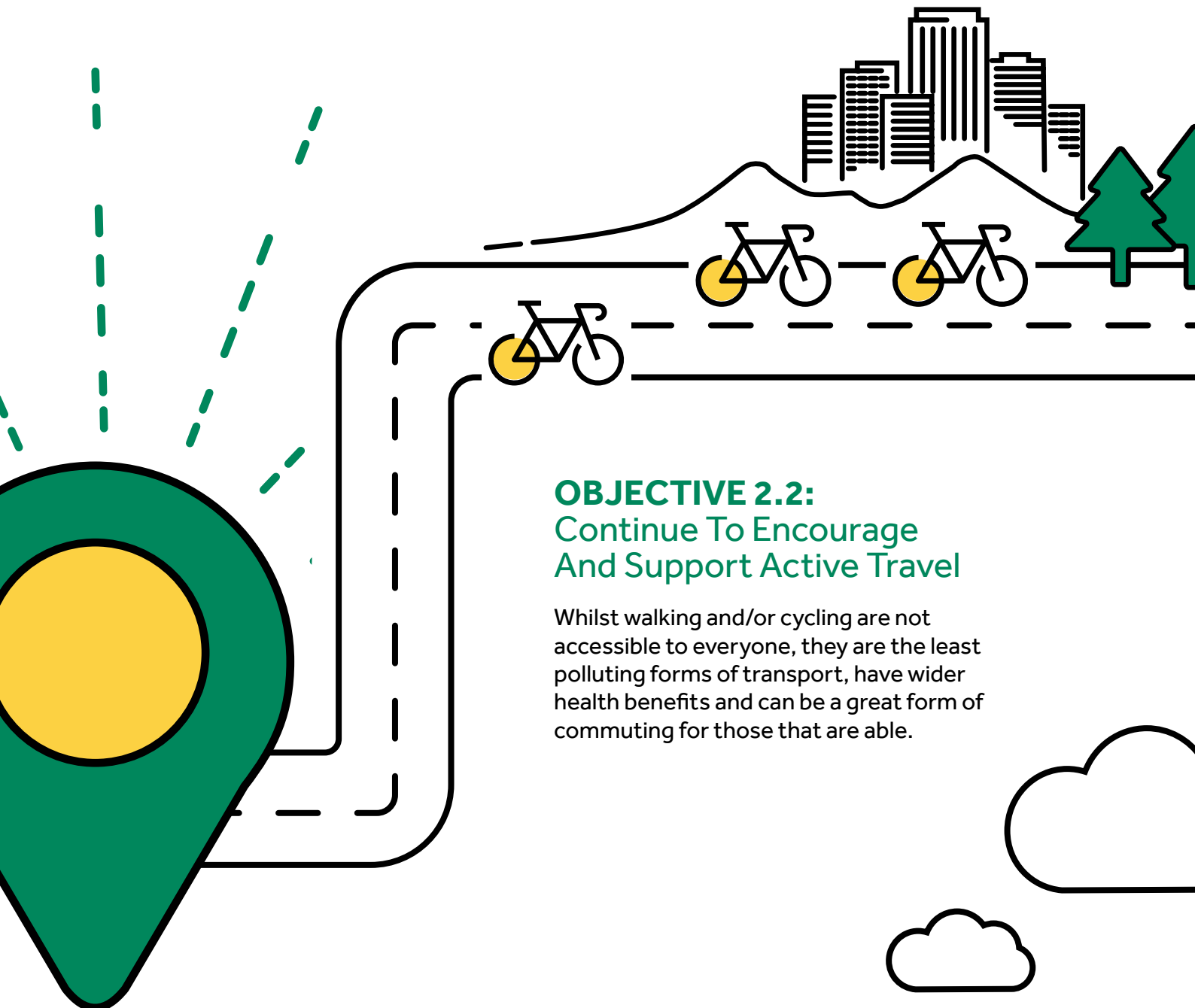
OBJECTIVE 2.2:
Continue To Encourage And Support Active Travel

Whilst walking and/or cycling are not accessible to everyone, they are the least polluting forms of transport, have wider health benefits and can be a great form of commuting for those that are able.

Objective 2.2: Challenges and Opportunities/Measures

Some of the challenges and opportunities/measures (or 'Actions') associated with supporting active travel are listed below

CHALLENGES	OPPORTUNITIES/MEASURES
Active Travel is not accessible for all, or requires additional support.	• Review cycle parking (including for adapted cycles) and seek to improve over course of the Travel Plan. • The rise of e-bikes is increasing the accessibility and attractiveness of cycling. Continue to review e-bike and e-scooter policies in line with government guidance. • Review quality of paths across and access to and from campus and consider improvements • Continue existing second hand bike-hire scheme to provide access to low cost bikes and consider the potential to expand
On-site safety concerns can be barriers to walking and cycling. For walking, this includes lighting, route widths and routes and CCTV. For cycling, this also includes cycle parking	• Ongoing review of routes including lighting and widths, including across the lake and also considering potential for delineated or segregated walking/cycling routes • Work to improve the quality of cycle parking facilities across each campus. Alongside, review cycle parking guidelines to ensure consistency. • Support wider CCTV project, including improving CCTV at any new cycle store. • Other security measures, such as bike lock sales, improved information on cycle security, bike tagging at events.
Off-site safety concerns are also a barrier, including a lack of safe, direct routes, safety issues at junctions and crossing points	• Continue close working relationship with RBC and WBC and input into any relevant consultation and feedback on schemes, Transport Strategies etc., • Lobby to improve off-site junctions and crossings and help to provide support where possible and where improvements will directly benefit the UoR community.
Existing shower, changing and storage facilities are limited and/or not fit-for purpose	• Review existing provision across each campus and devise priority plan for improvement • Consider interim improvements such as altering opening hours
A lack of confidence often leads to people not wanting to commit to trying cycling	• Continue to run successful cycle training scheme with external provider • Continue to run successful cycle maintenance programme with Dr Bike • Continue to work with RBC and WBC to improve local routes, alongside on-site improvements • Review cycle to work scheme to ensure offer is appealing • Investigate the potential for Pool Bike scheme

It is important, particularly for walking and cycling objectives, that any measures consider the University's biodiversity objectives.

OBJECTIVE 2.3: Continue To Encourage And Support Public Transport

Bus travel is an attractive option for many commuters, particularly where services are frequent, direct and more convenient than driving. Park & Ride allows for driving most of the way, but avoiding the most congested parts of towns and cities, instead using the bus. Rail travel can be an attractive option for longer journeys, again where services are frequent, convenient and priced attractively.

Objective 2.3: Challenges and Opportunities/Measures

Some of the challenges and opportunities/measures (or 'Actions') associated with supporting public transport are listed below. Further measures and detail are included within the Action Plan in Appendix A.

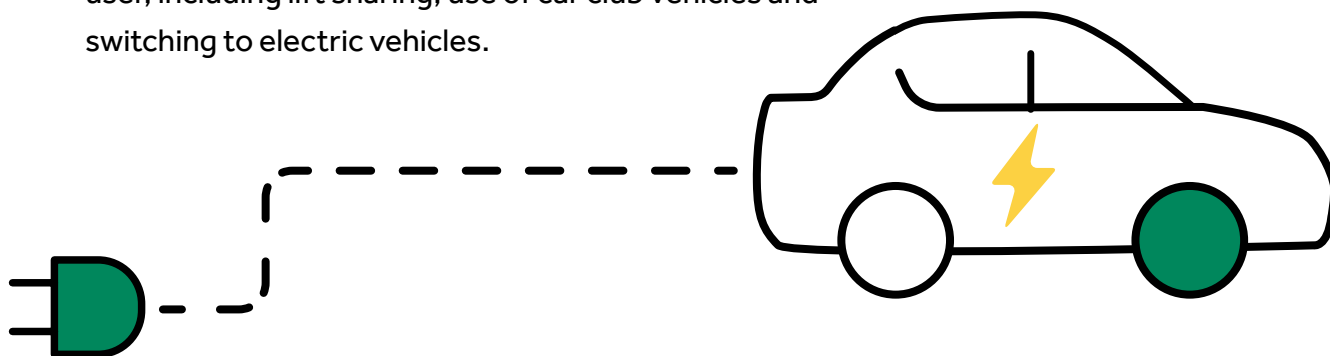| CHALLENGES	OPPORTUNITIES/MEASURES
The cost of public transport is a barrier to many, with car travel often much cheaper (particularly when users have a car already for use outside of work.)	• Seek to agree extension to bus discounts with Reading Buses • Continue to run free P&R service between the University and Mereoak and consider options to extend to other sites • Seek to extend the GWR 20% discount for Advance Single Fares for events at the University to those attending Visit, Open and Graduation days • Review options for further discounts to bus/train tickets
Regardless of cost, public transport is not accessible for all, with location and time being two of the biggest barriers	• Work with bus companies to review the most common and beneficial routes, looking to review/refine or alter these. This should focus first on the 21/21a to aim to provide a non-stop service between the town centre and Whiteknights campus, potentially extending to other routes • Review timetabling of key bus services with Reading Buses particularly outside of term time
Continued improvements are necessary to ensure , involving engagement	• Engage with Carousel buses and seek to refine service for Greenlands
Many simply aren't aware of some offers or need further information which prevents them from using services	• Continue to work with Reading Buses to improve other routes, potentially including RBC and WBC • Regular monitoring of bus services to review current service and identify any opportunities/improvements • Raise awareness of existing public transport discounts/offers

OBJECTIVE 2.4: Support Responsible Car Use

As well as travelling less altogether or switching modes to active or public transport, there are other measures which can limit some of the negative impacts of car driving on the environment whilst having other benefits for the user, including lift sharing, use of car club vehicles and switching to electric vehicles.

Challenges and Opportunities/Measures

Some of the challenges and opportunities/measures (or 'Actions) associated with supporting responsible car use are listed below. Further measures and detail are included within the Action Plan in Appendix A.

CHALLENGES	OPPORTUNITIES/MEASURES
Lift sharing requires pre-planning and often additional time for drop off/pick up and can therefore be seen as less attractive than driving alone	• Promote the benefits of car sharing including financial savings and engagement with colleagues/friends. • Review current lift-share platform and seek to improve. Investigate wider scheme to increase pool of car sharers • Consider ways of incentivising (for example dedicated parking, cheaper parking, flexibility in working patterns or guaranteed rides home)
There is increasing demand for EV charging points across each campus which needs to be addressed, but in a manageable, sustainable way	• Install new EVCPs at London Road, and prepare a programme of works for the other campuses • Continue to monitor demand through the travel surveys and through data from our EV provider(s)
The University has two car clubs which are well used, though not necessarily by UoR staff/students	• Investigate the potential to move the existing car club vehicles to more visible locations • Increase promotion of the car clubs, including monitoring use • Install new electric car club ('Co-Wheels) at London Road Campus including EVCP charge point • Explore potentials for discounts for staff members and students using the car clubs

OBJECTIVE 3:
REDUCE EMISSIONS FROM BUSINESS TRAVEL

The University's business travel emissions have grown significantly in recent years, accounting for around a third of the University's carbon footprint.

Some international travel is essential to maintain the University's global reach, however there are opportunities to either reduce travel through use of video, phone and conferencing technologies or use lower carbon alternatives such as train travel over plane.

The University has already put in place a Travel Policy relating to Business Travel, adopted in September 2023. The Travel Policy's target is that business travel emissions are reduced by at least **30%** by 2026 (compared to pre-COVID levels) and by **50%** by 2030.

The measures put in place as part of the Travel Policy include:

- Air travel is not permitted in mainland UK;

- If travelling internationally to a destination reachable within 8 hours by train from London St Pancras, train travel must be taken (other than in exceptional circumstances covered within the Policy);

- Any air travel must be economy;

- Public transport should be used rather than taxis in the first instance, though taxis can be booked for safety reasons.

Alongside this, a new target and monitoring system has been established for each School and Directorate, managed by the Travel Plan Officer. Each Quarter, a report is prepared to provide the School or Directorate with their own progress against the annual and a stretch target, and each recipient is given the opportunity to discuss their progress or any questions.
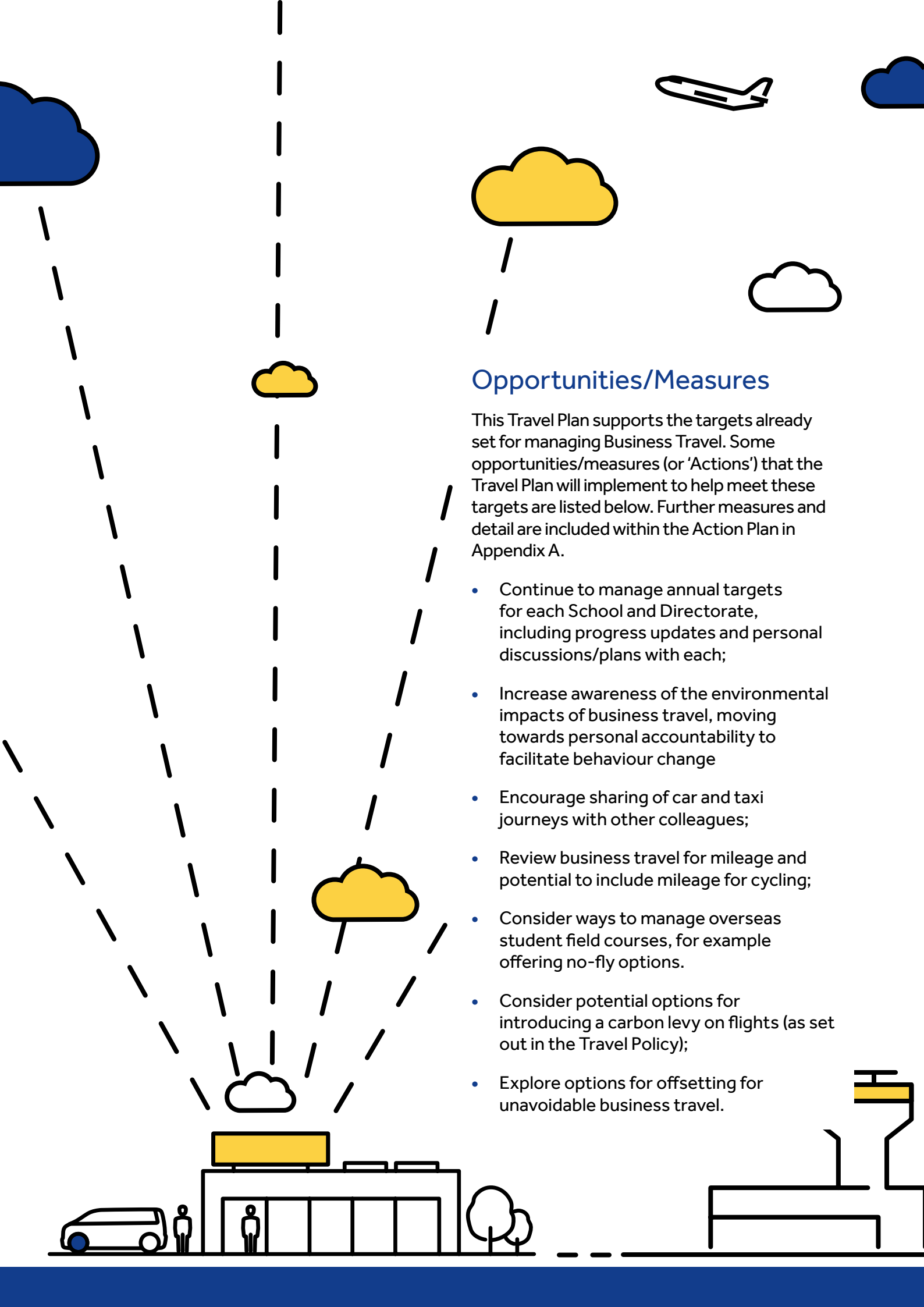
Opportunities/Measures

This Travel Plan supports the targets already set for managing Business Travel. Some opportunities/measures (or 'Actions') that the Travel Plan will implement to help meet these targets are listed below. Further measures and detail are included within the Action Plan in Appendix A.

- Continue to manage annual targets for each School and Directorate, including progress updates and personal discussions/plans with each;

- Increase awareness of the environmental impacts of business travel, moving towards personal accountability to facilitate behaviour change

- Encourage sharing of car and taxi journeys with other colleagues;

- Review business travel for mileage and potential to include mileage for cycling;

- Consider ways to manage overseas student field courses, for example offering no-fly options.

- Consider potential options for introducing a carbon levy on flights (as set out in the Travel Policy);

- Explore options for offsetting for unavoidable business travel.
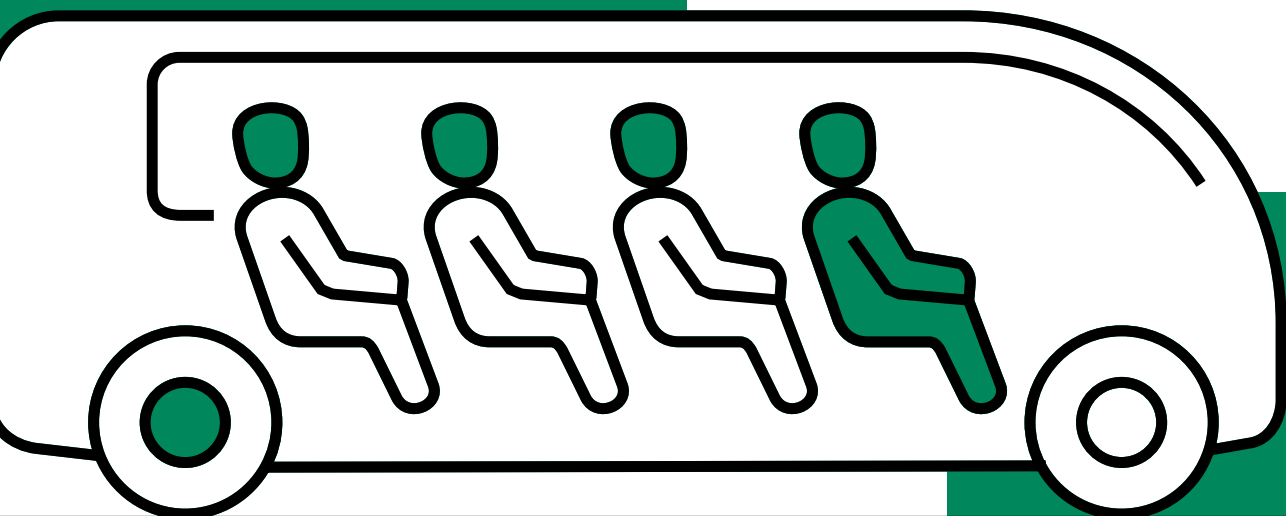
OBJECTIVE 4:
MANAGE TRAVEL BY FLEET AND OPERATIONAL VEHICLES

Emissions from the University's fleet vehicles account for only a minimal proportion of its overall carbon footprint, however it is important that the way that our staff travel whilst at work is fully considered alongside commuting and business travel.

Opportunities/Measures

Some opportunities/measures (or 'Actions) that the Travel Plan will implement to support improved sustainability by fleet and operational vehicles are listed below. Further measures and detail are included within the Action Plan in Appendix A.

- Support the transfer of fleet to electric vehicles, including reviewing the replacement policy alongside colleagues;

- Consider ways to reduce the number of ICE cars/vans within the University's fleet (potentially consolidating numbers) alongside colleagues;

- Investigate alternatives to cars/vans, such as cargo bikes or e-bikes.

OBJECTIVE 5:
MANAGE TRAVEL BY VISITORS AND DELIVERIES

The University has limited control over the way that visitors and delivery vehicles travel. However, visitors include prospective students and staff and often numbers of both visitors and deliveries are significant (for example on and around open days and graduation).

It is important that it promotes itself as a sustainable, accessible destination from the outset so that car driving is not relied upon and sustainable practices can be embedded from the outset of a student or staff members' time at the University.

The University already has many effective measures in place to support open days, graduation and other large events, such as:

- On open days, shuttle bus between Reading station and Whiteknights campus;

- On graduation, shuttle buses operating between Whiteknights and London Road campuses;

- (as previously noted) Train discounts with GWR on open, visit and graduation days;

- On open days, free train travel from some deprived postcodes for prospective students and one accompanying person.

Opportunities/Measures

There are opportunities for further improving sustainable travel for visitors at large events, as well as providing measures for smaller scale events and other visitors, including for deliveries. Some examples are listed below. Further measures and detail are included within the Action Plan in Appendix A.

- Better (or earlier) information on sustainable travel prior to open, visit and graduation days;

- To encourage other modes, such as Park & Ride for large events;

- Consider existing visitor car parking permit policy and seek to refine to encourage other, more sustainable modes;

- Review tender specifications for suppliers and contractors to require that they have low emitting fleet for the delivery of goods

- Explore ways to consolidate deliveries within or across departments.

DELIVERING THE PLAN

Implementing the Travel Plan takes time, effort and financial resources. The University appointed a new Sustainable Travel Officer in October 2023, who is the author of this document and is responsible for continuing the implementation of the Travel Plan and its activities on an ongoing and full-time basis.

Additionally, it is crucial that the Travel Plan has wider support. The Travel Plan co-ordination role sits within the wider Sustainability team for the University, which also deals with other operational functions including Waste & Recycling and Energy. The sustainability team is committed to ensuring the highest quality and standards surrounding all aspects of sustainability at and beyond the University.

Through preparing this Travel Plan, extensive engagement has included:

- Travel Survey provided all staff and students the opportunity to provide feedback on existing and potential future travel options, including multiple choice and free text questions;

- Specific meeting held with the Travel Working Group to discuss and input into the Travel Plan;

- In-person Workshop facilitated by an external consultant was undertaken with the Sustainability Champion Network, who represent a wide range of voices across the University;

- The Plan was presented to the Estates Leadership Team and Estates Committee to gather additional feedback.

The Travel Plan is endorsed by senior management including the Vice Chancellor. It is an active part of the University Sustainability Strategy. Management at the University are key for the Plan's long-term success; ensuring that appropriate funds are allocated, actions are delivered, and support is given to the Travel Plan Co-Ordinator.

COMMUNICATION

The way that the Plan and its measures are communicated are paramount to its' success. The University's Sustainability Team already has various communication platforms as outlined previously including the newsletter, sustainability champions and dedicated webpage, and hosts/attends various events throughout the year.

The measures outlined within this Plan and the accompanying Action Plan will be communicated through these, though the Action Plan does also contain further measures to continue to improve methods of communication and promotion.

MONITORING AND REPORTING

The progress of the Travel Plan is managed by the Sustainable Travel Officer and supervised by the Sustainability Director within Estates. The Travel Plan is overseen by the University's Environment and Sustainability Committee (ESC), chaired by the Vice Chancellor. Annual action plans (which are aligned to the overarching 5 Year Plan) are defined and agreed for delivery by the Sustainability team and reported to the Estates Committee.
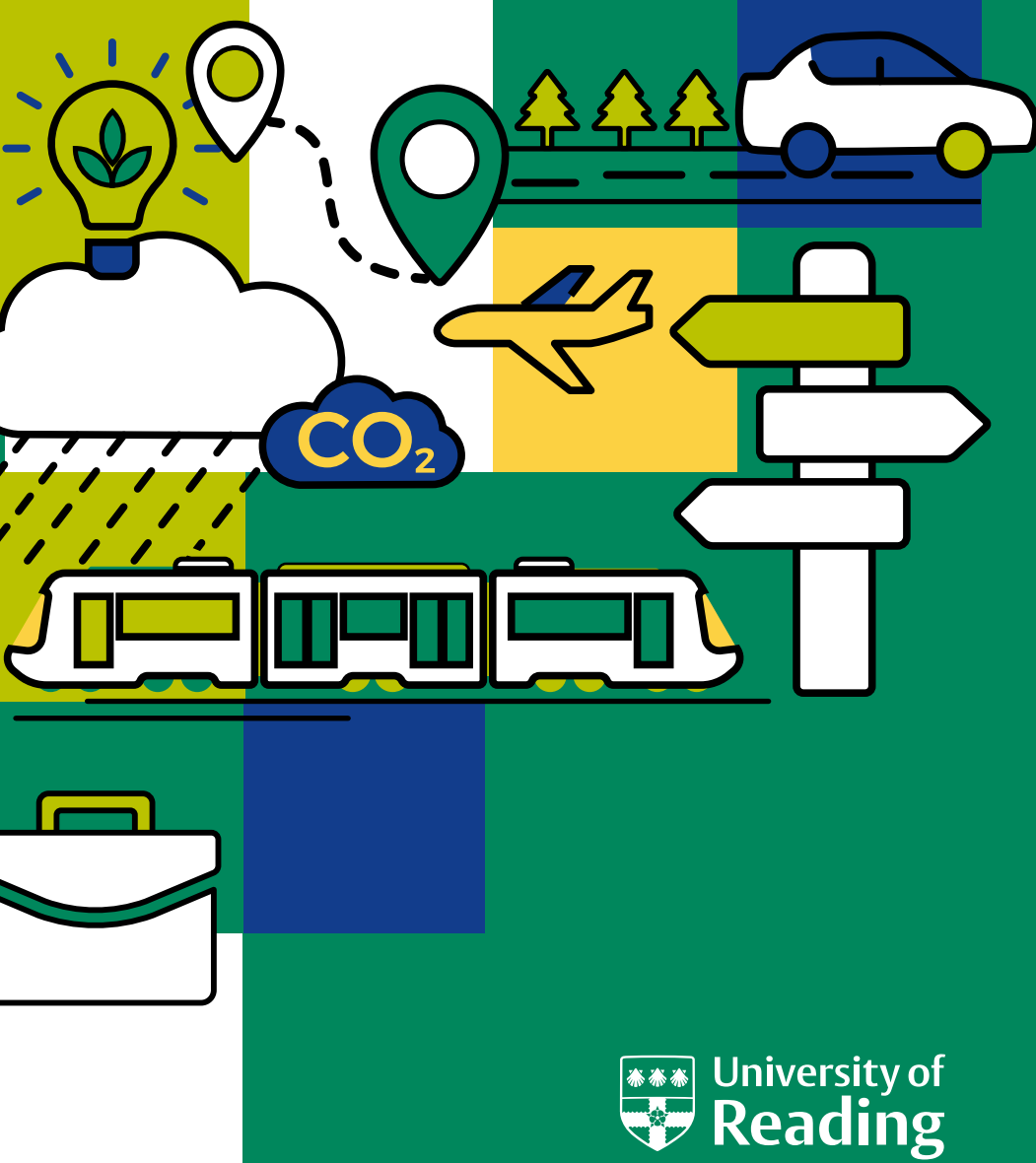
Ongoing monitoring of the various actions and incentives is continuous throughout the year and includes feedback from staff and students, monitoring of car club use, lift share platform activity, Park & Ride take-up, parking permit numbers and cycle parking activity (including recording thefts and attempted thefts).

The Travel Plan actions also include active engagement with external stakeholders, including local councils, bus companies, cycle charities and other local groups.

Every two years, the Travel Survey is undertaken which provides all staff and students the opportunity give up to date information about how and when they travel, by which mode, and their reasons for doing so (or for not using alternative modes). The travel survey also gives the opportunity for staff and students to give their own opinions on what they would like to see improved, any measures or incentives that they feel should be introduced, and give feedback on existing provision, measures or incentives.

FUNDING

The Travel Plan measures are primarily funded by income generated by staff and student parking permits and pay & display parking. Other sources of funding include parking penalty notice charges, grant funding secured via external partnerships, and central University project funding.

University of Reading