

TRAVEL PLAN ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 2020 – 2021

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2. UPDATED TRAVEL PLAN ACTION PLAN

For the full Travel Plan Action Plan please see the following link:

<https://sites.reading.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/15/2019/01/UOR-Travel-Plan-2017-2022-amended-Jan-2019.pdf>

3. USAGE DATA FOR TRAVEL INITIATIVES

This section provides an update on the uptake and usage of travel initiatives over the 2020-21 year, where data is available. The first of these reports was produced for the 2016-17 academic year.

A. STAFF HR BENEFITS

The University offers several salary sacrifice schemes and travel benefits which are available for staff in order to encourage sustainable modes of travel.

The Mycar scheme was removed as a staff benefit during this period and there are currently no plans to replace this scheme. The Covid 19 pandemic and work from home directives have resulted in large decreases in both rail season ticket and bus to work loans. It is hoped that these will increase once people return to campus.

	Scheme description and notes	No of participants at 31 Jul		
		2018/2019	2019/2020	2020/2021
Mycar	Purchase a car through Salary Sacrifice (Only available for Ultra Low Emission Vehicles). Participation lasts 36 months.	18	4	8
Cycle2work	A discounted Salary Sacrifice scheme which lasts 12 months.	14	32	25
Season Ticket Loans	For rail travel (lasts 10 months)	7	3	1
Bus to work – annual and 90-day loans	Significantly discounted bus pass cost, deducted from net salary in equal instalments over 3 or 12 months.	246	186	57

B. BUS USAGE

The ongoing disruption caused by the Covid 19 pandemic is shown in the figures relating to bus usage. Overall there were 176,904 journeys made on the 19a/b/c service in 2020/2021, this is compared to 305,305 in the 2019/20 period.

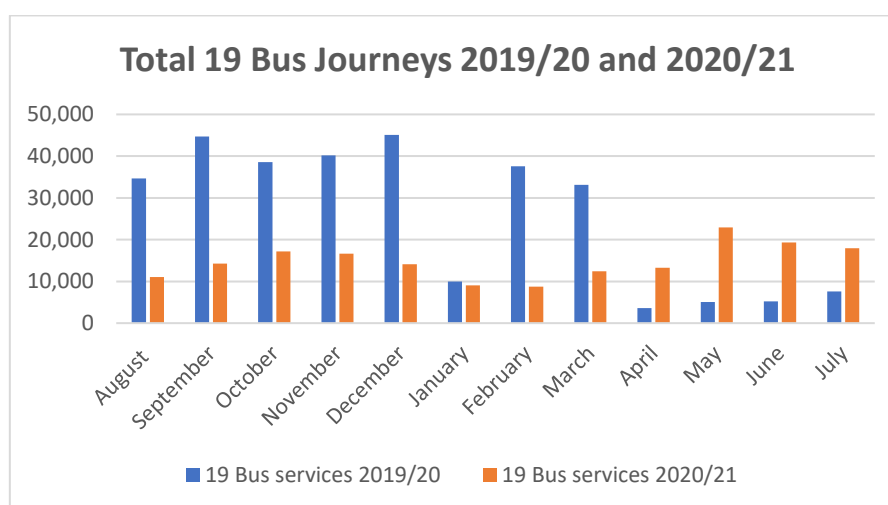


Figure 1 - Total 19a/b/c bus journeys made over the 2019/20 to 2020/21 periods.

Figure 1 illustrates the changes in the monthly pattern of bus travel for the 19a/b/c services over the last two data periods. This clearly shows the impact of the various Covid 19 lockdowns and the overall decline in passenger numbers.

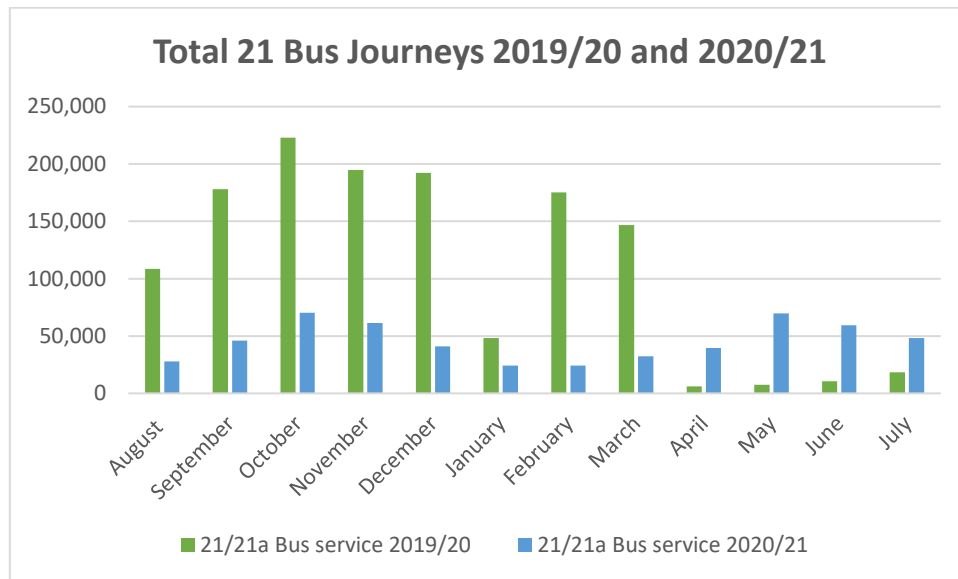


Figure 2 - Total 21/21a bus journeys made over the 2019/20 to 2020/21 periods.

The decline in passenger numbers was particularly marked for the Claret 21/21a service, which saw a decline from 1,309,011 to 544,543 from 2019/20 to 2020/21. The monthly pattern of passenger numbers is shown in Figure 2. It is hoped that the gradual lifting of restrictions and changes to the work at home guidance will see a resurgence of passenger numbers as we move into Autumn 2021.

C.CO-WHEELS CAR CLUB

There are two Co-Wheels car club cars available for hire – with one based at Dunsden Crescent in Park Group halls and the other car at St Patricks Hall. There has been a further marked increase in usage from previous years, rising from 514 to 625 annual bookings in the 2020/21 data period. This shows resilient levels of demand despite the disruption caused by the Covid 19 pandemic (see Fig 3).

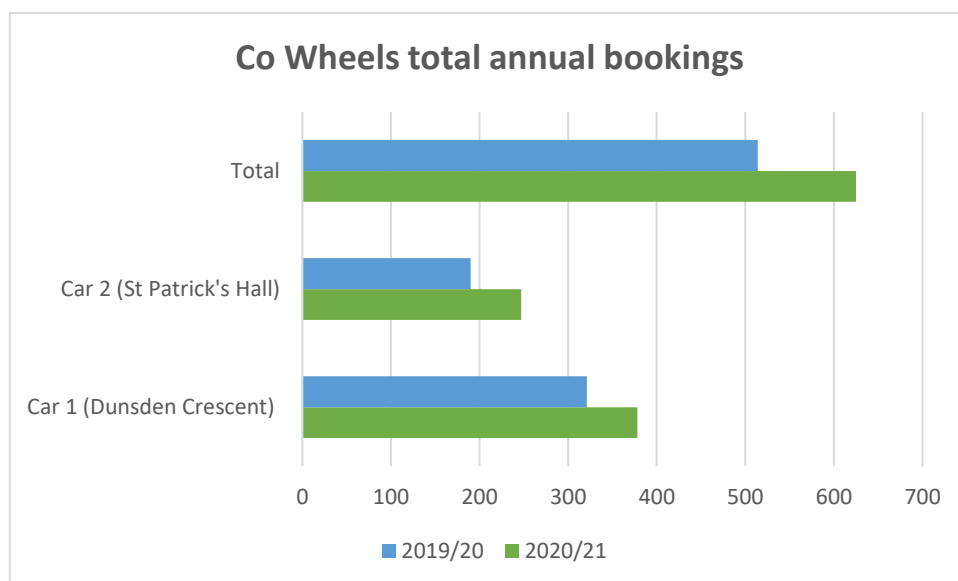


Figure 3 - Total annual bookings made 2019/20 and 2020/21.

Car 1 was the more popular car for bookings and had a utilisation rate of nearly 32% during the data period. Car 2 was used considerably more than the previous year and achieved a utilisation rate of 25%.

D. ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGE POINTS (EVCP)

The University has 2 EVCP's installed at the Sports Park pay and display car park on the Whiteknights campus and 1 EVCP installed at Henley Business School on the Greenlands Campus. They are all managed via the BP Chargemaster system.

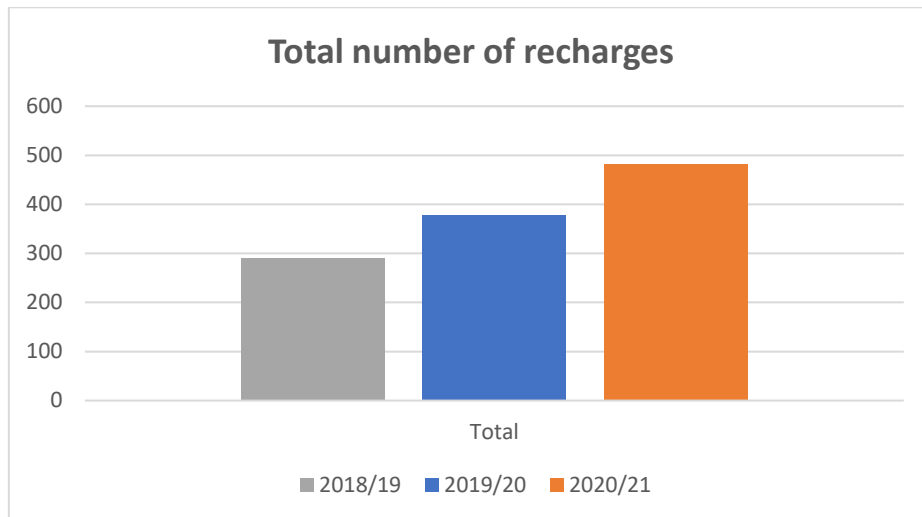


Figure 4 – Total number of recharges at all 3 EVCPs over the 18/19, 19/20, 20/21 data periods

There has been a steady increase in the total number of recharges since July 2018, with an increase of nearly 100 recharges per data period. This shows the growing popularity of EV vehicles and we expect usage to continue to increase. This trend will influence whether other EVCP locations are considered.

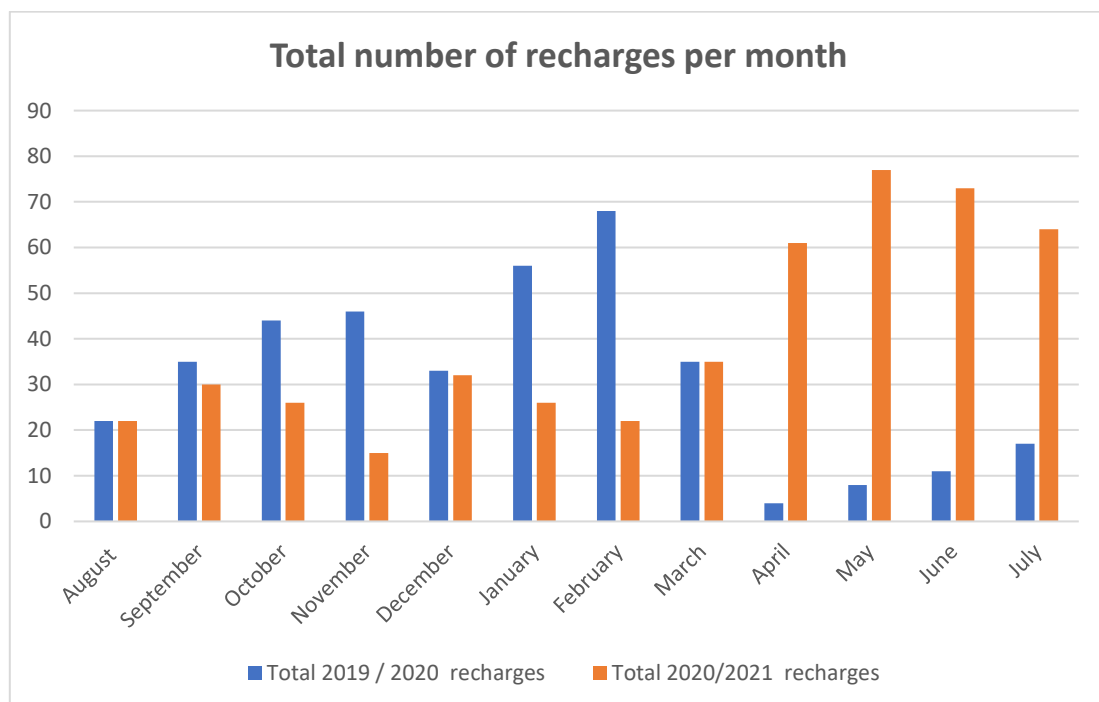


Figure 5 – Combined total monthly recharges at all EVCPs over the 19/20 and 20/21 data periods

Despite the overall number of recharges increasing, there was marked variation in the monthly picture which shows the huge impact of a number of Covid 19 lockdowns. However all 3 EVCPs were used consistently throughout the week, which shows they are being used by both the university and local community. The majority of these recharges are for under 4 hours in duration.

E. EASIT DISCOUNT CARD

The Easit network provides a number of travel-related discounts, some of which are available through registering online, and others require the purchase of an Easit card at £5.05 per year.

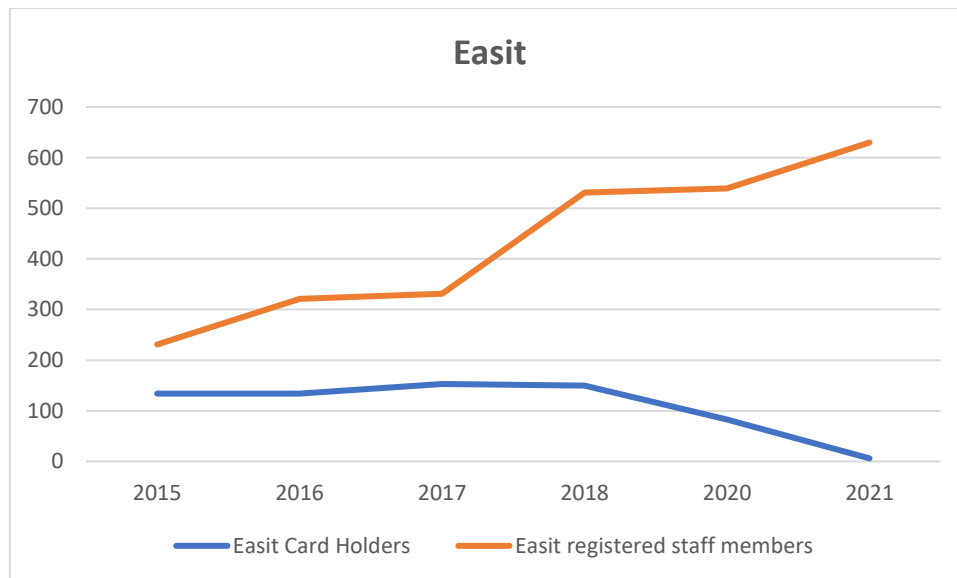


Figure 6 – Numbers of Easit card holders and Easit registered staff members

There has been a marked decrease in the number of Easit card's purchased, reducing from 83 to 6 over this data period. This shows the impact of a number of lockdowns and significantly reduced commuting. Easit expect to see an increase as staff return to campus.

Despite this marked drop in the number of cards purchased, the number of staff registering on the Easit website has increased from 539 to 630. This allows them to take advantage of other Easit initiatives such as discounted bus travel, car sharing and Halfords bicycle discount.

F. CYCLE SKILLS SESSIONS

A range of activities and initiatives promoting cycling were run throughout the year, when permissible, coordinated by project provider Avanti Cycling. There has been continued engagement and good attendance at activities despite it being another "unusual" year in terms of what activities were permitted, no large scale welcome week promotions and a requirement to operate more frequent, smaller events and training.

Over 100 trainee attended sessions took place; comprising 35 individual participants (i.e. an average of 3 sessions per individual). This was a mix of relatively experienced cyclists requiring refresh and roads confidence sessions and quite a large number of complete beginners needing several lessons before progressing onto cycle paths/ roads. Many were 1-1s or some 1:2 to ensure adequate distancing throughout

The breakdown for 2020/21 being:

- A total of 40 'Back on bike' sessions, with 62 attendees
- A total of 25 'Urban Commuting' sessions, with 40 attendees
- In addition 12 students and staff came to Learn to Ride lessons – a number of whom were complete beginners others who had not cycled since childhood. It's very encouraging to watch them progress through the levels of training and now cycle regularly for study; work or leisure
- A handful of leisure rides were run for newcomers and international students but we could not hold the usual promotional week larger participation rides (e.g. Student Wellbeing / Bike week)

Several factors seem to be helping the continued interest:

- Complete flexibility on the timetable of training and design of session to fit individuals (around the broad course descriptions) – particularly being able to offer out of term and evening sessions
- Running regular weekly events
- Incorporation of cycle training with the bike recycling and Unicycle bike hire schemes
- Continued momentum in communication and spreading of word by attendees / social media & variety of internal comms

G. BIKE MAINTENANCE SESSIONS

Dr Bike free maintenance

Dr Bike visited the campus on 15 occasions – weekly or fortnightly throughout the “permissible” periods right up to the end July. This provides free at point of use cycle checks; basic maintenance and advice on further repairs needed for over 90 staff and students.

Reading Bike Kitchen (RBK)

RBK held 6 pop-ups typically running for 3 hours providing safety checks; basic repairs and maintenance guidance / support for around 30 staff and students (some cross over between Dr Bike and RBK attendees) and supporting the refurbishment / recycling of abandoned bikes.

These repair sessions continue to be extremely popular and are generally run over lunchtime or towards end of the day to maximise potential for those working and studying to attend. The engagement with Reading Bike Kitchen has strengthened over the last few years and helps increase those who can be supported and continues drive more self-sufficiency across more cyclists.

The purchase by RUSU of outdoor basic maintenance equipment in 2019 (located by the Library covered bike racks) was sadly vandalised relatively quickly and the pump has been repaired several times but still mostly out of action. Therefore the tools bought in 2018 by this project are helpful to have onsite- securely stored in locations at Whiteknights and London Road Security offices.

H. CYCLE EVENTS

- Engaging our project provider, Avanti Cycling, from early August meant we were able to flex the timetable in line with continued Covid and University guidance. Unfortunately, we were unable to the following planned activities this year: pre-term and welcome week, an On Your Bike day in January and other large scale activities for post- Easter & Bike Week also had to be cancelled.

- However, during the Green Festival in November 2020, a number of cycle-based events ran as part of the programme including Light Up promotions and bike repair / recycle events.
- Plans remain in place for 2021/22 to hold a ‘Cycle to Work’ day as part of staff “Well-being” week in September and lots of participation in the RUSU organised events during 2021 Welcome Week and a further ‘On Your Bike’ day in October. This will be offering secondhand bike sales as well as promoting the entire range of cycle activities and facilities available. Generally, over 300 students (and many staff) participated in one or more of these events. A key part of this success was the improved recycling of abandoned campus bicycles, which was developed more fully in 2019/20.

I. UNICYCLE BIKE HIRE

This scheme allows for staff and students to hire a recycled bicycle at relatively low cost and much lower risk to buying. The hire and deposit fee includes reflective security lights and high-quality lock.

There has been a steady increase in participation over the years. During 2018/19 the numbers grew exponentially due to a new pool of bikes and extensive promotion - which unfortunately didn't continue to the same extent in 2019-20. This was partly due to the cost of the scheme increasing (to £30/ term and £100 deposit); and following poor weather in Autumn 2019 a huge reduction in students on campus – especially international students.

The Cycle Project Manager continues to provide hands on support for the hire bike and recycled sales schemes - fitting students and staff to appropriate bicycles, going over safety tips and information as well as providing basic riding training. This support is planned to continue into 2022/21 with an aim to increase the take up of hire bikes through further promotion and review of charges.

The volume and availability of Hire Bikes for 2021/22 is still under consideration by RUSU as the scheme requires considerable time and effort to administer. Based on prior years' success and overall benefits, resource / funding support is expected to continue in full scale (with over 30 hire bikes in the fleet).

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019/20	2020/21
Number of Unicycle hires	18	11	78	20	12

J. WEBSITE HITS

The cycle web pages had over 2,000 hits in 2019 – 2020. Unfortunately the website hits data for 2020/21 are not available at the current time.

K. BUSINESS TRAVEL

Business travel is discussed within the monitoring of the University's Carbon Management Programme.

4. COMPLETED TRAVEL PROJECTS

Project	Impact	Travel Plan budget cost
Complete installation of EV chargepoints at Greenlands	Ability for EV owners to charge vehicles at Greenlands	£33,863
Black Bridge - Bridges Hall path widening	Improve 'shared space' between cyclists and pedestrians	£45,628
Cycle skills sessions, safety promotion & maintenance	Improved cycled skills, confidence and safety	£10,800
Travel subscription licences	CoWheels, Easit, Chargemaster, JUMP	£5,442
Bus & cycle shelter cleaning		£4,078
Total Spend		£101,611

The 2020/21 travel budget has been limited by a significant drop in car parking income, due to the low presence of staff on campus caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.