

- Parking restrictions and charges do discourage car use – and will be accepted if funds raised are used for transport improvements
- Partnerships with innovative bus operators can dramatically increase usage

Highly Commended:

University of Derby

- A Car Pool Supports Travel Improvement

Until recently the Kedleston Road campus and the streets around it had a serious parking problem. Parking permits were ended for most full-time students and charges were introduced for staff (based on their salary) and part time students (a flat rate). An Automatic Number Plate Recognition system was installed to enforce the scheme, to enable rebates to infrequent users, and to make the car parks more secure.

The additional income enabled the appointment of a transport and travel manager; a halving of fares on the University's Unibus service (resulting in a near doubling of usage); and a car sharing website. In partnership with Toyota, a pool car scheme that includes a Prius hybrid has been established – and has the advantage of costing 25% less per mile than paying staff mileage expenses for their own cars. Further improvements are planned, with targets to reduce the percentage of staff commuting as single car users from 75% in 2004 to 63% in 2008, and to halve the number of student car journeys to campus over the same period.

James Brown, Transport and Travel Manager, believes that "the introduction of parking charges was controversial, but using revenues to solve obvious problems and achieve environmental goals has led most people to accept them."

Oxford Brookes University

- Creating Attractive Alternatives To The Car

A Green Commuter Plan was introduced in 1999 and has been implemented through annual action plans, funded by a ring fenced £60,000 per annum from parking charges (which will be increased further when daily charges are introduced in 2006).

A 'BrookesBus' service linking the three main campuses with each other, and residences has – together with discounts on other Oxford bus services through a uni-rider pass – led to a fivefold increase in bus travel. This has also been encouraged by car exclusion zones on campus, and an on-line car sharing scheme (subsequently expanded to cover Oxford University, 4 local hospitals and the City Council). Cycling has been supported by providing showers, weekly cycle maintenance sessions and a cyclist's mailing list. A leaflet also details four different walking routes to the Headington Campus, and the calories they should burn off!

Harriet Waters, the University's Environmental Co-ordinator, stresses the importance of "regular marketing of travel plans and improvements around the University to keep the issue in the forefront of people's minds. BrookesBus even has a website (www.brookesbus.net) which is interactive, and gives timetables and journey times – it actually makes public transport look 'sexy'!"

Judges' Comments on Transport

"The trend for more higher education staff and students to commute to and from campuses by car contributes to congestion, is incompatible with the Government's targets for reductions in CO2 emissions and air pollution, and is less healthy than cycling or walking. The University of Southampton's pioneering uni-link bus service shows that the trend can be reversed through thorough "homework" to identify and then address the deficiencies of existing provision; progressive improvements to bus and cycle alternatives to the car, and excellent marketing. The result is a better student experience - which helps recruitment – and benefits to local communities.

The successful schemes at Derby, Hertfordshire, Oxford Brookes and Sheffield Universities also suggest that parking charges and restrictions – whilst always controversial - can be helpful in encouraging switching from cars, but only if the revenues are applied to the development of more sustainable alternatives. Notable measures include the University of Derby's halving of student bus fares and development of a car pool, Hertfordshire and Oxford Brookes' well marketed bus services, and the University of Sheffield's formal partnership with local hospitals and other organisations. All five universities have also found business as well as environmental benefits, including improved reputation amongst host communities and students and freeing up of parking space for other uses."