

CASE STUDY

BATH SPA UNIVERSITY



Challenge

Bath Spa University has approximately 8,000 students and around 1,000 staff. The main campus is at Newton Park with additional sites around Bath and another campus at Corsham, Wiltshire. Altogether, the University manages approximately 80 buildings.

Research shows Bath to be in the UK's top ten of most congested cities, costing the city almost £120 million in 2017. On average, commuters in Bath spend 12% of their driving time sitting in congestion.



Bath Spa University understands that commuting and business-related travel, whilst essential for the University's employees, have a negative effect on local congestion and pollution. As a result, they are committed to minimising the health, social and environmental impacts of staff travel. The University embraces a strong environmental ethos, managing its impact through the internationally recognised standard ISO14001.

The Sustainability Team at the University supports cycling and many of the staff and students choose to cycle to the Newton Park campus, with the University providing covered bike racks and shower facilities. Always looking to improve, the University decided to review its Cycle to Work Scheme provision to see if it could be changed to encourage more staff to cycle to work.

Solution

During 2017, the University's Sustainability Team approached Green Commute Initiative to discuss adding the GCI scheme to the staff benefits package.

Although the University already had a Cycle to Work Scheme in place, the incumbent scheme could not provide bikes over the usual £1,000 limit which was a barrier for some staff, particularly as it excluded most ebike purchases. Therefore, the Sustainability Team's original plan was to run GCI alongside the current provider.

However, during the discussions with GCI, Bath Spa University learned that GCI as well as not having a £1,000 limit, does not charge a scheme exit fee. These fees can be as much as 7% of the original cost of the bike package, making a significant dent in the tax savings originally made by the employee, and often coming as an unpleasant surprise to scheme participants. Realising that GCI has the best Cycle to Work Scheme offering, the University chose to make GCI their sole scheme provider.



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Implementation

Green Commute Initiative set-up the University on its Corporate Portal, which enables the appointed Scheme Manager to approve and progress-check applications. Through the portal, the Scheme Manager sets scheme parameters such as a £2,000 spend limit on bike packages and a salary sacrifice period ranging from 3 to 24 months.

The Sustainability Team produced an information leaflet about cycling to work and promoted GCI to University staff through the HR Newsletter and new starter information packs as well as through staff networking groups.

Results

The scheme went live in 2018 and since then more than 110 members of staff have taken part in the scheme. Order values have ranged from £340 to £4,500 with a large proportion of the bikes being electric. Accessories such as helmets, locks, lights and mud guards are frequently added to bike packages. Since 2018, the total value of bikes and accessories ordered through the scheme comes to more than £118,000. The total employee tax savings achieved exceeds £55,000. The University has also saved approximately £25,000 in reduced employer National Insurance Contributions.

The scheme has been well received by both the University and participants. The Sustainability Team has found the scheme easy to implement and the portal user-friendly whilst staff are discovering the positive impact that cycling has on personal health, fitness and finance.

Local independent bike shops including AVC Bath, EcoMove Bristol, Okehampton Cycles and Take Charge have all benefitted from the extra business that the scheme has brought them, helping to keep the high street alive.

Julian Greaves, Sustainability Manager, said:

“We wanted to improve our cycle-to-work provision and after researching the market there was no doubt that Green Commute Initiative had the best offering currently available. The no £1,000 spending limit really helps our staff members get the bikes they want and they don’t get stung with scheme exit fees. Adding a Green Bike Pool to our sustainable transport options has been a great success and we are proud that the university has been able to reduce its impact on the local environment by limiting the number of short car journeys made. E-bikes are amazing.”

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Green Bike Pool

Whilst the new Cycle to Work Scheme was being set-up, the Sustainability Team had discussions about introducing a pool of ebikes. The University wanted to encourage all staff to use ebikes instead of their own cars when making the short journey between campuses, a journey which is typically 5-6 miles.

As a result, GCI put forward the Green Bike Pool Initiative; a scheme which enables clients to hire a pool of ebikes for a period of 12 months. Ebikes are perfect for those who are not used to cycling. Hills and distance are no longer obstacles and riders can wear their normal business clothes without getting hot and sweaty.

The Sustainability Team chose a fleet of six bikes; four Raleigh ebikes and two Wisper folding ebikes. The ebikes were sourced by Green Bike Pool from local bike shop, Take Charge, who were responsible for the regular safety checks. The team also purchased additional accessories, such as panniers and helmets.

As part of the 12-month hire package, Green Bike Pool provides insurance and gold standard locks. The insurance policy also provides for a breakdown recovery service should there be a problem with the bike. Bath Spa University paid for the hire charge over 12 monthly instalments and at the end of the 12 month period they choose to re-hire the same bikes at a 50% discount. Alternatively, they could have chosen to get an entire new fleet with a new 12-month agreement.

The ebike pool was made available to all staff members and the booking in/out process was managed by the University's Procurement Team in conjunction with the Green Bike Pool online portal. The bikes were available for both official University travel as well as leisure purposes.

The ebike pool went live in March 2018 and within the first nine months the bikes clocked up more than 1,000 miles which equated to reduction of approximately 0.52 tonnes of carbon dioxide. This helped the University to achieve it's objectives of reducing emissions and improving air quality.

GREEN BIKE POOL INITIATIVE

Transform your travel policy with an ebike pool

START A REVOLUTION IN YOUR WORKPLACE

WHAT IS AN EBIKE POOL?
An ebike pool allows you to provide staff with active travel options when they make work-related journeys such as travelling to different office locations or supplier meetings. The ebike pool will consist of a number of electric bikes, typically five or more, which you loan out to employees.

WHY JUST EBIKES?
The key to making your bike pool a success is to make it easy and accessible for all potential users and ebikes make cycling much easier for users of all abilities. Ebikes are great for building the confidence; distances become less of an issue and hills flatten when you have the battery power to help out tired legs. As the battery takes on the hard work, there's no need to get hot and sweaty; normal work attire is fine to wear.

EBIKE POOLS MAKE GREAT BUSINESS SENSE

- COST EFFECTIVE**
The rising costs of car use and public transport can constrain travel budgets. An ebike pool will help relieve these budgetary pressures, enabling you to reallocate part of the travel budget to other areas of the business.
- NET ZERO**
For organisations striving to achieve Net Zero targets, sustainable transport solutions have a crucial role to play in bringing down emissions.
- QUICKER AND MORE EFFICIENT JOURNEYS**
Ebikes can support much quicker journey times in urban areas, particularly those where there are congestion hotspots, helping employees spend more time performing their duties.