

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 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 E-bike 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These fees can be as much as 7% of the original cost of the bike package, making a significant dent in the tax savings originally made by the employee, and often coming as an unpleasant surprise to scheme participants.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 offering, the University chose to make GCI their sole cycle-to-work provider.

No Limits
Cycle to Work
Any Bike, Any Price

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Implementation

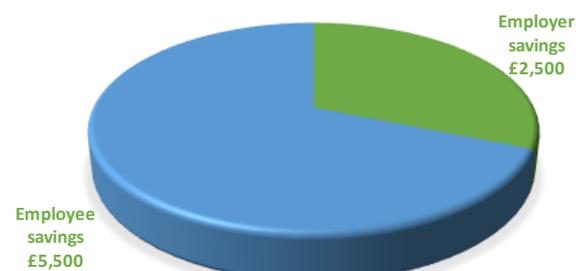
Green Commute Initiative set-up the University on its Corporate Portal, which enables the appointed scheme manager to approve and progress-check applications. Through the portal, the scheme manager sets scheme parameters such as a £2,000 spend limit on bike packages and a salary sacrifice period ranging 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 in the first nine months, 16 members of staff have taken part in the scheme, with order values ranging from £480 to £2,000. Bike brands chosen include Cube, Raleigh, Giant and Specialized, and 44% of the bikes are electric. Accessories, such as helmets, locks, lights and mud guards are frequently added to bike packages. To November 2018, the total order value was more than £18,000 which represents a total tax-free saving of more than £5,500. The University has also saved approximately £2,500 in reduced employer National Insurance Contributions.

SAVINGS MADE USING GCI



The scheme has been well received by both the University and participants. The Sustainability Team has found the scheme easy to implement and the Corporate Portal user-friendly. Whilst more staff are discovering the positive impact that cycling to work has on personal health, fitness and finance, the local community is also benefitting.

Local independent bike shops including AVC Bath 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, there were discussions about introducing a pool of E-bikes. The University wanted to encourage staff to use E-bikes 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 E-bikes for a period of 12 months. E-bikes 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 E-bikes and two Wisper folding E-bikes. The E-bikes were sourced by Green Bike Pool from local bike shop, Take Charge, who is also responsible for the safety checks which are carried out every eight weeks. 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 to satisfy the insurance requirements. In addition, the insurance policy also provides for a breakdown recovery service should there be a problem with the bike. The University pays for the hire charge over 12 monthly instalments and at the end of the 12 month period they can choose to re-hire the same bikes at a 50% discount, or get an entire new fleet complete with new manufacturer warranties.

The E-bike pool is made available to all staff members and the booking in/out process is managed by the University's Procurement Team using the Green Bike Pool online portal. The bikes are available for both official University travel as well as leisure purposes.

The E-bike pool went live in March 2018 and within the first nine months the bikes have clocked up more than 1,000 miles which equates to reduction of approximately 0.52 tonnes of carbon dioxide. This impressive start is helping the University to achieve it's objectives of reducing emissions and improving air quality.



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