

TravelSmart Consultation Summary

In February 2012 we consulted you regarding changes to UWE transport and parking under the “TravelSmart” programme. This package of measures was designed to safeguard the UWE Masterplan and future travel provision by ensuring we reduce reliance on single occupancy car journeys while investing in good quality alternatives.

We are grateful to the 429 people who responded formally as well as others who commented on the proposals in meetings with the UWE Transport department.

The following table indicates how we responded to your comments.

| You said... | We did... |
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| You had concerns over the new cost of parking under the proposals and why it should apply to Frenchay campus only | <p>Because the requirement for a 25% cut in parking only applied to Frenchay Campus Masterplan, originally the changes were only proposed to affect that campus. However all campuses will benefit from the revised bus service, parking and cycle improvements and in time all campuses will migrate to Frenchay and need to meet the same target – therefore the charges will now apply to all campuses.</p> <p>We researched travel costs and according to the AA a 5km return journey to UWE in an average car has variable costs £1.45 a day, plus fixed costs of £1.30. The current price of Wessex bus tickets compares favourably with this figure.</p> |
| You said that the number of buses are not sufficient to cater for growing demand, are unreliable or expensive | This year we have increased the Wessex Fleet by another five vehicles – accommodating over 350 extra passengers at peak times. More close management of service failures and timetable has resulted in significant improvements compared with 2010/11 academic year. |
| You were concerned about the effect of the proposals on staff morale and recruitment/retention. | HR statistics have shown that since the first travel plan was introduced five years ago the % of staff citing travel difficulties as a reason for leaving UWE has dropped dramatically. The most contentious issue for staff was the 3km exclusion zone and this is not now being taken forward. |
| You thought that introducing higher parking charges at the same time as £9k fees will deter students from applying. | <p>The proposals will only restrict parking for future students.</p> <p>There is no evidence from other Universities that raised parking charges affects student recruitment. In contrast, prospective students rate parking facilities of relatively low importance compared to public transport and other facilities.</p> <p>Student surveys suggest that overall accessibility is much more important, this includes whether buses are reliable or have to sit in congestion, standard of facilities, journey times and frequencies of buses to key locations and whether campus has good nearby facilities. A survey of accommodation at Swansea showed that availability of parking ranked 12th out of 13 factors when choosing where to live. Of the twelve most important factors for students choosing where to study, “quality of public transport” was seventh but parking did not feature at all in the list, being cited as an “other, less important factor”.</p> <p>Significant research including the 2010 HEFCE report indicates that good quality transport links to campus is a high priority for prospective students, particularly amongst those wishing to study</p> |

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| | <p>STEM subjects. There is research evidence that strongly indicates that this is the main priority and that students subsequently then choose the method of transport that is most likely to fulfil. Therefore if the bus service is inadequate, they or their parents may consider car purchase.</p> <p>Additionally, the master plan will place greater pressure on the bus services which for a significant proportion of students are their only realistic option for travelling to campus. The % of students who rely on buses is greater than the % who drive to UWE.</p> <p>It is therefore vital that UWE continues to offer a good quality transport link in the form of an expanding Wessex Red service as well as upgraded cycle, motorcycle and parking facilities. Overall, satisfaction levels on Wessex Red (based on independent surveys) easily outstrip most other bus providers in the South West and thus funding is necessary to ensure the service can grow and maintain high standards. To prevent funds being diverted away from the provision of academic studies the alternative is to fund sustainable travel through increased parking charges.</p> <p>Additionally the travel smart group were all agreed that we cannot restrict parking without providing good alternatives and the improved bus service and cycling facilities are required for this reason.</p> |
| You said that the exclusion zone proposals were discriminatory | We could not see any basis for this conclusion. Many other public sector organisations (locally including the NHS and MOD) as well as other Universities have introduced such measures. |
| You saw the 3km exclusion zone as too simplistic | We recognised the particular difficulties in introducing the 3km radius at this time. We did consider introducing an exclusion zone based on 'true' distance but this is highly complex and arguable, as it depends on the particular mode of transport and on whether there are other stopping points en route. Therefore the 3km radius is not taken forward. |
| You agreed that we need to reduce dependence on cars. | The need for this stems fundamentally from the need to secure UWE's future masterplan – we cannot and will not be permitted to intensify traffic levels at Frenchay. As a leading organisation in the sustainability field we also need to 'practice what we preach'. |