

Derbyshire Eco Centre

Travel Plan



Derbyshire Eco Centre

Travel Plan 2009

Introduction

The Eco Centre will be the county hub for the development of education for sustainable development (ESD). It will promote heritage and sustainable building skills, rural crafts, renewable energy technologies, the arts and environment.

Managed by Derbyshire Adult Community Education Service (DACES) it will promote the County Council's policies on climate change and act as a local, regional and national agent for change within the Adult Community Learning sector.

Leading by example the Eco Centre will be designed, constructed and run to ensure it has a minimal carbon footprint ensuring that the building will be a learning resource in its own right. As a very visible showcase of best practice in sustainable design the building is aiming for an excellent award from the Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Measure (BREEAM).

The travel plan will be an integral part of the ethos of the Eco Centre by providing learners and staff with travel options and choices for accessing the site with the aim of reducing its environmental impact, congestion and non essential single occupancy car use. It will emphasise the alternative travel choices available and offer practical measures on how to make them more accessible for all.

Travel Plan Purpose

The Eco Centre travel plan is a long term travel management strategy and is built on a framework of measures aimed at promoting sustainable travel with an emphasis on reducing reliance on single occupancy car journeys.

By promoting alternative modes of transport it is anticipated that:

- Learners and staff will enjoy health benefits from increased physical activity and can also make cost savings on transport.
- The community surrounding the Eco Centre site will benefit from a less polluted environment and improved road safety will benefit vulnerable road users.
- Learners from more socially deprived areas will be able to access the Eco Centre's facilities by improving transport choices.
- There will be a reduction in congestion and the need for car parking space within the Eco Centre site.
- Having the mechanism to demonstrate a responsible attitude to the environment and aid corporate social responsibility will reduce CO2 emissions and improve air quality.

Preliminary Transport Plan

A preliminary transport plan was written to accompany the planning application and to inform the design of the building. This has resulted in the final design which includes:

- A cycle storage area
- The provision of a shower and lockers
- Improvements to pedestrian access from the High Peak Trail and bus stop
- Segregated cycle way
- Pedestrian crossing points
- CCTV system
- Outside lighting for
- Single point of access for deliveries
- Facilities for disabled car users
- Sharing existing car parking spaces with the National Stone Centre

Appendix 1 shows the site plan of the Eco Centre showing the design and external works influenced by the preliminary travel plan.

Site specific transport survey and assessment

The Site

The Eco Centre building and surrounding landscape occupies an area of 2670m sq. which, is leased from the existing National Stone Centre, a few minutes walk from Wirksworth on the edge of the Peak District National Park. It is on the edge of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site and within five miles of Carsington Water, a major attraction. The whole site is a former quarry which is strategically placed in the centre of Derbyshire, within 30 miles of the conurbations of Derby, Nottingham, Sheffield and Manchester. The population within a 5 mile radius of the site is estimated at 32,132 and within 10 miles is 161,825 (2001 census).

Facilities and Operation

The Eco Centre building covers an area of 450 m sq. and includes the following facilities:

- Multi purpose workshop
- Social exhibition area
- Teaching / meeting room
- External canopy
- Office/ reception
- Outdoor teaching area
- Community garden
- Toilets/changing facilities

Current travel patterns

The Eco Centre is a new facility managed by Derbyshire County Council through the Adult Community Education Service and is due to be completed by March 2010. There are no existing travel patterns for users of this site.

Existing activity on site is within the remit of the National Stone Centre which attracts up to 10,000 visitors per year and includes a small visitor centre, café and guided trails within a nationally important Earth Science site. The largest group of visitors are school children on organised educational visits and they are transported to and from the site by coach. The site also attracts other leisure use where visitors generally travel by car. Walkers and cyclists access the site from the High Peak Trail, and local users and visitors via the footpaths that link the National Stone Centre to Wirksworth town, Middleton by Wirksworth and Bolehill. There is a small car park which will accommodate approximately 40 cars and a designated space for 6 coaches.

Future transport needs

It is anticipated that the Eco Centre will be open from 9am to evening most weekdays and during some weekends for special activities and events. The majority of the activities at the centre will be organised courses for which people will have to enrol before hand. In addition the centre will host meetings, exhibitions and activity days which will generally attract members of the public on an informal basis.

Running at maximum capacity the Eco centre would be able to accommodate up to 50 people on organised courses at any one time however attendance for one off events such as activity days which are mostly held outside could be around 200 to 300.

It is anticipated that the Eco Centre programme of activities will attract people from the local rural community, from across Derbyshire, and eventually from across the Midlands and Yorkshire regions. There will be 3 full time members of staff based at the centre and a team of part-time tutors will deliver most of the courses. The new Eco Centre Manager has just been appointed and lives within a mile of the site.

Future travel opportunities

The site offers a number of opportunities for encouraging sustainable transport choices among future users. It is well served by non car transport options, with a multi user trail adjacent and a good footpath network. Community facilities are within easy walking and cycling distance.

The remit of the Eco Centre is to promote education for sustainable development, so reducing the environmental impact of the centre and its users by encouraging sustainable transport choices is at the heart of its purpose. The centre will promote and build on the current opportunities identified in this site specific travel assessment.

Travel by Walking

Leisure walking is prevalent in this area, and the infrastructure is in place in the locality to encourage walking for attendance at courses and for journeys to work for staff. Walking facilities locally include provision for less mobile people and people with young children, with suitable grades and surfacing, compensating as far as is possible for the slopes that are an inherent part of this landscape. Walking can easily be combined with public

transport use as bus routes from the nearby highway provide both local links and links to the major towns and cities that circle the site. There is a walking route into the town of Wirksworth which is almost all off road, apart from a short section near the town which has a wide pavement, making the Centre safe to access on foot by families with young children.

Appendix 2 shows the existing High Peak Trail and footpaths within the locality. It shows how they link the Eco Centre to surrounding communities and the public transport system.

Travel by bicycle

The High Peak Trail is one of the main cycle routes in Derbyshire, following a former railway to link Cromford with Buxton across the Peak National Park. It runs through the site and there is easy access on to it within the site, only 150 m away from the Centre. This gives the Eco Centre many opportunities to promote cycling as a means of travelling for learners and staff.

The County Council already promote the use of the Trail as part of its strategic cycle network and have a cycle hire facility at Middleton Top which is just half a mile from the Eco Centre.

Leisure road cycling is an important leisure pursuit locally and Wirksworth provides a gateway in to the Peak District for road cyclists coming from the south. The Pennine Bridleway and many off road mountain bike routes (on bridleways and byways) are accessible from the High Peak Trail.

Despite the topography of the area the High Peak Trail and the Cromford Canal to which it links in the Derwent Valley give a largely level riding surface for less ambitious riders, and is highly popular with families with young children.

Appendix 3 shows the existing cycle network within Derbyshire

Travel by Bus

Buses that run within a ten minute walk to the Eco Centre include the following

Number	Route	Details and Frequency
6.1	Derby, Belper, Wirksworth, Cromford, Matlock, Bakewell	Stops by the main entrance Mon to Sat every hour from 6.05am to 22.43pm. Sun. every 2 hours from 10.17am to 21.17am
214	Sheffield, Baslow, Matlock, Wirksworth	Stops by the main entrance Mon to Friday 8.33am return 15.18pm only
17	Ashbourne, Matlock, Chesterfield	Stops at Middleton Top Sun and Bank Holiday 11.00am and 13.00pm return 16.00pm and 18.10pm only
411	Ashbourne, Carsington, Wirksworth, Matlock	Stops at Middleton Top Mon to Friday on average nearly every hour from 8.20am to 17.48pm Sat limited from 9.38am to 16.45pm

		Sun limited from 11.00am to 18.00pm
TransPeak	Nottingham to Manchester	Stops in Cromford on average every hour from 8.30am to 11.30pm

The main bus route is the 6.1 Derby to Bakewell service which stops directly outside the main entrance to the site. This service runs along the main A6 trunk road and connects the Eco Centre site to the main market towns in Derbyshire and to the City of Derby.

Appendix 4 shows the current Bus route map in Derbyshire and the Peak District

Travel by Train

The nearest train station is in Cromford, just under 2 miles from the Eco Centre site. This is the Derwent Valley Line that provides an hourly service from Matlock to Nottingham via Derby with connections to main line stations throughout the Country. This is an essential commuter routes in both directions between the cities to the south and rural northern Derbyshire. It is also a tourism route through the Derwent Valley Corridor World Heritage site and there are promoted walking routes to attractions along the route. Part of the learning offer of the Eco Centre will be linked to heritage appreciation and conservation so there will be many opportunities to promote and utilise these facilities.

There is also Ravenstor railway station within the site, less than 500 yards away from the Centre. This is part of the Ecclesbourne Valley Railway which was used to transport materials from the former Quarries in Wirksworth. This line is now being developed to offer public services from Ravenstor to Duffield via Wirksworth, Idridgehay and Belper. This then connects to the main line Derby to Sheffield service. It will operate both as a tourist attraction and for local commuter services, connecting many of the smaller communities in the Ecclesbourne Valley with Wirksworth and Duffield without following the main route up the Derwent corridor.

Appendix 5 shows the current rail network in Derbyshire including the rail link from Duffield to Wirksworth

Appendix 6 shows the Ravenstor Rail Station operated by Ecclesbourne Valley Rail.

Travel by car

Appendix B also shows the road network around the Eco Centre. The site is well served by the highways network giving suitable accessibility for car users. As the site is in a popular area for tourism, including motorcycle leisure riding, the Highways Authority has made many improvements to visibility, signage and road surfacing on local roads.

The site access is good and the access road links well to all the major routes, The A6, 1.25 miles away in Cromford provides access to cities both north and south. There are also alternative, quieter routes. Congestion is a problem on the A6 especially at peak times and over the summer period. To avoid the Centre contributing to this, and the other negative impacts of car travel, no additional car parking spaces, (other than for people with a disability) are planned.

Travel options for the less mobile

Visitors who have mobility difficulties can currently access the site by car. The Eco centre building proposes two disabled parking spaces. The existing car park is on level ground and has a bound surface. Access to the site is also possible on level, suitably surfaced ground from the High Peak Trail which also is fully accessible. Some buses to the site have disability assistance facilities.

Travel Plan

General Aims and Objectives

- To reduce the impact and frequency of car travel especially single occupancy vehicle use.
- To ensure the Eco Centre is easily accessible to the widest possible range of people
- To ensure that the transport arrangements have the minimum environmental impact
- To enable all staff, learners and visitors to have an informed choice about their travel options.
- To improve the health and well being of staff and Eco Centre users.

Means of Travel targets from September 2010

Mode of Transport	Target 2010/11 %	Target 2011/12 %	Target 2013/14 %
Car (driver alone)	70	60	50
Car Share	16	18	20
Public Transport	5	7	9
Eco Centre organised transport mini bus, taxi etc	3	5	7
Walk	2	4	6
Bicycle	4	6	8

Roles and responsibilities

The Eco Centre Manager will act as the Travel Plan Co-ordinator to ensure that the Travel Plan remains active and sustainable. The Travel Plan Co-ordinator will be responsible for the following:

- Promotion of the Plan
- Implementation of the Plan following construction
- Consulting with staff and Eco Centre users
- Setting and reviewing targets
- Conducting regular surveys

- Monitoring, reviewing and reporting progress

Promoting the ethos of the Travel Plan

The development and implementation of the Travel Plan will be an integral part of the Eco Centre's values in promoting education for sustainable development.

Actions	Detail	Timescale
Offer a reduction in course fees to those learners who travel by bus, rail, cycle, car share or on foot	Promote reduction in course literature. Monitor uptake.	2010/11
Promote healthy lifestyles within the core activities of the Centre	Develop courses around cycling & walking opportunities and enhancement of these.	2011/12
Provide information on alternative travel to all learners and staff	Travel information on the Eco Centre website. Travel information point to be established in the Centre. Face to face encouragement to learners as appropriate	2009/10
Ensure that the opening times and course programmes are arranged to fit in with existing bus/rail timetables	Courses start and finish in line with bus and rail timetables.	2009/10
Offer alternative Eco centre travel for groups of learners	Use of taxi service which is already based on the National Stone Centre Site.	2009/10
Promote new technologies in sustainable vehicles	Pilot alternative transport ideas with the County Council Transport Dept.	2010/11
Promote sustainable transport through course content	Develop courses to address sustainable transport issues, raise issues in other course content where relevant. Use sustainable transport where courses involve off site visits	2011/12
Encourage reduction in travel for multi-day courses	Promote affordable accommodation opportunities to encourage overnight stays locally	2010/11
Reduce luggage requirement so car travel is less necessary	Provide refreshments, protective equipment, memory sticks etc so learners have less to carry .	2010/11
For staff encourage productive use of time spent travelling in ways other than driving. Reduce travelling time	Time meetings and pace activity of the centre to allow reading time and reflection time as part	2010/11

and distance.	of non car transport. Plan meetings diary to reduce travelling distances. Organise meetings to be convenient to public transport for staff. Develop video conferencing and virtual meetings facilities. Agree principles for remote working where appropriate.	
Offer training at venues near to learners to reduce travel needs	Work with Adult Education Centres across the county to offer courses with reduced travel impact.	2010/11

Travelling by Foot

Walking is a realistic option for learners who live locally. It is also an essential part of other alternative means of transport. This requires safe and high quality pedestrian links to bus stops and rail links. Walking also contributes to increasing individual well being, and helps to connect people in communities. Walking has many direct and indirect carbon reduction benefits.

Pedestrians will have access to the Eco Centre via the main entrance to the front of the development.

Actions	Detail	Timescale
Promote the health benefits of walking	Include Healthy Living as part of the Eco Centre programme. Organise walking activities (such as family nature trails) along the High Peak Trail or as links between heritage sites. Promote Walk in to Work out activities. Offer walking for health leader training as part of the curriculum. Include walking for health schemes as case studies of sustainable development. Encourage use of Eco Centre as a comfort stop for Walking for Health groups.	2010/11
Provide easy access for pedestrians within the site	Speed restrictions on site. Pedestrian crossings . Ensure good lighting. Design safety features into the landscaping of the site.	2009/10

Encourage learners and staff within a two mile radius of the site to walk	Provide safe walking route maps with distances, times and local facilities.	2010/11
Encourage walking as part of a longer journey.	Provide safe walking route maps as above from facilities such as railway stations and bus stops further a field.	2010/11
Offer incentives to walkers	Provide 'Eco Centre' branded umbrellas and torches at reception for learners to borrow or buy. Provide showers and locker facilities. Develop a system that will reward walkers by reducing course fees	2009/10

Travelling by Bicycle

Full use will be made of the opportunities afforded by the High Peak Trail and the bridleway network. The network of quieter roads will be promoted. Cycle safety and people's skills and confidence in cycling will be developed.

Actions	Detail	
Promote the use of cycling as part of a healthy lifestyle	Develop links with the existing DCC cycle hire facility at Middleton Top. Promote cycle awareness, training, and maintenance courses as part of the Eco Centre Programme	2010/11
Publicise alternative ways to cycle to the site off road and with public transport	Link with bus and train options to transport cycles. Promote the existing cycle network within the area.	2010/11
Provide facilities within the Eco Centre to encourage cycling.	Provide shower and locker facilities. Provide secure cycle storage near to the main entrance. Provide separated cycle ways within the site.	2009/10
Provide signage and improve routes to make cycling easy	Liaise with DCC Countryside Service to improve signage along and off the High Peak Trail. Sign High Peak Trail and	2010/11

	Wirksworth from Eco Centre	
Support and develop learning opportunities presented by cycling initiatives around the County to offer off site courses according to local need.	Liaise with Countryside / Community and Sports Development workers in Bolsover / NE Derbyshire.	2010/11

Travelling by Bus

Actions	Detail	Time scale
Publicise bus routes and time tables to all learners and staff	Provide information in course confirmation and on website	2010/11
Improve existing bus stop to provide shelter for bus travellers	Liaise with DCC public transport unit to install	2011/12
Ensure that courses and activities are timed to fit in with the current bus timetable	Courses start and finish in line with bus and rail timetables. Monitor changes in timetabling.	2009/10
Provide a travel information point within the Eco centre	Allocate space, design to be attractive and make information easily accessible.	2010/11
Promote Derbyshire County Council's Gold Card Scheme which provides free bus travel for people over 60 years.	Signpost learners to Gold Card website on application. Promote via travel information point.	2010/11

Travelling by Train

Actions	Detail	Timescale
Publicise train timetables to all learners and staff	Provide a link to timetable as part of application confirmation. Promote within transport information point.	2010/11
Establish an off road pedestrian walk from the rail station to the Eco Centre	Work with DCC Countryside Service to develop promoted route	2011/12
Provide transport to and from the rail station.	Negotiate an Eco Centre taxi service.	2010/11
Support the development of Ravenstor station as a viable means of transport to and from the site.	Include development of the line as a case study within the sustainable development course curriculum	2011/12
Promote station to station walking routes	Include these as part of heritage course content, and for recreation use as part of Centre information.	2010/11

Travel for those with limited mobility and those with young children

Accessibility of the site will be improved for all users by the initiatives contained elsewhere in the travel plan. There are also specific requirements to enhance accessibility for disabled people and for people with young children. These improvements will also benefit other users.

Provide access for disabled learners	Provide parking spaces and appropriate surfacing near to entrance of building.	2009/10
Improve quality of surface of walking / cycling route to Wirksworth through the site to become more accessible	Liaise with DCC Countryside Service and National Stone Centre to upgrade the route surface to greenway standard	2011/12
Provide information in suitable formats	Produce child friendly activities for use on walks and rides to the Eco Centre. Provide leaflets and written in larger print for those with visual impairments	2010/11
Ensure surfaces of paths around the site are sufficiently good to make ease of use for all users.	Design for All when undertaking further external site development work	2011/12
Improve accessibility and ease of use of all of the site and routes to it.	Provide resting places and benches around the site and on walking routes to bus stops and to Wirksworth. Provide an attractive community garden at the Centre.	2010/11

Travelling by Car

The Eco Centre will only provide two new car parking spaces for disabled users and share the existing car parking facilities used by the National Stone Centre. In not providing additional new car parking space it is anticipated that this will help to communicate with learners and staff that the Eco centre is encouraging alternative forms of transport to the site.

The circulation and movement of vehicles around the car park has been taken into account at the planning stages and car users will be discouraged from parking anywhere other than the designated spaces having minimal impact on the immediate surrounding area.

Delivery access needs into and out of the site have been incorporated at the planning stage to ensure that there is minimal disruption and little or no traffic congestion. As far as possible the Eco Centre will source goods and services locally further reducing congestion, emissions and journey times.

Actions	Detail	Timescale
Encourage staff and learners to car share	Develop a car share registration scheme available on the Eco	2010/11

	centre website which will be available to all learners. Offer discounts to learners who car share	
Provide a segregated walk way from the existing car parking area to the Eco Ccentre mMain entrance	Incorporate into designs	2009/10
Offer sustainable alternatives to car use for transporting groups of learners to the Eco Centre without the Centre having its own mini bus	Work with Community Transport to provide minibus services to learners. Use community transport at a curriculum case study of sustainable development.	2009/10
Trial new technology vehicles to demonstrate low impact transport option, as appropriate.	Explore joint working with DCC's County Transport unit to demonstrate an eco friendly vehicle.	2011/12