

Sustainability Services Communications Strategy 2016-21

Purpose

This document sets out Sustainability Services' Communications Strategy, centred on the core objectives for communications as a team, and creating a structure for their delivery. It is designed to provide a framework for the Annual Communication and Engagement Plan to operate in. This supporting Plan provides detail on what activities will be delivered in each academic year as well as ensuring we comply with our ISO140001 and ISO50001 obligations.

Objectives

The following core objectives have been identified for this strategy:

Core Communication Objectives			
AVAILABILITY Ensure staff, students, contractors and other stakeholders are aware of the University's commitment to environmental sustainability, how it manages its environmental impacts, the successes it has achieved and relevant, up to date information is readily available	VISIBILITY Ensure sustainability is highly visible across Whiteknights, London Road and Greenlands	RELATIONSHIPS Develop relationships across operational and academic areas of the University to create a culture of sustainability	ACTIONS Ensure staff, students, contractors and other stakeholders are aware of what their responsibilities are and what positive actions they can take to reduce our collective impact on the environment

Prioritising Actions

When developing the Annual Communications and Engagement Plan, consideration will be given to how activities will deliver against our four core objectives. Activities which deliver strongly against a number of objectives will score more highly and therefore be prioritised. Depending on the overarching aims of the Business Plan for the year, more weight may be given to one objective over another, however there should always be actions that deliver on a mix of objectives.

Key messages

Priorities each year will change, although some messages may span a number of years. Each Annual Communication and Engagement Plan will specify no more than 6 key messages for the year, which will then be the focus of communication. By limiting the number of messages, it will ensure each one is heard more often by the target audiences, resulting in an increase in understanding and awareness.

Although messages may vary they should include, where possible, reference to our overarching sustainability vision, for the University to be:

"...a leader in reducing its impacts on the local as well as global environment, by embedding a culture of sustainability throughout its teaching, research and operations."

Communication channels

It is important to recognise that different communication channels will reach different target audiences. In most cases, a variety of channels will have to be utilised to ensure messages are communicated effectively. This may include social media, newsletters or WREN. A stakeholder communication analysis will be completed every 2 years to identify how best to communicate with relevant stakeholders. This will sit as an appendix to the Strategy.

Key Audiences

Whilst communications will be designed to meet the needs of a broad range of audiences, having an understanding of the key ones is important to ensuring the communications are effective. Staff, students (including research students) and contractors are obvious key audiences but more widely, stakeholders such as the local community, local authorities, regulatory bodies as well as other interested parties will all need their requirements met. It will be important to look at sub-groups within audiences to ensure communications are appropriate. One example within staff would be Heads of Schools / Senior Management who are important to communicate with due to their influence but may need very different messages to technical staff who may need more detailed, practical information.

In developing the Annual Plan (see below), a stakeholder analysis will be undertaken to identify the key stakeholders and associated communication channels appropriate to the Plan.

Annual Communications and Engagement Plan

The Annual Plan, developed and reviewed annually in February, will be a practical document which articulates:

- A review of the previous year's key activities to learn lessons
- The specific activities that will take place during the year
- How these deliver against the core objectives
- Key messages for the year (up to 6)
- Timeline for delivery
- Budget breakdown for activities
- Risks associated with delivery of the plan
- How each activity will be measured and what success looks like

Measuring Success

Thought will be given to how to assess the impact of the main communication activities each year. Whilst measuring precise savings, changes in behaviour etc. may be challenging, consideration will be given to what quantitative and qualitative metrics can be used to assess the impacts of core initiatives. This could include the number of website hits, social media follows, event attendees, or measurable changes in behaviour. A level at which an activity is deemed successful will be specified.