



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

Corporate
Communications.

The Council, 11 July 2016

Annual Report to Council - Public Value

1. Purpose and Remit

The purpose of this report is to update on the work and progress of the UEB Public Value Sub Group (PVSG), chaired by Professor Richard Jones. It outlines some key outputs that have been delivered as part of the action plan for the 2015/16 academic year and highlights next steps for taking the Public Value agenda forwards.

2. Background / context

The Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) sub group of UEB, working with other related areas - including the Engaged University, Widening Participation and Outreach, Public Engagement with Research - went through a period of re-thinking our CSR work, agreeing, in October 2014, on a revised UEB Sub- Group remit and terminology for CSR with a new focus on 'Public Value'. The term 'Public Value' was coined by Harvard Professor Mark Moore, and the phrase is used to describe the public sector equivalent of shareholder value in private enterprise. The strategy of the newly evolved Public Value sub group remains in line with the revised definition of CSR agreed by the CSR group in 2013:

"Our take on responsibility is straightforward: we're trying to make things better. The University is committed to contributing to improved quality of life and economic development locally, nationally and internationally. We are committed to producing graduates who are socially responsible, to undertaking research that benefits the world, and to conducting our business in a socially responsible manner. We seek to do this through dialogue and interaction with our many stakeholders"

The concept of the public value of the University's activities is central to our Mission, Vision and Identity and has shaped the development of our new Strategic Plan 2016-21, which, as well as containing a section on 'Our Public Responsibility' setting out our key challenges, values and strategy in this area, has many examples embedded throughout the document of how the University makes a difference to our many stakeholders.

The aims of the PVSG are to support progress towards embedding the concept of public value further within core business and existing structures of the University. This needs to be across our core areas of Research and Learning and Teaching as well as our operations. In doing this we hope to achieve:

- A better, more co-ordinated articulation of our impact
- Better recognition of what we do
- Reputational gains and increase in stakeholder engagement

The PVSG, with the support of an Operational Group for Public Value, developed three key questions in order to bring initial focus to a potentially very broad area, and to create a clear achievable action plan for the 2015/16 academic year:

Q1. What is the University doing about decarbonising the energy economy?

Q2: How does the University ensure that all its staff, students and graduates have the knowledge and skills to be active citizens in a world where sustainability is a major challenge?

Q3: How can we manage the development of our campus to meet the needs of our ongoing growth, whilst contributing to a sustainable urban environment?

3. Progress under Q1: What is the University doing about decarbonising the energy economy?

In November 2015 the University announced it would divest from fossil fuels in line with its endowment investment policy, which includes a commitment to eliminate exposure to investment linked to explicit environmental damage. The divestment policy is due to be implemented by the end of the current academic year. The announcement was preceded by a public debate to discuss issues surrounding decarbonising the energy economy and divestment which, though non-binding on the University's governing bodies, was well-informed and attended by over 300 people, with the results being reported through the University's management structure.

Work continues on reducing the University's overall carbon footprint, though with the current and projected levels of growth and campus development, the University's target of a 43% reduction in carbon emissions against the 2005 baseline by 2020 seems unlikely to be met. A new carbon management document focused on this growth and its impact is imminent, and the issue is currently being evaluated by the carbon management group. However, the University is improving carbon efficiency in relation to staff and student numbers. The possibility of a wind turbine at the AMRC site is currently being evaluated by Estates and Facilities Management, and the My Sustainable Campus page on the University site was published in December 2015, providing information and resources on our carbon performance and other energy saving initiatives occurring across the campus.

4. Progress under Q2: How does the University ensure that all its staff*, students and graduates have the knowledge and skills to be active citizens in a world where sustainability is a major challenge?

In tackling this question we have ensured that our understanding of sustainability accommodates the breadth of activities across the institution, including the social, economic and environmental aspects of sustainability. We have identified existing provision within the undergraduate and postgraduate curriculum, from modules on the physics of sustainable energy in Physics to food justice in Geography. As part of our flagship interdisciplinary initiative, Achieve More, all level 1 students work in cross-faculty teams to address real world problems such as the local impact of global issues like inequality and climate change. At Level 2, students have been addressing the social and environmental challenges of living in a world of 10 billion people. We have continued to collate examples of activities across the wider student experience, such as student volunteering and Students' Union initiatives. Input into the development of the communications plan for public value will ensure that learning and teaching and student experience in this area is more prominent and the extent of our current provision is effectively communicated. This has involved the creation and curation of a range of case studies and resources, including for example, Sheffield graduates working in professions linked to sustainability. To sustain and grow our work in this area, the new Learning and Teaching Plan 2016-2021 has a strong outward facing ethos of engaged learning and public responsibility. As part of this, we will be revisiting our commitment to active citizenship, ensuring that these aspirations continue to be reflected in our Sheffield Graduate Attributes.

*It was agreed that the staff element of this question be addressed in phase two (16/17 academic year). However, Public Value is a key theme within the new People Strategy. Colleagues in Human

Resources will be leading on the delivery of outputs on the staff element of Q2 for 16/17, undertaking research on what we currently offer, what other HE organisations and those outside of HE are involved in (with reference to other Top 100 Employers), and consideration of what we want to do and be renowned for and how we will engage with staff.

5. Progress under Q3: How can we manage the development of our campus to meet the needs of our ongoing growth, whilst contributing to a sustainable urban environment?

An audit of our current activities and conversation with internal stakeholders is ongoing, and plans to consult external stakeholders are currently under discussion. Encompassing our estates strategy, engagement with the city and research, the aim is to produce a position statement in the next academic year that highlights how the University is approaching the question, along with areas that may require further work and attention. The results of the audit have been discussed at PVSG, and work will continue on the report to add detail to public engagement and research areas.

The campus masterplan outlines a number of measures that will create a more sustainable campus, including pedestrianisation of the central area, the inclusion of green space, and the removal of surface car parking across the central site. There is a large amount of work being done in, or in partnership with, the city in the area of sustainability by both the public engagement team and academic departments.

6. Public Value as an integral part of internal and external communications

A communications plan has been developed highlighting the work being done under the three questions and identifying appropriate communication channels. Public responsibility is now included in Corporate Communications' key themes, allowing communications to be better resourced and co-ordinated. The development of a central hub for existing stories and projects around Public Value providing a compendium of information and resources is underway. Internal presentations on the work of public value have been given to Corporate Communications, the University-wide Marketing Forum, and Professional Services Executive Board. Dr Andrew West has offered for Student Services to be a test bed to try out approaches to the embedding process and work is underway developing effective methodology for this, with a presentation and feedback session planned at the next Student Services Staff briefing in July.

7. Public Value and Sustainability

Benchmarking and exploration of practice at other universities has been undertaken and the sum of activities on Q1, Q2, Q3 is under review to consider whether an overall sustainability strategy would add value. There are many developments (in relation to Carbon Management Group, Green Impact, the Estates Strategy, the new Learning and Teaching Plan and the current planning round and emerging themes under consideration by UEB for the year ahead) which will feed into this. Further scoping of our approach, including consideration of structures and resources, is underway.

8. Looking forwards

A look back/forwards is planned for the September meeting of PVSG, along with recommendations and a draft action plan for 16/17.

Lizzie Ruse
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