



## SMART ACTION PLAN ON SUSTAINABILITY FOR THE UNION 2018/19

### ACTION: STAY AT THE FOREFRONT OF EXCELLENT SUSTAINABILITY PRACTICE IN THE SECTOR

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| <b>Specific</b>                | Participate in NUS Green Impact Student Unions (GISU) annually.  |                      |
| <b>Measurable</b>              | Achieve 'Excellent' and maintain this on an ongoing basis.   |                      |
| <b>Achievable</b>              | By assigning dedicated staff resource to this action, working in collaboration with student groups, the university and other students' unions and establishing a Sustainability Group with staff from across the organisation.   |                      |
| <b>Realistic/<br/>Relevant</b> | Green Impact has been going for 12 years and is a great tool for students' unions to develop in terms of sustainability. The criteria change and develop each year too, so continuing to take part after we initially achieve 'Excellent' is relevant to The Union to be constantly moving forward. The benefits that taking part in the scheme has for The Union make it valuable to The Union. |                      |
| <b>Timed</b>                   | Achieve 'Very Good' by July 2019 and 'Excellent' by July 2020 and each year following.   |                      |
| <b>Staff Responsible:</b>      | Project Coordinator  | <b>Status:</b> Green |

### ACTION: REDUCE UNNECESSARY PAPER CONSUMPTION IN THE UNION

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| <b>Specific</b>                | Audit where paper is currently used in each department (excluding Crewe) and introduce initiatives and behavioural changes to reduce consumption.  |                      |
| <b>Measurable</b>              | A 10% reduction in paper consumption per head across the organisation.   |                      |
| <b>Achievable</b>              | A paper audit will be supported and carried out by members of The Union Sustainability Group. The Union has access to the data for how many pages staff have printed, combined with order receipts from marketing and commercial print. The Union has a large enough digital presence and platform to pursue paperless alternatives to current activity. |                      |
| <b>Realistic/<br/>Relevant</b> | Reducing paper consumption will save The Union money, which could be used to fund future initiatives. Digital alternatives make it easier to share information and organise work. As long as access needs are considered, reducing paper consumption across the organisation can only benefit The Union.   |                      |
| <b>Timed</b>                   | Achieve a 10% reduction in paper consumption per head from 2018 by December 2019.  |                      |
| <b>Staff Responsible:</b>      | Project Coordinator & Sustainability Working Group   | <b>Status:</b> Amber |

## ACTION: LESSEN THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF OUR UNNECESSARY SINGLE-USE PLASTICS

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| <b>Specific</b>                               | Audit where plastics are currently used in each department (excluding Crewe) and introduce initiatives and behavioural changes to reduce consumption.  |
| <b>Measurable</b>                             | At least three new initiatives that tangibly reduce, reuse or recycle single-use plastics in the organisation.   |
| <b>Achievable</b>                             | The Union has already taken steps in the past years to reduce its use of plastics, such as replacing plastic straws in the bars with biodegradable ones and offering a discount on hot beverages for bringing a reusable cup.  |
| <b>Realistic/<br/>Relevant</b>                | Previous actions are part of a wider movement backed by the Mayor of Greater Manchester to make Manchester plastic free by 2020. Public opinion of single-use plastics is rapidly shifting and The Union doing this would be well received by its members and external partners. It is an action that sits well in the local and global context. However, to cut out single-use plastics completely by 2020 is an unrealistic goal for us. The costs associated would have a negative knock-on effect on necessary student services. |
| <b>Timed</b>                                  | One initiative by June 2019. An additional two by June 2020.   |
| <b>Staff Responsible:</b> Project Coordinator |  |
| <b>Status:</b> Amber                          |  |

## ACTION: REDUCE ENERGY CONSUMPTION IN THE UNION

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| <b>Specific</b>                               | Create energy shutdown procedure checklists for every department in The Union (excluding Crewe).   |
| <b>Measurable</b>                             | A 5% reduction of energy across the year.  |
| <b>Achievable</b>                             | In 2015, The Union moved into its new home on Higher Cambridge Street. The new development was built with environmental sustainability and energy saving provision as a priority, incorporating LED lights (most of which are on motion sensors), thermostat controlled meeting rooms and offices, toilets with half-flush settings amongst other things. If staff and member behaviour changes, the fabric of the building will allow us to use less energy. The university tracks energy usage in The Union every half hour and they share this data with us, so measuring our reduction is very easy. |
| <b>Realistic/<br/>Relevant</b>                | Our current contract with the university means we pay a set fee for all of our energy, so using less will not save us money. However, it will reduce the carbon footprint of the organisation. Including staff time to create shutdown checklists and promote behaviour change, this action comes at a nominal cost to The Union. We won't be asking people who use the building to sit in freezing cold, dark rooms. We will be targeting primarily energy that is wasted when the building is empty (overnight and the holidays).  |
| <b>Timed</b>                                  | Every department in the Union will have a shutdown checklist by May 2019. Receive energy consumption data from the university every quarter to track progress. Achieve a reduction in energy consumption of 5% from 2018 to 2019.  |
| <b>Staff Responsible:</b> Project Coordinator |  |
| <b>Status:</b> Red                            |  |

## ACTION: REDUCE THE AMOUNT OF FOOD WASTE PRODUCED BY THE UNION

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| <b>Specific</b>  | Increase the number of food waste bins in The Union and encourage their proper use.  |
| <b>Measurable</b>  | At least one additional food bin in the organisation that is well used.  |
| <b>Achievable</b>  | The Union already recycles food waste in its commercial outlets, with food waste bins in the kitchens that staff are trained to use. In academic year 2017/18 we recycled 5.5 tonnes of food waste, so with an additional bin front of house or in the staff kitchen we should be able to increase that figure.  |
| <b>Realistic/<br/>Relevant</b>                                 | The target is not to increase the amount of food waste we recycle because it is better to reduce the amount of food we throw away all together. However, as an interim measure, introducing more food waste bins will help to reduce how much The Union send to incineration. The university's waste contractor already collect our food waste separately so getting it off site is realistic. |
| <b>Timed</b>   | One well-labelled and used food waste bin in a location other than in the kitchens by July 2019.   |
| <b>Staff Responsible:</b> Project Coordinator and/or Bar staff |  |
| <b>Status:</b> Red   |  |

## ACTION: GET MORE STAFF TRAVELING INTO WORK SUSTAINABLY

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| <b>Specific</b>                      | Introduce benefits for staff members who travel into work via public transport and improve provision for cyclists, encouraging more cycling into work.  |
| <b>Measurable</b>                    | A % increase in career staff and student officers who walk, cycle or use public transport to get to and from work.  |
| <b>Achievable</b>                    | In terms of benefits for using public transport, The Union already offers discounted bus passes to students, so we could explore options with our partners for offering a similar deal for staff. We also offer a cycle to work scheme to staff which currently two full time staff members are taking advantage of. A large proportion of staff already use public transport so they would definitely be demand for this. Conversations with the university regarding improving facilities for cyclists have already started taking place and this plays a part in their travel plan.  |
| <b>Realistic/<br/>Relevant</b>       | Encouraging staff to travel into work sustainably is part of The Union staff handbook so this action would be a case of walking the talk. Over the next three years, the university is building the new School of Digital Arts next to The Union building meaning we are losing our car park. All Saints campus as a whole is becoming more pedestrianised and cycle friendly, with less parking space for cars. In partnership with the university, The Union needs to adapt to these changes on campus. Therefore, it is logical to get more staff leaving their cars at home. That said, we are also losing the bike shelter in the process. We will also need to work with the institution to ensure proficient facilities are available for cycling staff. |
| <b>Timed</b>                         | A % increase in career staff and student officers who walk, cycle or use public transport to get to and from work from 2018 to 2019.  |
| <b>Staff Responsible:</b> HR Manager |   |
| <b>Status:</b> Red                   |   |

## ACTION: INCREASE COHESION IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

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| <b>Specific</b>                                | Increase positive engagement between our students and community members, partners and organisations through Community Projects.   |
| <b>Measurable</b>                              | Over 75% of students who engage with our Community Projects say they feel connected to their local community.   |
| <b>Achievable</b>                              | There is now dedicated resource and staff time to achieve this; the introduction of the Community Projects Coordinator role will allow us to venture further into this area.  |
| <b>Realistic/<br/>Relevant</b>                 | Improving cohesion in the community has many benefits for our members, the local community and The Union. We recognise that a large transient population of students can create tensions in the community, and this work can help to offset and resolve some of this by demonstrating that students can and will integrate into an existing community. In terms of benefits to our students, integration can help them to feel more at home and a part of something bigger than themselves: like they belong. This will help with mental health and wellbeing. It will also encourage and enable more active citizenship amongst students. This work is also beneficial to all parties involved because it provides people with different perspectives, making them more whole-rounded, conscientious members of society. |
| <b>Timed</b>                                   | Over 75% of students who engage with our Community Projects say they feel connected to their local community by the end of the work's initial funding in October 2021.  |
| <b>Staff Responsible:</b> Volunteering Manager |   |
| <b>Status:</b> Amber                           |   |

## ACTION: ENCOURAGE AND ENABLE STUDENTS TO GIVE BACK TO THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

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| <b>Specific</b>                                | Deliver social action projects involving students that directly benefit the local community (i.e. local schools, community groups or charities).   |
| <b>Measurable</b>                              | At least four social action projects or campaigns as a result of The Union's work <i>and</i> 1,500 student volunteers enabled to engage with Manchester based volunteering opportunities.  |
| <b>Achievable</b>                              | The Volunteering & Community Action team at The Union has increased in size, allowing them to deliver more community volunteering opportunities. In addition, there is definitely an appetite from students to engage with this type of work as evidenced by the high total of volunteering hours clocked by our sports teams. |
| <b>Realistic/<br/>Relevant</b>                 | Providing opportunities for students is what The Union is about. It equips them with skills and allows for personal development, as well as helps with their wellbeing. It also, of course, has the added benefit of helping local community groups, intrinsically enriching our members by tangibly aiding others.            |
| <b>Timed</b>                                   | Four social action projects or campaigns by academic year 2019/20, and four in each following academic year <i>and</i> 1,500 student volunteers enabled to engage with Manchester based volunteering opportunities each academic year by the end of academic year 2019/20.   |
| <b>Staff Responsible:</b> Volunteering Manager |  |
| <b>Status:</b> Amber                           |  |

**ACTION: REDUCE THE NEGATIVE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF THE CLOSURE OF THE UNION'S CHESHIRE SITE**

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| <b>Specific</b>                                 | Identify Union assets in Crewe that can be either transported to Manchester, given to students and alumni or gifted to the new occupiers of campus and designate one of these sustainable approaches to all assets.  |
| <b>Measurable</b>                               | No Union assets in our Cheshire site unnecessarily to go to waste.   |
| <b>Achievable</b>                               | Staff have created an inventory for all Union assets in Crewe and have been taking early precautions for find new homes for it, such as giving away all our leftover book swap books to students. Old sports kit has also been handed out to alumni at an event in March. An inventory of sports equipment has also been made with some equipment being brought up to Manchester to be used with the option of gifting some equipment to local organisations being investigated.   |
| <b>Realistic/<br/>Relevant</b>                  | Some of the assets we have in Crewe could be useful to The Union in Manchester, saving the organisation resources and making our operations more effective. There are also many assets that can be used by our student groups, saving them money too. Finally, there are many assets with sentimental value and Cheshire campus heritage such as the green and gold uniforms. Throwing these away would make past and present Cheshire campus students feel devalued by The Union. |
| <b>Timed</b>                                    | A successful transition with no Union assets unnecessarily going to waste before the sale of the campus in July 2019   |
| <b>Staff Responsible:</b> Opportunities Manager |  |
| <b>Status:</b> Green                            |  |

Last updated by George Bissett (Project Coordinator) on 10 April 2019.