Imagine an Oxford Brookes that understands both the positive and negative impacts of everything it does.

A place where students come with a zeal for positive change, and leave with the skills to make change happen. A place where potential students choose the university because of its reputation for academic excellence and its clear sense of responsibility. A place where academic and support staff have worked together to make the right choice – academically, economically, environmentally and socially. Here, the higher education sector looks to Oxford Brookes for leadership, proved by the University’s Platinum EcoCampus accreditation and ISO 14001 certification. The local community regard Oxford Brookes with respect. Its students are seen as considerate citizens who enhance Oxford’s community. This is what Oxford Brookes could be.

We’re already a long way towards this vision. Our Strategy 2020 demands that all aspects of our activity be sustainable. One of our core values is social responsibility. Collectively, we’ve spent lots of time and effort reducing Brookes’ negative impact. We’re already seen as a leading light in addressing our corporate responsibility.

Unfortunately, all this is not enough. To fully live up to our values and fulfil our 2020 Strategy, we need to think differently. We can’t keep on making incremental improvements to reduce our negative impact.

We need to make sure our positive impacts on the economy, society and environment outweigh our negatives.

This is much easier said than done. Understanding our net positive impact is where we face the biggest challenge. How do you define, measure and evaluate not only our negative, but also our positive impacts? Only a few are wrestling with this challenge. To date, no-one has overcome it. Indeed, in our sector we are the first to take it up, anywhere in the world.

Thankfully though, we have world-class academics and a groundbreaking corporate responsibility programme. We’ve already started this work but need the help and expertise of the University to truly understand our net positive impact.
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BROOKES AND SUSTAINABILITY

– A REMINDER

Our commitment has grown alongside our understanding. This is evident from the growth of our sustainability team which, since 2008, has grown from one to four dedicated specialist staff. This expanded capacity has greatly increased our influence across the University.

The first raft of projects that this document describes include: updating our carbon management plan, initiating a new sustainable travel plan and engagement through our civic and community engagement work. Learn more about what exciting things we are doing around the environment on these pages, with more information about our Brookes as a workplace, community and marketplace, overleaf.

Here you can find our achievements since our CR report in May 2010, in addition to our contribution to society through our teaching, learning and specific research projects.

Oxford Brookes University is based at three major sites in Oxford: Headington, Wheatley and Harcourt Hill as well as satellite sites elsewhere including Swindon. It has almost 3,000 employees and around 19,000 students. At Brookes, we recognise our impacts and influence run far wider than the University itself. With this in mind, our environmental management work includes our staff, students and the wider community.

ENVIROMENT

AS A LARGE INSTITUTION, WE HAVE A BIG ENVIRONMENTAL FOOTPRINT. WE’VE BEEN WORKING TO REDUCE THIS, IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER FOR OVER TEN YEARS SINCE OUR FIRST SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL PLAN LAUNCHED IN 1999. BELOW ARE OUR MAIN AREAS OF ACTIVITY.

OUR ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

We adopted our first environmental policy in 1997. It is overseen by our Registrar as well as our Student Union (SU) President. Our Governors and Academic Board review it every year to make sure it is up to date and relevant and our most recent one was signed off in August 2010.

Our environmental policy influences us all and covers our environmental impacts from both infrastructure and operations. However, we realise that our role as an influencer and educator allows our reach to extend far beyond improvements in infrastructure. We want to capitalise on the opportunities offered to us by pledging to embed sustainable development throughout our curriculum and research programmes. We will develop effective communications that will inspire staff and students to take action on sustainable development. We will look to create networks, ensuring that expertise is shared and built upon and involve our local community.

All of this is backed up by annual targets, which guide us towards our vision of having a net positive impact on the societies and environments with which we interact.

THIRD PARTY RECOGNITION

Third party assessment, feedback and recognition are essential for improvement. During the last 12 months we are proud to be among the first universities to receive the Platinum Award of the EcoCampus Environmental Management Scheme. This means we are compliant with ISO 14001, the internationally recognised standard of environmental management and ensures we are continually improving. We also received a People and Planet 1st class award and ranked in the top ten most environmentally conscious Universities in the country. This progressive award is particularly important because it takes into account rising issues like biodiversity and refurbishment.

SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL

Brookes recognises that its influence stretches far beyond the University gates. Our vision is to have a culture of sustainable travel embedded throughout the University. We want everyone to be actively reducing their own transport emissions and to expect the same level of sustainable travel at their future places of study or work.

We have been working on this for over a decade, since publishing our first sustainable travel plan in 1999. Recently, we have entered into a long-term contract with Oxford Bus Company to run the Brookes Bus Service. This change in local transport infrastructure is designed specifically to meet the needs of all university staff and students in the most environmentally efficient way possible.

We are tailoring our approach to each campus, whilst continuing to work with staff and students on campus-specific travel plans.

Our sustainable travel plan is the action plan implements the travel strategy adopted by the University in December 2010. It is also being updated in 2011. It will be designed to create an innovative, sector leading approach. This will include a new, overarching five year travel plan to address the carbon emissions from travel outside the university’s direct control (these are known technically as scope three carbon emissions).

To support this and encourage ownership of the behaviour change that will inevitably be needed, we are consulting on parking across our sites. New sustainable travel initiatives will be part-funded using income from our car parking charges.

CARBON MANAGEMENT

We were one of the first universities to develop a carbon management plan with the Carbon Trust in 2003/4. This plan has helped us reduce our emissions and highlighted improvements to be made by upgrading our estate, and we are currently undertaking a large scale estate project.

OUR NEW ENERGY STRATEGY IS A KEY COMPONENT TO OUR CARBON MANAGEMENT APPROACH. IT SETS A TARGET OF A 50% CARBON REDUCTION FROM 2005 LEVELS BY 2020.

WASTE

Our approach to waste goes far beyond recycling. Our environmental policy states that we will:

REDUCE THE VOLUME OF WASTE PRODUCED AND TO RECYCLE AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE WITH UNIVERSITY-WIDE INVOLVEMENT AND RESPONSIBILITY.

On campus, students and staff can recycle a wide range of materials, from unwanted books and mobile phones to the more traditional cans and bottles. Our co-mingled recycling scheme reduces confusion and ensures that most waste can be recycled. Our Catering Services team are looking to tackle the 15% of our landfill waste that comes from food using a new system: Trim Trax. We have managed to increase the percentage of waste we recycle on campus by a massive 15% from 2009 to 2010. It now stands at just over 45%, something we’re very proud of.

Re-use schemes are also at the forefront of our waste strategy and this has lead to a reduction in our on campus waste output. A big issue being addressed is the vast amount of items left by students in Halls of Residence at the end of the academic year. We have developed a staff-
COMMUNITY

THE DEFINITION OF COMMUNITY HAS MANY LEVELS. AT OXFORD BROOKES, WE INTERPRET THIS DEFINITION WIDELY. WE INCLUDE OUR IMMEDIATE NEIGHBOURS, THE WIDER OXFORDSHIRE COMMUNITY AND THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITIES IN WHICH WE OPERATE.

As a University, it is also vital that we have the support and respect of our local community. This year marks the release of our civic and community engagement strategy which we expect to transform the way in which we interact with the residents of Oxford and tackle one of the biggest impacts of the University as a whole. Some of our recent key statistics in this area show what impact we are having:

- £85,000 worth of Community Scholarships awarded to support 88 students in state secondary schools and further education colleges across the region.
- 25 State school students in Oxfordshire supported through the Brookes Youth Summer University. This programme is designed to help these students realise the opportunities higher education providers provide.
- 3,700 people attended 19 free public lectures.
- 200 students living in areas of under representation in higher education have studied a wide variety of courses at centres across the community.
- Deliveries in partnership with the Learning Communities Initiative – including Oxfordshire County Council, the South East England Development Agency and voluntary organisations.

Delivering inclusive education is a key aspect of our Community Strategy. We have extended our e-guidance support service provided, delivered through the Oxford Brookes Careers Centre to Oxfordshire residents, the provision of courses to the disadvantaged in city and rural areas, and leadership skills development programme for final year students – the Brookes Future Leaders Certificate. This has all been made possible through funding from the Economic Challenge Investment Fund.

While we are proud to deliver a wide variety of community projects, we know there is more we can do. Specifically, the projects tend not to be coordinated or particularly well communicated. We recognise that we do not capitalise on all the opportunities for increasing the volume and effectiveness of our community work, and innovating the work itself. This is a key area of focus in the community area of our work and Brookes has employed a person dedicated to lead this who reports directly to the senior management team.

MARKETPLACE

OUR MARKETPLACE WORK COVERS HOW HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTES MANAGE STUDENT AND SUPPLIER RELATIONSHIPS.

This includes developing and promoting courses to external offices, other aspects of sourcing, buying, marketing, and selling. It also considers the impact these activities have on our wider marketplace.

Again, in this area our collaborative approach is evident. We do not achieve a Net Positive Impact without the support of our students. We will need their insight, support and understanding to make sure our work has maximum impact. Our engagement efforts have been recognised and Oxford Brookes Student Union won Bronze award in this year’s Sound Impact awards.

STUDENTS

A prime example of our student engagement are the annual Fairtrade Fortnights and Energy Saving Weeks we hold. These activities employ fun and impactful events to engage our staff and students with hot topics.

This collaborative approach delivers real results. Brookes is proud to have been the first Fairtrade accredited University since 2003. This concept was developed by our students working with Oxfam and Fair Trade Foundation to make it a reality. Now there are over 120 Fairtrade Universities across the UK. We help our students to make better choices by selling in our shops and catering services and sell enough Fairtrade coffee beans to make over 1,000 espressos a day. Each year, we have nurtured and developed our relationship with Fairtrade, which you can read more about in our Fairtrade Report, available online.

Alongside flagship initiatives like Fairtrade, we deliver many other more standard services to improve the student experience. Our means...
tested bursaries total nearly £3.7 million for over 2,600 students. We have supported 996 current students in financial hardship during the last year with the allocation of £524,665 in grants. This included 421 students with specific disability-related costs who could not get assistance elsewhere. They were granted a total of £164,297.

As well as financial support, we also encourage community interaction. Student volunteering is encouraged by providing space in the university for organisations to recruit young volunteers, we hold an annual Volunteer Fair with up to 30 agencies supported by students and staff and set up projects with voluntary agencies such as IT training for AGE UK.

**HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR**

Our annual CR conference provides a unique opportunity for those in Higher Education and sustainability to meet and drive the field forward. Last year’s conference was a great success and featured speakers from the University of Westminster, Canon, HEFCE and Futerra. Each presented their experiences with working on sustainable development and offered advice for the journey ahead.

Several themes emerged throughout the day such as: the potential for sustainability to bring people together and the importance of understanding what sustainability means for your organisation. The importance of leadership and the need for sustainability to be embedded in all that we did was one theme that we have taken particularly to heart. In addition, communications should be fun, engaging and tailored to our individual audiences. The resulting workshops from these speeches provided us with the big ideas that we have used in our vision for 2011. This year’s theme will be engagement and we look forward to creating a roadmap for engagement across the Higher Education sector.

**SOURCING**

Our ethical sourcing policy is regularly updated to make sure we are performing to the best of our ability. The policy specifies only organic milk is purchased and free range eggs used exclusively across all of our sites. We understand the impact fishing can have on the delicate ocean and river ecosystems and have become the first university to become Marine Stewardship Council accredited. Our fresh fruits, vegetables and meat are UK sourced, Wheatley campus where vegetables are grown by our staff and students. The garden is the first to use the new “Carbon Gold” bio-char product that acts as both a soil supplement and a means of carbon capture and sequestration.

We’re proud that our Catering Department’s efforts in food sourcing have been recognised externally. They have been Hospitality Assured certified and have won Compassion in World Farming’s (CiWF) Good Egg and Good Chicken awards. CiWF were so impressed that they chose to hold the first University specific ‘Good Egg’ and ‘Good Chicken’ awards ceremony. Our ‘Food for the Brain’ accreditation promotes seasonality as well as healthy eating.

It’s important to celebrate the hard work everyone has been doing. We are constantly trying to promote the Marketplace work we do to staff and students to make them aware and supportive. We know that, as a big institution, we can do more to make our purchasing power more positive. We spend £20million with local suppliers alone. This is an ongoing area of work for us.

**WHAT NEXT?**

If you want to get involved please contact Harriet Waters on sustainability@brookes.ac.uk to find out how.

To keep up to date please visit our sustainability web pages www.brookes.ac.uk/about/sustainability

The next update on our sustainability work will be released in November 2011. We’re looking forward to having much more to tell you.

WE HOPE THIS BRIEF UPDATE ON OUR SUSTAINABILITY WORK HAS GIVEN YOU AN INSIGHT INTO WHAT BROOKES IS DOING TO MAKE ITS IMPACT NET POSITIVE.