Environmental Information Regulations (EIRs) and Freedom of Information (FOI) Publication Scheme Review

A meeting of the Group was held on 07 June 2012 at 2.30pm in Carrington 203.

Present: Lee Shailer (LS), Kim Stock (KS), Ian Cruickshank (IC), Leigh Blount (LB) and Keith Hodgson (KH).

12/01 Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting (16/05/2011) were agreed. They will be published in the Publication Scheme on the University website.

ACTION:KS

12/02 Matters arising from last meeting

- **11/04 Replacement for Andy Stafford**
  Leigh Blount has become part of the group. He will represent the academic community in addition to representing the Digital Development Team (DDT).

12/03 Discussion item: ‘Our policies and procedures’ section of Publication Scheme

The group discussed the issues concerning ‘policies and procedures’ raised in a document prepared by IMPS and considered the proposals contained therein.

The following was agreed:

- **12/04 IMPS would effectively take over ownership of the policies and procedures information for the University. As a start to this, KS would contact Communications to get the page called ‘Policies and documents’ in the ‘About us’ section of the UoR website to link to the IMPS page ‘Our policies and procedures’.

  The obsolete page ‘Guide to Policy and Procedure’ needs to be removed from the Staff Portal of the University website. If it is removed before the links to it in the A-Z lists in the Staff Portal are altered, we will be left with many broken links. KS has a list of the required links and will arrange for Communications to either update the links or show her how to do it. Then she will arrange for the removal of the obsolete page.

  ACTION:KS

- **12/05 IMPS to draft some protocols for writing and maintaining policies to put before IFSG for approval, including some working definitions for terms such as ‘policy’ and


‘procedures’; this may involve looking at how other universities define such terms. IMPS would also provide guidance as to the expected scope of policies, eg whether they are to be considered School or University-wide, and more general policy guidance, for instance encouraging staff to allocate the role of ‘keeper’ of the policy to an office rather than an individual.

**ACTION:** KS/LS

- **12/06** A draft version box circulated was agreed to provide version control for policy documents. IMPS would contact Design and Print to finalise the version box and provide advice as to its use under 12/05 above

**ACTION:** KS/LS

**12/07** The group reviewed the following section of the Code of Practice on the discharge of the obligations of public authorities under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004

"II PROACTIVE DISSEMINATION OF INFORMATION

4. Under Regulation 4, a public authority has a duty to progressively make the information available to the public by electronic means which are easily accessible, and to take reasonable steps to organize information relevant to its functions with a view to active and systematic dissemination.

5. Consideration should be given to making web sites accessible to all and simple to use, so that information can be readily found, for example by enabling search functions and having an alphabetical directory as well as tree structures. Information should not be ‘buried’ on a site.

6. Public authorities should consider how to publicise applicants’ rights to information, for example as part of general information on services provided by the authority.

7. When public authorities are considering what information to disseminate proactively, they should not restrict themselves to the minimum requirements as listed in the Directive. For example, consideration should be given to disseminating frequently requested information, which will reduce individual requests for such information in the future."

**12/08** New material

The following were mentioned as potential new material, including:

- **12/09 Academics’ research blogs**
  Some academics are publishing information about their research in their blogs and these could be highlighted in our publication scheme. IMPS to investigate further.

  **ACTION:** IMPS

- **12/10 EcoCampus standards**
  Information is collected in order to achieve the EcoCampus awards. IC to investigate whether this information can be published on the website

  **ACTION:** IC

**12/11 AOB**
It was agreed that the minutes of this meeting will not be published online until they have been approved.

12/12 Next meeting
In six months KS to email members to check whether there is any urgent business to discuss. If not, KS to arrange the next meeting for approximately twelve months time.

ACTION:KS