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

A meeting of the Group was held on 11 June 2013 at 2.30pm in Room 214, Whiteknights House.

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

13/01 Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting (07/06/2012) were agreed and will be published in the Publication Scheme.

ACTION: KS

13/02 Matters arising from last meeting

- 12/04 Remove obsolete page “Guide to Policy and Procedure” from University website and tidy up loose ends created by its removal
  Completed.

- 12/06 Draft version box for policies
  Ongoing, see 13/07 below.

- 12/09 Academics’ research blogs
  A link to
  http://blogs.reading.ac.uk/the-forum
  has been added to the Environmental Information section

- 12/10 Publication of Information collected for EcoCampus awards
  IC reported that much of the data collected for these awards are published on the Clean and Green website.

13/03 Report on new definition document for Publication Scheme for universities and other HEIs

The group noted that the Office of the Information Commissioner has published a new version of the Definition document for universities and other HEIs in January 2013. The following main changes were noted:
• instead of duplicating information that is publicly available elsewhere, an HEI may choose to provide a direct link to the information;
• thresholds for the publication of expenditure and contracts have been set at £25,000;
• senior staff are defined as those earning over £100,000 on the Senior Management Team or equivalent;
• the decision-making section has been amended to emphasise that HEIs are only expected to publish information relating to the making of key decisions;
• the sections on research funding and research information have been amended;
• the definition document refers to the forthcoming Gateway to Research, but in the meantime HEIs are expected to move towards greater transparency in publishing research information - and that position will be reviewed;
• references to “local campaigns” and adherence to pay policy have been removed; and
• amendments to the CCTV provisions allow more flexibility.

The following actions were agreed:

13/04 Check whether any of the newly required information is already held for other purposes (such as the preparation of the financial statements) by James Dinsdale, Financial Accountant.

ACTION:LS

13/05 Liaise with Director of Finance to enable the Expenses and Hospitality policy to be made available to non-staff on the University website.

ACTION:LS

13/06 The group noted the recent changes to the exemption from FOI requests for pre-publication research.

13/07 ‘Our Policies and Procedures’


It was agreed that it would be difficult to produce a definitive policy before the future changes in terminology for the University’s Corporate Plan and its underlying strategies had been announced later this month but once these were in place the policy should be redrafted, checked by the University Secretary and eventually put before the Information Framework Strategy Group (IFSG) for approval.

ACTION:IMPS and KH

13/08 AOB

None

13/09 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