



SCP Board

20th October 2023

2.00-3.30pm – Dartmouth Avenue

Present:

Chair: Dr Janet Rose (Principal, **Norland College**)

B&NES: Cllr Ian Halsall (Member Advocate for Engagement with Students)

Bath Spa University: Becky Schaaf

Bath Spa University Students' Union: Laura Bold (VP Welfare and Community)

Norland College: Becci Digby (Head of Learning, Research, and Teaching)

University of Bath: Peter Lambert

University of Bath Students' Unions: Mandy Wilson-Garner (Deputy Chief Executive) Hanna Hajzer (Community Officer)

In Attendance: Ghika Savva (Manager, **SCP**), and Kathryn Jones (Administrator, **SCP**).

1. Welcome, Introductions, and Apologies

JR welcomed the Group.

Apologies were received from Dave Dixon (Community Engagement Management, **B&NES**), Cllr Dine Romero (**B&NES**), Caroline Jarosz (**Bath College**), Caroline Dangerfield (Deputy Chief Executive, **Bath Spa University Students' Union**), and Cassie Wilson (**University of Bath**).

2. Actions from previous meeting held 13th June 2023

Action	Person(s)	Status
GS to give Housing update at next meeting.	GS	On Agenda
GS/DD to organise SCP representation at Councillor meetings.	GS/DD	Completed
PL and RS to find University representation to attend FOBRA.	PL/RS	Completed

3. Housing Update

JR mentioned paper 1 and distressing results of SOS UK housing survey. She mentioned value in considering and discussing ways to resolve.

GS explained key findings from Bath Spa University as 79% felt cost of accommodation most important aspect compared to 13% who felt condition. She mentioned 1 in 5 students did not know what EPC was or had proof of gas safety check, and 68% found mould and damp in current accommodation.

She explained 72% of University of Bath students felt location most important aspect and 44% mentioned cost. She mentioned 69% had issues with damp and mould on walls and ceilings, and 57% had poorly insulated or draughty properties.

She explained numbers around being cold was concerning as 60% of University of Bath felt uncomfortably cold, and cost of heating was factor for not using it. She mentioned at least half of students saying cold affected health and around 40% affected mental health.

She highlighted that only 42% of Bath Spa University students and 38% of University of Bath students felt part of the local community.

MWG mentioned SCP Housing Group and asked about work on this. GS explained the ongoing discussions between University Housing/Accommodation staff with Letting Agents and Council Housing Teams to address issues. IH explained Council have enforcement powers for poor living environments and ability to place orders on landlords, but lack of community feeling is concerning especially in Westmoreland and Oldfield Park.

GS mentioned work on mould and damp advice piece with B&NES for students before going into winter.

HH mentioned work at Plymouth University around where students access support, and highlighted main source as friends or parents, so work around targeting parents may be useful.

GS mentioned SCP Moving In brochure includes cost of living support and where to get advice for housing issues, however SOS Survey highlighted that students know support is available but not are accessing it.

MWG asked if solutions could come from additional licensing. IH explained not as separate conditions and scheme is ending in December.

PL explained communications with parents is not allowed, but solution may be to include information pack at Registration.

JR mentioned common fear of losing deposit or backlash from Landlord or Agent so may be reluctant to raise issues. She mentioned key to create safe environment to report issues.

GS explained Letting Agent representation now sits on SCP Housing Group, and that they had recently commented that it was a myth that agents do not want to refund deposits so she would be working with them on communication to dispel this idea.

She mentioned key aspect of additional licensing is proactive work so once scheme ends work will become reactive. IH confirmed yes, unfortunately inspections are not as routine as desired and removal of scheme will affect 3- and 4-bedroom properties. GS mentioned ongoing work to gather data to support the retention/resumption of the additional licensing scheme.

MWG mentioned cost of heating can be addressed via University Hardship Fund, and asked if B&NES have similar funding or messaging. IH explained topic can be raised with Housing Team.

Action: IH to raise cost of living funding for students with Housing Team.

PL explained Hardship Fund has lack of request each year so potentially students are unaware.

BS commented willingness to investigate action to take with accommodation team including updating parent and supporters tool kit, update accommodation advice, and potential winter campaign.

Action: BS to discuss parent and supporters tool kit, accommodation advice, and winter campaign with accommodation team.

JR explained cost is wider issue and ability to only support students to report issues to landlord so may need to work across the Universities to find solutions, for example utilising spare Norland College rooms to house other students.

BS explained involvement in accommodation group and aim to ensure enough provision is in city but also usage of bed spaces. She mentioned ability to forward details for Norland College representation at group.

Action: Norland College to forward contact details to BS for accommodation meeting attendance.

BD commented on the differences between students not feeling part of the community but Paper 2 demonstrates that long-term residents like students to be in the city. GS mentioned complaints received each year are small compared to number of students, but often more visible/vocal than positive experiences.

MWG mentioned usefulness of B&NES' welcome message to students and demonstrates local area are open to students in city. IH explained door-knocking showcases students are not bringing cars to city now and overwhelming positive support for students in area.

JR commented on value in asking students how they would feel part of community and find solution through common responses. GS commented Students' Unions work on housing survey and potential to include question around topic.

Action: Students' Unions to include questions around community involvement in housing survey.

4. SCP Manager's Report, including Working Groups Update

GS mentioned Moving Out Campaign visited 2112 houses and received 770 responses, made up of 64% long-term residents and 35% students. She explained long-term residents reported 78.5% positive experience, 10.5% mixed, and 3% negative experience.

PL commented campaign occurs at peak time for complaints but only 3% are negative experiences. JR mentioned showcases idea students are welcomed but may not feeling welcome.

GS mentioned quotes from residents include Bathwick love having them here, Southdown think SCP has helped reduce noise, and Westmoreland love having students in the area.

She explained student residents reported 87% positive experience, 5% mixed, and 4.3% negative which related to landlords and housing. She explained Widcombe & Lyncombe and Bathwick were more negative than other areas and this was attributed to bus stop noise rather than student neighbours.

She mentioned Pack for Good Campaign reduced very slightly due to having half the number of banks but 23 tonnes of waste was diverted from landfill and overall a great positive for Universities' and Colleges' reputations but also saves Council money.

She explained Moving In Campaign is ongoing and aims to cover 81 streets. She mentioned lots of support from University of Bath Students' Union, Bath Spa University, and particularly B&NES Waste Services Team. She mentioned Waste Services also helped with Welcome Week events and provided useful conversations with students.

She explained literature updated to include cost of living, new RPZ information, registering to vote, and supportive messages around noise guidance. She mentioned information on timeframe for repairs in HMOs also in leaflet as finding more contact from students around property issues and landlords.

JR commented on usefulness of adding mould and heating guidance for next years' leaflet. GS mentioned Mini Move In in February and ability to discuss topic then.

She explained complaints consistently increasing year by year due to more awareness of SCP and spikes typically occur around campaigns. She explained Westmoreland is typically higher due to greatest concentration of student residents, but currently Southdown, Widcombe & Lyncombe, and Twerton are higher due to parking and housing issues respectively.

JR commented on misunderstandings and misconceptions around student rights in city, despite contributing in other ways.

GS mentioned new RPZ and impact on wards outside, including concerns around student welfare. IH mentioned ability to raise with Ward Councillor. IH asked if car usage data from door-knocking can be circulated and explained this will be raised with colleagues.

Action: KJ to forward car usage data to IH. IH to raise issue with Council.

GS mentioned Vape Recycling Task & Finish Group, under SCP Green Group, currently working on solution to recycle vapes on campus. She explained solution currently stuck at Health & Safety but once resolved, both Universities will create comms and solution can be expanded to city venues.

She explained ending of additional licensing scheme as main concern at SCP Housing Group and ongoing work to address and support students with damp and mould. She explained student housing is being chosen early due to pressure and the subsequent impact on reassignments and increased welfare issues later in academic year. HH mentioned landlords starting to sell houses in area due to mortgage rises. LB explained more PBSAs being built but higher cost so gap in accommodation still occurs.

She mentioned SCP Personal Safety focusing on relaunch of #NeverOK into city centre venues and SCP River Safety currently working on joint messaging with B&NES around flooding.

5. Agree 2023-24 Top Ten Aims

GS explained that aims 8 – 10 had been reworded and asked if Board were happy with the final ten.

JR asked when feedback is given on the top ten. GS explained reporting is quarterly and ability to compile data into one report. She is currently working on a 2022-23 Annual Report.

JR asked if students feeling part of the community was covered in aims. GS mentioned this can be incorporated into final two aims.

JR commented if other aims covered by reports and work. The Group agreed.

6. AOB

JR mentioned that BD would be chairing the meetings for the rest of this academic year.

HH commented on usefulness of noting students can vote in two places for local elections.

IH mentioned Police and Crime Commissioner vote and Mayoral Elections next year for students to vote in.

BS mentioned usefulness of including students in local plans and consultations. IH mentioned role in Local Plan Board and ongoing work to allocate resources effectively, including plans for engaging with Universities, and confirmed scope to liaise and include students. GS mentioned this can be added to Aim 9, and ongoing work with SCP Green Group on topic. MWG mentioned SU work on this and discussions around Council website and consultation processes being more student and user.

BS mentioned shift in rhetoric from city with Universities in to being a University city and usefulness in utilising shift in perception. IH commented 25% of residents are students so key stakeholders in area.

No other business was discussed.

JR thanked the Group and closed the meeting.

7. Date of Next Meeting

25th January 2024, 1.00-2.30pm at Dartmouth Avenue

Actions:

Action	Person(s)
IH to raise cost of living funding for students with Housing Team.	IH
BS to discuss parent and supporters tool kit, accommodation advice, and winter campaign with accommodation team.	BS
Norland College to forward contact details to BS for accommodation meeting attendance.	BS
Students' Unions to include questions around community involvement in housing survey.	LB/HH
KJ to forward car usage data to IH. IH to raise issue with Council.	KJ/IH