

boon brown

Issue 04

December 2024

Corporate Social Responsibility

Social Value Strategy

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Introduction

What is CSR?

Corporate Social Responsibility, or CSR, is a form of self-regulation that reflects a business' accountability and commitment to contributing to the well-being of communities and society through various environmental and social measures.

Some ways that a company can embrace CSR include:-

- being environmentally friendly and eco-conscious;
- promoting equality, diversity, and inclusion in the workplace;
- ensuring respect for all;
- giving back to the community;
- and ensuring business decisions are ethical.

Why does CSR matter?

CSR demonstrates that you're a company that takes an interest in wider social issues, in addition to the day-to-day activities of your business.

CSR plays a crucial role in a company's brand perception including its attractiveness to customers, employees and investors, talent retention and overall business success.

It is important to remain an outward-looking business and by embracing CSR, it demonstrates ambition to create a positive impact on the world.

Our Social Value Strategy

At Boonbrown, we have reflected on the CSR aims and felt that we should consider not just their standard form but how we might adapt them to our particular ambitions.

Our Social Value Strategy therefore is based upon CSR principles, with a tailored approach which identifies the critical elements of CSR which are of greatest importance to our working practices and makes the most appropriate commitments for us towards the sustainable social and community goals that we have targeted.

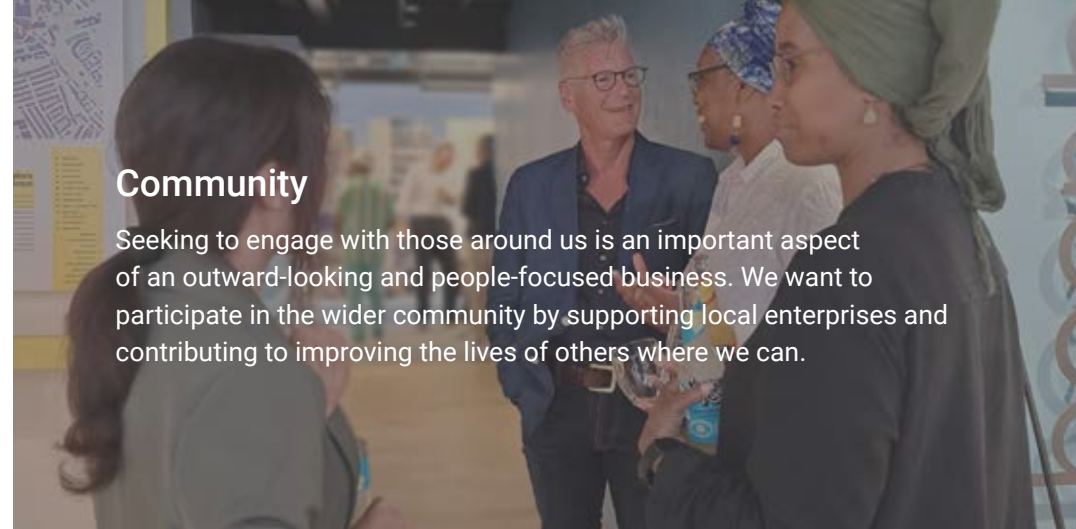
Our Vision



Our vision is to create spaces that are inspirational and contextual, focused on improving quality of life and providing sustainable places for the future. Our studios take a proactive approach to improving our business and continually look at ways to develop our activities concerning our community, our people and the environment. We achieve this through rigorous analysis of our current practices, engagement with our employees, clients and the community, as well as ambitious goal-setting. This ensures that we evolve and respond to developing social, ethical and environmental principles.

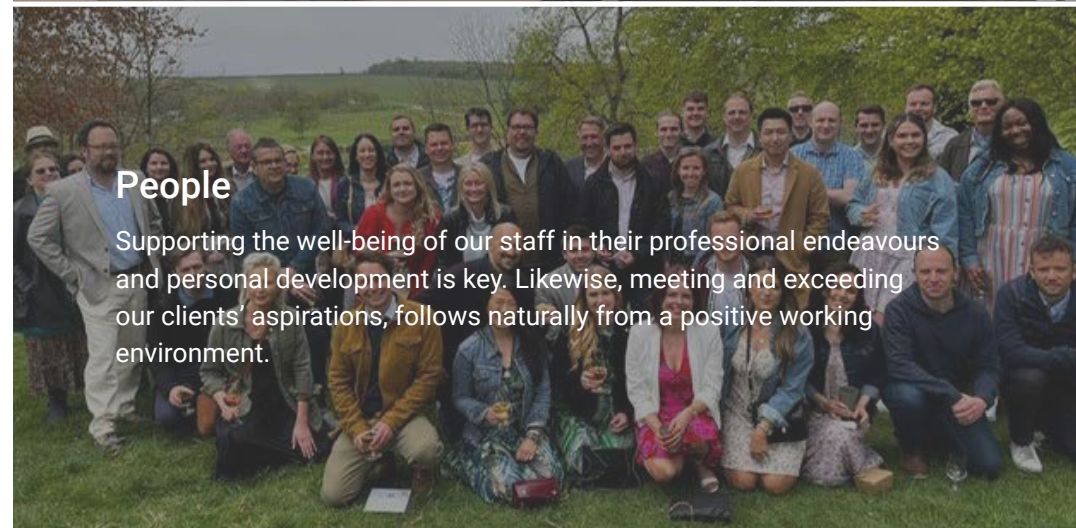


Abigail Baggley
Director of Architecture | Architect



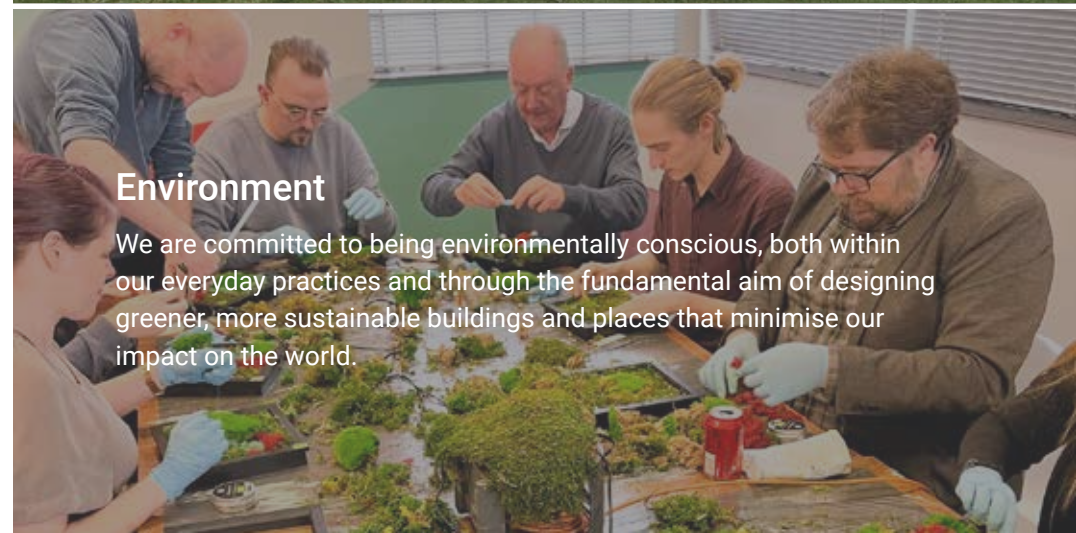
Community

Seeking to engage with those around us is an important aspect of an outward-looking and people-focused business. We want to participate in the wider community by supporting local enterprises and contributing to improving the lives of others where we can.



People

Supporting the well-being of our staff in their professional endeavours and personal development is key. Likewise, meeting and exceeding our clients' aspirations, follows naturally from a positive working environment.



Environment

We are committed to being environmentally conscious, both within our everyday practices and through the fundamental aim of designing greener, more sustainable buildings and places that minimise our impact on the world.

About Us

Our Practice

We are an established, client-focussed, creative design practice, with an enterprising, commercial mindset and in-depth technical knowledge.

With over 38 years of experience and an annual turnover of £ 3.6 million, we have built a team of talented people, working across every aspect of the built environment including:

- Architects
- Landscape architects
- Town planners
- Masterplanners
- Principal designers
- Technologists

Our Sectors

Our expertise spans all sectors including:

- Residential
- Commercial
- Civic
- Healthcare
- Education
- Leisure



Our People

Our Team

Our 50 strong team includes architects, town planners and landscape architects with individuals specialising in concept design, planning and technical delivery.

Our Core Values

Empowering others

Creating places and buildings that empower new communities and celebrate diversity and individuality.

Holistic approach to design

Seeking to find holistic landscape-led design solutions, which promote the transition to net zero and inspire positive change.

Integrity

Fostering a culture of conversation, idea sharing and collaboration, united in our professional conduct, always working with honesty and in the best interests of clients and the environment.

Designing to deliver

Providing solutions to complex technical, logistical and construction problems through high-quality design.



Our CSR Committee

Our CSR committee is a group of volunteers from all areas of the business, with an interest in developing BoonBrown's responsible business activities.



Roles & Responsibilities

The Directors

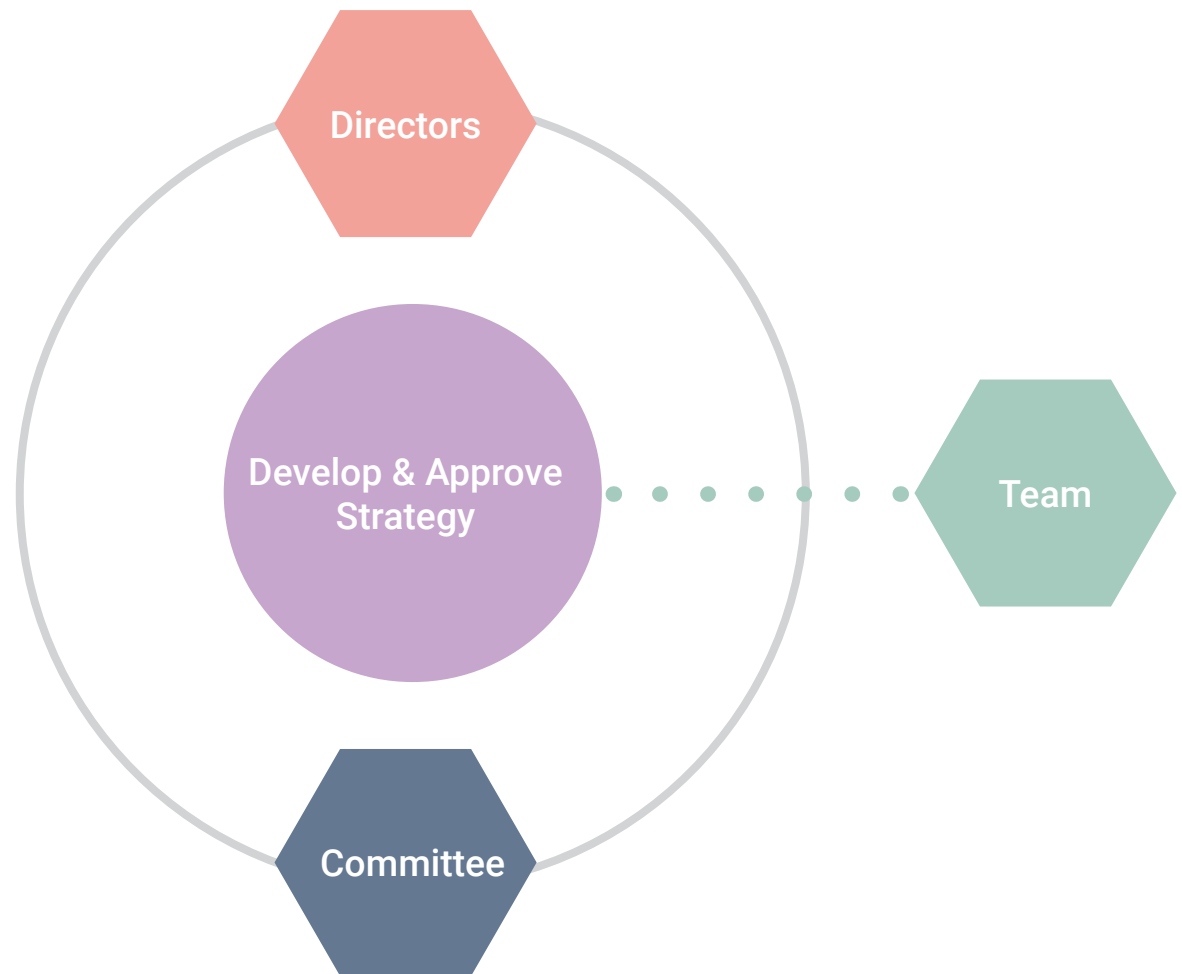
Our Directors are an important part of the CSR process as they promote social responsibility from the top down by approving strategies, agreeing and facilitating goals.

The Committee

Our Committee is responsible for generating ideas with the purpose of improving practices. They focus on the delivery and ongoing development of strategies while engaging and consulting with the team to establish shared values and goals.

The Team

Our Team play a pivotal role in the process as they need to be receptive to change and the progression of new practices. The team help to support us by providing feedback on successes and any areas for improvement, offering the ideas to promote CSR philosophies to our clients and wider community.



Sustainable Development Goals

In 2015, 193 countries adopted Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

While all the goals are important, we felt that we should focus on a select few to direct our efforts where we could have the most effect.

Coming together as a business, we decided to engage with the wider team, undertaking a company-wide survey to decide which goals were the most important to us collectively, and thus which ones we should support.



Employee Engagement

Soliciting and responding to employees' feedback is a key driver of engagement.

We believe it is important for our staff to support the company culture and values; with a survey, we were able to take a step towards improving our practices.

Our first survey, undertaken in the summer 2021, focused on some of the important drivers of engagement including well-being, support and sustainability goals.

From the results*, we defined several areas for improvement; these have become important goals for us to achieve within the first year of adopting the strategy.

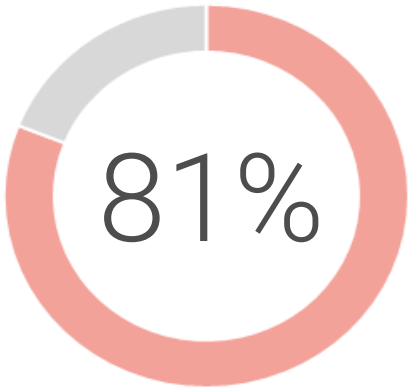
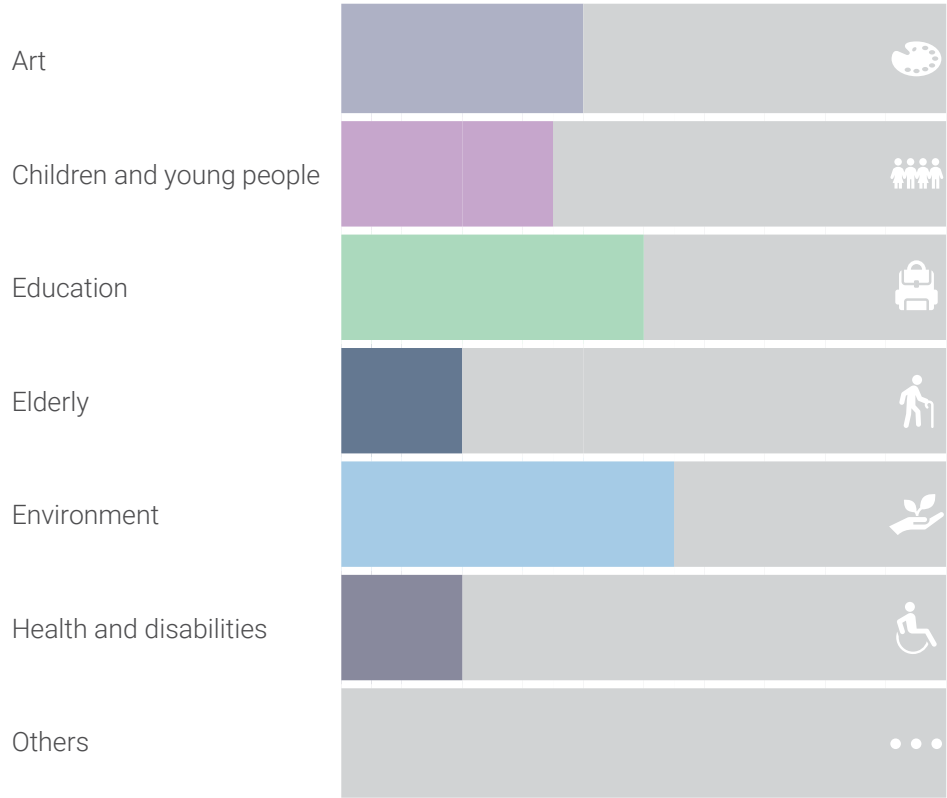
*The document represents a sample of the results.



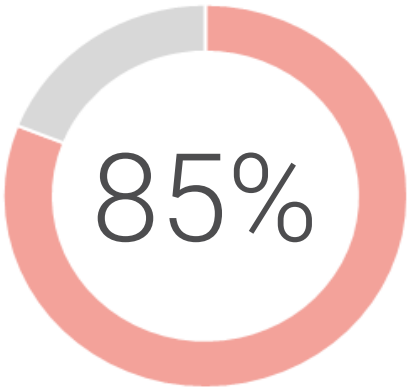
Survey Results

Survey Results | Volunteering

Causes that people are keen to support:



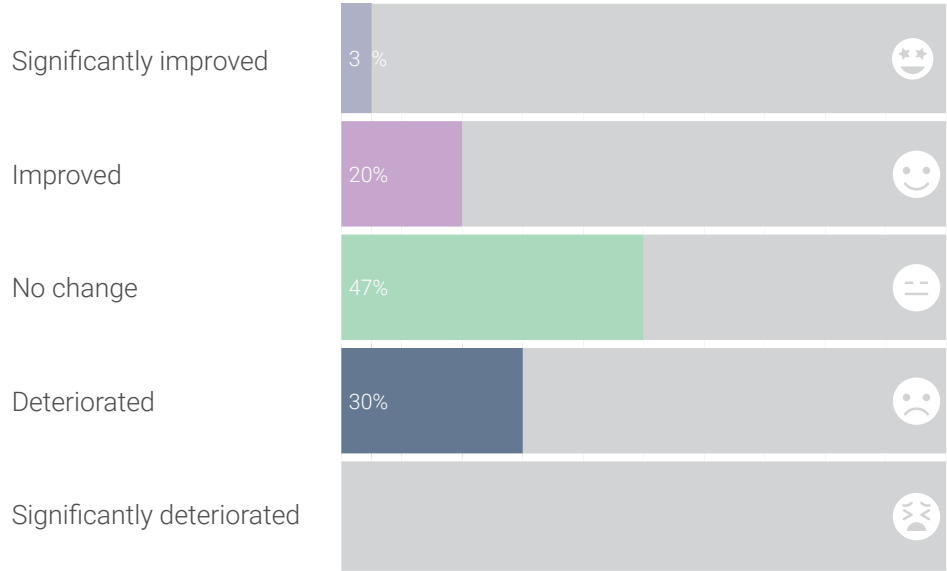
Would be interested in volunteering their time/skills to a company community activity



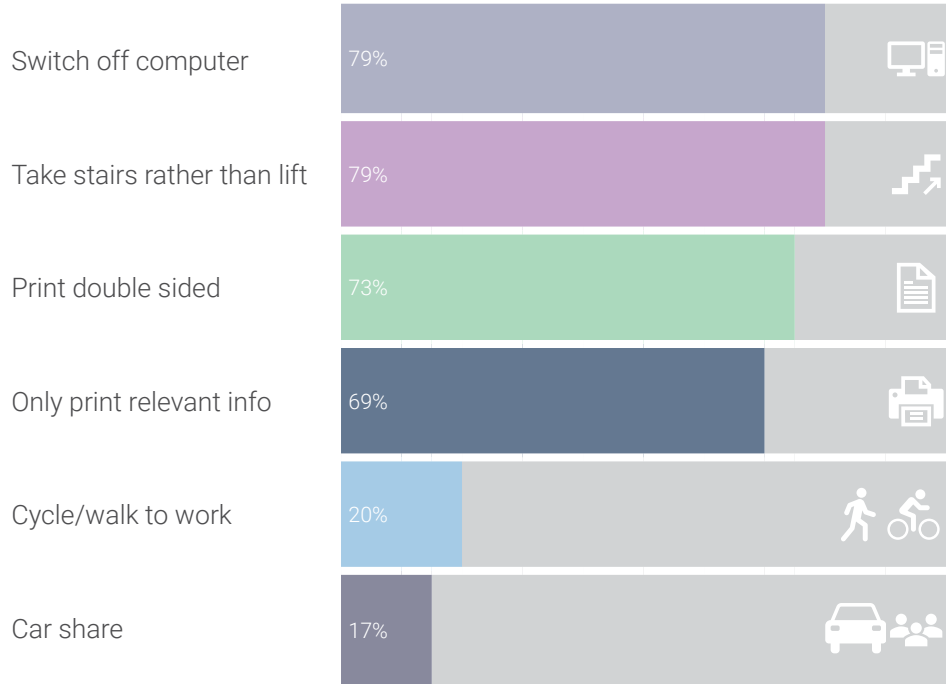
People think time constraints are the main barrier to volunteering

Survey Results | Well Being & Environment

How do you feel your well being at work has changed over the last year? (occurred during the pandemic)



Which do you do at work to improve sustainability?



Survey Results | Sustainable Development Goals

Out of the 17 sustainable development goals, which four do you feel are most important to you?

30%

CLIMATE ACTION



33%

ZERO HUNGER

43%

GOOD HEALTH & WELL-BEING

33%

QUALITY EDUCATION

Survey Summary | What Did We Learn

SDG Summary

Collectively as a practice, we feel the following four SDGs are most important to us:-



We want to help communities achieve food security and promote sustainable agriculture.



We would like to promote learning opportunities for all and provide quality education.



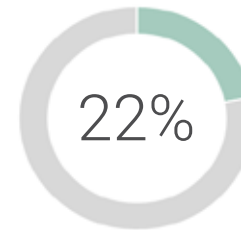
It is important that we encourage well-being and good health for our staff and clients.



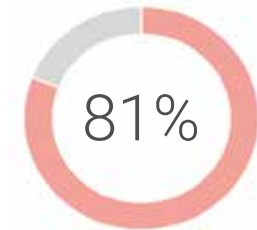
We want to take urgent action to reduce our impact on climate change and promote sustainable solutions.

General Summary

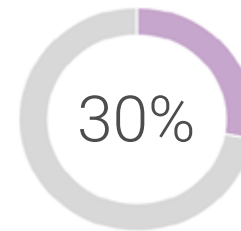
There is a desire across the practice to volunteer in the community. Communication could be improved to promote our existing responsible activities and new activities we undertake through the development of the CSR Strategy. As expected, there has been an impact on employee well-being due to the impact of Covid-19, however this CSR Strategy aligned with our chosen SDGs above provide an opportunity to improve staff well-being through the implementation of a range of company wide improvements.



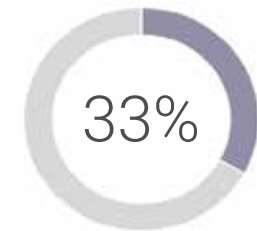
Currently volunteer



Would be interested in volunteering time/skills to a company community activity



Felt their well-being at work had deteriorated since 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic



Are aware of BoonBrown's responsible business activities

Next Steps

Continue Consultation

We have taken our first steps to formalising our practices and procedures in terms of real employee engagement and CSR actions. The consultation will continue to be an ongoing, live process of feedback and improvements as we move forward.

This is intended to contribute to the continuing success of the business with a 'best practice' approach throughout the company, while helping us work towards a progressively sustainable future.

Setting Objectives

We have outlined several objectives which define strategies and necessary steps to attain goals that align with our chosen SDGs. By setting these objectives, we have clear areas of focus and target dates for implementing them. These will be reviewed on a 6 monthly basis.

Our progress to date including how we have operated over 35 years undoubtedly stands us in good stead and bodes well for the future. Our pursuit of the ideals and standards that we have set out in this document will ensure that we continue to grow and deliver with the right values and ambitions of a business fit for today and ready for tomorrow.

Design

As per the vision we have set out, we will strive to design greener buildings and spaces, keeping pace with new ideas and technologies, using sustainable materials and methods such as 'modern methods of construction' (MMC) wherever possible.

Community



















We have resolved to engage more with the wider community and local businesses as we endeavour to lead on key issues that affect us all.

Well-being









We will persevere with the promotion of well-being for our staff and our determination to meet the aims of our clients is core to what we do.

CSR Objectives

















CSR Objectives | People

SDG	In./Ext.	Proposed	Target Date	Improvements/Progress
		Review flexi-time policy to ensure it's fit for purpose	February 2023	Flexi-time policy has been implemented. Review further to decide how flexi-time can work best for staff.
		Review work from home policy / provide feedback to ensure it's fit for purpose	February 2023	Work-from-home policy adopted in April 2022. To be reviewed.
		Create a team-building / skills development event calendar (training related)	January 2023	Activity calendar to be created for 2023.
		Promote / schedule summer and winter physical and social group activities	February 2023	Review winter options and send survey to staff to select preferred winter sports activities.
		Schedule quarterly team lunches	Ongoing	Implemented, continue organising lunches.
		Organise monthly fruit baskets / provide fruit to the team	Ongoing	Implemented in both offices.
		Review support in place for mental health (consider Mental Health First Aiders)	February 2023	Mental health toolboxes have been issued to the practice. Review CPD options for increasing Mental Health Awareness across all staff. Exact CSR objective to be agreed if Mental Health First Aiders are not the preferred route. Consider renaming objective to 'Wellness' or 'Wellbeing'. To be reviewed at next quarterly meeting.
		Consider monthly open hours for staff to have the opportunity to speak to HR / Director	February 2023	A drop-in open hour for HR on a monthly basis has been implemented in Yeovil. Review ways to engage London office. Run quarterly in-person drop-in sessions in the London office to coincide with ELT meetings and review options for more contact.
		Provide suggestion boxes	Completed	Implemented in both offices.
		Review what BoonBrown can do to help improve well-being e.g. reviewing employee benefits, office set-up	February 2023	Review options for employee benefits. To review with team at next quarterly meeting.

CSR Objectives | People

SDG	In./Ext.	Proposed	Target Date	Improvements/Progress
		Promoting the use of Nationally Described Space Standards to clients via blogs & presentations	February 2023	Yeovil team to promote in Somerset and produce relevant blog. Date for blog issue to be agreed. Review best options for promoting in London.
		Develop 'Green Agenda' that sets out BoonBrown's values e.g. one edible tree per household in new development sites	February 2023	Spin off group has been formed call 'Design M.O' and an initiatives list has been developed to cover design principles. A proposal is currently in progress.
		Create formalised PEDR structure & development plan for students whilst working at BoonBrown	February 2023	Student development plan document has been created and needs to be reviewed to make it more user friendly for students. Technical mentoring programme has been implemented in Yeovil; to be reviewed against apprenticeship requirements. Progress to be reviewed with team at next quarterly meeting.
		Offer education to wider community / clients on targeting occupancy Net Zero through utilisation of Passivhaus design principles / low carbon technologies and sustainable materiality	February 2023	Ran an 'open-house' event for Dorset Green Homes. Second event planned for Saturday 12th November. Further opportunities for educational events to be explored and reviewed at next meeting.

CSR Objectives | Community

SDG	In./Ext.	Proposed	Target Date	Improvements/Progress
		Agree & implement a volunteering programme for staff at food banks	February 2023	Contacted The Gateway in Yeovil to enquire about volunteering opportunities; to be reviewed with the Yeovil team.
		Quarterly donation to a food bank from staff	December 2022	Donations made to Brixton and Yeovil foodbanks on 21/10/22. Christmas toy collection to be arranged for December. Date to be agreed for collection in February.
		Offer meeting room space to charities for free to help support community	February 2023	Implemented in London. Options to be explored in Yeovil, to review with team at next quarterly meeting.
		Supporting a dedicated local charity voted by the team for each office	January 2023	London to support New Initiatives, the charity that are using the meeting room. Charity to be selected in Yeovil; LE to create shortlist so staff can vote on a charity to support throughout 2023.
		Explore the opportunity to give to charity through a pay package	February 2023	Review options and understand administrative implications of payroll donations. To review with team at next quarterly meeting.
		Creation of an event / volunteering calendar for local community events	January 2023	Volunteering opportunities calendar to be created for 2023 in Yeovil / London.
		Offer work experience placement for local schools	July 2023	Hosted work experience placements for the following schools - Stanchester Academy, Westfield Academy, Buckler's Mead, Yeovil College, Huish Episcopi, Preston School, Kings School/Upper, Thomas Hardy. Somerset Education Business Partnership Awards - Boon Brown were honoured to have been nominated for Best Placement Employer category by Westfield Academy. Two new starts, Apprentice Technician for 2 years and second year student on a 2month placement. London to organise for new year.
		Offer lectures / seminar programmes / critiques to universities' local to both studios	February 2023	Contact Yeovil College regarding further input with student briefs and look into opportunities to crit / mentor at UWE. Review opportunities in London. Progress to be reviewed at next quarterly meeting.

CSR Objectives | Community

SDG	In./Ext.	Proposed	Target Date	Improvements/Progress
		Attend two student career days per annum	February 2023	Implemented in Yeovil – events attended in Frome, Wincanton and at Yeovil College. Event attended in Brixton, London team to explore more opportunities.
		Organise mentoring with local schools	February 2023	Yeovil have hosted several work experience students from various schools over 2022. London team are part of the mentoring programme at Southbank College. Yeovil team to review mentoring options locally and offer mentoring when contacting schools regarding work experience.
		Support units of work in local schools	February 2023	Review ways in which both offices can support units of work with the schools we are in contact with.
		Support independent businesses with British made products rather than imported goods. Review BoonBrown supply chain.	February 2023	To be reviewed in the new year.

CSR Objectives | Environment

SDG	In./Ext.	Proposed	Target Date	Improvements/Progress
		Review and reduce paper consumption including promotion of paperless working. Use of eco-friendly paper	February 2023	Combine CSR objectives with relevant ISO 14001 objectives. Identified need to educate staff in ways to reduce paper waste, eg. Marking up drawings on Adobe rather than printing hard copies. Noted that 'Drawbox' is used by the landscape team in London to mark-up drawings. Review options for acquiring new software and feedback to team at next quarterly meeting.
		Review office supplies and swap to sustainable products. Promote refillable products and less packaging	February 2023	To be reviewed in both London and Yeovil office. London are currently looking into sustainable deliveries, feedback on progress at next meeting.
		Recycle shredded paper and donate to horse pens for bedding	Completed	Implemented in Yeovil, not applicable in London office as no shredded paper. Goal completed.
		Provide bike storage at both studios to encourage cycling to work	January 2023	Bike storage provision reviewed at the Yeovil office. Issue survey to staff / Motivo building users to establish interest in cycling to work.
		Review business practices and ways that we can target becoming a Carbon Neutral practice. Establish existing carbon footprint so targets can be set.	December 2022	Progressing with establishing carbon footprint and aiming to issue initial findings by end of year. Potential measures to reduce carbon footprint to be reviewed at next quarterly meeting.
		Promote sustainable design solutions/approaches through our blogs	January 2023	Identify upcoming blog topics and timelines for publishing. Consider writing blog on urban greening factor in 2023.
		Implement cycle to work scheme	February 2023	Review as part of benefits package.
		Improve recycling statistics in both offices	Ongoing	Advised that there has been an improvement in recycling statistics compared to 2021.
		Review requirements for having electric charging points in Yeovil Studio (n/a in Brixton)	February 2023	Advised that EV charging points have been priced for in Yeovil. To be reviewed at next meeting.
		Promote car sharing through incentive schemes	February 2023	Incentives to be reviewed for the Yeovil office.
		Sponsor local trees	February 2023	To be reviewed further in 2023. Research Ecosia, an alternative search engine that uses profits from advertising to plant trees.

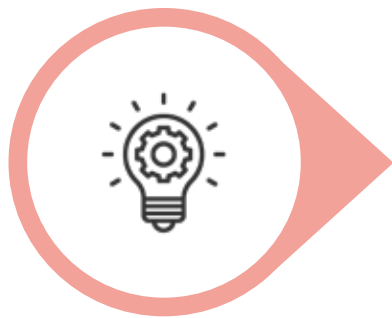
Going Forward

CONSULTATION

Draft CSR report is issued to BoonBrown team for 'consultation' and feedback

6 MONTH REVIEW

Progress is reviewed against objectives; 6 months from issue. An interim CSR report is then issued to demonstrate progress



IDEATION

The Committee develops and approves a draft CSR report

'GO LIVE'

The Committee responds to feedback and finalises the first issue

ANNUAL PUBLISH

One year after its first issue, the strategy will be redefined and developed further. This process may include setting new targets, focusing on new sustainable development goals and evolving the documentation

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