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Students guide the way in environmental initiative

Students from Northumbria University have partnered up with employees at a North East business park to provide their insight towards new environmental plans.

Four students from Northumbria University's Department of Geography and Environment completed a ten week placement at Quorum in which they took on consultancy roles for two projects that the business park is implementing as part of its long-term commitment to sustainability and the environment.

The first strand of work the students were involved with was the development of a wildlife trail to capitalise on the existing and thriving wildlife area at Quorum. Past projects have seen nectar beds planted for bees and a stream cleared to encourage the surrounding nature. Luke Smith, 21, and Hollie Stocks, 22, were allocated the role of bio-diversity consultants on this project.

Luke and Hollie, who both currently study Geography (BSc), were briefed with plans to create a walking trail for people working on the park to complete on their lunch breaks and experience the various types of wildlife.

They were tasked with carrying out an analysis of the wildlife already present in the grounds, and creating a proposal detailing measures which could be introduced to attract more birds, bees and butterflies.

The students liaised with Quorum's onsite landscaper and gardener to discuss some of their suggestions and developed a feasible concept for the trail.

Quorum events manager Jen Taylor said: "We will be implementing the measures proposed by the students in time for the summer with the help of the Quorum Wildlife Group and concluding with a sign-posted trail around the park for all to enjoy."

The placement, which required a minimum of 70 hours commitment, also saw Geography (BA) student Michael Wren and Environmental Management (BSc) student Pei Tan act as travel plan consultants on a green travel initiative for Quorum.

The students analysed a recent employee travel survey and identified areas that could be strengthened – such as encouraging more car sharing. They then gave a presentation to human resource managers from companies across the park highlighting schemes and incentives to urge people to consider car sharing.

Quorum commuter centre manager Laura McVittie, who worked with Michael and Pei on the travel project, said: "Every year, the travel plan is reviewed and this presented the perfect opportunity for the placement students to provide a fresh perspective.

"A great idea they came up with was to host a roadshow where a giant car share map would be mounted in tenant restaurant areas. Willing commuters can then pinpoint their address on the map and leave their contact details for

compatible car sharers. This hopes to create a friendly and relaxed vibe around car sharing and hopefully encourage more people to do it at Quorum.”

Laura addedd: “All the students made an impact for the better and it has been a really rewarding experience working with them. We already have a cooperative partnership with Northumbria University as a result of our Q Learning facility that is offered to the park’s tenants for which it delivers bespoke training sessions.

“We have also encouraged companies on the park to forge academic links and educational partnerships in the same way. Balfour Beatty has already taken on two students for an energy management project.”

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