

Stakeholder Engagement Report 2020/21



INTRODUCTION

In order to ensure our responsible business (RB) approach remains robust and relevant, the firm undertook a series of stakeholder interviews to gain direct feedback from people and organisations related to our business.

Stakeholders were asked to rate our RB approach and suggest any areas for improvement or future consideration. Additionally the conversations were used to identify any opportunities for us to collaborate further with stakeholders on the RB agenda.

The interviews took the format of a 30-45 minute conversation between each stakeholder and our RB team. Sixteen stakeholders were interviewed in total. We would like to thank all the stakeholders involved in this process, as their time and views were invaluable.



HOW DO STAKEHOLDERS RATE OUR APPROACH TO RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS?

- Our framework for responsible business resonates well, stakeholders like the structure and that our people sit at the core

*'Excellent framework – visually get it straight away, simple, impactful'
Sustainability partner*

- Clients see a good alignment between our RB approach and what they are doing and what they expect of their professional services suppliers
- No major topics seem to be missing from our framework. Topics we cover that are deemed most important are D&I, social mobility, wellbeing, people engagement and governance

*'Expect Burges Salmon to focus on workplace priorities: Engaged, happy people, wellbeing, D&I and social mobility – we recognise role of the client in enabling this whilst not being over demanding'
Client*

- Stakeholders are pleasantly surprised that the environment features so prominently in our approach, this is not necessarily expected from a professional services firm but is increasingly important
- Our understanding and application of the Sustainable Development Goals seems well thought through and advanced compared to other businesses
- The Preferred Firm Network felt we are well advanced with this agenda and we should use this as a differentiator
- Stakeholders felt it was good to see we have a strong focus on collaboration

*'See good alignment with Burges Salmon and seem they are in the right areas given expectations as a Professional services firm'
Client*

WHAT ELSE WOULD STAKEHOLDERS EXPECT OR LIKE TO SEE US DOING?

Strategically

- Continue to work with our supply chain on responsible business and environmental standards
- Continue our understanding of climate change impacts, utilising Science Based Targets to get to net zero
- Link further into city wide initiatives to deliver inclusive and sustainable cities where we operate

*'Would expect us as a firm to be aligning and considering the WECA Industrial Strategy and the One City Plan to help inform our approach especially in terms of community'
Forums and regulators*

- We have a lot of RB topics; ensure we prioritise in order that we can communicate a cohesive and understandable story

Through data and communications

- Ensure we bring to life what we do around RB with case studies and stories, make it 'real' for people and equip client facing lawyers with the information they can share with clients

- Provide consistent disclosure of data
- Communicate good news stories frequently, there is an appetite for it
- Communicate that we are doing this because it is the right thing to do as well as being the right thing for our clients

'Important that we are doing this because it's the right thing not just to tick a box – important for buy-in and our culture and values'
Our people

- Further evolve KPIs and measures so they illustrate where we are performing well, areas for improvement and trends in data
- Consider how else we can educate our people on sustainability issues, societal not just work related

'Think organisations should support their people in widening their understanding and views to be responsible citizens e.g. with lunch and learns session on wider societal issues (slavery, homelessness)'
Client

Within the business community

- Burges Salmon is a leader in RB thinking in the region, take opportunities to share our experience and be a role model for other businesses

'Burges Salmon is known for its responsible business approach – hosting, sharing space and listening to the wider city agenda – embedded and integrated approach – broader civic contribution'
Sustainability partner

- Take up the mantle for a post COVID green recovery

WHAT WE WILL DO WITH THIS INFORMATION

This information is now being shared widely within the business function and responded to through the Responsible Business teams planning of priorities for the coming months.

We have also gained useful insight on further opportunities to collaborate around the RB agenda with various stakeholder organisations and new initiatives and partnerships are being explored as a result of the conversations.