

BUSINESS CASE STUDY: UNITED UTILITIES PLC

United Utilities plc's principal activity is to manage and operate the regulated water and wastewater network in the north west of England, a region with a population of around 7 million. It also operates utility infrastructure for customers throughout the UK and overseas.

UU plays a vital role in the communities we serve, providing essential water and energy services that millions of people depend on every day.

The company believes it has a moral and regulatory duty to supply these services responsibly, meeting the needs of our customers, employees, regulators and investors, while limiting the negative effects on the environment and enhancing our local communities.

United Utilities has a strong track record in corporate responsibility and working in partnership is an integral part of the business's approach. It works hard to bring the principles of community involvement and sustainable development into the heart of decision-making within the business, as well as willingly sharing best practice.

Making community involvement a central part of the business has taken time and indeed is still evolving to keep pace with the changing industry and with the wider environment.

The company has been a partner of the Campaign since its inception.

Why is United Utilities involved with the MBC?

There is very close alignment of the Campaign's objectives with those of United Utilities. Whilst short-term improvements matter, both organisations have a commitment to the long-term development of the region.

How is United Utilities involved?

The company is involved through both financial sponsorship and, as importantly, through the contribution of employee resources, with the business of the Campaign at both strategic and operational levels. It:

- Contributes to the work of the Council
- Second an employee to work on policy and projects
- Sponsors and supports Action Partnerships through direct funding and provision of office facilities for three local co-ordinators
- Provides sponsorship towards the Campaign's annual conference and magazine

What are the benefits of involvement to United Utilities?

Many of the benefits to the business stem from the mutual building of reputation and ways of working that have been established over many years

Through partnership, United Utilities is seen to be working with an organisation which:

- Is recognised as an environmental leader in the North West
- Contributes to strategic regional initiatives, especially on regeneration in the North West
Manages an effective project portfolio which leverages funding from other sources in a 1:9 ratio
- Is well placed to address future issues e.g. climate change, water efficiency

This “working together” with the Campaign enables the business to:

- Better influence key stakeholders (e.g. Ofwat, Environment Agency) on the key strategic policies (Periodic Review, Water Framework Directive, Regional Economic Strategy/Regional Spatial Strategy)
- Gain publicity which
 - Promotes the value of water quality improvements and the benefits they bring to the local economy and communities
 - Promotes positive messages about United Utilities’ role in these improvements
 - Gives the company a high profile at the annual conference (attended by 250 other stakeholders)
 - Gives high visibility through quality publications supported by the company
- Give employees a wider experience which enhances their skills and competencies consistent with the business long term strategy
- Gain a broader prospective through European projects, with the benefits of learning in a two-way exchange of information and experience