

## UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

**MINUTE OF A MEETING** of the Sustainable Information Technology Group held in the Elder Room, Old College on Friday 2 October 2015.**1 Welcome and Introductions**

The Convener welcomed attendees to the first meeting of the Group which included representation from across the University, both physically and in terms of function.

The purpose of the relaunched Group was to generate discussion on possible action in terms of SRS and IT. It was noted that proposed membership had grown during the lengthy pre-meeting phase, and now needed to be reduced.

Action – All to give feedback through the Secretary on appropriate membership for the Group, including any additions and signalling if any areas were over-represented.

**2 Membership, Remit & Governance Arrangements**

The Convener introduced a paper on representation, scope and strategic oversight for the relaunched Group. The key element was the proposed remit in section 3 - in particular reaching an understanding of the footprint associated with IT and identifying opportunities to make energy, carbon and cost savings to contribute to review of the University's Climate Strategy.

Attendees noted that setting targets for consumption per area and reporting progress against these could be potentially burdensome, and that representation on the Group may not be at the right level to secure such reports.

Members discussed the prevalence of personal devices, agreeing to include in the Group's remit all University-owned devices, and noting that impact would vary by item (e.g. the conflict minerals issue was strongest in relation to mobile phones). As with the business aviation issue, the best approach would be to offer guidelines and opportunities for staff to test internally.

The Group broadly endorsed the paper, agreeing to rationalise membership.

Action – All to provide feedback on the remit via the Secretary.

**3 Climate Strategy Review Update & ICT Contribution**

In the absence of the Climate Policy Manager, the Convener outlined the context for this update on Phase 1 of the Climate Strategy Review. In terms of the current Climate Action Plan adopted in 2010, while the University had performed extremely well in some areas (such as waste, transport and CHP), emissions continued to rise. Efforts were underway to investigate what could be done, without constraining institutional growth and ambition. Evidence was being gathered on best practice around the world and a carbon modelling tool was being developed. The CIO for Humanities and Social Sciences noted a premade tool used elsewhere in the sector that could be used to get a clear idea of UoE's current position.

Action – FM to share further information on the tool.

The aim was to get a sense of the real scale of the University's IT footprint, as well as potential pathways for improvement. As a first step, members agreed that it would be helpful to establish a baseline to understand how significant in carbon terms the various issues were. Members acknowledged that the Group could identify useful changes while accepting that emissions in this area might still increase.

A

B

It was recognised that there had been a lack of rigour with regard to boundaries, though work was ongoing to resolve this. The key was operational control and deciding what this would mean in terms of IT. Historically, UoE had tended to take the entire hit for shared services such as ARCHER, and changing this to a calculated portion was one option. Attendees noted that boundary questions should not be allowed to get in the way of UoE's contribution to society.

Action – follow up with members on baseline and boundary issues linked to carbon footprinting.

#### **4 Sustainable ICT Procurement & Supply Chains**

**C**

The Procurement Manager presented for discussion a paper on the Sustainable Procurement Prioritisation Tool (SPPT), highlighting some of the broad SRS issues which relate to ICT supply chains, and outlining how potential risks are managed.

The Scottish Government Procurement Reform Bill would mandate additional sustainability requirements and changes in reporting. A dummy run using the SPPT had been carried out and the paper proposed a further SPPT exercise to set priorities for the coming years. This session may be held off until after December when the tool would be finalised. The CIO, Humanities and Social Sciences had attended the first SPPT session, found it to be useful, was happy to attend in future and encouraged others to do so.

It was essential to ensure procurement at UoE captured the overall power consumption of equipment, whole life costing etc. which were not necessarily part of current procurement requirements. Attendees proposed adding fair phones as an option for University telephony, which could help boost UoE's ranking in the People & Planet league.

Action – GR to reflect on attendees at the last SPPT session, what range to aim for at the next session, and put a request back to the Group.

#### **5 ICT in the Context of Reuse**

**D**

The Chief Information Officer, CHSS presented an update on internal and external reuse, including recommendations on hard drive wiping, which had arisen through discussions within the College on PCs that were no longer required. The paper identified barriers to PC reuse (secure data erasure, storage and time constraints) and how they might be overcome to make the process less onerous and drive greater reuse. It was proposed that UoE investigate the use of a commercial product to cleanse PCs to a set standard.

Attendees noted potential risks of cascading internally kit that was more than 5 years old as it was likely to be the least energy efficient and could be cheaper to replace purely on running costs (though the energy involved in producing the piece of equipment should also be factored in). Further thought could be given to whether existing equipment could be made to serve for longer, potentially by upgrading components rather than machines. While there were positive examples of internal reuse saving resources, and members were keen to retain the option of cascading internally, it should be recognised that older kit required more support.

Members discussed selling equipment to staff for use at home. Some areas had taken payment for peripherals (though not desktop machines due to data protection issues) in order to be able to keep track of these through the system.

Equipment approaching end of life was of significant value to charities, and excellent partnership arrangements were already in place. These partnerships had very specific requirements which the Waste and Environment Manager had been working on.

Action – MB to share the protocols that had been developed in this area.

The Group expressed universal support for the idea of doing more in this space, though further debate on the principles and priorities was needed.

Action – FM to reflect further on the key issues and a potential starting point, and report back to the Group following further discussion.

## **6 Conflict Minerals Policy**

**E**

In the absence of the Research & Policy Manager, the Head of SRS Programmes presented this paper providing background on the development of a conflict minerals policy for the University and offering a draft of the policy to consider and potentially endorse.

SITG noted that the Chief Information Officer and Librarian to the University was broadly supportive of the policy, suggesting it be adopted and reviewed within the year. The intention was to start at the collective buying level, rather than focus on individual equipment. The issue highlighted deep implications within UoE supply chains. These issues generally began as voluntary before becoming mandatory. It was essential for the University to remain ahead of the curve and signal its position for the companies it does business with (though most companies UoE sources from have their own conflict minerals policies).

SITG members endorsed the draft policy. Once consultation was finalised it would be submitted to IT Committee and SRS Committee for approval.

## **7 2015-18 Framework Planning Exercise**

The purpose of this facilitated planning exercise was to gather initial thoughts on SRS opportunities within ICT and where the Group was going to develop into an action plan.

Group 1 identified two main priorities: power efficiency and the circular economy. Developing a broad understanding of the University's IT footprint should be the first step. A review carried out last year found that half the spend associated with IT sits with Information Services and is centrally managed, the other half is distributed and devolved. Once a baseline was established the Group would be in a position to identify efficiencies. If included the Advanced Computing Facility (ACF) would dominate power use figures. The Group was advised not to look to ARCHER for further efficiency savings. These facilities delivered the ability to model, saving energy by running experiments digitally through simulations.

Group 2 focused on the baseline, data availability, and annual audits. Wireless could be used to map and monitor device usage levels. Guidance should be made available including information on the relative impacts of different pieces of equipment to drive positive behaviours. Devolving data and systems budgets could make a difference. SITG could promote a shift to paperless working and increase messaging on positive impacts.

Group 3 discussed the need for an energy consumption tracking tool to collate and analyse data, noting the JISC-funded IT Higher Education Energy Consumption Tool. SITG could look into intelligent power consumption agent software which could generate significant savings. An energy standby policy could be implemented for supported desktops. SITG could promote the introduction of other procurement options (e.g. fair phones as part of the telephony options on the procurement website). It was recommended that the Group seek a student representative.

Action – MB & CO to prepare a summary for circulation with the minutes.

Action – All to send any suggestions for a student member to the Secretary.

Action – JR to schedule quarterly meetings starting in January 2016.