

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

MINUTE OF A MEETING of the Sustainability Operations Advisory Group held in Main Library Meeting Room 1.11 on Wednesday 16 September 2015.

Members: Hugh Edmiston, Director of Corporate Services
David Barratt, Engineering Operations Manager
Michelle Brown, Head of SRS Programmes
Michelle Christian, Senior Accommodation Manager
Dave Gorman, Director of Social Responsibility & Sustainability
Sarah Gormley, Business Manager & Deputy Head of IS Planning
Andrew Haddon, Head of Estates Finance
David Jack, Energy Manager
Andrew Kerr, Director of Edinburgh Centre on Carbon Innovation
Urte Macikene, EUSA Vice President Services
Phil McNaul, Director of Finance
Brian McTeir, Roslin Campus Facilities & Services Manager
Fleur Ruckley, Waste & Environment Manager
George Sked, Assistant Director of Procurement
Geoff Turnbull, Assistant Director, Estates Operations
Elizabeth Vander Meer, Climate Policy Manager
Dougie Williams, Energy Systems Manager

In attendance: Clare Wharmby, Director Carbon Forecast Ltd, for item 5
Jonny Ross-Tatam, EUSA President

Apologies: Hugh Edmiston; David Barratt; Sarah Gormley; Andrew Haddon;
David Jack; Andrew Kerr; Brian McTeir; George Sked; Geoff Turnbull;
Elizabeth Vander Meer

- 1 The minute of the meeting held on 27 May 2015 was approved as a correct record. In the absence of the Convener, the Director of Social Responsibility and Sustainability chaired the meeting. Consequently, it would not be possible to come to a decision on all items, but members could offer comment to be fed back. **A**

SOAG welcomed new member Michelle Christian, Senior Accommodation Manager, replacing Liz Beattie; and Clare Wharmby, Director of Carbon Forecast Ltd, in attendance for item 5. On behalf of the Group the Director of SRS thanked outgoing members Liz Beattie and Geoff Turnbull for their substantial contribution to sustainability issues down the years.

- 2 **Matters Arising**
There were no matters arising not covered on the agenda or in post-meeting notes.

SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS

- 3 **SOAG Membership** **B**
The Director of SRS presented a proposed update to the Group's membership, reflecting staffing changes, realignment with the Group's practical operational remit, and designed to mesh with the new SRS Committee membership which had moved away from individual interest to a focus on role and function.

Members were broadly supportive of the changes, including adding representation from the Colleges, Health and Safety, and Estate Development. Attendees recommended further reducing the size of the group to enhance its effectiveness, with individual members responsible for bringing along the views of several colleagues. Comments would be fed back to the Convener.

Action – JR to update the proposal to swap SOAG roles for the Energy Manager and Energy Systems Manager respectively; and shift the overall emphasis from named individuals to roles.

Action – JRT & UM to decide sabbatical representation for SRSC and SOAG respectively and report back to the Secretary.

4 SRS Reporting, 2015/16 Plan and Quarterly Reporting

C

The Head of SRS Programmes presented this update on SRS reporting and timelines, a proposed plan for updating progress towards the annual SRS Implementation Plan, and quarterly reporting requirements for SOAG.

In a move toward integrated reporting, the SRS Department were working with Finance on sustainability content to be included in the UoE Annual Report and Accounts. In addition, there was a stand-alone SRS report which included the same data with more case studies. Issues arising included materiality, identifying the most important areas to report on, as well as those topics of greatest interest to stakeholders.

Quarterly reporting structures had already been introduced for SOAG. The SRS Programme Manager was meeting with key stakeholders on introducing standardised reporting templates.

The SRS Department is working on gathering content for SRS Reporting with a deadline for Estates performance data of 23rd October. This deadline also enables Public Bodies Duties reporting requirements (November). Though this may be challenging in some areas, it was better to have the data, even with qualifiers.

As SOAG meetings were scheduled based on dates cascading from Court through CMG to SRS Committee, future dates were not currently aligned with reporting.

Members agreed that Table 2 aligned with SOAG's business, and that reporting should not to be viewed as a stand-alone exercise, but linked back to University strategy, goals, metrics and KPIs, giving a snapshot of current performance and an indication of the direction the University needed to take.

Mandatory reporting under the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 unified reporting timelines, creating problems for the education sector working to the academic year. UoE had successfully secured an additional month to report. With a robust quarterly reporting system in place, submitting four months after year end should be feasible, as there would be three solid quarters plus a fourth including some estimations. UoE would report on the 14/15 academic year in November, taking solid data up to a point, then extrapolating.

An update on progress of the 14/15 Implementation Plan would be presented at the next meeting in November and a revised version of Paper C would go to SRS Committee in October.

Action – MB to review the current order of the topics listed (starting with climate / investment), emphasising links to the University business model, and

flesh out the titles, quantifying the scale of the problem and how much of a difference UoE wanted to make, to aid prioritisation.

Action – JR to issue a follow up email by the end of October outlining actions and requesting content.

Action – JR to realign SOAG dates to the quarterly reporting timeframe.

5 Climate Strategy Phase 1 Update & Tool Presentation

D

The Director of SRS introduced a climate strategy update for noting. Progress had been somewhat hampered in the absence of the Climate Policy Manager, however consultants had been retained and various packages of work were being done, the most important of which was Lot 1 – development of a climate modelling and scenario tool. The tool would inform development of a new carbon target.

Clare Wharmby, Director of Carbon Forecast Ltd, presented an update on Lot 1. Objectives for the tool were to manage all carbon footprint data, acting as a master dataset to draw subsets from, and to calculate UoE's carbon footprint. The tool would be able to calculate the impact of carbon reduction projects, project the impact of changes in student numbers or income, decarbonisation of the grid, and so forth. These aspects together would be designed to produce a climate strategy best placed to meet the set targets.

A key element was establishing the boundary, i.e. the subset of total emissions that the target would be based on. Discussions were ongoing to decide which areas of Accommodation Services fell within the boundary, based on operational control. Estate and waste data would be broken down into five campuses which aligned with how that data was controlled and managed.

Attendees discussed exclusions, noting cattle as a typical example - biogenic emissions were difficult to estimate, represented a very small source, and UoE was unlikely to have the data. It was acceptable to make these exclusions, provided UoE was explicit about the reason.

The project had factored in opportunities for knowledge transfer including: involving Carbon Masters student in testing the tool; a student completion to find the best carbon reduction project; providing briefings for courses with an interest in this area or presentations for conferences; and sharing links to the tool with University networks. UoE would need to be confident in the tool before engaging in any promotional activity.

Action – CW to add food and compost back in to the boundary diagram.

Action – All members with comments or queries on the paper to follow up with DG or MB.

ROUTINE ITEMS

6 Update on Sustainable Laboratories Activities

E

SOAG noted the minute of the SLSG meeting on 2 June. A lot of traction and buy-in to sustainable laboratories had been built up, and work was ongoing to translate this into practical action, including exploring the case for a permanent Sustainable Labs Coordinator post on a 'spend to save' basis.

7 Utilities Working Group & Practical Plan Update

F

SOAG noted the minute of 11 August, recognising utilities as a key strand of the Climate Strategy Review. The meeting had reflected on the 10% reduction target, breaking it down into components and identifying requirements to meet

it. Major challenges were identified in terms of data, infrastructure, and behaviour change. It would be necessary to spend to save, and the group was looking at schemes implemented elsewhere that were showing 10-20% returns on investment.

8 Any Other Business

No items were raised.

ITEMS FOR FORMAL APPROVAL/NOTING

9 Sustainability Awards Update & Feedback on Proposed Special Awards

G

The Head of SRS Programmes presented for noting a paper on the current status of the Awards programme, thanking members for feedback contributed to the review. Building on success and lessons learned in 2014/15, changes in 2015/16 would ensure a more strategic approach that:

- Aligned more closely with key UoE sustainability priorities
- Fitted the workflow of the academic and business year
- Reduced risk of the awards process becoming a 'box ticking' exercise.

A ceremony in April would focus on Special Awards (labs, energy, innovation, impact, personal contribution) and would align with volunteering, specifically Development & Alumni promotion of [the Big Leap](#).

This would be a year of transition, with parallel aims to increase the number of teams participating (spreading the scheme and reducing processing cost) and the overall impact of the Awards. While continuing to celebrate grass roots activity, the scheme was looking into ways of recognising leadership, for example engraining sustainability in working practices at School level. Some members would be invited to join the judging panel. Attendees recommended adding a representative from Health & Safety.

Action – All members wishing to be involved to contact Caro Overy.

10 3 Year Strategy

H

SOAG noted a paper outlining the current 2015-2018 strategy of the SRS Department, including goals, objectives, ways of working and plans to monitor and measure outcomes.

Members suggested reviewing the document to test whether the objectives were genuinely SMART, and dividing the timeframe into 12 quarters to break down actions in a way that would allow for more effective staff performance management.

Action – All members to provide comments to be addressed when the document was reviewed.

11 Annual Risk Assessment – Operational Components

I

SOAG noted this paper assessing potential risks, their impact and mitigation in terms of operational sustainability. Elements relevant to SOAG had been extracted from the overall SRS Department risk log.

Members recommended reviewing those net risks that were considered unacceptable, splitting out the current set of controls which were insufficient, and including SMART objectives to improve these controls and reduce the risk to an acceptable level.