

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

MINUTE OF A MEETING *of the Social Responsibility and Sustainability Committee held in the Raeburn Room, Old College on Monday 2 March 2015.*

- Members:** Charlie Jeffery (in chair), Senior Vice Principal
 Pete Higgins (Vice Convener), Dean of Students, CHSS
 Tasha Boardman, EUSA Vice President Services
 Karen Bowman, Director of Procurement
 Michelle Brown, Head of SRS Programmes
 Gavin Douglas, Deputy Secretary Student Experience, SASG
 Hugh Edmiston, Director of Corporate Services
 Moira Gibson, External Relationship Manager, CAM
 Dave Gorman, Director of Social Responsibility and Sustainability
 Gary Jebb, Director of Estates
 Phil McNaul, Director of Finance
 Janet Philp, Joint Unions Liaison Committee
 Ian Pirie, Assistant Principal Learning and Development
- In attendance:** David Somervell, Head of SRS Futures, for item 7
 David Jack, Energy Manager, for item 8
 Dougie Williams, Energy Systems Manager, for item 8
 Alexis Heeren, SRS Projects Coordinator – Engagement, for item 9
- Apologies:** Mayank Dutia, School of Biomedical Sciences, CMVM
 Hamish MacAndrew, Head of Research Office, ERI
 Hugh McCann, School of Engineering, SCE
 Michael Northcott, School of Divinity, CHSS
 Lesley Ross, IS Building and Service Manager (KB)
 James Smith, Vice Principal International
- 1** SRS Committee noted under item 11 of the previous minute that the Fairtrade Fortnight city event on 28 February had subsequently moved from Out of the Blue café as minuted to Summerhall. **A**
- The minute of the meeting held on 22 October 2014 was approved as a correct record.
- 2** **Matters Arising**
- The Committee noted that a number of outstanding actions from the previous minute were currently paused pending decisions from senior management.
- 3** **Convener's Introductory Remarks**
- Members welcomed Senior Vice Principal Charlie Jeffery to his first meeting as convener.

SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS

4 Definitions of Social Responsibility and Sustainability

B

The Director of SRS outlined the background to the paper which offered a definition of the terms 'social responsibility' and 'sustainability' and what that might mean for the University in practice. The aim was to clarify and prioritise the scope of the SRS Committee's activities, as a successor to SEAG, identify any governance issues that arise, and provide a clearer framework for the work of the SRS Department.

Members noted a distinction between the relative clarity of operational environmental sustainability and the more open, aspirational understanding of 'social responsibility', though this area was becoming more defined by policy and law. There was general agreement that operational sustainability, food, fairtrade/supply chains should be issues in scope, but there was less support for some of the broader themes being included.

Members recommended that the focus be on translating these definitions into practical and pragmatic objectives that lay within the boundary of issues the Committee was competent to address. In terms of roles, it should be made clear that responsibility for managing these issues lay with the individual managers and functions and not with committees. Benchmarking against other Universities could assist with decisions on the inclusion of complex areas such as community engagement. The University of British Columbia, Harvard, Stanford, and Plymouth and Manchester in the UK were cited as notable examples.

Action – CJ & DG, with input from other members, to reflect further on the issue and DG to present a reduced version of the paper, with a tighter focus, for consideration at June's meeting.

5 Embedding SRS in Learning & Teaching

C

The Vice Convener introduced this paper for noting. The extent of the Committee's involvement in learning and teaching had been a long-running issue. SEAG had previously expressed a view in favour of making SRS available to students as part of their degree programme. The University's Strategic Plan had also expressed a clear commitment to address teaching as a focus for action on SRS: 'embedding our commitment to social responsibility and sustainability in our curricula, policies, strategies and procedures... offering every student opportunities to study the broader aspects of current global challenges, social responsibility and sustainability, and to explore in depth how their chosen subjects relate to them.'

The Vice Convener led a working group set up by Senatus Learning and Teaching Committee and had secured funding from the Vice Principal Learning and Teaching, CHSS, SCE and GESA to establish two posts to develop two courses. These would be led from Moray House and GeoSciences respectively, would be online and available to all students, and would build on existing work and expertise. The courses would be submitted to the Board of Studies for validation by the end of the year and be rolled out in semester 2 of 2015/16.

Members welcomed the initiative and discussed opportunities to extend access to these kinds of courses to staff and to integrate these elements in induction processes.

Action – PH to keep the Committee updated as work progresses.

6 Progress on Climate Action Plan 2010-2020

D

The Director of SRS introduced this update on progress against the University's Climate Action Plan 2010-20. While progress had been made on relative carbon intensity, growth of the estate had impacted on progress against absolute targets.

The paper suggested that the original proposal for a stand-alone Review Group had been superseded. The Directors of Estates and SRS would work together to develop a practical energy reduction plan and SRS Committee would take a more fundamental look at strategic elements and future targets and make recommendations to CMG.

Members discussed the implications of not meeting the statutory reduction of 42% by 2020, and the further investment and modelling required to keep to its climate change commitments as the University continued to expand and change. The Committee agreed on the need to set clear and realistic stretch targets that took account of the wider context. In taking on this review, the Committee should assist the University in taking a long-term view.

Action – DG to establish a sub-group to take the review forward, to consider the external regulatory environment and the University's own institutional objectives and produce a paper for the next meeting.

7 Climate Change Reporting under Public Bodies Duties

E

The Head of SRS Futures presented a briefing outlining imminent changes in Scottish Government reporting expectations on publicly funded bodies including Universities. From autumn 2015 there would be a move from voluntary reporting, through the Environmental Association for Universities and Colleges (EAUC) and the Scottish Funding Council (SFC), to mandatory reporting.

The Committee noted that UoE staff were actively engaged in framing the Further and Higher Education Institutions (FHEI) section of the pro forma reporting templates that EAUC-Scotland were coordinating. A Scottish Government consultation had been launched and would run until the end of May. A response would be drafted in collaboration with Scottish Association of University Directors of Estates (SAUDE) colleagues and submitted to the Convener of SOAG for sign off. Concerns were raised that in bringing together reporting from four different sectors, the resulting timeline could be out of step with the University's reporting year. DG noted that colleagues in Governance and Strategic Planning would be briefed.

Action – DS to prepare material for the Convener to forward on to Alastair Sim at Universities Scotland on the importance of the reporting deadline being consistent and fair.

8 Climate Emissions – Energy Briefing Update

F

The Energy Manager presented this report, previously submitted to SOAG, on energy and utility performance and associated KPIs for the 2013/14 academic year. The report covered utility consumptions and KPIs for the whole estate (including Accommodation Services) and an additional KPI relating to the University's headcount. Headcount and revenue turnover figures showed a steady improvement in relative emissions over the last 3 years.

The Energy Systems Manager demonstrated the Meterology energy display system. Using the University's standard maps, the system displayed data for the year to date, as well as the current day overlaid with the same day the previous week, updated every minute (based on half-hourly readings) and including an estimated cost. The display had proved a useful tool in engaging building users on reducing the University's £20million/year expenditure on heat, light and power. While a number of buildings were currently using the displays, there was no obligation to do so at present.

To reduce consumption it was necessary to communicate figures to all building users and engage to influence behaviours; pursue technological and institutional approaches such as CHP; and ensure that energy and utility performance was taken into account in the design of new buildings.

Action – DJ to circulate more detailed information on UoE consumption and emissions profiles.

Action – CJ, with input from members, to look at ways of increasing uptake of these displays in more buildings.

9 Business Travel Review

G

SRS Projects Coordinator Alexis Heeren introduced the background to this report of current practices, costs, and GHG emissions impacts. The paper had arisen from work carried out by the SRS Department and the Transport Office to estimate the University's carbon footprint from business travel, breaking it down across various modes, and exploring how to mitigate the impact. The report, presented at SOAG in January, had been brought to SRS Committee to communicate the findings and ask for suggestions on how to take this work forward.

As 93% of UoE business travel emissions were from aviation, this constituted the greatest opportunity for carbon footprint reduction, with a particular focus on mode shift from domestic flights to less carbon-intensive options. A domestic aviation workshop had been held in December 2014 as a first step. The Scottish Government Individual, Social and Material (ISM) behaviours tool had been used to explore the factors influencing business travel decisions and develop a package of interventions designed to address the issue at all levels.

A lot of the responsibility for these decisions lay with individuals and, with many factors out of their control, it was suggested that the issue needed to be addressed at a strategic level. Recommendations included: introducing sustainable business travel guidance; clarifying policies and

making them available on a single business travel site; offering incentives and removing barriers; setting up a short-term working group; and reviewing video conferencing facilities. SRS Committee noted that the new IS desktop would include a teleconferencing tool.

The Committee acknowledged that this was a sensitive issue in need of careful management, given the importance of access to flying for academic and university business. There was a clear need to ensure fit to ongoing strategic reviews, further explore the actual, carbon and time costs involved, and secure wider buy-in. Members agreed that the Committee could provide the necessary leadership and oversight with no need for a separate review group.

While emissions were relatively modest compared to electricity and gas, business aviation had considerable signal value in terms of how institutions were judged on sustainability. By showcasing individuals who were setting a good example in this area, the University could take a leadership position. Additional groundwork would be required to raise the profile of this work in a way that could be accommodated within the culture and business of the University.

Action –SRS to work with Estates and Procurement to develop proposals for guidance and best practice and to amend existing guidance as required.

ROUTINE ITEMS

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| 10 | SOAG Report to SRS Committee
SRS Committee noted the minutes of 5 November 2014 and 28 January 2015. | H |
| 11 | Fair Trade Steering Group Update
SRS Committee noted the minutes of 15 December 2014 and 3 February 2015. | I |
| 12 | Student Engagement Update
SRS Committee noted the minute of the third meeting of the Student Social Responsibility and Sustainability Forum on 28 January 2015. | J |
| 13 | Any Other Business
<u>NUS Responsible Futures</u>
The EUSA Vice President Services updated the Committee on progress with the pilot scheme. If successful, it would be rolled out in 2016.
<u>Procurement Rules Changes (Sustainability Duty)</u>
The Director of Procurement outlined potential changes to procurement rules including a sustainability duty, highlighted a consultation closing on 30 April, and invited members to attend a roadshow. | |

ITEMS FOR FORMAL APPROVAL/NOTING

14 SRS Implementation Plan 2014-15 K

SRS Committee noted this fifth annual Implementation Plan, which responded to the University's Strategic Plan and recorded actions delivering both existing policies and new commitments. The Plan recognised and celebrated current major activities from across the University working towards SRS objectives and included information on the staff resources and financial costs associated with each task. Historically these Implementation Plans were drawn together from the range of actors involved in evidencing the University's contribution to society, aligned thematically with SRS, but not in terms of delivery.

The Plan acted as a useful but interim measure to demonstrate ambition and for use as a planning tool, with a need to move towards longer term and outcome based targets in due course.

Although the Plan covered the main development areas of activity, the total resource contained was only a component of the overall resources applied in this area. The Plan had been delayed this year and would normally be in place for the autumn.

15 SRS Annual Report 2013/14 and Future Sign Off L

SRS Committee noted the University's Social Responsibility & Sustainability (SRS) Report 2013-14, which would subsequently go to CMG for sign off.

Post meeting note: CMG approved the publication of the report at its meeting of 4th March.

The report built upon and developed the previous SRS Highlights reports published annually since 2009/10. The Report would normally come forward earlier in the academic year.

The Head of SRS Programmes outlined the future sign off process for the SRS Report 2014-15, clarifying that it was a University and not a Departmental report. SRS Committee would be responsible for deciding the areas that should be reported on, and time would be set aside at June's meeting to discuss what to include in the next Annual Report.

16 Convener's Concluding Remarks

Having been a member of this Committee and its predecessor since 1990, this would be David Somervell's last meeting. The Convener noted that David had been a part of the many changes the University had seen in this area and thanked him on behalf of the University.

Date of next meeting: 09.00-11.00, Wed 17 June 2015, Raeburn Rm, Old College