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UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

MINUTE OF A MEETING *of the Social Responsibility and Sustainability Committee held in the Elder Room, Old College on Wednesday 21 October 2015.*

Present:	Charlie Jeffery (in chair), Senior Vice Principal
	Pete Higgins (Vice Convener), Dean of Students, CHSS
	Karen Bowman, Director of Procurement
	Michelle Brown, Head of SRS Programmes
	Hugh Edmiston, Director of Corporate Services
	Moira Gibson, External Relations Manager, Communications & Marketing
	Dave Gorman, Director of Social Responsibility and Sustainability
	Kathleen Hood, Head of Widening Participation
	Gary Jebb, Director of Estates
	Urte Macikene, EUSA Vice President Services
	Janet Philp, Joint Unions Liaison Committee
	Heather Rea, Project Lead, Beltane Public Engagement Network
	Jonny Ross-Tatam, EUSA President
In attendance:	Lesley McAra, Assistant Principal Community Relations
	Zoe Lewandowski, deputising for Jane Norman
Apologies:	Gavin Douglas, Deputy Secretary Student Experience, USG
	Mayank Dutia, School of Biomedical Sciences, CMVM
	Sarah Gormley, Business Manager & Deputy Head of IS Planning
	Hamish MacAndrew, Head of Research Office, ERI
	Hugh McCann, School of Engineering, SCE
	Phil McNaull, Director of Finance
	Jane Norman, Vice-Principal People and Culture
	Michael Northcott, School of Divinity, CHSS
	Ian Pirie, Assistant Principal Learning and Development
	James Smith, Vice Principal International

1   SRS Committee welcomed new members Kathleen Hood and Heather Rea. Lesley   **A**
McAra would be appointed to the Committee in due course.

The minute of the meeting held on 17 June 2015 was approved as a correct record.

2   Matters Arising

Following on from the report of the Fossil Fuels Review Group discussed at June's meeting it had been anticipated that a similar process would be initiated for armaments, however a different approach was agreed. The University confirmed that it had not and would not invest in controversial weapons, and was committed to engagement with interested parties, taking a proactive position aligned with its commitments under the United Nations Principles for Responsible Investment (UNPRI). There would be more to report in terms of a positive investment strategy in due course, including a paper to be submitted at January's meeting.

The 'Edinburgh Action for the Climate' organisation-wide campaign had launched, bringing together and celebrating what staff and students were already doing in this area. A series of videos were being produced to showcase this activity in the run up to the 21st Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP21). To see this activity persist beyond the immediate catalyst of the Paris summit, there was an opportunity to link delivery on the

University's sustainable development goals into College of Science and Engineering research into climate science, renewables, and carbon mitigation. There was a role for the social sciences to connect with and contribute to these initiatives, focusing on behaviour change. This focus on climate change should not disrupt work on the broader social agenda – Professor Charles Hopkins, UNESCO Chair of Re-orientating Teacher Education for Sustainability, would be delivering a talk in the Our Changing World series on 3rd November on [UN Sustainable Development Goals, Learning for Sustainability and government policies](#).

STRATEGIC AND SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS

3   Scope, Membership & Remit of SRS Committee   **B**
The version circulated as paper B had been approved by CMG on 1 September and would act as the foundational document for the Committee in its new guise. SRSC was in a transitional state regarding developing activities under its new remit, and would have an opportunity to think this through at the Away Session on 23rd October. The main focus would be on the division of labour outlined in Table 1. In some areas the SRS Department would lead, in others simply support.

Action – JR to separate out climate and energy issues, indicating the energy lead sits with Estates, though SRS have a critical role in promoting behaviour change.

The role of the Committee in providing strategic leadership across a number of areas irrespective of delivery would be clarified, and the terminology adjusted to separate SRS Committee and wider SRS reporting from the SRS Department.

4   SRS Reporting & Planning   **C**
The paper comprised both immediate needs, specifically feedback on SRS content for the Annual Report & Accounts (AR&A), and a framework to develop SRS reporting in future, ensuring narrative and data were consistent and aligned (to be discussed further at the Away Session).

Action – MB to reframe the opening paragraphs to address the additional activities now deemed to be social responsibility, and give a sense of the changed purpose of the Committee.

Action – MB to clarify that the economic impact referenced on p23, paragraph 4 was UoE impact, and not that of the HE sector.

Action – MB to separate public engagement currently collated with community engagement, and work with HR to flesh this out.

Action – All members with specific comments on the content to send these to MB by Friday 23rd October.

Finalised content would go to SOAG on 4 November, then continue through formal governance channels to CMG.

5   Sustainable Travel Advice   **D**
The paper followed on from a steer received at SRS Committee in March. Research on scope 1-3 emissions as part of the Climate Strategy Review had highlighted significant carbon attached to the University's business travel. This should not be constrained as it was vital to the University, but there were opportunities to save financial cost and carbon by thinking differently about business travel, considering non-travel options and travelling by train within the UK.

Business travel emissions data was currently incomplete, including all travel booked through the University approved travel agency and some expenses claims, but not all

travel booked personally or tied to grants. It was probable that current data underestimated public transport and other walk-up costs.

The Committee agreed that offering advice was the best approach. There was potential for a business case to improve existing video-conferencing facilities. The Director of Estates proposed a bid put through Minor Works for high quality VC suites capable of supporting positive, interactive meetings. It was proposed that a contact point be added to the advice as a channel to feed back concerns and identify potential barriers. There was scope for further engagement with Heads of School emphasising the financial savings associated with virtual meetings (e.g. for PhD examining). A creative communications plan would be needed.
<u>Action – MB</u> to add contact details, remove the final section 'Be sustainable where you go', switch the order of cycling/walking and conference calls and submit the revised paper along with a communications plan to CMG for approval.

6   Fair Trade Steering Group Review   E
The Director of Procurement thanked SRS staff for their help with the review. FTSG was a sub-group of this Committee which had been running since 2004. Members recognised the huge impact of work initiated by the Group in that time, influencing UoE catering and NUS policy and working with groups across the UK and beyond.

Findings from the review indicated that FTSG in its current form was no longer needed. SRSC endorsed recommendations that FTSG stand down and that this work be carried on through a SRS staff/student workshop, short-life working groups taking forward policy issues, and that supply chain issues should come under the remit of SOAG. This should not be seen as a diminishing in UoE fair trade policy. It was further recommended that UoE retain its Fairtrade accreditation.

7   Climate Strategy Phase 1 Update   F
As the existing Climate Action Plan (CAP) was 5 years old, given the changing statutory landscape and the fact that UoE was not on track to meet its targets, there was a need to review the Plan. The review would comprise three phases: evidence gathering, optioneering, and decision-making, and was broadly on track, currently coming to the end of phase 1. The timeline had been reduced to have in place by April 2015 adequate information to inform the next Strategic Plan. Phase 1 would generate the evidence to allow debate to happen, as well as a useful tool to project various interventions and present options informed by best practice.

The climate reporting landscape was changing, with a move toward statutory reporting. Original timelines had given the HE sector 3 months to report where other organisations had 6. Through subsequent negotiations an additional month had been secured. Reporting would start from November 2015. It would be key to get climate and carbon metrics right in the next Strategic Plan. This should be an adaptable, dynamic and realistic stretch target. Previous absolute targets had provided little real insight into progress. The Strategy needed to look beyond BREEAM and CHP and be novel in its approach to capturing carbon. The review would agree principles and outline priorities before going out to wider consultation. More research would be done into offsetting and investment in renewables. There were other areas that could be progressed if the metrics became more reliable.

REPORTS AND MINUTES FROM SUB-GROUPS

8   SOAG Report to SRS Committee   G
SRS Committee noted the minute of 16 September 2015. SOAG had refined its membership, needing to ensure there were enough members to represent the various functions without the size of the group becoming unwieldy. There had been significant

discussion on reporting, moving away from activity-based to focus on targets into the longer term. It was timely given the extended scope of this committee to reflect on other awards in the SRS area, including the Principal's Medals and EUSA volunteering awards. There was potential for a design challenge, open to students and staff, focused on small changes to lower the University's carbon footprint in its day to day work.

Action – DG to do initial awards scoping work and bring back a paper for discussion.

9   Fair Trade Steering Group Update   H

SRS Committee noted the minute of the final meeting of the group on 22 September 2015, which reflected positive discussion and a commitment to fair trade going forward. Next steps would be working with CaM to communicate past achievements and future plans.

Action – JR to organise a 'thank you' event for FTSG members.

10   SITG Report to SRS Committee   I

SRS Committee noted the minute of 2 October 2015. SITG provided a forum for discussion of sustainability issues around IT, as well as broader human rights and supply chain concerns. Following this initial meeting membership would be further refined. As IT at UoE was both central and dispersed it was important to have representation from the Colleges. The Group identified a number of opportunities around reuse to save money and carbon.

A policy on conflict minerals was endorsed by the Group, driven by legal requirements as well as moral concerns regarding materials in phones originating from and driving conflict in Congo. A speaker from Congo Calling would address the issue at the October 2015 SRS Student Forum, followed by communication in the student press. The policy outlined use of existing procurement systems to ask questions of suppliers and raise awareness of the choices available to purchasers. EUSA were passing a similar policy. The University was a member of Electronics Watch, an EU-wide attempt to facilitate investigation into supply chains beyond the first tier. There was scope for some initial awareness raising in the interim, but the main lever would be the policy, which would come to SRSC in February 2016.

ITEMS FOR FORMAL APPROVAL/NOTING

11   Public Engagement Overview   J

The Beltane Project Lead gave an overview of public engagement (PE) activities, which were growing in a dispersed and grassroots way across the University - Beltane did not have full oversight. One of the main challenges was central co-ordination and efforts to provide a virtual front door for public engagement at UoE. There was currently no focal point for PE within planning and resource allocation. The Vice Principal for Community Development would be taking a paper to the Principal's Strategy Group to ensure the University gives sufficient priority to PE. The role of this Committee would be to help celebrate and show the value of this activity. Members agreed on the need for a direct link on the website for external engagement. The paper and discussion provided a useful starting point and members would think further on how to present PE in this forum.

12   Widening Participation Overview   K

The widening participation (WP) theme was part of an over-arching recruitment strategy, encompassing undergraduate, postgraduate and international, and designed develop the capacity to offer places to people able to succeed at this university, whatever their background. WP was a strategic theme in the current Strategic Plan and

was linked in to development of the new Plan. Among its comparators, UoE was one of the most engaged with WP and its projects were being replicated elsewhere. The challenge of addressing impact on offer chances was an external issue to be managed through engagement and influencing within the sector. The Commission on Widening Access interim report was due at the end of October.

The Committee recognised the tremendous achievements of the core WP team of four staff plus a graduate intern. Further thought would be given to how this activity plays in to this Committee. UoE achievements in this area were not widely messaged or appreciated beyond the University and there was a promotional role for the Committee in ensuring this activity was better known, supporting but not cutting across current frameworks.

Action – ZL/JN to present an overview paper to the next meeting on UoE as a good employer.

13 SRSC Away Day 2015 Briefing Paper – Goals & Metrics **L**
The Head of SRS Programmes presented on long-term goals and metrics for the SRS Department and for wider SRS activity across the University, to be discussed further at the Away Session. These discussions would provide a useful frame for thinking more generally about how to integrate the new areas and stimulate collective discussion on how the Committee should operate in future.

The Director of SRS and Head of SRS Programmes had met with the Head of Strategic Performance and Research Policy to explore how the Plan would recognise SRS as a key theme. Members saw a case to retain the wording "make a significant, sustainable and socially responsible contribution to Scotland, the UK and the world".

Action – MB to separate out Widening Participation, and reword 'equality' to 'good employer'.

14 Governance of Sub-Groups **M**
The Director of SRS presented this paper reminding members of the committee sub-structure. FTSG had been stood down and SRSC had taken on joint oversight of SITG with IT Committee. There were significant questions as to how SRSC should relate to other relevant committees, which would require an understanding of the existing landscape so as not to cut across areas where other groups had more of a mandate.

15 Any Other Business
- Procurement Law Update

New statutory guidance was available from the Scottish Government, and further guidance would follow from the Scottish Procurement Policy Forum. A Risk Management Executive Group comprising representatives nominated by Heads of School and subsidiaries would take forward these elements.

- Modern Slavery

From October 2015 there would be a new responsibility on corporate entities to make a public statement on their website regarding what they were to doing to address modern slavery. Discussions were ongoing with the Director of Legal Services and UoE's legal team.

- Alumni

Further efforts were needed to ensure alumni were included in messaging and that online sustainability courses were made available to them. It was proposed that a representative from Development & Alumni be invited to join the Committee to feed in to discussions around communications, philanthropic giving and industry relations.