UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

MINUTE OF A MEETING *of the Sustainability, Social & Civic Responsibility Committee held via Microsoft Teams on Tuesday 5 October 2021.*

Present:	Sandy Tudhope (Convenor), University Lead on Climate Responsibility and Sustainability
	Lesley McAra (Vice Convenor), Assistant Principal, Community Relations
	Juan Cruz, ECA Principal
	Dave Gorman, Director of Social Responsibility and Sustainability
	Claire Graf, Joint Unions Liaison Committee Representative
	Theresa Merrick, Director of Communications & Marketing
	Rachael Robertson, Deputy Director of Finance
	James Saville, Director of HR
	Beth Simpson, Students' Association VP Community
In attendance:	Louise Kidd, HR Partner Reward, for item 4
	Melissa Highton, Director of Learning Teaching & Web Services, for item 6, and deputising for Gavin McLachlan
	Rachael Barton, SRS Projects Coordinator, for item 7
	Chris Litwiniuk, Sustainability Innovation & Engagement Manager, for item 10
	Kirstin Henry, Widening Participation Manager (Student Lifecycle), deputising for Laura Cattell
	Matthew Lawson, Senior SRS Programmes Manager, deputising for Michelle Brown
Apologies:	Michelle Brown, Deputy Director of SRS
	Laura Cattell, Head of Widening Participation
	Colm Harmon, Vice Principal (Students)
	Pete Higgins, Director, Global Environment & Society Academy
	Gary Jebb, Director of Place
	Catherine Martin, Vice-Principal Corporate Services
	Gavin McLachlan, VP and Chief Information Officer
	Anne Payne, CSE Registrar
	George Sked, Director of Procurement
	James Smith, Vice Principal International
	Rona Smith, Director of Strategic Planning and Insight

1   **Minute**   **A**
The minute of 15ᵗʰ June 2021 was approved as a correct record.

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

STRATEGIC AND SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS

3   **Talloires Network & Social Impact**
The Assistant Principal: Community Relations presented to the Committee on the opportunities the Talloires Network offers the University. The largest global network of civic universities, it commits to strengthening their civic roles and social responsibilities, offering grants, action research, conferences and networking.

Following SWOT analysis, the University's strengths in this area were: embedding public responsibility in learning and teaching, research, and through public service; fostering partnerships with other universities; and awareness raising, documenting and communicating.

Areas for growth included: embedding civic responsibility in policies and practices; reward and recognition; applying similar standards of excellence and peer review to civic engagement as to research and learning and teaching; and supporting education for active citizenship across all educational sectors.

Other relevant opportunities and networks identified included: the UKRI regional hubs for public engagement; placemaking initiatives linked to the DDI programme; the Civic University network; and partnerships between the Universities of Edinburgh and Glasgow.

A paper to University Executive would follow in due course.

The Committee recognised the value of the University's involvement, and advised focusing on the tractable, strategic, and actionable, limiting the number of high-level priorities, identifying existing activity in this area, and avoiding overcomplication.

Action – LM to share the presentation with the Secretary for circulation.

4   **Edinburgh Living Wage City**   **B**
The HR Partner Reward presented this paper on the Edinburgh Living Wage City initiative and work carried out by the City Council and partners towards Living Wage City accreditation.

UoE became an accredited Living Wage employer in 2017, having paid the living wage for a number of years prior. While the Students' Association were not yet accredited, they had a commitment and roadmap in place. The Action Group had agreed to submit the application in late October. The initiative would launch at the UoE Business School on 16 November.

Members felt the initiative was a strong example of UoE tangibly demonstrating its values, as discussed under the previous item on the Talloires Network, and were keen to see how the University could further support the initiative in meeting its targets over the five years of the plan. The Convener clarified that SSCRC did not have any financial resources, but could assist in shaping requests that would then be directed further up the governance hierarchy.

Action – DG to discuss with LK how the incoming Head of Social Impact could add capacity and value, including acting as an additional representative on the Action Group.

5   **Vision and New Structure for SRS Department**   **C**
The Director of SRS introduced this paper setting out a vision for the SRS Department, explaining the rationale, and discussing impact on staff and recruitment, particularly the new Head of Social Impact role.

Due to a vacant post at senior level, the opportunity had arisen to review the department structure. This restructure had to be done on a fixed budget, and should result in a small overall saving. It had been agreed, and was now at the advertising stage. The new Head of Social Impact would be asked to take time to consider what to focus on, how best to catalyse new work and add value, and set better measurement criteria in this space.

The ECA Principal highlighted that the University's cultural contribution was not articulated in the document. Following wide-ranging discussion, members agreed that the SRS Department should focus on sustainability impact, in line with its remit, but that there could be a role for the Committee in pulling information together to make the University's contribution to culture in the city more strategically visible.

As SRS was one of the main vehicles helping drive positive change, the Convenor welcomed the Director sharing their thinking with the group.

It was clarified that the four communications posts in the organogram were existing roles. SRS recognised that Communications & Marketing were the University lead in this area.

Action – All members were asked to share the Head of Sustainability and Head of Social Impact vacancies with their networks.

ITEMS FOR FORMAL APPROVAL/NOTING

6   Supporting Sustainable Development Goals through Open Education   **D**
The Director of Learning Teaching & Web Services presented this review of developments relating to the Open Educational Resources (OER) Policy introduced in 2016, outlining how the University's strategic support for open education contributed to achieving the aims of the SDGs and civic responsibility.

The group noted the scope of free teaching resources produced by University staff and students and made available under an open licence: https://www.tes.com/teaching-resources/shop/OpenEd, making UoE the largest producer of this kind of open education material of any of the UK universities. Members recognised the value of this work in terms of equity, access to education, global reach, and student involvement, and felt it should be communicated and celebrated more widely.

It was clarified that the policy actively encouraged staff to make their materials open. This did not conflict with the University's copyright. ISG helped staff to put a creative commons licence on the material, resolve any conflicting copyright issues, and advised on how to share it so the target audience could find it.

Next steps were to get more people involved and generate more content, engage with consumers to establish what content they would find useful, and encourage UoE staff to consume and reuse resources from other cultures.

The Committee welcomed the paper, recognising this work as a key part of the social and civic responsibility of the University. It was agreed that the Director of Learning Teaching & Web Services would return and update the group annually, as a prompt for members to discuss how to better support and integrate this initiative.

7   COP Update   **E**
The Committee noted this update from SRS Projects Coordinator Rachael Barton on activity to date and future plans for the University to make a strong contribution to COP26. Key strands for the COP26 Planning Group included UoE's physical presence at COP, communications, student engagement, alumni engagement, community and public engagement, and external partnerships.

The University had five successful proposals for events in the Green Zone, was awarded 15 observer passes (split across the weeks, allowing 29 delegates to attend), secured funding for student climate innovation grants of up to £1K each as well as community microgrants up to £15K total, and developed dedicated MOOCs including Live at COP26. UoE would host a number of high profile events including UK - Africa Partnerships for Climate Action, Realising a Compassionate Planet, and Because the Ocean.

The Convenor thanked Rachael Barton for pulling together such a wide range of activity. The Committee also recognised the contribution made by Sarah Ford-Hutchinson and Matthew Lawson in SRS, David Reay and other academic colleagues, Public Engagement Coordinator Fiona Murray, Derek McLeod in Edinburgh Global, and Ed McCracken and Gavin Donoghue in Communications & Marketing.

Action – All members wanting further information to contact Rachael Barton.

Action – All to ensure activity in their area was included on UoE's COP26 page.

Action – ST to share the narrative note being prepared for the Principal and leadership team once complete.

8   City of Edinburgh Council Climate Strategy Consultation   **F**
Members noted this paper from the Director of SRS outlining the University's response to the City Council's Climate Strategy consultation, submitted on 10 September 2021.

UoE had recognised the City stepping up on climate change, putting in place the additional staff resources required, and had advised the City on issues impacting on delivery of its ambitious 2030 target. It was anticipated that new governance structures would be put in place. The University would then be in a position to plan its energy and carbon response in the context of a wider City response.

The Convenor thanked the Director of SRS and his team for co-ordinating the response, which set a good balance between ambition and practicality, and was a further example of the University acting as a good civic partner.

9   Modern Slavery Statement 2020/21   G
The Director of SRS set the context for this draft of the University's 2020/21 Modern Slavery Statement, its sixth since the Modern Slavery Act came into force. For any members wishing to complete Modern Slavery training, this was available online via Learn.

SSCRC endorsed the statement for onward approval through University Executive, Audit and Risk Committee, and Court.

Action – DG to note digital services, such as human-finished transcription, as an area requiring further scrutiny, particularly with regard to the Living Wage.

10   Implementing the Schools Sustainability Framework   H
The Committee noted this follow-up to the June 2021 paper on the Sustainability Framework for Schools and Colleges. It proposed utilising the general structure of the existing Sustainability Awards to develop the Sustainability Framework. SRS were in discussion with IS on creating a digital platform for the framework.

The Committee welcomed the paper, recognising the value of the Sustainability Awards as a framework for engagement with staff and students, and noting that it was timely to review it and take a more strategic approach to embedding sustainability in University operations. SRS would need to take care when disseminating the framework to emphasise its usefulness, articulate how it integrated with reporting frameworks, and how it aligned with wider University strategy.

Members highlighted the importance of the consultation process and endorsed trialling the framework with volunteer champions in the first year, to see what it looked like in different contexts, and start to uncover issues.

Action – All members wanting information on open education activity in their areas to contact MH.

Action – CL to follow up with JC on the possibility of ECA being an early adopter.

11   SRS Programmes Report   I
SSCRC noted this paper outlining highlights from the Department for Social Responsibility and Sustainability Programmes 20/21, including work centring around COP26, work with colleagues in Finance, Procurement and Communications & Marketing on climate conscious travel and the new travel policy, and the unusually large number of community grants awarded this year, partly as a response to COVID. In future the report would focus less on departmental activities and more on to the embedding agenda. Members recognised the impressive list of activities and achievements.

Action – all members noticing gaps or missed opportunities to follow up with the SRS team.

12   Any Other Business
The Convenor thanked outgoing Deputy Director and Head of SRS Programmes Michelle Brown, one of the most inspiring colleagues to work with in general, who added a huge amount of value to this committee by bringing forward exceptional initiatives, responding to comments and taking them forward. Members would really miss her presence, professionalism and collegiality.