

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

MINUTE OF A MEETING of the Sustainable Laboratories Steering Group held in the Cuillin Room, Charles Stewart House on Monday 12 December 2016.

1 Welcome and Introductions

The Convener welcomed attendees to the sixth meeting of the Group and outlined the agenda for the session.

2 Minute

The minute of the meeting held on 14 September 2016 was approved as a correct record.

A

3 Matters Arising

The Engagement Manager updated the Group on ways to increase internal lab equipment reuse through [Warpit](#). CCL North were also aiming to increase their reuse rate through partnership working. SITG proposed including a link to Warpit on the University homepage and using the CCL North list to populate it.

Action – CO to circulate a request for suggestions for low-value high-use items to feature on Warpit, as well as ideas on how to improve the process and increase use of the portal for lab items.

SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS**4 Energy audits in lab buildings – main findings**

As part of a larger project, Estates and SRS had identified the top 20 energy consuming buildings, 17 of which were targeted for walkarounds and improvements. This included lab audits at SCRM, QMRI and Hugh Robson, focusing on: behaviour change, fitting timers on small equipment, BEMS review and optimisation, draught-proofing, replacing old equipment, and installing LEDs and daylight sensors. Estates were encouraged to look into reinstating ground source heat pumps at SCRM, and solar shading for the south side of Hugh Robson. Lab audits were still to be carried out at Joseph Black and the Vet School.

Carbon appraisals based on DEFRA figures had demonstrated that it was more efficient to remove some old equipment from the University estate entirely, rather than reuse it internally. A BMS operator would be in post for the next six months, helping to identify options and opportunities. The Sustainable Campus Fund could have a role in funding draught-proofing projects.

Action – AA to circulate a one page briefing on findings to date.

Action – JR to circulate November UWG paper on energy engagement.

Post-meeting note: UWG Paper F circulated on 5 January.

5 Sustainable Campus Fund lab projects

Since launching in August 2016, the SCF had funded ten projects related to labs (including equipment replacements, helium reuse and fume cupboard refits) predicted to generate £110K in savings. Some projects (notably freezer replacement and lighting) did not quite fit the criteria for the fund. A paper on freezer replacements had been presented to the Utilities Working Group which had agreed to release a set amount of funding. A higher tolerance for lighting project paybacks had also been

approved. Work was ongoing to establish a suitable balance with school contribution / match funding. The aim was to have more viable projects to take to Estates Committee than available funding.

SLSG noted a potential capacity issue in Estates around how many projects it could deliver at the same time, though, once done, these were largely replicable. Significant savings could be achieved by reducing ventilation in labs, but the Group recognised that it would not be possible to approach this on a whole campus basis. The Fund acted as an initial mechanism to raise awareness, build in processes, and uncover issues and opportunities.

6 Progress against Labs Implementation Plan

B

The Labs Projects Coordinator presented the paper, noting that progress had been made on operational savings (Area A). On lab design and construction (Area B), SRS were now invited to consult on new development projects as a matter of course and were working with Estates colleagues to develop guidelines that could be adopted across the University. Work was ongoing to review appropriate design guidelines, including alternatives to BREEAM, that may be better suited to the Edinburgh context (e.g. on rainwater recovery). In terms of data (Area C), work was ongoing to generate evidence from business cases and review best practice.

On engagement (Area D), the labs coordinator role had now been made permanent. Some contacts had moved on and had not necessarily been replaced, or their replacements were not quite as engaged. While some areas had become less engaged, focusing on core business, this was balanced by other areas improving. A video was currently being produced on areas of good practice identified as part of the Sustainability Awards.

SLSG noted that freezer inventories were useful in helping to reduce the ever expanding fleet, but were not standard across the estate. The Wellcome Trust inventoried twice annually. The summer inventory was carried out by an intern, one way to address the time demand, which also linked to the University goal to provide more work experience opportunities for students. A case could be made to the Sustainable Campus Fund, or a central fund could be proposed. There were benefits in terms of space, air conditioning saved, and the avoided energy cost of additional freezers. The Group recognised the inherent difficulty in trying to calculate avoided costs. The aim was to make throwing away old samples part of routine maintenance. Some areas had very detailed computerised records, while others used paper records on freezer doors. Health & Safety were planning to implement a system for radiation and biological organisms capable of recording room, fridge and shelf details. If departments bought in to this system, it could be used to monitor other samples.

Action – AA to draw up thoughts on how to facilitate the process.

Replacing mercury lamps in microscopes with LEDs (Task A11) did not generate sufficient carbon savings to meet campus fund criteria. This type of action currently fell entirely to the School or College, and the Group should look into other mechanisms to encourage this to happen, perhaps through industry collaboration as King's College London were doing, or centralisation of imaging services. In larger imaging facilities the trend was for lasers rather than LEDs, so replacements would be small scale. Benefits included time saved, hazardous waste reduction, and less down time.

Action – SG to request Estate Development report from the Development Engineering Manager.

Action – JR to forward the capital projects list (tabled at UWG) to the Projects Coordinator (Labs).

Post-meeting note: sent on 6 January 2017.

SLSG noted that there was no financial component to the Sustainability Awards, which ran like a certification scheme (though project awards were timebound, including deliverables). There were seven labs teams across the estate. Once Schools had received an award, they tended to sustain the effort internally to keep the activity going. Different prizes were offered at different staff levels. SRS were looking at using the campus fund to extend this. It was proposed that Biology add a sustainability prize to the Impact Awards – SRS could provide the criteria.

Action – AA & CO to follow up with David Gray on links to Impact Committee.

7 Sustainable Labs Vision and Programme Plan

C

At the previous meeting the Engagement Manager had presented on overall goals and activities. This update was based on feedback from that meeting. It was a Programme Plan for the SRS Department, and further discussion would be required on how it mapped to the Implementation Plan.

The Engagement Manager outlined goals, outcome objectives, outputs and activities and how to interpret these into annual Sustainable Labs Implementation Plans, including an aim to increase the number of Energy Coordinators based in labs.

The Group advised the current Implementation Plan be extended to cover the time period to the end of the academic year 2016/17. It was recognised that the vision and the programme plan for the Department for SRS was correct, but there could be more done to deliver on the vision more broadly than within the Department for SRS so a workshop was suggested to develop these ideas (see next item).

8 Extension of Labs Implementation Plan to August 2017

Members discussed whether to draw up a 2017 plan, use the department plan, or a third option. SRS Programmes already had a rigorous reporting system in place. It was agreed that a formal Implementation Plan was required, separate from SRS Department planning, and combining straightforward achievable outcomes with more ambitious, free-text goals. A more detailed and strategic view would then be taken for the next three to four years, including a possible design session looking at specific goals for 2020, working up from planned actions.

Members agreed to move to planning aligned to the academic year, extend the current implementation plan, and hold a workshop session to establish how all stakeholders will contribute to delivering the vision.

9 Working with People Committee, HR and IAD to improve support for Technical staff

The Projects Coordinator (Labs) had been working with technical staff via the HEaTED network on concerns, succession planning, and impact on the University. There were currently around one thousand technical staff across the University and they had some of the greatest impact on lab behaviours. A paper went to People Committee who recognised the issue. The challenge now was to work out how to address it. A small Technicians Support Steering Group (TSSG) had been established, had met and begun to discuss the issues. This was also discussed at the

Labs Workshop on CPD and professional development for lab technical staff on 6 December. Suggestions were being sought on ways the University could make its support for technical staff clearer. One recommendation of the TSSG is that a member of technical staff could be seconded to HR, though additional funding would be required to free them up from their current tasks. A further recommendation was that a webpage could be set up for University technical staff, including videos describing their roles and a directory of services which facilitated cross-University links and requests for use of those services, an approach that was working well in other Universities.

Members recognised that it would be beneficial to have a physical or online forum to bring technical staff together, promote collaboration, circulate newsletters, arrange get-togethers and CPD opportunities, and share a career pathway toolkit (there were a number of off-the-shelf versions that UoE could adopt that could help alleviate concerns around career progression). UoE could promote professional registration more, offering and supporting it, rather than making it mandatory.

ROUTINE ITEMS (verbal)

10 Any Other Business

The new Climate Strategy had been launched on 23 November. The key was adopting a whole institution approach as much about what the University was teaching, purchasing, and investing in as how it ran its buildings. New targets included reducing carbon emissions per £million turnover by 50% from a 2007/08 baseline by 2025, and becoming carbon neutral by 2040.

Initial actions would include development of a three year Implementation Plan, building on work in labs, energy management, and waste, and making a case for alternatives to aviation (including promoting rail travel to London and videoconferencing facilities). The Renewable Energy and Low Carbon Options Review Group was looking at the case for large-scale investment in wind, solar, biomass, heat pumps and so forth, including their value as a teaching resource.