**UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH** **A**

**MINUTE OF A MEETING** *of the Sustainable Laboratories Steering Group held in the Elder Room, Old College on Tuesday 3 October 2017.*

**1 Welcome and Introductions**

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

**2 Minute** **A**

The minute of the meeting held on 29 May 2017 was approved as a correct record.

**3 Matters Arising**

*Freezer Fund*

Some expressions of interest and a few claims had been received for the Freezer Fund, though demand was reduced as all freezers were now effectively 'eco' models. While the 'top up' aspect of the fund was defunct, it still had value in helping replace old models. The Convener emphasised the need to either spend these funds, or reallocate them.

*Warp-it*

There had been changes to the functionality of the system. The next newsletter, issued to all users, would contain an explanation on how to sign up for alerts.

*SFC University Carbon Reduction Fund*

The soft loan fund of £20M had now been launched, with SALIX as administrators. Concerns had been raised about the amount of paperwork required, and that the loan amount would be deducted from funds awarded to the organisation. UoE aimed to submit a bid by the end of October, focusing on renewables projects and CHP.

Action – All members wanting to know more to contact CO.

*Technical Staff*

A group currently working on supporting University technical staff had secured agreement for UoE to sign up to the Technician Commitment which aimed to ensure visibility, recognition, career development and sustainability for technicians working in higher education and research across all disciplines.

**SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS**

**4 Sustainable Labs Vision and Programme Plan** **B**

The SRS Projects Coordinator – Labs presented this paper summarising outputs from planning and committee meetings in May. Members discussed potential additions, priorities, how to deliver on targets, and how the Plan would be resourced.

Internal SRS project management documentation, summarised in this document, gave more detail on the individual areas and how actions linked to outcomes. All this information was being uploaded to the IS Projects website.

Action – AA to share these documents with the Group to give a better idea of how plans would be delivered.

SLSG endorsed the ambitious Vision and Programme Plan as a basis for reporting and to guide the Group's work over the next three years.

**5 Findings from Energy Audits**

Over the summer 30 sites had been audited by AECOM, including some labs, focusing on building fabric, plant and lighting. Parallel audits carried out by the SRS Department – where resourced allowed – looked at smaller equipment and behavioural changes. The different areas had very distinct needs and outcomes. AECOM reporting was not yet complete, but would contain recommendations covering boiler replacement, air handling, energy efficiency, lighting upgrades, loft insulation and pipe insulation. It was anticipated that a good proportion of these could be funded through the Sustainable Campus Fund. The AECOM recommendations should not impact on the operation of the labs.

Action – AA to send DG an estimate of the envisaged spend.

The SRS Projects Coordinator – Labs gave a broad summary of findings from the SRS site visits, including a number of recommendations for IGMM and the Swann Building. These focused on cold storage management and maintenance, installing a dividing wall in Swann wash up, being more rigorous about switching off equipment, installing timers, adjusting PCR holding temperatures, lighting efficiencies, adjustments to fume cupboards, various behavioural changes and replacing old equipment such as drying cupboards.

Action – AA to share the full AECOM recommendations when available, along with recommendations from SRS audits.

Recommendations with an associated cost would be put forward to the Sustainable Campus Fund. Those requiring behaviour change (poster campaigns, changes to induction etc.) would be taken up with individual contacts in those buildings. In terms of fume cupboards, the aim was to get maintenance regimes back in line with manufacturers' specification.

Action – AA to follow up with Tommy Angus, Head of Small Projects & Minor Works, to check for overlap with the scheduled programme of works.

**6 Estates Development sustainability guidelines development**

A review of design guidelines for sustainability at universities had been ongoing with the Estates Capital Projects team. BREEAM had served well, and provided useful consensus, but the time had come to move on, and the review sought to identify what changes needed to be made, and what framework might work best. This should not prioritise points over performance, but focus on delivering resilient, low carbon, low cost buildings that promoted wellbeing. The review group would meet again on 9th October. At the next SLSG meeting members would be briefed on what this would look like in practice. Lab guidelines had already been developed, fitting in to this wider context. The Projects Coordinator – Labs had followed up with Edinburgh and Fife Councils who were also looking into alternatives to BREEAM and would keep communications open.

**7 Ventilation policy initial discussion**

One of the main aspects of the Labs Programme Plan was to develop University-wide policies on ventilation and cold storage. Ventilation would consider testing of fume cupboards, air changes in labs, demand based ventilation systems, the Aircuity pilot, and arrangements in animal facilities. In-cage technologies were developing which could yield significant savings for future plant, though these would not be appropriate

for all facilities. There had been a lot of interest from North American institutions in Aircuity and similar systems. Talks were ongoing with the Home Office on interpretation of the current regulations around air changes and representatives would be meeting with the Home Office in the next week. KCL already had a ventilation policy, drafted by former UoE Labs Coordinator Martin Farley.

Members discussed what the policy should cover, whether it could or should be applicable for all circumstances, and whether it could be accompanied by a set of guidelines. There were existing Estates guidelines for ventilation which were currently being reviewed. There was also an existing policy for labs from a safety aspect, based on British Standards that could be fed in. It should be clear what the policy applied to, offer something to aim for, and be compatible with existing Health and Safety guidance. The policy should include a covering paper outlining the issues, for colleagues unfamiliar with the area, indicating why this was worth pursuing, and identifying which were quick fixes and which aspects were more innovative. Following consultation, the policy would go to the University Health and Safety Committee, Estates Committee and CMG for sign off.

Action – AA to develop a first draft, with CS feeding in on Health & Safety aspects, and all members contributing where they could.

**8 Cold storage policy initial discussion**

Members discussed whether it would be appropriate to have a cold storage policy, what it might include, whether it should stipulate temperature or ask colleagues to consider operating at higher temperatures, stipulate frequency of maintenance, require users to have a maintenance contract, require defrosting annually, annual inventorying, or use of a centralised archiving system. The Group discussed new cold storage technologies, with Nordic Systems offering a series of insulated cabinets cooled by a compression system, with the heat expelled from each reclaimed and not influencing the temperature of other units. QMRI were considering installing such a system.

The Group suggested offering a policy statement outlining broad aims, along with best practice guidance, including scientific backup. It should include advice on suitable environments to locate freezers. UBC ran an engagement campaign with users, starting from the academic literature and evidence.

Action – AA to draft best practice guidelines, with assistance from the Group.

Action – AA to pass on figures to BM and SM, once they had been received from Nordic.

**9 Edinburgh Sustainability Awards update**

It was currently audit season, with a couple of new teams coming forward this year, including one from Environmental Engineering. There were still gaps in representation from the rest of the School of Engineering, Physics, and numbers were low in Biology. These areas would be approached via School management systems. Accreditation now lasted two years. A more fundamental review of the Sustainability Awards was planned, to be discussed in more detail next year.

Action – AA to find an early stage researcher to join the Group.

**10 Improving support for Technical staff careers**

The Technicians Support Steering Group, formed under a year ago with representation from HR and IAD, was working to set ambitions and focus, with tasks

for the short and long term. An email list for technicians had been set up, with representation on Twitter and Facebook, to help develop the community and disseminate information. This work was part of implementation of the Technician Commitment, which involved enhancing visibility, supporting recognition, promoting career progression opportunities, and ensuring the future sustainability of technical skills within UoE. A professional registration event run by the Science Council would take place on 14 November.

Action – AA to circulate details.

Action – JR to keep this on as a standing item.

**11 Update on lab equipment re-use/re-sale procedure**

A flowchart had been developed to help lab managers, PIs, and others with equipment assets they may want to sell, to navigate the process. The chart had been created to build awareness, seek feedback, and secure endorsement. It had been reviewed by senior staff including College Registrars, tax and insurance advisors, and the Director of Procurement. It should be signed off by the next SLSG and would be reviewed by Legal Services before going live. IT equipment had been excluded, as there was already a well-established process for resale.

Members noted that the title could be more inclusive, rather than just restricted to Labs, and that a final step could be added – removing the equipment from the asset register. It should clarify that the seller of the equipment would be responsible for finding a buyer and that a marketing service was not being offered at this time. A conflict of interest declaration may be needed. The seller would also need to be reminded to charge VAT. Overseas sales must have shipping documents on file. A stage confirming that permission to sell had been secured (e.g. from the research councils) should be added to the flowchart.

Next steps included re-convening the sub-group, refining the process, publishing it on the web, investigating the possibility of developing a donation flowchart, and investigating opportunities for extracting further monetary value from low value WEEE.

Action – All members to reflect on how to get more colleagues to sign up to Warp-it for lab equipment.

**ROUTINE ITEMS**

**12 Any Other Business**

Sample Databases discussion carried forward to next meeting.