

## UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

**MINUTE OF A MEETING** of the Sustainability Operations Advisory Group held in the Cuillin Room, Charles Stewart House on Wednesday 28 January 2015.

**Members:** Hugh Edmiston (in chair), Director of Corporate Services  
Michelle Brown, Head of SRS Programmes  
Dave Gorman, Director of Social Responsibility and Sustainability  
David Jack, Energy Manager  
Lesley Ross, IS Building and Service Manager (KB)  
David Somervell, Head of SRS Futures  
Geoff Turnbull, Assistant Director, Estates Operations  
Dougie Williams, Energy Systems Manager

**In attendance:** Fleur Ruckley, Waste & Environment Manager, for item 4  
Emma Crowther, Transport Manager, for item 5  
Alexis Heeren, Engagement Facilitator, for item 5  
Caro Overy, SRS Engagement Manager, for item 7  
Andrew Arnott, Programmes Facilitator - Laboratories, for item 8  
Matthew Lawson, SRS Programme Manager, for items 10 & 12

**Apologies:** David Barratt, Engineering Operations Manager  
Liz Beattie, Assistant Director, Accommodation Services  
Tasha Boardman, EUSA Vice President Services  
Davy Gray, EUSA Environmental Co-ordinator  
Andrew Haddon, Head of Estates Finance  
Andrew Kerr, Director of Edinburgh Centre on Carbon Innovation  
Phil McNaul, Director of Finance  
George Sked, Assistant Director of Procurement

1 The minute of the meeting held on 5 November 2014 was approved as a correct record. **A**

SOAG welcomed new member Lesley Ross, Building and Service Manager (KB).

## 2 Matters Arising

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

## SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS

### 3 Climate Emissions Report **B**

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

Work was ongoing to establish the relative contribution of each building, focusing initially on the top 20 users, then on the top 200. A two-year target was in place to get buildings metered and verified down to College level across the estate. SOAG noted that there was currently little incentive to reduce utilisation. Allowing departments to keep a percentage of any money saved would effectively incentivise

the devolved budget model. The Engagement Team were available to assist departments in this, focusing their activities and the Sustainability Awards to support wider strategic priorities.

The Energy Systems Manager demonstrated the Meteorology plasma energy display system. 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 proved a useful tool in getting building users interested in energy consumption levels. While a number of buildings were currently using the displays, there was no obligation to do so at present.

Action – GT & DW to meet with Brian McTeir and Gordon McLean to get their feedback on consumption.

The Convener emphasised the importance of this essential background work in terms of the Climate Action Plan and getting the data necessary to secure buy-in, and highlighted the need to liaise with key individuals and raise its profile.

Action – DJ & DW to report further progress at the SOAG meeting in May.

Action – JR to invite Brian McTeir to attend the May meeting.

Action – DG to propose bringing this data to SRS Committee in March at the upcoming SRSC pre-agenda meeting.

#### **4 Waste and Recycling Outturn for 2013-2014**

**C**

SOAG noted a paper from the Waste & Environment Manager summarising waste management performance within the academic estate for 2013-14, with comparisons to previous years and data corrections.

Following review of performance of the contractor appointed by UoE under the APUC framework, this year has seen a new tender process leading to appointment of a new contractor. Improvements were noted in reuse, recycling and landfill diversion. A breakdown of data on a quarterly basis suggested that this trend would continue into 2014-15. Work on the quality of recyclate was particularly important and drivers were in place at a national level. SOAG noted a change in GHG reporting standards limiting reporting to direct emissions.

#### **5 Business Travel Review**

**D**

SOAG noted a paper introduced by the Transport Manager which summarised the findings of an investigation into current performance and barriers to adopting more sustainable business travel at UoE, particularly mode shift from domestic flights to less carbon-intensive options. This report of current practices, costs, and greenhouse gas emissions impacts was compiled from data for the year 2013-14. Data collection was made more challenging by the diverse range of suppliers, not all of which were attuned to provide carbon data.

A small domestic aviation workshop had been arranged as a first step and the ISM behaviours tool had been used to explore the factors shaping business travel decisions. A lot of the responsibility for these decisions lay with individuals and, with many factors out of their control, the issue needed to be addressed at a strategic level. Recommendations included introducing guidance, offering incentives and removing barriers, setting up a short-term working group, and reviewing video conferencing facilities.

SOAG acknowledged that this was a sensitive topic in need of careful handling, given the importance of access to flying for academic and university business. There was a clear need to ensure fit to ongoing strategic reviews, and to secure wider buy-

in prior to taking action. 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. The Convener acknowledged this as a very worthwhile piece of work and thanked the Transport Manager and Engagement Facilitator for the analysis. 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 – EC & AH to include information on potential cost savings.

Action – EC & AH to take the paper to SRS Committee in March for guidance on how best to progress further.

Action – HE to reflect on the issue and follow up with other senior colleagues.

## **6 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 EAUC and SFC, to mandatory reporting. UoE staff were actively engaged in framing the FHEI section of the pro forma reporting templates that EAUC-Scotland was coordinating. A Scottish Government consultation would shortly be launched and a draft response would be shared with the Group.

UoE was well placed to deliver on reporting, however there needed to be discussion now to anticipate the legislation and decide how the institution should position itself.

Action – DS to take the paper to SRS Committee for discussion to take the issue forward.

In discussion, the Convener agreed that strategic issues could be brought to SOAG for support and advice, but that SRS Committee would require to sign off strategic and policy issues.

## **7 Edinburgh Sustainability Awards 2014-15**

**F**

The SRS Engagement Manager presented a paper which gave an outline of participation and achievement in the University's Sustainability Awards scheme in terms of College and Group, as well as level of Award, since the beginning of the scheme in 2010/11.

There had been a steady increase in participation with a large number of returning teams as well as engagement with new areas. Participants were spread across the estate, with particular concentrations in CMVM and CSG which tended to have more co-ordinated campuses and were easier to engage with on a strategic level. The lab audits were particularly appealing to CMVM. More work would be done to promote the awards at KB, which tended to operate on a school by school basis rather than at a College or campus level, and within CHSS and ISG, where the emphasis would be more on individual behaviour change than review of shared space. The Awards criteria were reviewed every year to reflect current initiatives and framing of topics.

SOAG discussed how the scheme could develop to keep engaging and motivating repeated Gold Award winners, in terms of sharing best practice and including mentoring as an aspect of the Gold level, using student auditors to reduce the need to resubmit evidence, and celebrating exceptional contribution.

Action – HE to follow up with colleagues in ISG.

Action – CO to keep the Group updated with regard to any support it could provide.

SOAG noted Roslin as a discrete, manageable area with potential to test different

modes of engagement, particularly around reducing power consumption and costs.

Action – CO to approach Brian McTeir for views on how to sustain Gold level participants' interest and engagement.

Action – JR to keep the item on the agenda for May's meeting, to continue the dialogue and discussion.

## **ROUTINE ITEMS**

### **8 Update on Sustainable Laboratories Activities**

The Head of SRS Programmes introduced the new Programme Facilitator – Laboratories, Andrew Arnott, to the Group and gave a verbal report on the first meeting of the Sustainable Laboratories Steering Group on 27<sup>th</sup> January. The meeting had looked at barriers, opportunities, remit and membership, and acknowledged the need for a strong research and evidence base. Interest had been high, though there was a need for more representation from key academics. The Group would seek to work with PIs, research students and academic champions to share best practice, bring about culture and behaviour change from the design stage onwards, and review major funders and opportunities to offer incentives. In terms of governance, SLSG was not empowered to take action but would bring issues to SOAG or other relevant groups for advice on how best to take them forward. An initial output from SLSG would be a work plan put together by the SRS Department in collaboration with colleagues.

### **9 Any Other Business**

No items raised.

## **ITEMS FOR FORMAL APPROVAL/NOTING**

### **10 SRS Annual Report**

**G**

SOAG noted a paper from the Programme Manager comprising a draft of the 2013-14 SRS Annual Report. Additional comments were still to be incorporated. Further consideration would be given to the sign off process in future in order to secure wider buy in.

The Convener commented positively on the format, timeline and dashboard layout, and noted a good balance overall. The Convener recommended production of future reports in the autumn to align with Colleges' and Support Group's annual planning cycles.

Action – DG to respond to comments previously received from HE.

Action – ML to take the paper on to SRS Committee and ultimately CMG.

### **11 SRS Implementation Plan 2014-15**

**H**

The Head of Programmes updated the Group on the SRS Implementation Plan and actions since the last meeting.

The annual plan is considered 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. This fifth annual Implementation Plan responded to the University's Strategic Plan and recorded actions delivering both existing policies and new commitments. It provided an overview of 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.

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 Director of SRS noted that the plan had been produced later than usual this year and would normally be in place for the autumn.

Action – MB to take the paper to SRS Committee for noting.

## **12 People & Planet University League**

I

SOAG noted a briefing paper providing a summary of the University's ethical and environmental performance in the People and Planet University League 2015. UoE achieved a 2.1 ranking, holding its score from last year and improving its position by two places to 44<sup>th</sup> place.

Members noted issues arising this year from changes to the criteria and the breadth of the League which had resulted in some boycotting and lack of stakeholder buy-in. While UoE was in a relatively good position, already having gathered the data for sustainability reporting, others in the sector lacked the resource to respond fully to the changes. SOAG noted a general feeling at the AUDE Conference that the sector should have its own measuring tool and not rely on an external body to do this on its behalf.

Participation in the League did impact on behaviour and was noted as a driver particularly in terms of transparency and sustainable procurement. As behaviours became embedded and widespread, they eventually dropped off the pro forma as part of a collective continuous improvement cycle.

SOAG agreed to leave the issue open and return to it in advance of the next submission.

Action – ML to produce an analysis of UoE performance in comparison to the Russell Group average.

### **Convener's Concluding Remarks**

The Convener expressed appreciation for the practical operational work being done and would work with the Senior Vice Principal and the Director of SRS on moving the strategic issues forward.

With Roy Dawkes, Judith Salters and David Somervell stepping back from the Group, it was felt to be timely to review the membership.

Action – DG & JR to reflect on membership and make suggestions to the Convener.

The Convener thanked David Somervell for his contribution to the work of the Group.

**Date of next meeting:** 09.30-11.30, Wed 27 May 2015, Cuillin Rm, Charles Stewart House