

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

MINUTE OF A MEETING of the Social Responsibility and Sustainability Committee held in the Elder Room, Old College on Friday 26 February 2016.

Present: Charlie Jeffery (in chair), Senior Vice Principal
 Michelle Brown, Head of SRS Programmes
 Moira Gibson, External Affairs Manager, Communications & Marketing
 Kathleen Hood, Head of Widening Participation
 Gary Jebb, Director of Estates
 Zoe Lewandowski; Director of Human Resources
 Urte Macikene, EUSA Vice President Services
 Lesley McAra, Assistant Principal Community Relations
 Phil McNaull, Director of Finance
 Janet Philp, Joint Unions Liaison Committee
 George Sked; Acting Director of Procurement

In attendance: Sabrina Jenquin, Procurement Legal Services, for item 7

Apologies: Gavin Douglas, Deputy Secretary Student Experience, USG
 Hugh Edmiston, Director of Corporate Services
 Dave Gorman, Director of Social Responsibility and Sustainability
 Pete Higgins (Vice Convener), Dean of Students, CHSS
 Jane Norman, Vice-Principal People and Culture
 Heather Rea, Project Lead, Beltane Public Engagement Network
 James Smith, Vice Principal International

- 1 SRS Committee welcomed new members Lesley McAra and George Sked (sharing the Director of Procurement role with Karen Bowman). On behalf of the Committee, the Convener thanked outgoing member Kathleen Hood whose effective leadership of Widening Participation work had brought many positive benefits.

A

The minute of the meeting on 21 October 2015 was approved as a correct record.

- 2 **Matters Arising**

Under item 11, 'Public Engagement Overview', it was noted that Vice-Principal Community Development Mary Bownes had set up a working group including College Deans of Research to follow through on this activity.

STRATEGIC AND SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS

- 3 **Strategic Direction Setting for SRS Committee 2016-2017**

B

Following the refresh of the Committee's remit, membership and scope, as well as agreement on a definition of SRS, the Head of SRS Programmes presented a proposed strategic agenda for 2016-17.

The Committee endorsed the paper, including the proposal to update the SRS Strategy in 2016/17, and the recommended programme of topical half day away sessions.

Action – All to share any further ideas with MB.

Action – MB to amend the programme to prioritise areas that could lead to income generation, update the programme, and proceed as agreed.

- 4 **SRSC Away Session 2015 – Strategic Plan Content**

C

Following discussions with the Head of Strategic Performance & Research Policy at the meeting on 17 June, away session on 23 October, and subsequent dialogue, the Head of SRS Programmes shared suggested SRS content for the new Strategic Plan, including introductory text, KPIs and case studies. Though its final shape, structure and length was not yet clear, the Strategic Plan was evolving, and the new version would be a shorter, more dynamic document, brought to life through the website, less generic and more focused on the distinctiveness of the University.

Members highlighted the need to refine this material, focusing on brief statements and distinctive case studies, as the amount of detail included was more suited to development of a new SRS Strategy than draft content for the higher level Strategic Plan, and there was a risk that key elements would be overlooked. Hotlinks in the online version could be exploited to tell the wider story.

The new Strategy would take a different approach to KPIs and indicators. In terms of SRS, metrics could be set with reference to the inventory of key issues outlined in Paper B Table 1, with a focus on their relevance to an external audience.

Action – MB & DG to think further on these prompts and redraft, focusing on evocative, significant statements and illustrative case studies that exemplify the institution.

5a Community Relations – Draft Strategy

The External Affairs Manager set out the context of the draft Community Relations Strategy 2016-18, replacing the 2009 Community Relations Plan, which evidenced how UoE supports economic development, contributes to civic and community life, and works in partnership locally. Community engagement was included in the University's mission statement, beginning to have an impact on research income, and may be a criterion in future rankings.

An October 2015 survey of the local community indicated that, while respondents saw UoE as an asset, they did not have a clear idea of what the University did, or how it contributed to the health service, schooling or culture of the city. There was already significant outreach activity in Edinburgh and Midlothian, and the Strategy was not intended to disrupt this, but to identify further opportunities and ways to align activity and work more strategically.

The Strategy had three main aims: strengthening relationships (mapping activity, understanding gaps and opportunities, and investigating if resources could be better distributed); research, learning and teaching (identifying opportunities for research and experiential learning, and promoting Edinburgh as a 'learning city'); and building understanding (improving communications and listening to what the local community would value). When the survey is run again in three years it should show greater understanding of the University in the community.

The Committee noted potential opportunities in this area and agreed with the aspiration and direction of the strategy, but indicated a need for tighter definition and further work on implementation and metrics. An annex covering aspects of implementation was available on request from the Secretary.

Action – MG to take an updated version of Paper D1, to include elements of an Implementation Plan, to CMG on 12 April for University-level endorsement.

5b Community Relations - Overview

The Assistant Principal Community Relations presented an overview to be picked up via a May/June workshop. Proposals included opportunities for experiential learning outside the classroom, scholarships linked to social enterprise, and digital education as a fundamental part of outreach. There had been a tendency to reproduce rather than make best use of existing practice. A proportion of supporting resource, currently scattered, could be repurposed. A Community of Practice had been set up, run through IAD. Much more could be done in terms of corporate narratives and promoting UoE values and identity. With the University growing exponentially, more needed to be done to ensure students felt part of a scholarly community and were included in University activities in the city. This could be linked to work around degree programmes as the gold standard for employability, building resilience, emotional intelligence and a problem-solving mindset.

SRS Committee noted the perspectives 5a and 5b afforded into community relations, the former offering practical steps and a platform for the activities outlined in the latter. While there were deficits, there were also excellent examples of good practice. These were currently fragile because they were not articulated. Better mediums for

D1

D2

communication were needed, particularly externally, as part of more general discussion around the institution's communicative capacity and competence. This should connect in to wider debate regarding a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system.

Members agreed to continue developing the wider agenda set out by the Assistant Principal Community Relations, identifying measureable outcomes and areas where there was resource, and ensuring work stayed aligned with the purposes of the University.

6 UoE as a Good Employer

E

The Director of Human Resources introduced an overview of UoE performance as a fair, inclusive and socially responsible employer, highlighting the Living Wage and Scottish Business Pledge.

The Committee noted the upcoming visit of Annabelle Ewing MSP to the School of Chemistry (first Athena Swan Gold award recipient in Scotland) and re-emphasised the importance of having communication plans in place to adequately promote this, internally and externally. Members recommended converting the paper into a brief document summarising the package that could be issued to all staff.

Action – ZL to amend the paper to clarify the position of apprentices with regard to the Living Wage.

7 Modern Slavery

F

The Head of SRS Programmes presenting this briefing paper produced in conjunction with Legal Services and the Head of Court Services. The Act, introduced in March 2015, encouraged organisations to assess, prevent, mitigate and account for any risks of forced and/or compulsory labour. Section 54 required the University to produce a slavery and human trafficking statement for each financial year and display it prominently, preferably on the University homepage. While risks were very minimal within the University's own employment practices, the requirements included international offices, contractors and supply chains.

SRS Committee acknowledged the legal duties and approved a cross-department consultation and action plan including creation of a short-life working group, linking with processes already in place around the Scottish Procurement Prioritisation Tool.

Action - MB to follow up with others on next steps and the mandatory statement.

8 Conflict Minerals Policy

G

The Head of SRS Programmes noted that the approach taken in the Conflict Minerals Policy linked to that of the UN Guiding Principles for Business and Human Rights and that many companies were currently making efforts to clarify their position. The Policy had been endorsed by the Fair Trade Steering Group and the Sustainable IT Group.

Members noted the potential leverage the University could have to raise issues through simply asking questions. UoE was currently lobbying APUC to include the issue in their tenders. Work was ongoing to raise awareness in staff and student purchasing and to link in to research in different disciplines. The Head of SRS Programmes thanked the EUSA Vice President Services for help in raising the agenda, putting a similar policy through the EUSA Student Council.

The Committee endorsed the policy, recognised the reputational importance of communicating the University's commitment to the issue and that this should also be linked to membership of Electronics Watch for over two years.

Action – MB to take the Policy to CMG for formal noting and approval.

9 Climate Strategy Update

H

The Head of SRS Programmes updated members on technical consultancy work, supported by the Scottish Funding Council, feeding in to review of the University's Climate Strategy. Action for the Climate, COP21, planned events with ECCI and a new Community of Practice were all feeding in to the process. The new Strategy would take

a whole institution approach, bringing in links to teaching & research, cross-referencing responsible investment, and aligning with the Strategic Plan.

REPORTS AND MINUTES FROM SUB-GROUPS

10 SOAG Report to SRS Committee

I

SRS Committee noted the minute of 26 January 2016 including 2014/15 Waste and Energy Annual Reports, an update on the Utilities Project and proposal for a Sustainable Campus Fund.

11 SITG Report to SRS Committee

J

SRS Committee noted the minute of 2 October 2015.

Members agreed that in future minutes of sub-groups would be dropped from Committee papers, with key issues coming as full items.

ITEMS FOR FORMAL APPROVAL/NOTING

12 The Commission on Widening Access

K

The Head of Widening Participation presented a briefing on findings and implications of the Commission's interim report. The full report, due on 24 March, and UoE response would be discussed at the next meeting.

Edinburgh was the only University to be invited on to all expert groups, indicative of the in-roads that had been made. The Convener recognised the substantial contribution made by Kathleen Hood, and the need for the Committee to reassess how to express the University's commitment to Widening Participation in these changed circumstances.

13 Current & Potential Awards in the SRS Area

L

The Committee noted this initial scoping paper to stimulate discussion around existing awards and prizes in the SRS area and identify potential for initiating or extending involvement with parallel initiatives on SRS themes within the University and with partner organisations.

The Sustainability Awards ceremony in April would be shorter this year, focusing on special awards in particular categories. The Head of SRS Programmes thanked the EUSA President and the Director of Corporate Services who had agreed to present the awards, and the Assistant Principal Community Relations who would chair a workshop on the morning of the ceremony.

Members reiterated the need for suitable mechanisms to communicate and celebrate activity in this area.

Action – All to email the Secretary with any relevant awards that have been missed.

14 SRS Reporting

M

SRS Committee noted an update on 2014/15 Social Responsibility and Sustainability Reporting. Based on the information which was included in the Annual Report & Accounts, the 2014/15 SRS Report comprised the key points, infographic and a link to the [microsite](#).

Action – All members to share any feedback with the Secretary.

15 Responsible Investment

N

Members noted an update on the new RI Policy Statement agreed at CMG on 19 January which summarised the University's approach. This followed the decision to sign up to PRI (formerly UNPRI), to divest from coal and tar sands, and to engage with companies on responsible investment. The Convener emphasised the need to ensure the policy statement was communicated clearly and to follow up on implementation.

16 Any Other Business

2015 Green Gown Awards: - UoE was shortlisted for four awards, winning in the category 'Facilities and Services' for the project 'Sustainable Laboratories – sharing best practice through peer learning', a collaborative project with Estates and CMVM.