

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

MINUTE OF A MEETING of the Social Responsibility and Sustainability Committee
held in the Ochil Room, Charles Stewart House on Thursday 1 February 2018.

- Present:** Charlie Jeffery (Convenor), Senior Vice Principal
Michelle Brown, Head of SRS Programmes
Karen Bowman/George Sked, Director of Procurement
Katrina Castle, Head of Widening Participation
Hugh Edmiston, Director of Corporate Services
Moira Gibson, Head of External Affairs, Communications & Marketing
Ollie Glick, Students' Association VP Community
Dave Gorman, Director of Social Responsibility and Sustainability
Pete Higgins, Director, Global Environment & Society Academy
Gary Jebb, Director of Estates
Lesley McAra, Assistant Principal Community Relations
Phil McNaul, Director of Finance
Heather Rea, Project Lead, Beltane Public Engagement Network
Tracey Slaven, Deputy Secretary, Strategic Planning
- In attendance:** Kai O'Doherty, Students' Association VP Activities & Services, for item 4
- Apologies:** Gavin Douglas, Deputy Secretary Student Experience
Lee Hamill, Deputy Director of Finance
Zoe Lewandowski, Director of Human Resources
Jane Norman, Vice-Principal People and Culture
Janet Philp, Joint Unions Liaison Committee
James Smith, Vice Principal International

- 1** The Committee welcomed Head of Widening Participation Katrina Castle and Students' Association VP Activities & Services Kai O'Doherty (in attendance for item 4). **A**

The minute of 12 October 2017 was approved as a correct record.

2 Matters Arising

While not all their staff were paid the living wage, the Students' Association were keen to address this and had submitted a request for support via the planning round.

STRATEGIC AND SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS**3 Community Benefits in Procurement** **B**

The Director of Procurement updated members on plans to deliver Impact for Society through UoE's procurement spend, in collaboration with suppliers, and thanked colleagues listed in section 20 who participated in the consultation process. It was a legal requirement to consider community benefits for all procurement processes at or above £4M. UoE would work with delivery partners and experts to identify the kinds of benefit that would be most valuable.

SRSC endorsed the draft policy and guidance, and noted next steps for collaboration on delivery and monitoring outcomes. Members emphasised the need to do this in a legally compliant, fair and transparent way. The accompanying draft procedures document, while helpful, would not be mandatory. Once approved, Procurement would periodically report

back on the finalised policy, including exemplifications of how community benefit was being realised.

4 Tackling Coffee Cup Waste on Campus

C

The Students' Association VP Activities & Services, in attendance for this item, presented this paper responding to student feedback about levels of waste on campus. It proposed measures to tackle coffee cup waste by increasing use of reusable cups, in partnership with Waste and ACE. Around two million coffee cups were going into the University's waste stream each year, though a lot of these were from other providers. The Scottish Government were also looking to tackle the issue, using a similar tactic.

The proposal comprised three main points: introducing a 20p surcharge for disposable cups, rather than a 20p discount for using reusable cups; giving free reusable cups to incoming students; and allowing customers to use any brand of reusable cup. There would be no change to the final cost for the customer. While some Schools were already providing students with reusable cups through local budgets, organising this centrally would help demonstrate that it was not intended as a money-making venture. The cost of providing new students with cups was estimated at £45K per annum. Asking students to sign up before being issued a cup would help ensure those who received them would actually use them. A one year pilot could be run, with results assessed to see if it was worth continuing. There was some flexibility in the model to protect revenue and cover funding the cups. Another option would be to look into sponsorship. There remained questions around current procurement of KeepCups, as the price was quite high. Further work was needed to develop ways to procure ethical cups that met the necessary standard at lower cost.

Members endorsed the paper, as well as the general trend away from disposables, noting the increase in interest in sustainability generally, with symbolic waste and resource issues moving up the agenda. Plastic straws were another symbolic issue that merited further discussion. Members noted an initiative developing in the Sports Union around water bottles, and the need to integrate with this, potentially looking at multifunctional cups. The Committee acknowledged substantial work already done by catering colleagues in getting waste reduction schemes in place. Members noted similar approaches taken by other institutions, and the need to continue to monitor these, identify what worked well and replicate it. Having agreed a broad direction of travel, next steps would be to establish how to deliver it in the most sustainable and cost effective way. Holding no budget, the Committee could only endorse the ambition.

Action – HE, KO & OG to look at how to move the proposal forward.

5 Sustainability Awards Review

D

The Head of SRS Programmes introduced this paper outlining plans to review the Sustainability Awards programme in 2018, including background, draft objectives, scope and methodology. The scheme was known to deliver a range of benefits for participating teams, and the number of students involved continued to grow. The review could offer a possible project for a PhD student internship. Support received from Edinburgh Awards students could be recorded on their Higher Education Achievement Record.

After 7 years, the number of awards given out was increasing, which could dilute their significance, and a lot of projects had become business as usual, so there was an opportunity to raise the bar and focus on what was really driving the agenda, while continuing to bring people together and showcase achievement, even if it was not directly

linked to an award. The Special Awards category would be reviewed to include research and academic input, and the whole scheme would be badged in terms of the UN SDGs.

The Committee endorsed the terms of reference, and the direction they provided in terms of impact and legacy, recognising the key role the awards played in celebrating colleagues' contribution to sustainability. With funding council guidance including increasing duties around sustainability, these members of staff were doing a service to the University as well as being good citizens. Members recognised the community benefit impact of the programme's partnership with the Grassmarket Community Project who crafted the awards trophies. More work could be done to promote the awards to staff who were not already engaged with SRS.

ITEMS FOR FORMAL APPROVAL/NOTING

6 Social Impact Pledge

E

The Assistant Principal Community Relations updated members on progress responding to the Scottish Government's Social Impact Pledge initiative, and outlined proposals for pledges to be made for 2018. In addition to the moral imperative, these activities were good for the University reputationally.

SRS Committee recognised the success in year one of Read, Write Count, the Digital Ambassadors Programme, and the Social Enterprise Pathway, and noted next steps. Talks with the City Deal team were ongoing on further opportunities for data-driven innovation. There was potential for work helping SMEs with technology, extending ambassadorial activity into new contexts. Members welcomed plans to establish a Centre for Homeless and Inclusion Health, and emphasised the need to communicate these activities beyond the Edinburgh Local pages.

Action – LM to follow up with Alison Muckersie in CSG on scaling up the Digital Ambassadors programme into other areas.

7 RELCO Final Report

F

The Director of SRS shared this closed paper in confidence, given the Committee's role overseeing the Climate Strategy. It summarised the RELCO Report submitted to PSG in October 2017. Nothing had yet been agreed, though follow up actions were ongoing and a decision was expected in spring to summer 2018. Funding for the solar aspects had been secured. In line with advice from the Director of Estates, rather than presenting the proposals as a single £63.7M investment, they would be seen as a series of linked projects requiring careful individual evaluation. The aim was to explore how far the need to transition to a low carbon economy, with University Court having committed to UoE becoming carbon neutral by 2040, could be aligned with research and teaching and open up new opportunities, building the core business rationale. This scale of investment could only be justified if it brought substantial benefits for research, learning and teaching. The report had been receiving some very positive feedback, with the challenge now to quantify proposals and assess feasibility.

SRS Committee welcomed the report, which raised the stakes for other universities and organisations of the same scale, advising that wider communications would need to be carefully managed to develop a shared understanding. Members welcomed plans to work with internal experts to manage community engagement and recognised the reputational benefits, possible partnership opportunities, and potential for learning opportunities from the student perspective.

8 New Outcome Agreement & Inclusion of Sustainability

The Deputy Secretary, Strategic Planning updated members on the new outcome agreement, which asked for evidence of leadership, articulated by the existence of strategy documents and plans, and included a section on leadership in environmental and social sustainability. Members noted an opportunity to include further narrative on UoE activity in this area, not in this year's outcome agreement, but in the subsequent evaluation report.

9 Social Finance

The Director of SRS gave a brief update on progress. In the summer Court had agreed in principle to investment of £8m in social finance, accepting a lower return for social benefit. Work was ongoing to get appropriate governance in place, including roles for this Committee and the Industry Engagement Group, as well as aligning with existing and parallel activity. There was a potential role for the SRS Committee in setting strategy and priorities.

Action – DG to take a proposal paper back to the committee in due course.

10 Scottish Funding Council Loan Opportunity

The University had bid for a 0% loan, with repayment over 7 years, and had been awarded £5M. This would fund general energy efficiency work as well as the solar elements of the RELCO report. The challenge of delivery remained. Members were pleased to see the University starting to get a share of the funding available in this area.

11 Any Other Business

The Director of Procurement updated members on work assessing how the University was performing in terms of the flexible framework. Having reached the top level, Procurement were currently working on the Annual Report UoE was required to publish, and looking into next steps.

The Students' Association had signed up to the Sustainable Development Goals Accord.

The Senate meeting on 7th February would discuss community engagement and how it intersected with core business, including more on the Centre for Homeless and Inclusion Health.

A paper on Drinking Water would go to SSAG, and a subgroup had been established to look at where drinking fountains should go and to promote reusable water bottles.