

MINUTE OF A MEETING of the Sustainability Strategy Advisory Group held in 2.01 Geography (Old Infirmary) on Tuesday 24 June 2019.

- Members:** Dave Gorman, (Convener) Director of Social Responsibility & Sustainability
Michelle Brown, Head of SRS Programmes
Michelle Christian, Director - Property & Residential Services
Emma Crowther, Transport & Parking Manager
Dean Drobot, Head of Utilities & Energy Management
Grant Ferguson, Director of Estates Operations
Kate Fitzpatrick, Waste & Recycling Manager
David Jack, Energy & Utilities Operations Manager
George Sked, Director of Procurement
Rosheen Wallace, Students' Association VP Community
Hugh Edmiston, Director of Corporate Services (ex officio)
Gary Jebb, Director of Estates (ex officio)
- In attendance:** Sarah Ford-Hutchinson, SRS Communications Manager, for item 6
Matthew Lawson, SRS Programmes Manager, for item 8
Alexis Heeren, Supply Chains Programme Manager, for item 11
- Apologies:** Michelle Christian; Emma Crowther; Kate Fitzpatrick; George Sked;
Gary Jebb (ex officio); Hugh Edmiston (ex-officio)

1 The minute of the meeting held on 11 December 2018 was approved as a correct record. **A**

2 Matters Arising

Quarterly reports on Waste and Transport were to be re-included from this meeting, enhancing awareness of developments within these areas.

Action – KF to report back on changes to contract costs at the next meeting in October.

Post-meeting note: *The new contract was awarded to Biffa (who were our incumbent contractor) and the contract start date was 22 April. Based on an indicative pricing model which was used in the Tender process (a 'typical' week collections), the new contract is approximately 20% less than the previous contract.*

Members noted clarification from the Deputy Secretary, Strategic Planning on the difference between a formal University 'policy', which needed to be approved by the University Executive and Court, and a 'procedure', which SSAG and similar groups could approve directly.

3 Climate Change: Update on External Developments & UoE Response **B**

SSAG noted this version of a paper previously shared with the Principal, senior leadership team, and SRS Committee, outlining a range of recent developments around the climate emergency and the University's response. UoE was on track to deliver its 2025 targets, but would need to do more to meet its 'Zero by 2040' objective, given the current rate of growth and intensity of business travel.

The issue had been discussed at length at the Strategic Away Day on 13th June, with all 25 senior leaders present agreeing that 'Zero by 2040' was a core goal for the University. As a result, UoE's senior leadership was reconsidering the RELCO proposals, looking at issues around curriculum reform, transport and waste, and was more open to action on aviation, including a potential internal levy on flights, to be funnelled into carbon-offsetting projects. This was an excellent opportunity for the group, which would come forward with ideas in due course. Though the scale and timing were still to be decided, the RELCO land option in particular offered strong co-curricular and living lab opportunities, including eco-restoration, land management and rewilding. It was also noted that in due course proposals on energy and heat would need to be brought forward.

4 Staff and Student Sustainability Champions and SRS Changemakers

C

When the SRS Department was formed in 2014 it inherited a network of roles and champions. With sustainability as part of every staff member's role, the department was considering how best to empower, support, and inspire staff at all levels, as well as support student sustainability champions.

Previously there had been a focus within staff networks on energy savings, in line with CSG's 10% reduction target. Growing the energy coordinator network had been challenging, with numbers stalling around 150 against a target of 300. Following manager review, the next step would be the launch, during Welcome Week, of a reconfigured network of 'Sustainability Champions', to include both staff and students, with a broader sustainability focus. This would replace the current energy and waste coordinator networks. Anticipated benefits included enhanced knowledge and skills development for participants, streamlined engagement channels, and increased capacity to take action on sustainability issues. Activities around the launch would continue over the summer, including further reflection on the title 'SRS Champions' and how best to market the new network. SRS would consult and secure feedback to shape the future of the scheme.

SSAG endorsed the proposal, recognising the efficiencies it offered. Members felt it was timely, and took the correct approach. It would be particularly valuable in creating opportunities for students from different Schools to work together. SSAG acknowledged the efforts that had gone into securing academic credit for participants in the ESSA Project and the Edinburgh Award, and hoped to see an increase in the number of students taking up these kinds of opportunities.

5 Sustainability Policy – Preliminary Draft

D

This draft provided an update to the 2000 Policy, reflecting substantial progress achieved, and bringing together UoE ambitions and objectives in this area. The finalised policy would be a powerful communication tool and should lead to efficiencies, replacing numerous policies on sub-issues. The Policy would align with the goals and cross-cutting themes of the Strategic Plan. Next steps would include consultation with staff and students, including the new Sustainability Champions network, with sign off by the Students' Association and SRS Committee planned for the autumn.

SSAG endorsed the proposal for a one to two page Sustainability Policy, comprising both social and environmental aspects, to be developed in partnership with the Students' Association. Members felt that the process of updating the policy would generate valuable discussions and the finished document would be a useful guide demonstrating how these issues were connected, and explicitly setting out expectations of UoE staff and students. Increasingly there was demand for a brief policy statement to include in

tenders and research bids, issue to contractors, and for use in external ranking processes such as the People & Planet Green League.

Action – MB to include the wording ‘in our operations and investments’ in section 1, to reflect the breadth of activity.

Action – MB to work with the VP Community to carry out a consultation process with the Students’ Association.

Action – All members to send their comments to MB.

6 **#ZeroWasteUoE Campaign**

E

The SRS Communications Manager, in attendance for this item, briefed the Group on an upcoming behaviour change campaign around reduction of avoidable waste, increase in reuse, and improved recycling practice, which would be key in achieving the goal, laid out in the [Waste Strategy](#), to become a zero waste University. Based on nudge theory, the focus would be on individual action on resource efficiency. Next steps would include production and piloting of campaign materials over the summer, including social media graphics, clearer guidance on recycling, and case studies and blogs highlighting good practice, with launch to the whole University community planned for the autumn.

SSAG welcomed the campaign, recognising waste reduction as a key University priority, and seeing the value of engagement to ensure this was reflected in the culture on the ground. The campaign would help communicate what the University’s vision of zero waste would mean on a day to day basis, prompting staff and students to consider what actions they could take. Members noted that there was no need to create new initiatives to reduce waste – existing systems were in place in Estates and SRS. The challenge was in changing behaviours.

Action – SFH to come back and report on progress at the next meeting.

7 **Energy Quarterly Report**

F

The Head of Energy & Utilities Management updated the Group on strategic priorities and activities at Q4. Work was ongoing to input data into the Optima visualiser tool in order to generate management reports in a format that was easy to understand and share with different groups. Work breaking reporting down to College level was almost complete. It would then be taken to building level. Most of the data was in place to allow building typology reporting. This would enable Estates to differentiate how energy was being used across campus, and inform the main user groups about their energy impact. An ‘Energy Masterplan’ was in development, with funding support from Zero Waste Scotland. The final report, due in July, should contain significant output of interest to SSAG. Overall, significant investment was being made in the area and energy use was reducing, but not currently at pace to meet set targets.

Members welcomed the sample report, noting that Optima Energy would be producing functional KPI reports by the end of 2018/19. This timeline aligned well with the Finance Transformation programme. The reports would be particularly useful when communicating and engaging with building users. SSAG noted the issues around challenging energy use, including a similar push back as when challenging generation of avoidable waste.

Action – DD to report on key outcomes from the Energy Masterplan at October’s meeting.

Action – DD to revisit the standard template to re-include and enhance visualisation of quarterly comparisons.

Action – DD to present the appendices in future reports rotated to landscape format for ease of viewing.

Action – DD to share report with CSE Sustainability Intern Jasmine Hussain.

The Convener thanked the Energy & Utilities team for producing the report, and expressed disappointment at the absence of quarterly reports from Waste and Transport, given the importance of the Group having an overview of developments in these areas.

8 SRS Reporting – Plans for 2019

G

The Student Engagement, Events & Reporting Programme Manager outlined plans for developing the University's Social Responsibility and Sustainability Report for 2019. This more detailed stand-alone report complemented reporting on social responsibility and sustainability issues integrated within the Annual Report and Accounts. The SRS Department collated reporting information from colleagues across professional services and academic schools. Key information providers would be contacted from July. In November a final draft would be shared with internal and external colleagues for feedback on UoE's performance against its objectives, as well as on the overall format and feel of the report. Publication of the final version was scheduled for December 2019.

Action – MB to share a mock-up of the SRS online platform for feedback.

SSAG anticipated strong performance on energy and carbon, with areas for improvement around transport and business travel. Members discussed the percentage of the University's power consumption coming from renewables. It was estimated that around 30% of UoE electricity was from renewable sources.

9 Biodiversity Strategy

H

In the absence of the Climate Policy Manager, the Director of SRS presented the paper. Ownership of the Strategy was with Estates, with support from SRS. The Strategy combined consideration of physical campus biodiversity with research, learning and teaching.

Members warmly welcomed the strategy as addressing an important issue, while raising some concerns about excessive repetition within the draft. It was felt to be a mixture of strategy, policy and programme plan and could benefit from further refining before going to University Executive for sign off. Further discussion on resourcing was needed, particularly on the amount of communications work that would be required. SSAG noted missed opportunities to use inter-building spaces as areas for study and relaxation, and asked that the impact of improved biodiversity on mental wellbeing be highlighted further in the final version. Biodiversity also had strong links to welfare and the student experience.

SSAG approved the programme outlined in the draft, subject to further discussions on resourcing, particularly the impact on Estates Development managers.

Action – EVM to remove extraneous content, make the draft clearer, further unpack the implications, and make the carbon benefits more prominent.

10 Carbon Reporting Verification and Assurance and Next Steps

I

In the absence of the Climate Policy Manager, the Director of SRS presented this paper outlining carbon reporting verification of the University's footprint for 2017-18, as entered into the Ecometrica platform, and undertaken on an annual basis by Sweco.

SRS had discovered errors in the data for business travel and worked to resolve the issue. While initial data appeared to point to a rise in emissions from business travel, recalculation indicated a decrease from emissions reported in 2016-17. An analysis report was being put together over the summer to compare this year's figures with the previous, and findings would be shared with SSAG.

Members confirmed they were satisfied with the verification report.

11 Theory of Change for SRS in Supply Chains

J

The Supply Chains Programme Manager, in attendance for this item, presented this paper outlining a 'theory of change' for how UoE could make a positive impact on global supply chains through its operational procurement as well as learning, teaching and research. The exercise had highlighted the University's ability to leverage supply chains through non-procurement activities such as investment, research and teaching. It would be used as a tool to inform future work in the area.

SSAG recognised the difficulty of reporting on the impact of the University's work on sustainable procurement, given the complexity of global supply chains, and acknowledged the value of developing a 'theory of change' to articulate how these activities advanced sustainable supply chains, as well as pinpointing areas for improvement. Areas which would receive particular focus over the next five years included food, travel, ICT, lab equipment and estates. Within each of these categories SRS and Procurement had identified ways of improving the sustainability of what the University was buying. The Group discussed where the shared workload sat between SRS and Procurement, with SRS in a supporting role, carrying out research, advising on SRS aspects of tenders, and providing communications.

SSAG congratulated Alexis Heeren on her recent appointment as SRS in Supply Chains Programme Manager.

Action – AH to add a sixth pathway around the University's investment activity.

Action – AH to share the Estates category report with DD.

12 Students' Association VP Community Manifesto

K

SSAG noted the manifesto, highlighting the objective on encouraging and promoting green living, particularly activities around textbook exchange, food recycling, and food sharing. It was confirmed that the Food Sharing pilot was going to be renewed and would be used by ACE as a basis for deciding a future approach for the University. Members noted that the Students' Association shop now had a zero waste section. The VP Activities and Services planned to do more promotion around the Farmers Market, including carrying out a trial at KB. SSAG welcomed the wide range of objectives and looked forward to working with the VP Community.

Action – RW to follow up with the Transport Manager on provision of bike pumps.