



UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

MINUTE OF A MEETING of the Sustainability Strategy Advisory Group held in the Ochil Room, Charles Stewart House on Tuesday 8 October 2019.

- Members:** Dave Gorman, (Convener) Director of Social Responsibility & Sustainability
Michelle Brown, Deputy Director & Head of SRS Programmes
Michelle Christian, Director - Property & Residential Services
Glen Cousquer, UCU Green rep
Emma Crowther, Transport & Parking Manager
Dean Drobot, Head of Utilities & Energy Management
Grant Ferguson, Director of Estates Operations
Kate Fitzpatrick, Waste & Recycling Manager
Claire Graf, Joint Unions Liaison Committee representative
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:** Sandra Kinnear, Health, Safety and Sustainability Advisor, ACE Property, for Michelle Christian
Charlotte Lee-Woolf, SRS Business Development Executive, for item 3
Lucy Stanfield, Business Development Analyst – Circular Economy, for item 3
- Apologies:** Michelle Christian; Kate Fitzpatrick; Claire Graf; David Jack; George Sked; Hugh Edmiston (ex-officio)

- 1** The Group welcomed new member University and College Union (UCU) Green rep Glen Cousquer. **A**

The minute of the meeting held on 24 June 2019 was approved as a correct record, subject to one amendment: item 8 on SRS Reporting had been presented by the Student Engagement, Events & Reporting Programme Manager rather than the Head of SRS Programmes.

- 2 Matters Arising**
There were no matters arising not covered elsewhere on the agenda.

- 3 Proposal for a Circular Economy Innovation Centre** **B**
SSAG was briefed on an ongoing project to develop a business case for a Circular Economy Innovation Centre. Discussions between Zero Waste Scotland and the SRS Business Development Executive began 18 months ago, highlighting the need for a hub to bring together students, academics, business representatives and policy makers to exchange knowledge, develop skills, create solutions and help overcome barriers in the transition to a circular economy.

Five months in to the project an outline proposition had been drafted (summarised in the paper), in line with the current vision for the city region, and underpinned by the idea of a global centre of knowledge and innovation. The Centre would deliver a programme across five activity streams: research and innovation support; education and skills (including links to the new Circular Economy MSc); showcasing and problem-solving events; developing a network across the region and beyond; and policy engagement

within the region and nationally. The focus would be on areas of opportunity for innovation, such as construction, food and drink, hospitality and tourism, as well as several cross-cutting themes, such as procurement. As activities would be multi-agency, considerations of ownership would have to be on a case by case basis.

The hub, managed by a core team of half a dozen staff, would work closely with ECCI, and look for opportunities to use the UoE estate as a living lab. The business case would be completed by summer 2020 and the centre established soon afterwards. Following initial seed funding (in part from Zero Waste Scotland – the centre was not yet fully funded), it should be self-sustaining within five years. The centre would not be funded directly by UoE, only in kind through provision of space (for six desks, plus access to space for meetings and events). The hope was for the centre to be housed within the Edinburgh Futures Institute, and accommodated in the interim at Edinburgh Innovations.

Members were broadly supportive of the proposition, but urged the project team to be cautious and ensure that any commitments being made were deliverable. SSAG highlighted potential reputational issues if sustainability claims regarding the operations of the centre were not replicated across the wider University. The Group noted that there could be significant interest in the hub from the student body, particularly around opportunities for student-led social enterprise workshops, which were being discussed as part of the collaboration with the prospective MSc in Circular Economy.

Action – CLW to follow up on student opportunities with RW outwith the meeting.

4 Responding to the Climate Emergency – Next Steps

C

Since the Group last met there had been significant developments around climate change. Positive discussions had taken place at the University Executive Away Day on 13th June, resulting in a series of agreed actions which were now being implemented. UoE's Zero by 2040 target was reconfirmed, taking a mixed economy approach of managing down demand in terms of energy, heat, travel and so forth, while accepting that in the short-term it would not be possible to reach zero without some form of offsetting. There were a number of potential pathways available on energy and heat, though these would come at significant financial cost. The Travel and Aviation Working Group had been established to look into possible next steps on flights. The Travel Survey coming out in the next few weeks would be another opportunity to engage on the issue.

Action – EC to follow up with the SRS Communications Manager on the form of words to best convey the University's position on the climate emergency, as agreed with the Director of Communications & Marketing.

SSAG noted that the University of Stirling Students' Union had declared that they were now carbon neutral in their operations. While a number of UoE departments had expressed an interest in becoming carbon neutral, members recognised the importance of approaching this in the context of their wider School, College, or Support Group, to ensure efforts were corralled into a more impactful, strategic approach.

5 The Government's Programme for Scotland 2019-20

D

In the absence of the Climate Policy Manager, the Director of SRS briefed the group on the Programme for Scotland, released by the Scottish Government every September and setting out actions for the coming year. The latest version included a number of commitments on climate change, including: a 'Green New Deal' with the Scottish National Investment Bank to attract green finance to Scotland, alongside a green growth

accelerator for councils; investing in bus infrastructure and working towards net zero aviation; requirements for new commercial buildings to be net zero by 2024; and planning a £30M investment in renewable heat projects.

It was not yet clear how this would be achieved. While the Programme contained distinct opportunities for the University in terms of serving as a living lab on heat innovations and accessing funding, significant challenges remained. Decarbonisation of heat within UoE would not happen within that timescale, though decarbonisation of the fleet was feasible. SSAG recognised that it was important not to neglect the heat agenda in favour of the offsetting question. While there was research on heat within UoE, the real challenge was the practicality of how to apply this to the existing estate, in a cost-effective way. A coherent site strategy would be required, rather than a building-by-building approach. Scottish Water were exploring the same issue, looking at capturing heat from sewers. UOE would continue to engage with third parties on emerging technologies and keep abreast of discussions.

The Scottish Government was currently running a consultation focused on the role of public sector bodies in ending Scotland's contribution to climate change, aimed at establishing more strategic reporting, with each organisation declaring their target and how they planned to get there. SRS would continue to share briefings on areas relevant to the Group.

6 Sustainability & Festivals Project

E

There had been growing awareness that UoE could be doing more to support sustainability at Edinburgh's Festivals in University venues. The Sustainability and Festivals Project was established early in 2019, following a short term internship. The project work streams were implemented by the SRS Project Coordinator: Sustainability and Festivals, supported and monitored by a Steering Group.

As the largest landlord of the Festival Fringe, the University was in a strong position to collaborate with tenants to ensure sustainability was further embedded in policy and practice. Over summer 2019 SRS hosted a sustainability hub with both an online and a physical presence. The project evaluation report would be available soon. Next steps included continuing to work with companies, tenants and University stakeholders to improve sustainability of the 2020 Festival Fringe; supporting opportunities for student learning and research and for student-led social enterprise (e.g. on eliminating single use cups); identifying new ways to improve Festival sustainability and developing a long term approach. Plans were underway to introduce a reusable cup scheme in University venues next year.

SSAG welcomed efforts to take a more structured approach to festival sustainability, enabling UoE to formalise and police activity in its spaces with tenants using its power, water and waste streams (as was already done for health and safety). There was also significant reputational impact. Members noted increasing focus on sustainable tourism, including current research focused on Barcelona. Lessons learned from festivals could be applied to University events more generally.

Action – DG to follow up with Janet Archer on funding.

Action – MB to follow up with Glen Cousquer on sustainable tourism.

Action – All members to share their festival sustainability ideas with Matthew Lawson.

7 Energy Quarterly Report

F

The Head of Energy & Utilities Management updated the Group on issues and priorities relevant to utilities infrastructure and performance at Q1 2019/20. In terms of energy strategy, there had been an issue with metering, which was addressed through an extensive upgrade programme. KB in particular had had problems getting metering down to building level. Its capacity to report at this level had been greatly improved, though it would take some time for data to come through and accumulate to a point where it was actionable. UoE now had the capacity to enable building level metering of electricity and heat across the majority of its sites, which could then be used to link behaviours to buildings and better assess the outcome of energy engagement activities. The Energy & Utilities Team were providing a platform that could give detailed reporting outlining a building's performance throughout the year and allow comparisons across campuses, buildings, colleges and faculties. A customisable web-based display of renewable energy generation from PV was expected in the next few months.

Action – DD to provide an indication of timescales to completion as well as an overview of what that entailed, for December's meeting.

A similar exercise had been carried out tracking the efficiency of University data centres, which had found them to be performing well in terms of power usage effectiveness (PUE). More work was needed on how the University communicated its energy performance to stakeholders, and on how this compared with other institutions and with UoE's own historical performance. Estates would take advice from IS on how best to frame these communications.

The 2018/19 end of year utility expenditure was on target at 4% under budget. SSAG noted that it was currently worthwhile paying the offsetting charge in order to be carbon neutral, as this helped with research funding bids. A £20M pipeline of energy efficiency projects had been teed up, with plans for project delivery being reported to Estates Committee in March.

Estates were currently reviewing the final draft of the Energy Masterplan, looking for a cost effective pathway to deliver zero carbon heat and electricity by 2040. UoE would transition away from fossil fuel driven electricity generation, making investments in wider infrastructure and requiring an extensive refurbishment programme at building level to facilitate this. It had been an 8-month long process, working with external consultants Buro Happold who had carried out energy audits and costed various interventions, ranging from £50/m² to 500/m² for 'light' versus 'deep' retrofitting. Deep refurbishments in older buildings were estimated to achieve a 40-60% reduction in heat demand. Members welcomed the energy performance update and KPI reporting format.

8 SRS Programmes Quarterly Report

G

SSAG noted an update on SRS Programmes 2018/19. Through August and September Programmes had its usual link in to Welcome Week, launching communications campaigns and the Sustainability Champions network. The SDGs in the curriculum mapping project was underway. Programmes were supporting the University's response to the climate emergency and, over the next few months, would be engaging on business travel, sustainability in the curriculum, and the Sustainability Awards, which offered a good vehicle to bring to life UoE's ambitious zero waste, zero carbon and SDG goals.

9 Waste, Reuse & Recycling Quarterly Report

H

Members noted a summary of the University's waste performance within the academic and support estate during 1 August 2019 to 31 July 2019. With the number of occupants

in University buildings continuing to increase, the Waste Office managed multiple waste streams ensuring that UoE waste was diverted from landfill. SSAG could be confident in the figures provided, as the Waste Manager ensured disposal routes were audited, including physical checks. The new general waste contract began in April 2019, having been awarded to Biffa (the incumbent supplier).

Action – KF to provide a brief summary of how the University's waste was recycled and what this meant in practice.

SSAG found these reports helpful, noting a need to rethink communication with international students on waste. Members advised emphasising the University's zero waste targets at Open Days, engaging early with the student community on desired behaviours around waste.

Action – SK & KF to follow up outwith the meeting on the per capita figures for Pollock Halls.

Action – GC to follow up with KF on presenting on UoE waste systems, to give clarity on the issue.

10 Travel & Transport Quarterly Report

The Travel & Transport Manager gave an overview of activities throughout 2018-19. A key focus had been provision of fair and equitable bus services between campuses. Peter Brett Associates were contracted to support the review, looking at bus operations, free shuttle bus provision, ticketing options, and how other institutions approached the issue. PBA recommended replacing the KB shuttle with a more equitable and environmentally friendly offer, diverting funding to support a discounted student Lothian Bus Ridacard, a low price student offer for the Just Eat cycle hire scheme, and improvement of the travel offer to Easter Bush. University Executive accepted the recommendations in May. As implementation from September 2019 was not feasible, the changes were deferred to September 2020.

The number of Just Eat cycle passes sold to date was relatively low and discussions were ongoing on how to improve communications around the scheme. Usage rates had changed dramatically, with 70% of all journeys in the city being carried out with the University pass. Figures were difficult to compare with the equivalent this time last year, as the scheme had just launched. The most popular routes were all between University sites, with Bristo Square consistently featuring in the top two. There were some challenges and concerns about the long term viability of the scheme, in the absence of Council funding, and with rates of vandalism increasing. Just Eat would produce a University-specific report. The UoE Travel Survey, carried out every two years, would be issued to all staff and students in late October, including opportunities to feed back on bus options and the Just Eat cycle scheme.

Action – MB to follow up with the SRS Communications Manager on promoting student travel deals.

More than half of Estates' fleet were now electric vehicles, with replacements been done as terms of existing vehicles came up. The focus was now on transitioning the wider University fleet, though the technology for larger vans was lacking. ACE were aiming to have an all-electric fleet by Christmas 2019.

Members welcomed the report, in particular measures to improve cycle safety, and felt that more progress was needed to improve cycle safety on access routes to Easter Bush.