



Community Board Quarterly Meeting

Wednesday 24 April, 2.05-4pm

Argyle House Meeting Room 14

Chair: Gemma Gourlay, Head of Social Impact, Department of Social Responsibility & Sustainability (in place of Dave Gorman)

Attending:

Sarah Anderson, Senior Community Engagement Manager, Social Responsibility and Sustainability
Patricia Erskine, Head of Stakeholder Relations, College Office (College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences)

Ian Fyfe, Senior Lecturer, Moray House School of Education and Sport

Dave Gorman, Director of Social Responsibility and Sustainability

Jessica Hume, Widening Participation Manager

Rebecca Jones, Director of Alumni Relations, Development & Alumni

Alma Kalina Riessler, Vice President Community, Edinburgh University Students' Association

Anne-Sofie Laegran, Head of Research Impact, Edinburgh Research Office

Hazel Lambert, Head of Communications, Marketing & Engagement, College of Medicine & Veterinary Medicine

Jacky MacBeath, Head of Museums, Heritage Collections (Access & Engagement)

Derek MacLeod, Head of Global Partnerships, Edinburgh Global

Lynn McMath, Deputy Director, Stakeholder Relations, Communications and Marketing

James Mooney, Director of Open Studies, Centre for Open Learning

Cameron Ritchie, Depute Director and Head of Operations, University Sport and Exercise

Sean Smith, Director of the Centre for Future Infrastructure, College of Science and Engineering

Zoe Stephens, Director of Estates Business Services, Estates Management Group

Stuart Tooley, Head of Public Affairs, Communications and Marketing

Apologies:

Bridie Ashrowan, Chief Executive, Edinburgh Voluntary Organisations' Council (EVOC)

Rachel Bowen, Head of Engagement, College of Science and Engineering

Eppy Harries-Pugh, Communications Manager, Social Responsibility and Sustainability

Lesley McAra, Assistant Principal Community Relations and Director of Institute of Advanced Studies in the Humanities

In Attendance:

Sophia Blum, Social Impact Evaluation Intern, Social Responsibility and Sustainability

Denise Nesbitt, Director of Talent and Development, Human Resources

Eve Redhead, Communications Coordinator, Social Responsibility and Sustainability

Petra Renman, Community Engagement Projects Coordinator, Social Responsibility and Sustainability

Cat Rossiter, Communications Manager, Social Responsibility and Sustainability

Agenda

	Time	Item	Paper
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			(closed/ open)
1.	2.05pm	Approval of meeting minute of 7 February 2024 (Gemma Gourlay)	A
2.	2.10pm	Matters Arising, not otherwise covered in the agenda (Gemma Gourlay) - Housing Summit (Lynn McMath)	-
3.	2.15pm	Update on University youth employment activities (Denise Nesbitt)	-
4.	2.40pm	Research Engagement and Impact team's support for public and policy engagement in Research and Innovation Strategy 2030 (Anne Sofie Laegran)	B
5.	3.00pm	Comfort break	-
6.	3.10pm	Stories of positive impact from the University's socially-positive investments and the new University Responsible Social Investment Policy (Cat Rossiter, Dave Gorman)	-
7.	3.30pm	Edinburgh Futures Institute (EFI) community engagement update (Patricia Erskine)	Verbal
8.	3.45pm	Community Team update, including communications update on Community Plan report (Stuart Tooley, Sarah Anderson)	C
9.	3.50pm	Brief update on Community Plan refresh process, including proposed summer workshop for Community Board (Sarah Anderson)	-
10.	3.55pm	AOB	-
11.	4.00pm	Meeting close	-

MINUTE OF A MEETING of the Community Board held in ECCI Conference Room and via MS Teams on Wednesday 7 February 2024, 11am-1pm.

Present: Sarah Anderson, Senior Community Engagement Manager, Social Responsibility and Sustainability
Bridie Ashrowan, Chief Executive, Edinburgh Voluntary Organisations' Council (EVOG)
Gemma Gourlay, Head of Social Impact, Department of Social Responsibility & Sustainability
Eppy Harries-Pugh, Communications Manager, Social Responsibility and Sustainability
Jessica Hume, Widening Participation Manager
Anne-Sofie Laegran, Head of Research Impact, Edinburgh Research Office
Hazel Lambert, Head of Communications, Marketing & Engagement, College of Medicine & Veterinary Medicine
Derek MacLeod, Head of Global Partnerships, Edinburgh Global
Lesley McAra, Assistant Principal Community Relations and Director of Institute of Advanced Studies in the Humanities
Lynn McMath, Deputy Director, Stakeholder Relations, Communications and Marketing
James Mooney, Director of Open Studies, Centre for Open Learning
Cameron Ritchie, Depute Director and Head of Operations, University Sport and Exercise
Sean Smith, Director of the Centre for Future Infrastructure, College of Science and Engineering
Zoe Stephens, Director of Estates Business Services, Estates Management Group

In attendance: Sophia Blum, Social Impact Evaluation Intern (Employ.ed), Social Responsibility and Sustainability
Scott Quinn, Edinburgh University Students' Association
Petra Renman, Community Engagement Projects Coordinator (minute)

Apologies: Patricia Erskine, Head of Stakeholder Relations, College Office (College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences)
Ian Fyfe, Senior Lecturer, Moray House School of Education and Sport
Rebecca Jones, Director of Alumni Relations, Development & Alumni
Alma Kalina Riessler, Vice President Community, Edinburgh University Students' Association
Jacky MacBeath, Head of Museums, Heritage Collections (Access & Engagement)
Stuart Tooley, Head of Public Affairs, Communications and Marketing

1 Approval of meeting minute of 26 April 2023

A

The Community Board minute of 26 April 2023 was approved.

2 Matters Arising, not otherwise covered in the agenda

No matters arising.

3 Timeline for Community Plan refresh process

B

Sarah Anderson, Senior Community Engagement Manager, Social Responsibility and Sustainability presented paper B, which details the timeline for the refresh of the 2025-2030 Community Plan.

Additional points raised and discussed:

- How to specifically target schools and colleges, and also how to link the Community Plan with the new Research Policy so that they add value to each other. It was suggested that the draft be presented at research committees and the Curriculum Transformation Board. It was also noted that learners of short courses are a key group that are missing from the current group of stakeholders, as these are not usually students but often members of the local community.
- There might be an opportunity to use surveys. However, it may be preferential to create a baseline public survey, which can then be used to measure progress against, rather than a consultative survey. Informal surveys can be done over social media and the Newsletter. It was also suggested that the opening of Edinburgh Futures Institute may be a good opportunity for brief surveys.
- There may be opportunities to collaborate with the City Deal team and to liaise with the Edinburgh Community Planning Partnership.
- The Head of Research Impact, Edinburgh Research Office, highlighted that there is a lot of appetite for local research and engagement, and supported the suggestion to reach out to research committees. The Edinburgh Community Engagement Forum and the Participatory Research Group convened by ERO were suggested as suitable opportunities for engagement.
- The importance of considering the needs of local primary and secondary schools was also highly emphasised.

4 Update on: (1) Impact Accelerator Account Strategic Partnerships Net Zero Project with City of Edinburgh Council and (2) Regional Net Zero Accelerator Hub Proposal

Sean Smith, Director of the Centre for Future Infrastructure, College of Science and Engineering provided a verbal update on the Net Zero Project and the Net Zero Accelerator Hub proposal.

Additional points raised and discussed:

- It was suggested that Jamie Brogan be invited to present at the Board to give an update on work taking place at the ECCI.
- SS confirmed that the Project and Proposal will be presented to the Net Zero Programme Board.
- There was a discussion around whether there's an opportunity to link into the Community Plan, for example by linking the skills shortage challenge to social enterprises and community building initiatives.

5 Break

6 Community Planning Transformation

Bridie Ashrowan, Chief Executive, Edinburgh Voluntary Organisations' Council (EVOC) gave a verbal presentation on the Community Planning Transformation process. Previously there has not been a clear governance structure, but more of an agile approach, which has resulted in some key issues not being discussed from a Community Planning point of view.

Additional points raised and discussed:

- The University is hosting a Housing Summit at the end of February, for solution-focused round-table discussions with groups from diverse areas on various issues around the housing crisis.
- A discussion around four-University (and wider community) approach to city-wide issues followed.

7 Community Plan year three report

Gemma Gourlay, Head of Social Impact, Department of Social Responsibility & Sustainability, gave a verbal presentation on the Community Plan Year Three Report. The

report recognises the areas where good progress has been made, and areas where more work is needed. The reporting has been done in engagement with community grantees and other stakeholders, and has provided an opportunity to engage with stakeholders ahead of the Community Plan refresh. The Community Plan Report video was presented.

Additional points raised and discussed:

- Eppy Harries-Pugh, Communications Manager, Social Responsibility and Sustainability confirmed that as a result of filming material for the video, Simon Community Scotland was able to use some of the footage to create their own video. This will be shared when finalised.
- The Report and video will be shared more widely when fully finalised.
- It was confirmed that the Year Four Report will be a more light-touch data collection.

8 Community Team Update, including Communications

Eppy Harries-Pugh, Communications Manager, Social Responsibility and Sustainability presented paper C. It was confirmed that there will be a communications push for the Community Plan Year Three report at the end of February, and another push for the Community Access to Rooms scheme later on in the spring.

Additional points raised and discussed:

- Lynn McMath, Deputy Director, Stakeholder Relations, Communications and Marketing noted that the Economic Impact Report event was successful, and the report received positive reactions, especially among internal stakeholders.

9 Brief feedback from Sustainability, Civic and Social Responsibility Committee on Community Access to Rooms and Community Plan refresh

Sarah Anderson, Senior Community Engagement Manager, Social Responsibility and Sustainability provided a verbal presentation. Due to the success of the Community Access to Rooms pilot, University Executive has approved the project to continue as business as usual. It was also confirmed that the previous requirement for a connection to the University has now been removed. The Board was asked to share communications around this when the communications push starts.

10 AOB

None to report.



COMMUNITY BOARD

24 April

Research and Innovation Strategy 2030 – commitments to engaging with communities through research.

Author and presenter: Dr Anne Sofie Laegran, Head of Research Impact, Edinburgh Research Office

Description of paper

This paper outlines the commitment the University has given to engaging communities with our research as part of the Research and Innovation Strategy 2030, and how the Research Engagement and Impact Team is responding to deliver on this and support for public engagement more widely.

Action requested

The board is invited to reflect and comment on this, in particular in the context of the Community Plan refresh.

Background and context

The Research and Innovation Strategy 2030 was agreed by University Court following an 18 months long process of engagement and consultation with the research community, led by the VP Research and Enterprise Christin Boswell. It was launched at the end of January 2024. It is available in [full](#) and as an [executive summary](#) on the University [Research and Innovation](#) webpage, and with a further document on our more detailed priorities for university colleagues on [SharePoint](#)





The Strategy is informed by three main developments. First is the increasingly central role of universities in driving innovation and growth in our local regions, and in unlocking solutions to global challenges. Second is the growing awareness across the sector of the need for more inclusive research environments that allow all of our research community to realise their potential. Third is the evolving funding environment, which requires us to continually adapt our focus to ensure we have the resources to enable outstanding research. Our strategy will equip us to tackle these challenges and opportunities over the next seven years, across three main areas Research, Engagement and Environment.

As the figure above shows, “Public & Policy” features as one of three strands under Engagement. The section is introduced with *We are dedicated to ensuring our research and innovation fully engages with and improves the lives of individuals and communities – whether in Edinburgh and our region, across Scotland the UK, or through our many international projects and partnerships.*

The paragraph on public engagement reads:

*Through our **Public Engagement**, we engage with people to gauge new perspectives, understand lived experience, build trust in new technologies, and collaborate and co-create research. We do this through consultation and co-design with patient and community groups, exhibitions and events, engaging with schools, and building trusted relationships with a range of professional and broker organisations. We have experience of a wide range of methods of community engagement and co-production across the University, and are committed to harnessing this to inspire and inform our research and engagement.*

Our location in Edinburgh is central to our engagement with the creative arts. We have forged key partnerships with the city’s festivals, museums, exhibition spaces and performing arts institutions. Edinburgh Futures Institute will act as a crucial convenor and hub for these flourishing relationships, ensuring continual innovation in the design of public engagement activities. We are committed to ensuring our engagement with communities is never extractive, but always brings clear benefit to our partners, beyond their immediate engagement. We are especially focused on extending our engagement to social and economic groups currently under-represented in engagement with the University.

Our engagement with Industry and with Policy does of course also contribute to our community, but is perhaps not as directly relevant to the Community Board so it is not extracted here. However, I encourage Community Board members to read those, as well as the other sections of the strategy from the links above.

Implementing the R&I strategy

The implementation of the R&I strategy is a whole University effort, as also illustrated in the table below. There are five commitments in the section on Policy and Public Engagement. The table shows these, along with alignment to other strategies and plans, new projects and initiatives and who across the university is responsible/involved with delivery.



2. Priorities for Engagement	Strategic Alignment	Projects & Initiatives	Areas of Responsibility							
			ERO	EI	Colleges	HR	Global	DDI	Schools	SRS
2.2 Public & Policy Engagement										
2.2.1 Strengthen and forge strategic partnerships with key organisations and groups	Research Engagement and Impact Plan	New University-level Research Engagement and Impact Team	●		●				●	●
2.2.2 Build on relationships nurtured through the City Deal to deliver the Regional Prosperity Framework	DDI Programme	Regional Prosperity Framework						●		
2.2.3 Support methods for public and community engagement	Research Engagement and Impact Plan	New University-level Research Engagement and Impact Team	●		●				●	
2.2.4 Amplify our policy impact through ensuring specialised support for researchers	Research Engagement and Impact Plan	New University-level Policy Engagement with Research Manager Post Developing Data for Policy Hub within Regional Prosperity Framework	●					●		
2.2.5 Engage with the creative sector to help them harness data-driven technologies	DDI Programme	EFI activity		●				●		

The new Research Engagement and Impact Team (REIT) is featured under most of the commitments under public and policy engagement, although the DDI Programme and EFI have specific responsibilities in for the City Deal and creative sector commitments. All commitments are to be delivered in partnership with professional and academic colleagues in Colleges and Schools as well as other professional services units (all are not mentioned here).

The REI team was established in the autumn 2023 following strategic investment from our uplift in Research Excellence Grant (REG) based on our excellent REF 2021 performance. It funds 6 new roles to lead and support research impact across UoE: Head of Research Impact, three College facing Research Impact Managers, one Policy engagement with Research Manager and one Research Engagement and impact administrator. These come in addition to three previously existing posts; Research Engagement and Impact coordinator, Public Engagement with Research Manager and Public Engagement administrator (0.7FTE). In addition, in December 2023, Senior Leadership approved a new post initially funded through REG to support Public Patient Involvement and Engagement from August 2024. This post will sit within the PPIE team in CMVM, but work across the University, in particular to support PPIE in relation to health technologies research.

The Research Engagement and Impact Team works to priorities beyond what is covered by the R&I strategy, including developing a culture in which impact is rewarded and supported, delivering the University’s curated programme during the Science Festival and the Cabaret of Dangerous Ideas at Festival Fringe, the ESRC Impact Acceleration Account and preparation for the engagement and impact part of REF. These are outlined in the Research and Engagement Plan referred to in the table above. A summary is provided in Annex 1.

The following is an adaptation of the section Enabling public engagement and involvement with our research of the plan:

The *Enabling outstanding impact* review from 2023 noted that support for public engagement with research is patchy across UoE. The 1.7FTE resource in ERO play a key role in bringing together colleagues across College Schools, Institutes, Library & Collections, CAM and SRS to share good practice and coordinate initiatives.



To that end, and based on requests from academic colleagues, we have initiated a new academic driven network on **participatory research** to share learning, identify and remove barriers for involving members of the public actively in research. We have more than 80 colleagues already signed up for the network, who all have contributed to the shape of this work. Two “coffee morning” events are scheduled for spring 2024, with a launch event 4th June.

In direct response to the R&I Strategy 2030 commitment on **methods for public engagement**, we are also creating a curated hub of resources developed with the new citizen science post in the Library and an RA based in the School of Health in Social Science who has experience from this type of work. The hub will be launched later this spring and include guidance and best practice papers along with some academic papers focusing on methods of engagement.

The team also runs the **Edinburgh Public Engagement Forum** for colleagues supporting public engagement. These are mainly public engagement professionals based in Schools or centres, but also some academic leads for public engagement. The forum meets quarterly to share good practice and update each other on developments. Many of the members are also members of the Research Impact Network of professionals across the university, and involved with the Scottish Public Engagement Network.

We will make sure the new post on Public Patient Involvement and Engagement (appointment expected by August 2024) is integrated in the wider network of engagement professionals as there are clear synergies to be drawn from that specialist engagement with the public in health research to involving the public in research in other disciplines. For example, the PPIE team in CMVM has worked with Finance to create guidance on when and how to pay or compensate participants for their time which should be consistent across the University.

The REI team will continue the success in engaging the public through innovative high quality events during the Edinburgh Science Festival (2414 people engaged through drop-ins, events and walking tours, plus 2163 unique sign-ins for self guided tours in 2023), the Cabaret of Dangerous Ideas during the Fringe (1863 tickets sold for 47 shows) and the ESRC Festival of Social Science (13 events in Oct/Nov). Beyond the benefits of sharing research with the public, researchers report that preparing for and participating in these events develop skills and confidence in communication that also benefit other areas of academic practice.

We will work with IAD to review current training on offer for public engagement in Spring 2024. This will also include provision locally. The aim will be to develop a streamlined programme of training events and resources from 2024-25.

The above has hopefully given a flavour of REI team priorities in supporting the commitments in R&I Strategy 2030, and support public engagement with research broadly. It should be stressed that all activities are done in partnership with academic and professional colleagues across the university. I believe these overall commitments and activities put us in a good place to define more specific commitments around place based research as part of the renewal of the University’s Community plan. This should be in part about highlighting good work that already takes place by colleagues in centres and projects dedicated to this work. In setting new commitments we should be aware of resource implications, both ensuring we have academic colleagues with interest and capacity to deliver, and appropriate professional services support where this is required.



Annex 1. Table of priorities for Research Engagement and Impact Team 2023-24

Research Engagement and Impact Team Priorities	Partnership	Time
Strengthening our engagement and impact culture		
Lead on the conceptualisation, organisation and delivery of an annual celebrating impact festival including running a prize competition	EI, CAM, College, School	23-24-> Annually
Conduct review of barriers to EDI in impact among academic staff	EI (IAA)	23-24
Promote online Research Impact course and deliver sessions on developing and demonstrating impact for researchers	IAD, College, School	Spring 24->
Deliver training on REF impact for professional services including EI	EI, School	Spring 24->
Review and improve web based presentation of engagement and impact support and resources	ERO, consultant	23-24
Enhancing the influence of our research on public policy		
Maximise opportunities for policy influence with local, Scottish and UK policy through UPEN, SPRE, Policy Wise and targeted engagement	CAM, DDI	Continuous
Scope needs for training in policy engagement for researchers and develop programme for delivery from 24-25	College, School	Spring 24->
Enhance capacity for supporting policy engagement with research through a network of communication and engagement professionals	CAM, College, School	23-24 ->
Deliver on ESRC investments in two posts: Climate Change Scrutiny with Scottish Parliament	ESRC, Partner institutions	Nov 23-25
Enabling public engagement and involvement with our research		
Contribute to refresh of the Community Plan including commitment on placebased research with local community	SRD, CAM	Spring 24->
Convene Participatory Research Network	Academic ideas group	23-24 ->
Curate hub of guidance and methods for participatory research	Library, RA	23-24
Review existing learning and development provision in public engagement and refresh offer from 24-25 onwards	IAD, College, School	Spring 24->
Deliver the University's programme for Edinburgh Science Festival, Cabaret of Dangerous Ideas and ESRC Festival of Social Science	CAM, Festivals Office, College, School	Continuous
Developing and demonstrating impact from our research		
Fund projects through Strategic Impact Fund (through Colleges), the ESRC and Harmonised IAA	EI, College	Continuous
Contribute expertise in impact development to strategic funding bids	ERO, College	Continuous
With Schools, identify prospects for REF2028 case studies and advise on how to maximise potential for and evidence impact	College, School	Spring 24->
With College, REF Team and REF Board, develop process for review of REF impact case studies as part of wider REF plan.	College, School	Spring 24->



COMMUNITY BOARD

24 April 2024

Community Team and communications update

Description of paper

1. This paper is a regular update on the activity of the Community Team since the last routine Board meeting on 7 February 2024.

Action requested/Recommendation

2. No action is requested as this paper is for information.

Background and context

3. The Community Team is a small group of staff who hold community-related roles in the Department for Social Responsibility and Sustainability (SRS) and Communications and Marketing (CaM). Team members are line-managed and their roles and operational budgets financed by their respective departments; most also work on areas other than community. The Community Team help to deliver the Community Plan, including several commitments where they have full responsibility.

4. Managers within the Community Team (Sarah Anderson, Stuart Tooley, Gemma Gourlay, Lynn McMath) are members of the Community Board, along with SRS Communications Manager Eppy Harries-Pugh.

5. The Community Team provide a short regular update to each Board meeting. This includes updates on the implementation plan and changes in RAG (Red, Amber, Green) status.

Discussion

6. Membership of the Community Team is changing. Jenna Bogan is coming to the end of her Modern Apprenticeship with the Team, with a new role secured from May. A new grade 7 open-ended post, Social Impact Manager, has been successfully filled; the staff member starts in post on 10 June 2024.

7. Round 14 of the University's community grant scheme is currently underway. Group information sessions for applicants are being run for the first time and are proving popular: 61 people registered, with 33 attending. The number of individual phone and email inquiries has felt more manageable for the Community Team this round, and this may be connected to the group sessions meeting the same need.

8. A one-off round of Midlothian STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) grants will run in May 2024. This will disburse £15,000 for projects creating positive social impact for people living in Midlothian using STEM activities. Most funds were donated to the University when the Midlothian Science Festival was wound up.

9. Demand for micro-grants is a higher this academic year, with 45 applications received between August 2023 and April 2024, compared to 38 received during the whole of the 22/23 academic year. Micro-grant funds have been increased from local operational budget, but we still anticipate a lower success rate for 23/24 versus 22/23.

10. The annual report on year 3 of the Community Plan's implementation was published at the end of February 2024. Video and print versions were produced to mark this halfway milestone in the Plan's implementation. The video has been particularly successful. Print versions have been sent to all members of the University's Executive. Communication of the report has leveraged follow-up conversations that are informing the Community Plan refresh, including a presentation to the Centre for Sport and Exercise. Planning for year 4 reporting will commence shortly to ensure coordination with the Community Plan refresh.

11. Wider internal and external engagement and consultation to create the 2025-30 University Community Plan is well underway. Student engagement has been a priority since the Board last met, with three workshops being held at BioQuarter, King's Buildings and the central area respectively. The student workshops were targeted to students who are already engaging with communities either via their degree or through extracurricular activities like societies. The Students' Association and Department for Social Responsibility and Sustainability assisted with promotion, as did College communications contacts and some course organisers. Uptake was low (11 attendees total out of 26 registered), even with a pizza incentive, but this was expected. The sessions generated very useful content and some stories of existing success we were unaware of.

12. Looking to the near future of the Community Plan refresh, planning for Meadows Festival activity (dream jars inspired by Roald Dahl's BFG; hanging wishes as leaves on a tree) is well underway and an initial intention to work together with EVOC (Edinburgh Voluntary Organisations' Council) on their place-based networks has been set. The Community Team has also set the intention to run another dialogue session in the autumn of 2024, inviting local external community members, as this method was fruitful when developing the current Community Plan. A session for University Court may now take place in late September 2024 but other items may take priority on the agenda. Either way, the intention is to take the definitive version of the new Plan to Court in summer 2025.

13. It has been possible to obtain good engagement from the Sustainability, Civic and Social Responsibility Committee in the refresh process. An updated version of the refresh paper brought to the February Community Board was brought to the April 2024 meeting of the Sustainability, Civic and Social Responsibility Committee and helpful

advice was given. The refresh will be brought back to the Committee in autumn 2024 to test ideas being considered for inclusion in the new Plan.

14. A workshop for the Community Board has been put in diaries for 31st July. The suggested format for this is for the Community Team to present to the Board what has been learned through consultation by that point. There will then be ample time for the Board to feed back.

15. [Gaelic Week 2024](#) took place in February 2024. The University partners with City of Edinburgh Council to run this festival each year. Twenty-five events took place across twenty venues across the city. A challenge for student engagement is that the festival necessarily takes place during the University's reading week, but it was still possible to run events with the Edinburgh University Students' Association and the University's student Highland Society.

16. The University is [currently consulting to develop its next Gaelic Plan](#). Several of the proposed commitments relate to building ties with local community organisations. Stakeholder relations colleagues, including the University's Gaelic Officer, are leading this process. The consultation closes 30 April 2024.

17. A [promotional push](#) for the Community Access to Rooms project started this week. A press release has been issued and user-facing web materials simplified. A long-form video and article for Edinburgh Impact were launched this week and should help build internal awareness of the scheme's benefits. Edinburgh Local channels are leading with shorter video content designed to drive more booking requests. A further promotional push is planned for September 2024.

18. The University is [currently consulting to create its next BSL \(British Sign Language\) Plan](#). Stakeholder relations colleagues in the Community Team are helping to facilitate this as members of the public are one audience the Plan aims to reach. The process is being led by a group of interested University staff as the University does not currently have a dedicated BSL Officer. The consultation closes 19 April 2024.

19. The first [Alwaleed Centre community grant](#) round has now closed. This is being run by Nadin Akta with advice from the Community Team. Two awards have been made.

20. Community grant information has been updated on the University's Strategic Performance Framework dashboard against [indicator 14, social impact](#).

21. The Community Team were also involved in helping to organise a housing summit in February 2024, chaired by Prof McAra. This brought together 50 stakeholders from across the city and housing sectors, including leading councillors, to discuss the housing crisis. Follow-ups are continuing including engaging with the Scottish Government.

22. New Estates developments including the purchase of student accommodation in Gorgie and the redevelopment of Darwin Tower at The King's Buildings have meant the Community Team are working with local communities to ensure that local stakeholders and neighbours are properly informed and consulted where appropriate. This has seen an uptick in required resources in recent months. There has also been an early conversation about possible procurement community benefits regarding the Darwin Tower's redevelopment.

23. Changes in RAG (Red, Amber, Green) status on the Community Plan's implementation tracker since the 7 February meeting are:

- Commitment 1, social impact pledges: Downgraded to amber as next pledges need to be made.
- Commitment 2, support for social enterprises, social investment: Downgraded to amber with respect to student social enterprises only, as recent conversations indicate that likely longevity is a challenge to generating levels of student social enterprise activity that would be in line with previous University ambitions.
- Commitment 10, student volunteering: Upgraded to green as the final technical work needed to automate the student volunteering database is now assured to take place.

Communications (February-April 2024)

24. In advance of the current promotional push, SRS communications colleagues have ensured that the [Community Access to Rooms webpage](#) has been updated to serve as a central hub for information in a more accessible format. Since February, the project has had ongoing presence in internal newsletters and the project was featured in the Community Plan mid-way report, video, and associated communications. SRS communications colleagues worked closely with Communications and Marketing to produce a video and article for [Edinburgh Impact](#). A print flyer has been created and circulated to libraries in the City of Edinburgh. The April 2024 press release and corporate web story have been coordinated with the University Press Office and STV, with the that the latter will pick up the story. Launching the promotional push in the week commencing 15 April 2024 was strategically scheduled after the teaching break and aligning with the press schedule in Communications and Marketing. The Community Engagement Projects Coordinator is monitoring interest to evaluate whether these communications are having the intended impact.

25. Evaluation of communications on the year 3 report on the Community Plan indicates that public audiences got enough of a taste of the work from the video, so did not need to visit the website. The video had a very impressive performance on Instagram. The case studies on the web will still have important internal use. Many pieces of positive feedback have been received internally, and some from external people. Social media figures have matched or exceeded the launch of the Community Plan: 14,932 accounts were reached on Instagram (6,437 for the Launch of the Community Plan). For the first time, the report was posted on LinkedIn with good result: 2,322 video views, 65 likes/reactions, 16 reposts on video, similar for PDF (video received more

reactions/impressions; PDF got more clicks/engagement). Performance was lower on X and Facebook, which was expected given the platforms. Amplification from the University's main social corporate social media account has been beneficial.

26. The SRS communications team has supported both the current community grant round and the Alwaleed community grants. Print promotion has been done for the former, along with a reel, promoted post and newsletter.

27. The SRS communications team has also been working with Human Resources and Internal Communications colleagues to develop communications around the Modern Apprentice programme. The aim of this campaign is to attract for hiring managers to recruit young people through this scheme. The campaign will involve a video, plus an email to line managers and heads of schools.

28. For social investment, the SRS communications team capitalised on the March 2024 Prosper Social Finance event by taking a broad selection of photos and publishing a Q&A style post on The Seed; the latter received excellent engagement on LinkedIn (nearly 6,000 impressions and a 9.5% engagement rate). SRS Communications Manager Cat Rossiter presented to Edinburgh Innovations' business advisors on the University's Social Investment Fund with a view to supporting Edinburgh Innovations to boost University social entrepreneurship. A press release and an article highlighting the local impact of the Social Investment Fund to date are planned.

29. General social media updates for Edinburgh Local accounts are:

- Instagram: 3.87% growth rate, with 5 reels and 18 tile posts since February 2024. Best performing posts have been on the Community Plan, Gaelic Week, Edinburgh's Chinese New Year Bilingual Ceilidh 2024, and the reel for the opening of the current community grant round (latter had reach of 451 and 480 views).
- X: 3.30% growth rate.
- Facebook (last 28 days): 400 post reach with 32 post engagements.

30. Looking ahead, the communications plan for social impact (via Edinburgh Local channels) is to push out case studies monthly, with videos. The aim is to post more interactive stories on Instagram and to do more collaborative posts, as these do well.

31. Time has been spent aligning the work of the Edinburgh Local and SRS social media teams to ensure continuity of progress in future months.

Resource implications

32. N/A as this is an update.

Risk Management

33. N/A as this is an update.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

34. The work of the Community Team particularly contributes to the following Sustainable Development Goals:



Equality & Diversity

35. N/A as this is an update.

Next steps/implications

36. N/A as this is an update.

Consultation

37. This paper was written in consultation with the Community Team.

Further information

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38. Open.