



Community Board Quarterly Meeting

Wednesday 7 February 2024, 11am-1pm

The Conference Room, Edinburgh Centre for Carbon Innovation (ECCI), High School Yards

Chair: Dave Gorman, Director of Social Responsibility and Sustainability

Attending:

Sarah Anderson, Senior Community Engagement Manager, Social Responsibility and Sustainability

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

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

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

Rebecca Jones, Director of Alumni Relations, Development & Alumni

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

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

Derek MacLeod, Head of Global Partnerships, Edinburgh Global

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

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

Stuart Tooley, Head of Public Affairs, Communications and Marketing

Apologies:

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

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

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, Social Responsibility and Sustainability

Agenda

	Time	Item	Paper (closed/ open)
1.	11.00am	Approval of meeting minute of 26 April 2023 (Dave Gorman)	A

2.	11.05am	Matters Arising, not otherwise covered in the agenda (Dave Gorman)	-
3.	11.15am	Timeline for Community Plan refresh process (Gemma Gourlay, Sarah Anderson)	B
4.	11.35am	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)	Verbal
5.	11.55am	Lunch break (lunch provided)	-
6.	12.05pm	Community planning transformation (Bridie Ashrowan)	Verbal
7.	12.25pm	Community Plan year three report (Gemma Gourlay)	Presentation
7.	12.45pm	Community Team update, including Communications (Eppy Harries-Pugh, Stuart Tooley, Sarah Anderson)	C
8.	12.50pm	Brief feedback from Sustainability, Civic and Social Responsibility Committee on Community Access to Rooms and Community Plan refresh (Sarah Anderson)	Verbal
9.	12.55pm	AOB	-
10.	1.00pm	Meeting close	-

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

MINUTE OF A MEETING of the Community Board held in Meeting Room 14, Argyle House and via MS Teams on Wednesday 26 April 2023.

- Present:** Gemma Gourlay, Head of Social Impact, Department for Social Responsibility & Sustainability (GG) (Chair)
 Sarah Anderson, Senior Community Engagement Manager, Department for Social Responsibility & Sustainability (SA)
 Bridie Ashrowan, Chief Executive, Edinburgh Voluntary Organisations' Council (BA)
 Patricia Erskine, Head of Stakeholder Relations, College Office. College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (PE)
 Ian Fyfe, Senior Lecturer, Institute for Education, Community and Society, Moray House School of Education and Sport (IF)
 Eppy Harries-Pugh, Communications Manager, Department for Social Responsibility & Sustainability (EHP)
 Hazel Lambert, Head of Communications, Marketing & Engagement, College of Medicine & Veterinary Medicine (HL)
 Derek MacLeod, Head of Global Partnerships and Community, Edinburgh Global (DMcL)
 Lesley McAra, Assistant Principal Community Relations and Director of Institute of Advanced Studies in the Humanities (LMcA)
 Lynn McMath, Deputy Director, Stakeholder Relations, Communications and Marketing (LMcM)
 Pat Reid, Widening Participation Manager, Student Recruitment and Admissions
 Sean Smith, Director of the Centre for Future Infrastructure, Institute for Infrastructure and Environment (SS)
 Zoe Stephens, Head of Organisational Development and Change, Estates Management Group (ZS)
 Stuart Tooley, Community Relations Manager, Communications and Marketing (ST)
- In attendance:** Kristy Docherty, Sector Engagement Manager (Public Services), Edinburgh Futures Institute
- Apologies:** Jacky MacBeath, Head of Heritage Collections (Access & Engagement), Library & University Collections, ISG (JMcb)
 Dave Gorman, Director of Social Responsibility and Sustainability (DG)
 Anne Sofie Laegran, Head of Knowledge Exchange and Impact, Edinburgh Research Office
 James Mooney, Director of Open Studies, Centre for Open Learning
 Cameron Ritchie, Depute Director and Head of Operations, University Sport and Exercise (CR)
 Isi Williams, EUSA VP Community (IW)

1 Approval of meeting minute of 8 February 2023

The Community Board minute of 8 February 2023 was approved.

2 Matters Arising, not otherwise covered in the agenda

Katrina Castle, Head of Strategic Partnerships and Transitions, Student Recruitment and Admissions has stepped down from the Community Board due to a change in her role. Katrina was thanked for her contribution to the Board over several years. Pat Reid was welcomed onto the Board as Katrina's replacement.

Update on actions from last meeting:

- Action 5(1), Dec 2022: Details of University staff with possible interest in Community Wealth Building now passed to Bridie Ashrowan (LM).
- Action 5(2), Dec 2022: Community Wealth Building has brought to the attention of Kim Graham, Provost of the University of Edinburgh (GG).
- Action 6(1), Dec 2022: Senior University ownership of the University's Cost of Living Working Group and travel vouchers for staff have been raised at the Working Group (LM).
- Action 5, Feb 2023: Coordinated internal and external communications for the University's 2022 Community Plan report are well underway (EHP, BA, ST).
- Action 9, Feb 2023: Planning of the University's response to community need in light of potential local authority budget cuts will be brought to a future meeting of the University's Cost of Living Working Group (IF).

3 Public service at the Edinburgh Futures Institute

Kristy Docherty, Sector Engagement Manager (Public Services) at Edinburgh Futures Institute (EFI), gave a presentation on her research and current work. Kristy's background in private sector renewables led to research on the role of collaboration in leadership in order to solve 'wicked' problems. Kristy's work with EFI is initiating the physical co-location of Police Scotland and Public Health Scotland staff within a former hospital ward at the new EFI building on Lauriston Place. They will work on the new EFI Prevention Hub, which aims to improve the life-course trajectory of young people with intervention from pre-birth. The presentation was of great interest to the Board. Bridie Ashrowan, Chief Executive, Edinburgh Voluntary Organisations' Council, asked whether communities organised as groups would also be able to have a physical base in the new EFI building.

Action: KD, GG and SA to circulate a copy of Kristy's presentation to Board members

Action: PE explore possible EFI leadership routes for community organisations

4 College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences Social & Civic Responsibility Statement (CLOSED PAPER)

B

Patricia Erskine, Head of Stakeholder Relations, College Office. College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, gave a verbal presentation on the draft of the Statement. The statement had been updated in light of feedback from University colleagues. The Board welcomed the creation of the statement. Board members noted that governance for University Colleges' work on social responsibility and sustainability was still developing. More work is required to connect the Department for Social Responsibility and Sustainability with academic departments.

5 Community Plan reporting and refresh process

C

The Head of Social Impact and Community Team outlined some initial thoughts on the process to report on year three of the Community Plan's implementation and the process to refresh the current Plan, which expires in 2025. Board members will be asked to continue to contribute light-touch information for reporting and participate in a strategy development workshop in September 2023. Year three reporting efforts will take a more in-depth look at Community Plan commitments where notable movement is expected; this may require greater input from some Board members.

6 Standing item: report from the Cost of Living Working Group

The Cost of Living Working Group had not met since the February 2023 Community Board meeting. Lynn McMath, Deputy Director, Stakeholder Relations, Communications and Marketing provided an update on some major internal communications to students about cost of living support. University student hardship funding has been increased and wellbeing and financial advice for students is on webpages. Soft communications taking place to encourage students to think about their September 2023 accommodation options. TikTok being used as a communications channel to reach students. The Board noted that

there is potential power in the higher education sector coming together to address issues but this is encountering some challenges.

7 Highlights from community grant impact evaluation

D

Gemma Gourlay (Head of Social Impact) and Sarah Anderson (Senior Community Engagement Manager) provided a brief presentation on insights from the five year impact evaluation of the University's community grant scheme. Several areas requiring strategic decision on direction by Board. The Board suggested that the University's trustee network might help with reaching community organisations outside the City of Edinburgh. An opportunity to input into the University's London Economics report was noted.

Action: LM contact Community Team about London Economics case study

Action: SA set up separate meeting with sub-group of Board to decide future direction of some strategic scheme aspects.

8 Standing Item: Community Team and Communications update (CLOSED PAPER)

E

Stuart Tooley, Community Relations Manager, Communications and Marketing, Eppy Harries-Pugh, Communications Manager, Department for Social Responsibility and Sustainability and Sarah Anderson, Senior Community Engagement Manager in the same provided an update on their teams' community-related work since February 2023. Changes in the risk levels of successful implementation of any Community Plan commitments were noted.

Action: ST and SA update responsible names and departments on Board's implementation tracker

9 AOB

None.



COMMUNITY BOARD

7 February 2024

Timeline for Community Plan refresh process

Description of paper

1. This paper provides an overview of the proposed timeline for the remainder of the process to refresh the University's Community Plan. The output of the process is intended to be a Community Plan to cover the period 2025-30.

Action requested/Recommendation

2. The Board is asked to **provide feedback** on the approaches suggested in this paper.

Background and context

3. The University launched the current version of its Community Plan in November 2020. The plan consists of thirty-two commitments grouped under five themes. The commitments were chosen based on external consultations with communities and internal consultation with University staff and students, coupled with insights of Board members gained from their membership of various groups and committees. The current Community Plan **expires in November 2025**.

4. The Community Plan supports the Social and Civic Responsibility focus of Strategy 2030 and sits under the University's Social and Civic Responsibility Delivery Plan. The Delivery Plan is currently due to **expire in 2030**.

5. In April 2023, [a paper](#) was brought to this Board which included some initial thoughts on the refresh process. These came from the Community Team and Head of Social Impact and were, in brief summary:

- i. The **internal** (i.e., University staff and student) audience is as important as the external audience (local people who are not University staff or students) for Plan delivery that has maximum positive impact.
- ii. The current Plan **excludes** some fantastic activity with local social impact that we know is happening.
- iii. Having 32 commitments makes it hard to evaluate the **overall difference made** by the University.
- iv. Certain Sustainable Development Goals have, through the five-year community grant impact evaluation, 'risen to the top' as those implicitly targeted by the current

Community Plan. It would be good to make these explicit. **Sustainable Development Goals** are widely used across the higher education sector and beyond and seem to be future-proof.

- v. Consultation and involvement need to be purposeful and appropriate. Much information about what local communities want and need is **already in the public domain**. We should respect people's time and energy by not re-asking them questions they have already answered. At the same time, especially with respect to the internal audience, we need to **bring people along with us** so that they are invested to deliver on the 2025-30 Community Plan.
- vi. The **internal context** is changing in parallel to the refresh process: the remit and mandate of the Sustainability, Civic and Social Responsibility Committee is being evaluated; an Accommodation, Catering and Events residential strategy is also being developed.
- vii. An approach to **internal culture change**, such as a good theory of change model, may need to be created and implemented if the ambitions of a refreshed Community Plan are to be reached.

6. A number of other strategies and frameworks are also currently developing which have relevance to the Community Plan refresh process, either in terms of content or the audiences their development is targeting:

- A new University **Research and Innovation Strategy** is expected to be published before the refreshed Community Plan and is expected to refer to community and social impact activities.
- A one-off report on how the University is responding to the **Sustainable Development Goals** is anticipated to be published in 2024.
- The University's **Gaelic Plan** is due to be refreshed in 2024 and has local external audiences as part of its scope.
- A comprehensive process to create a University **climate strategy** is reaching conclusion and has involved a number of internal stakeholders also relevant for the Community Plan.
- A new University [widening participation strategy](#) has just been published; while it has a UK-wide scope, the local Scottish context remains of high importance.
- The University's [British Sign Language Plan](#) is due to be updated and this could involve stakeholders also relevant to the Community Plan.
- A [University Sustainability Framework](#) is being piloted, with the ultimate aim for wide roll-out, and it includes pertinent and editable community engagement calls-to-action; the target audience for the Framework is University staff with leadership responsibility.

7. It was [agreed](#) at the April 2021 meeting of the Community Board that **the responsibilities of the Community Board** include:

“Overseeing and drive the delivery of the Community Plan’s implementation plan, and provide strategic direction for further priorities if required.”

8. As promised in our April 2023 paper, a summer 2023 undergraduate intern was recruited and has assisted in part with designing the refresh process. Resource has been secured to retain this intern for nine hours per week until the end of July 2024. The intern is skilled in **quantitative and qualitative and participatory research methods** and has knowledge of **social policy**.

9. The University is wishing to improve its approach to reporting social impact reporting in relation to certain **rankings**, such as [QS](#) and [Times Higher](#). This work is being led by Matthew Lawson.

10. The University’s overarching strategy, **Strategy 2030**, runs until 2030 and includes the following objectives:

- We will have created opportunities for partners, friends, neighbours and supporters to co-create, engage with the world and amplify our impacts.
- We will see integrated reporting of our whole organisational impact against the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.
- Our estate will be fit for purpose, sustainable and accessible. We will support learning, research and collaboration with our neighbours, businesses and partners.
- We will see our research having a greater impact as a result of partnership, international reach and investment in emergent disciplines.

The **Social and Civic Responsibility focus** of Strategy 2030 has the following vision:

“Our vision is to make the world a better place, so we will ensure that our actions and activities deliver positive change locally, regionally and globally.”

This section directly mentions the Community Plan 2020-25 as a key vehicle to delivering the desired change.

11. The University’s **definition and evaluation of social impact** is in early stages but is developing, as in many other institutions and organisations. We can make limited predictions at this stage how the definition and evaluation may evolve.

Discussion

12. Since April 2023, the **following activity** towards the refresh process **has already taken place**, some of which has directly involved the Community Board:

- **Two workshops** with Community Team, Head of Social Impact, Deputy Director Stakeholder Relations, Assistant Principal Community and SRS Senior Implementation Manager to reflect on current version of Plan and agree key aspects of refresh process ([June notes](#); [August notes](#)).
- **Benchmarking** against strategies of other organisations ([benchmarking outputs](#)).
- **Mapping** of the University's internal 'social impact ecosystem' ([mapping](#)).
- Conversations with colleagues to **learn from the University's climate strategy refresh process** (working groups with lead members slightly in favour of proposed plan; 1:1 'warm up' of all members of approving committees).
- Desk research on **participatory research methods** ([two documents summarising](#)).
- Desk research on **types of strategy** ([summary](#)).
- Methods learning from colleagues who carried out the recent Equality, Diversity and Inclusion survey conducted across Corporate Services Group.
- 1:1 conversations with Assistant Principal Community on the topic of **citizen involvement** and mobile assertive outreach.
- **Stakeholder** mapping ([draft list](#)).
- Two **AMEC** (Association for Measurement and Evaluation of Communication) workshops with Community Team, Head of Social Impact and Deputy Director Stakeholder Relations also to develop refresh process ([output slides](#)).
- **Workshop for Community Board** facilitated by Joette Thomas of Animate Consulting ([notes](#)).
- Brief verbal presentation to **Sustainability, Civic and Social Responsibility Committee** on rough plan for refresh process.
- Follow on meeting of sub-group of Committee (Iain Gordon; Dave Gorman, Gemma Gourlay, Lynn McMath) to discuss factors to consider for refreshed Plan.
- Meeting with **University of Birmingham** about their approach to social impact.
- Meeting of University's **Social Impact working group** on Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal benefits realisation.
- Meeting with **University of Hull** about their civic engagement.

13. This initial work has enabled a thorough critical review of the current Plan and has, in turn, indicated the following for the **actual refreshed Community Plan itself**:

- Should continue as distinct Plan, but **cross-refer** to other University strategies and plans.
 - **Comment:** Potential implications also for integrated reporting.

- Must readily support reporting of local community social impact against **Sustainable Development Goals**.
- Could be **values-driven**, perhaps referring to [Strategy 2030 values](#).
 - **Comment:** The University's brand is values-based, with Strategy 2030 values distilled to six brand keywords: Ambitious; Relevant; Excellent; Inclusive; Accessible; Principled.
- Should have a **small number of clear goals, outcomes or themes** which are also broad enough to capture all of the **grass-roots positive social impact** created by University staff and students with local communities.
- Should have **measurable indicators** attached to goals or outcomes at very outset so that the vision of success is clear to all who engage with the Plan. These should be **co-created with those who have a stake in the goals or outcomes** if at all possible.
- Should aim for **whole institution delivery**, possibly with a (good) theory of change sitting alongside the public Plan to enable whole-institution potential being reached.
 - **Question:** To avoid a multiplicity of plans, could the University's new Sustainability Framework fulfil this function? Influence over the University's sixteen organisational key performance indicators may also be a possibility.
- Should **account negative as well as positive social impact**, borrowing from social audit and ethics-based public policy approaches, so that the University's net positive benefit can be understood. This realistic approach, while standard in some sectors, may be more challenging for some University colleagues and this should be factored into how the updated Plan is taken through governance approval.
- Should continue to take the **Edinburgh City Region** (City of Edinburgh; Fife; Lothians; Scottish Borders) as its scope, recognising both manageability of delivery and the scope of the [Edinburgh and South East Scotland Regional Prosperity Framework](#) which runs 2021-2041.
- Should significantly feature priorities which have been established as being of strategic importance to the regional third sector until at least 2030, e.g.:
 - [Community Wealth Building](#) (a people-centred approach to local economic development)
 - The [principle of moral imagination](#)
 - Clear articulation to the confirmed **needs of local communities**, which have altered since the last Plan was produced.
- A structured approach to citizen involvement throughout the lifecycle of the delivery of the 2025-30 Plan, such as the careful formation of a **citizen's panel**.

- Should factor in, to a greater level, **community engagement in the student curriculum** given that the implementation of Curriculum Transformation work will be emerging from 2025.
 - **Comment:** The role the Plan plays in the student experience is likely to be important in the governance approval.

14. In terms of **how the refresh process is conducted**, this initial work has established:

- **Iterative touchpoints** with internal stakeholders are needed over the next 20 months to ensure that Plan is approved and ready to launch in time.
- Internal and external stakeholders must be positively engaged with the development of the Plan. This is so that:
 - Internal stakeholders have a sense of **ownership** of the Plan, meaning they will help deliver it.
 - The Plan’s delivery has the **biggest possible positive influence**, both in terms of social impact and reputation, externally.
- While the internal audience is crucial, staff morale is very low regarding workload and some stakeholders have recently been heavily involved in development of the University’s new climate strategy. Intensive engagement **may not be the right approach** this time.
- Coordination with other University plans and strategies, both in the content of the final output and during development, is needed both for institutional embedding and **reducing the complexity of the internal strategic landscape and governance**. This is essential if someone who is not heavily invested in the agenda – most of the University’s staff and student population – is to be able to engage with its delivery.

15. The timeline for the remainder of the refresh’s engagement and involvement process is as follows:

Phase	Purpose	Activity	Date window
Active engagement and involvement of stakeholders in development	Establish mandate, build ownership and influence	Visit by University of Manchester	Early 2024
		Scoping session with CaM and SRS Director to agree working definitions of scope 'community'	
		Guided discussion with Edinburgh Community Engagement Forum	
		Start of community grantee focus groups	Spring 2024
		Suite of student consultation and involvement using methods developed with expertise of Social Impact Intern	

Phase	Purpose	Activity	Date window
		Initiate meetings with universities of Toronto, Nottingham and Helsinki and universities and colleges in Edinburgh City Region	
		Meet with Principal and Provost to test key ideas that will be in refreshed Plan	Summer 2024
		Test emerging ideas with Edinburgh Community Engagement Forum	
		Engagement with Meadows Festival attendees	
		Alternative to engagement with Craigmillar Festival attendees (2024 Festival cancelled)	
		Engagement with North Edinburgh Festival attendees	
		Engagement with Edinburgh major summer festival attendees	
		Interactive seminar for University Court	
		Second workshop for Community Board and guests	
		Possible Living Lab dissertation project (using ethical values as a framework for strategic decision-making)	
		Polling students on final ideas likely to be in Plan (avoiding Welcome Week)	
		Poll Doors Open Day attendees on final ideas	
		Update Edinburgh Community Engagement Forum on emerging ideas	
		Public survey to act as baseline for refreshed Plan's implementation measurement	
		Workshop, away day or discussion of draft refreshed Plan with SCSR Committee	TBC but taking place in 2024
Internal survey (need TBC)			
Approval	Ensure institutional acceptance and understanding; agree governance for delivery	Latest date for final version to Community Board for approval	Feb 2025
		Latest date for final version to Sustainability, Civic and Social Responsibility Committee for approval	March 2025
		Latest date for final version to University Executive for approval	April 2025

Phase	Purpose	Activity	Date window
		Latest date for final version to University Court for information	June 2025
		Communications and event planning ready for launch	July-Sep 2025
Launch	Awareness-raising, profile-building	Formal public and internal launch of refreshed Community Plan 2025-30	Wednesday 8 October 2025

Table 1: Timeline for remainder of refresh process engagement and involvement

16. The Community Team is currently giving thought to the design of individual activities listed in table 1. **Student audiences** are likely key to successful delivery of the refreshed Plan and were consulted only to a limited extent to develop the current version. Ideas generated (by our Employ.Ed intern, a current undergraduate) include:

- **Light-touch:**
 - Stall outside University libraries (using free food as incentive).
 - Consultation with student class reps – current cohort reported to be very engaged.
 - Survey: low response is a risk, but an incentive may help; could be a light-touch vote accessed via QR code on posters placed around student spaces.
 - Town hall meetings in student spaces.
- **In-depth:**
 - In-person conversations, possibly more than once and fuelled by biscuits, with specific student groups with high interest, e.g., Slurp, Edinburgh RAG, those who do community placements as part of their degree, those who have done community volunteering, international students, those who have local home addresses. These could take the form of:
 - Attending society meetings
 - Speaking with placement student cohort reps
 - Placing a survey link on the Students’ Association’s volunteering website.

17. Engagement and involvement is only one input to the Plan’s development. Desk research and what is learned through ongoing delivery of other community-related work (e.g., assertive outreach by the Centre for Homelessness and Inclusion Health and Assistant Principal Community Relations, conference attendance by Community Team, routine horizon scanning of linked cross-University work, attendance at Edinburgh Partnership Board and community council meetings) will also play a key role. Both will be maximised to avoid unnecessary consultation, engagement and involvement.

Resource implications

18. Resource, both staff time and operational budget, for the delivery of the remainder of the refresh process is in place within the Community Team, Communications and Marketing and Social Responsibility and Sustainability. Being involved with the process could impact on the time of other University staff, students and external stakeholders; care will be taken to make this manageable. It is hoped that the momentum created by the October 2023 Economic and Social Impact reception will help with hooking engagement. **The formation of a citizen's panel is not currently factored into the refresh process timeline; the resource required to create and maintain this needs to be calculated, as does ownership of the activity.**

Risk Management

19. As Strategy 2030 is in place until 2030, and the current version of the Community Plan expires in 2025, there is a risk of missed opportunity and institutional underperformance, with associated reputational damage, if a strategic approach to working with communities for 2025-30 is not designed. Staff capacity challenges have been considered as part of the refresh and reporting process planned for the next two years, with steps taken to mitigate. The risk of over-consulting or disenfranchising communities through the Plan refresh process is being mitigated through a considered approach to its design, which is starting two years out from when the refreshed Plan is required.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

20. The work of the Community Plan particularly delivers on the following Sustainable Development Goals:



Equality & Diversity

21. A well-designed and delivered refresh process for the Community Plan will help to ensure equality, diversity, and inclusion in how the University works with and for local communities. This would include undertaking Equalities Impact Assessments where indicated.

Next steps/implications

22. Feedback from the Community Board will be used to finalise dates and activities for 2024 and 2025.

Consultation

23. Paragraph 12 outlines the consultation to date on this work. Some members of the Community Team, the Community Board and the Department for Social Responsibility and Sustainability have been consulted in the drafting of this paper.

Further information

Author

Sarah Anderson

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Social Responsibility and Sustainability

Presenters

Sarah Anderson

Senior Community Engagement
Manager

Social Responsibility and Sustainability

Gemma Gourlay

Head of Social Impact

Social Responsibility and Sustainability

Freedom of Information

24. Open.



COMMUNITY BOARD

7 February 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 in April 2023.

Action requested/Recommendation

2. No action is requested as this paper is just 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, Eppy Harries-Pugh and Stuart Tooley) are members of the Community Board.

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. **Petra Renman** started in post as Community Engagement Projects Coordinator on Monday 22nd January, taking over from Anne Douglas. Petra's role is full-time, an increase from the three days per week worked by Anne. Gemma Gourlay (Head of Social Impact) and Sarah Anderson (Senior Community Engagement Manager) will also shortly be recruiting for a new grade 7 open-ended post, **Social Impact Manager**. Two days per week of this role (average) will be spent on work to catalyse procurement community benefits. The role will also provide management support across a range of initiatives, including community grants and community access to rooms, freeing up more of Sarah Anderson's capacity to work on the Community Plan refresh and reporting.

7. **Round 13 of the community grant scheme** took place in November 2023. A total of £41,809 was awarded to 10 projects. New organisations funded by the University

through this round are [Sexpression Edinburgh](#) (student society for community-facing project), [West Lothian Women's Aid](#) and [Smart Works Scotland](#).

8. An in-person meeting of the **Edinburgh Community Engagement Forum** took place on 25th October 2023 and was well-attended (c. 30 people). For the first time, the purpose was purely lunch and unstructured networking. This format was more popular than we expected, and we intend to use it again. The Forum's membership has grown since we last reported by 34 to 447 (on Teams).

9. **Doors Open Day** took place at the end of September 2023. In total, 16 buildings opened and received 10,375 person visits (with some people visiting more than one venue). The event also resulted in nearly 1,600 new visitors to the Edinburgh Local webpages. Several public engagement with research stalls were set up with the Playfair and had a positive effect; this happened through partnership with public engagement colleagues in the Edinburgh Research Office. The hope is that even more public engagement activities will have a stall in the Playfair Library for the September 2024 Doors Open Day.

10. **Dick Vet in the Community** at 127 Nicolson Street had its official opening in the autumn of 2023 to coincide with the bicentenary of the Dick Vet. The building now has full external signage and a growing number of other activities also using the space.

11. The successful bidder has been selected in the procurement process for a private sector developer to join the partnership for the next phase of **Edinburgh Bioquarter development**. This will be made public later in 2024, once workshops to establish the initial implementation of the contract have taken place. Members of the Community Team are among those involved with the community-theme workshops.

12. The **public report on year three of the Community Plan's** implementation will go live in February 2024. It will take the form of webpages, a video and a PDF and print document. Proactive communication will be targeted at the same range of stakeholders that are being targeted for the Community Plan refresh.

13. Summary monitoring data from the community grant scheme is now being submitted regularly for reporting against the University's **pilot social impact metric**.

14. The **Community Access to Rooms** pilot scheme was approved by University Executive to become part of University business-as-usual in December 2023, on the condition that the University's new insurance manager was brought up to speed on the scheme. This has been done, with no concerns raised, and, now the requirement for a pre-existing link with the University has also been dropped, a public communications push will take place when the new Community Engagement Projects Coordinator is up-to-speed and ready to process a possible surge in bookings requests.

15. Preparation for **Gaelic Week 2024** is in its late stages. This celebration of Edinburgh's Gaelic community involves partnership between the University and the City of Edinburgh Council. Isla Parker (Gaelic & Community Relations Officer) leads the University's involvement. The 2024 Week promises to be on a similar scale to 2023 and takes place 19-25th February.

16. The SRS Communications team is helping the **Alwaleed Centre** promote their new community grant scheme. This scheme has been modelled on the University's central scheme and "aims to promote a better understanding of Islam and the contemporary Muslim world". Funding priorities for the current academic year are:

- Interfaith and intra-faith relations
- Islam and the environment
- Education and skills development
- Digital Islam

Further information about the scheme is available here: <https://www.ed.ac.uk/literatures-languages-cultures/alwaleed/projects/alwaleed-grants>.

17. The University has received funding from the wind-down of the **Midlothian Science Festival** to run a one-off round of community grants for STEM-related community activities for communities in Midlothian. The funding call is planned to go live at the end of April 2024.

18. Sarah Anderson, Anne Douglas and Stuart Tooley, joined by Collette from the School Bank West Lothian, presented on the community grant scheme's 5-year impact evaluation at the **National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement's December 2024 online conference**. It generated plenty of questions and a follow-up visit by the University of Hull. The conference felt of value; it would just have been good to see more other community representatives there.

19. A major University event was held in November 2023 at the Dovecot, where the **University celebrated its economic and social impact** with an invited audience of politicians, staff, students, community grantees, donors, and others. The Principal warmly congratulated all on their hard work to deliver the impact to date, and has repeated this message at subsequent events.

20. The next phase of the **Community Plan refresh** will kick off imminently and will be a primary part of the workload of some Community Team members in 2024.

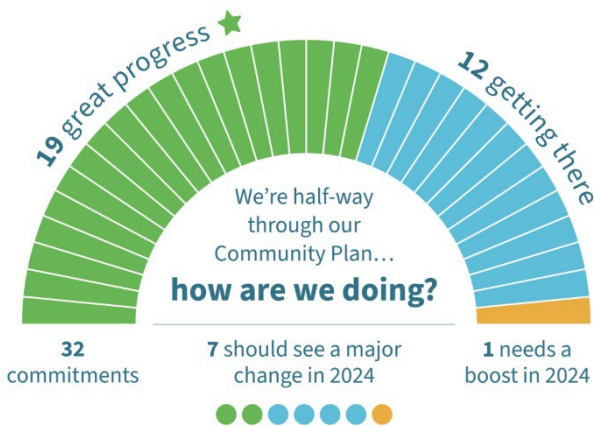
Communications

21. Last 6 months: July 2023 – January 2024

Milestone/Activity	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July
Upskilling team													
Social investments													
SCR reporting													
Community Plan reporting: Y3													
Community Plan refresh													
Community Grants													
Access to rooms expansion & promo													
Social media, newsletter, website													

Key updates

- A. **Community Access to Rooms:** Supported the promotion of project: webpages, awareness raising. Working on an Impact piece with CaM and a video to launch programme in Spring 2024.
- B. **Community Plan reporting:** including webpages and 5x case studies. Commissioning a video and a report which are being finalised to promote internally and externally in Feb 2024. Hoping to have CaM support in promotion to maximise reach



Preview of Community Plan report:

Share knowledge and experience: data and wellbeing

Two-way flows of knowledge between schools & communities and experts at the University of Edinburgh have been flourishing in 2023.

Schools sensor network boosts pupils' data skills

Edinburgh's biggest Internet of Things network soon targets to provide every school in the south-east of Scotland with advanced environmental sensors.

The network is already giving thousands of students from more than 40 schools in Edinburgh, Fife, the Lothians and Borders access to the latest indoor smart technology, capable of measuring CO₂, humidity, light, air pressure and temperature levels.

The £9.5 million scheme also provides some schools with outdoor air quality monitors, soil moisture sensors and weather stations.

Local school children are being inspired to get interested in science and are using the data to optimise their classrooms. For example, Addiewell Primary School in West Lothian has installed a long wall filled with colourful plants and reduced the lighting to improve the learning environment.

Discover more: impact.ed.ac.uk/our-shared-world/getting-ready-for-a-data-driven-future
dataschools.education

“Often as a teacher, kids pose questions that you can't answer and they get shut down. Whereas with this project, they're really able to investigate whatever they want to do. They're learning lots of great skills, really developing their initiative, their creativity, their sense making. They're looking at large data sets that are really quite confusing for an adult but they're able to break it down, [find] exactly what they're looking for and make sense of that.”

Liam Aisley
Primary 7 Teacher, Addiewell School, West Lothian

Accessible education

5,588
enrolments in Short Courses by people living locally

113
City of Edinburgh S5 and S6 students attended Language Immersion Day at the University

270
New Scots took English classes taught by staff (in 22/23 academic year)

630
New Scots have participated since these classes started

“Thank you so much... This program has helped me, and many people and your work cannot be overestimated.”
Learner, July 2023

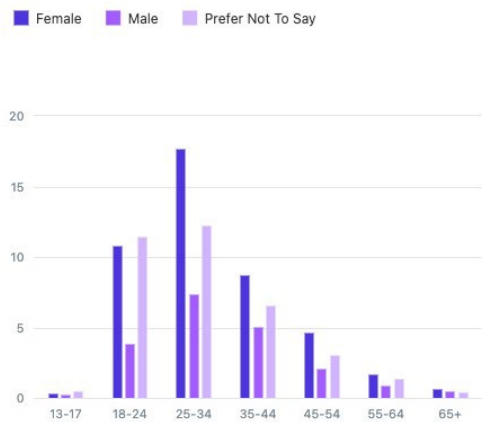
- C. **Social investment:** Reached out to our partners, Big Issue Invest, Big Society Capital, Social Investment Scotland etc, and updated our webpages and social media channels with case studies of the positive social impact these funds have achieved. This has included a filmed case study featuring SCS Homes, a programme being run by Simon Community Scotland. Produced a blog from student-run social enterprise Prosper Social Finance, who have used a £50k loan from the University to invest in companies that meet their ESG criteria.
- D. **Team:** Integrating SRS comms team into the programme area and upskilling in best practice communications for community engagement.
- E. **Community Grants:** Supporting on the promotion of the projects' Autumn round, including case studies, website updates and social media. Have been out to meet a number of grants recipients to hear about the funded projects and attended AGM for The Welcoming.
- F. **Ongoing social media, newsletter and website:**
Updated comms approach. Key changes included:
 - Updated the newsletter template after conducting a survey on our readers
 - Prioritising Instagram
 - More frequent posting
 - More reels
 - More boosting and geographically targeted posts

Social media (compared to previous 6 months):

	Instagram	X	Facebook
Reach: from the organic or paid distribution of content	30,948 + 568%	72.2k	1,921 - 70% (last 3 months)
Visits: the number of times your profile was visited.	801 + 34.6%	-	1776 +72.9%
Followers:	1,929 + 15.3%	2,176 (+100 in timeframe)	17 +21.4%

Instagram stats:

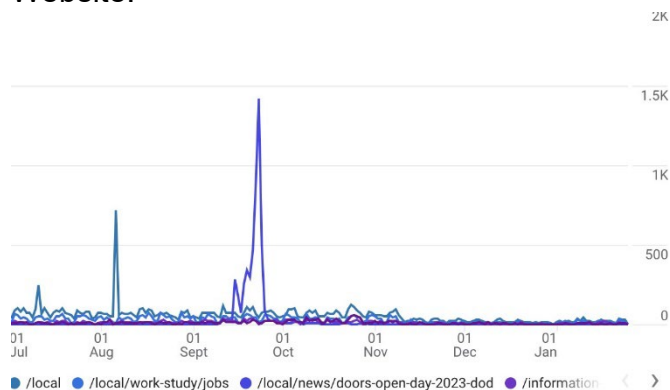




Top posts (often reels):

- A day in the life of a Digital Marketing apprentice
- Anatomical museum open days
- Guardian story of the repatriation of Taiwanese skulls
- Workshop on UoE's colonial history
- Doors Open Day
- Community grants
- Groundswell media coverage
- Edinburgh Giants wheelchair rugby

Website:



- Traffic is modest, but social media does steer people to the website and CaM support has major impact e.g. Doors Open Day

- Wrestling with GA4!

Newsletter:

- Send every other month
- Click to open rate averages at about 20% - actually, not bad.
- December message from Gemma had good readership – over 1,100 opens and positive engagement

Priorities for next six months:

- Community Plan reporting
- Launching the Access to Rooms project
- Supporting with Community Grants
- Update Ed Local webpages
- Better utilisation of LinkedIn to reach higher education/community professionals
- More use of faces on social media (to beat the algorithm) and better content interactions with other profiles
- Internal awareness raising of this programme

Resource implications

22. N/A as this is an update.

Risk Management

23. N/A as this is an update.

Responding to the Climate Emergency & Sustainable Development Goals

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



Equality & Diversity

25. N/A as this is an update.

Next steps/implications

26. N/A as this is an update.

Consultation

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

Further information

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Freedom of Information

28. Open.