

MINUTE OF A MEETING of the Fossil Fuels Review Group held in the Elder Room, Old College on Monday 12 January 2015.

Present:	Prof Charlie Jeffery	Senior Vice Principal (Convenor)
	Dave Gorman	Director of Social Responsibility & Sustainability
	Tasha Boardman	EUSA Vice President Services
	Mark Connolly	CIO, Aviva Investors (Member of Investment Committee)
	Prof Andrew Curtis	Professor of Mathematical Geoscience
	Dr Andy Kerr	Executive Director, Edinburgh Centre on Carbon Innovation
	Prof Lesley McAra	Chair of Penology, School of Law
	Phil McNaull	Director of Finance
	Tracey Slaven	Deputy Secretary, Strategic Planning
	Jane Rooney	Minute Secretary

1 Convener's Remarks

The Convenor welcomed members to the third meeting of the Review Group.

2 Minute

The minute of the meeting held on 27 November 2014 was approved as a correct record.

A

3 Matters Arising

• Progress Report

Members approved the statement for wider circulation.

Action – DG/JR to follow up with Communications & Marketing on setting up a FFRG page on the University website.

• Update to CMG

Members approved the paper, which the Convenor would present at CMG on 20 January.

Action – JR to update information in point 16 and membership details in the annex and ensure paper is submitted.

• Liaison with EUSA

Further internal consultation clarified that the request referred to those companies whose primary business is the extraction of fossil fuels and that this would be identified via the Carbon Underground top 200.

4 Climate Statement

FFRG endorsed this draft which would become a founding statement in its final report.

Action – DG to amend the final sentence to read “should take a lead through our research, teaching and knowledge exchange in helping society understand...”

B

5 Further Progress on Evidence Gathering

a) Contributions to climate change from various fossil fuel uses

Members noted an updated paper from AK & AC in response to the Group's concern to differentiate more fully the impact of various fossil fuel uses and the existence of

feasible alternatives. The Group raised for consideration the possibility that the University might invest in alternative and transition technologies.

b) Teaching and courses

- Analysis of courses with SRS components

The Group noted Olga Bloemen's report, which was not felt to be focused enough on fossil fuel/climate change issues for the Groups' purposes.

- Careers destinations

The Deputy Secretary, Strategic Planning presented further information on careers destinations, noting that the 2010 survey had been widened to include non-UK students. As the survey is carried out six months after graduation it offers only an initial snapshot and does not capture evolving roles and careers thereafter. It was noted that the number of UoE students going on to work in activities related to fossil fuel extraction was relatively small.

FFRG noted that the University offers a range of courses enabling a rounded appreciation of issues around fossil fuels exploitation and climate change. The group might wish to consider ongoing work led by Pete Higgins and Sue Rigby to develop this offering further.

Action – DG to circulate a background paper on Pete Higgins's Group.

- Teaching provision and energy/fossil fuel provision

AC gave a verbal presentation on data pulled from EUCLID. Overall, this indicated that the weight of UoE teaching leaned toward sustainability, including new courses arising based on student demand, though there remained a significant element that focuses on fossil fuels exploration and exploitation.

c) Research overview

- Analysis of previous REF submissions

The Convener had reviewed Research Environment statements included in Engineering, GeoSciences, Politics and Sociology submissions in 2001, 2008 and 2014. In 2001 climate change was an emerging issue, whereas by 2008 and 2014 it was increasingly central in Engineering and Geosciences (though still largely peripheral in social sciences). The weight of emphasis was on modelling, mitigation, carbon capture and storage, though there was still substantial research on exploration and exploitation in both schools.

Action – TS to pass the three relevant Law submissions to CJ for review.

- Overall picture of relevant research

It was clear that climate change and environmental issues had become central to the most prominent and impactful research, but UoE also maintained a profile in exploration and exploitation of fossil fuels, the two aspects often working in synergy.

d) Investment issues

- Summary of fossil fuel exposures

Action – MC to circulate an updated summary of fossil fuel exposures including data to the end of December 2015. It was anticipated that the values would have changed significantly due to market movements.

- Reports on investor behaviour

MC summarised the findings from the various reports he had circulated. FFRG noted the conclusion that signal value was stronger than impact on capital access or

company behaviour in the short term.

- Investment managers' engagements with energy companies

MC summarised the approach of our investment managers in engaging with companies on fossil fuel issues.

Action – MC to confirm the basis on which information from investment managers had been shared.

Members agreed, in the interim, that information from BlackRock, which was already generally available, could be treated as public, while everything else would be considered shared in confidence.

e) Discussion in GeoSciences

AC summarised his report on engagement with colleagues from the School of GeoSciences. Responses from the School's three main institutes illustrated the range of different arguments; for, against, and including some element of conditionality. Members discussed issues around academic freedom arising from the report.

f) Principles for Divestment

AC outlined potential principles that could apply in the case of fossil fuels, as well as being generalizable to other possible divestment debates. Members expressed broad agreement that engagement should precede divestment.

6 Options Paper

C

Based on morphological analysis, the paper presented different approaches based on set criteria. The next step would be to reduce these to a core, realistic set of options.

Action – DG (with others feeding in) to produce for the next meeting a reasonably advanced outline giving full account of the evidence base the Group had consulted and, on the basis of further reflection on principles and variables, produce a set of concrete options to discuss, as well as additional recommendations for UoE on how to manage issues of this kind.

Action – JR to circulate a minute as soon as possible along with a supplementary note on key points from the discussion.

Meeting 11.30 – 13.30 Wednesday 11 February 2015 Elder Room, Old College

Dates: 10.45 – 12.30 Monday 2 March 2015 Lee Room, Old College