



CENTRAL MANAGEMENT GROUP

14 April 2015

Extract From Draft Minute

- Present:** Senior Vice-Principal Professor C Jeffery
Vice-Principal Professor D Miell
Vice-Principal Professor M Bownes
Vice-Principal Professor J Seckl
Vice-Principal Professor J Smith
Vice-Principal Professor S Welburn
Vice-Principal Professor J Norman
Mr H Edmiston, Director of Corporate Services
Mrs T Slaven, Deputy Secretary, Strategic Planning
Mr P McNaull, Director of Finance
Mr G Jebb, Director of Estates
- In attendance:** Assistant Principal Professor A Trew, on behalf of Vice-Principal Professor Yellowlees
Dr C Elliot, on behalf of Vice-Principal Professor Sir John Savill
Professor C Clarke, Head of School of Health in Social Science
Ms L Chalmers, Director of Legal Services
Dr I Conn, Director of Communications and Marketing
Mr D Gorman, Director of Social Responsibility and Sustainability
Mr B MacGregor, Director of User Services Division
Mr D Kyles, Chief Internal Auditor
Mr D Gillespie, Head of HR, on behalf of Ms Z Lewandowski, Director of HR
Ms B Pegado, President of Edinburgh University Students' Association (for item 3 only)
Ms T Boardman, Vice-President Services of Edinburgh University Students' Association (for item 3 only)
Mrs K Bowman, Director of Procurement (for item 7 only)
Ms K Graham, Deputy Head of Court Services
- Apologies:** The Principal
Vice-Principal Professor S Rigby
Vice Principal Professor R Kenway
Vice-Principal Professor A Morris
Vice-Principal Professor J Haywood
Vice-Principal Professor C Breward
University Secretary, Ms S Smith
Mr G McLachlan, Chief Information Officer

SUBSTANTIVE ITEMS

CMG noted that in January 2013 the University was the first University in Europe and only the second in the world to sign up to the United Nations Principles for Responsible Investment. As a result of that commitment, the University has been actively reviewing its existing Responsible Investment policy.

The Edinburgh University Students' Association (EUSA) formally requested that the University consider divestment from fossil fuels companies and it was agreed by CMG to establish the Fossil Fuels Review Group, to consider the case for disinvestment in fossil fuels. The group was chaired by the Senior Vice-Principal, Professor Charlie Jeffery, and consisted of a range of experts in climate policy and science, geosciences and law, as well as representation from EUSA and senior University managers.

The group had now prepared a report for CMG with a series of options and recommendations for consideration. Court will consider the report at its meeting on 11 May, including consideration of the discussions at CMG.

CMG discussed the report with a wide range of opinions expressed. These included concern from some schools in the College of Science and Engineering regarding the impact of a divestment decision on academic freedom by potentially restricting areas of research. However it was also recognised that companies involved in the extraction of high carbon-emitting fuels also fund research into greater energy efficiency and alternative energy sources to mitigate climate change. There was also concern that negative publicity could be detrimental to students who may be expecting to work for these companies.

CMG noted that the report conclusions and recommendations were nuanced and did not recommend a binary decision of either no additional action or full divestment from all energy related fossil fuel companies.

It recognised the growth of research areas based on carbon mitigation and climate change strategy. Research fields focussed on carbon capture and storage frequently used the same techniques and often people as the extraction and exploitation of fossil fuels so there was much cross over. The report therefore provided a considered set of options that can be taken forward concurrently to assist the University in making a contribution to solving the climate problem through its investment strategy, without inappropriately restricting its ability to undertake research and teaching.

The EUSA representatives welcomed the report and the acceptance that human influence on the climate system is clear. Involvement in the group had fostered a greater understanding of the research and teaching implications and the complexities around the area of

disinvestment. EUSA's priority was that the University approve the report and implement the recommendations without delay.

CMG agreed on the complexity of the issue and that the balanced and measured approach taken by the group in presenting a series of options was appropriate and offered the opportunity to contribute to climate change mitigation through teaching and research and to take a positive role in working with companies to drive change.