

## Minute of the meeting of the Sustainability Working Group (SWG)

8 February 2023 via Zoom

Attending: David Duncan (DD) (Chair), Jaime Toney (JT), Stewart Miller, Ian Campbell (IC), Peter Craig (PC), Hilda De Groot (HDG), Gordon McLeod (GMcL), Chrissy Sanachan (CS), Erika Makipere (SRC Environmental Officer), Alasdair Thomson, Minty Donald, Josephine Gallagher, Katie Fish (VP Activities)

Apologies: Fabrice Renaud, Gioia Falcone, Rinna Vare (SRC President), Robert Garnish, Ross Barker, Barry Morton, Euan Smith, Hailie Pentleton (VP Student Welfare), Fan Henry (GUEST), Molly Davison (GUEST)

Attending: Wim Vanderbauwhede (WV), Viola Retzlaff (VR), Jennifer Russell (JR), Scott Masterton Rhona Little (Clerk)

### 1 Minute

The Minute of the meeting of 8 December 2022 was approved.

#### Matters Arising

##### Tree Planting – Garscube and Cochno Farm

A Tiny Forest has been successfully planted on a patch of land on the Garscube Campus. In the interim Procurement are putting in place a contract for more tree planting work to start at Cochno farm late summer/early Autumn. The Convenor of Court has an interest in Cochno and has a paper to go to the Estates Committee with a plan to use it as a test bed for environment projects. There is a large house on the Cochno Estate that is in a very poor condition.

### 2 Embedding sustainability in the curriculum

Professor Wim Vanderbauwhede gave a presentation on Decarbonising Education which means transforming how and what we learn so that education sufficiently addresses and prepares students for the climate crisis and ecological emergency. That means our curricula must equip students with the knowledge, skills, attributes and values to tackle the reformation of our currently carbon intense economic system. This activity fits with the UN's Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 13 "Climate Action". Decarbonising the curriculum fits with the University's Strategy 2025, "Building a sustainable future through our research and actions: Responding to the climate emergency challenge" and the VP for Learning and Teaching has agreed to sponsor a pilot in the College of Science and Engineering. Every school in the college now has a Sustainability Subject Advisor (SSA) and the College Management Group has recognised this as an official admin role. The SSAs form a working group at college level to share information, ideas and best practice and liaise with the L&T Committee and advise on definition of subject specific aims and ILOs and the best way to incorporate these in the programmes, in discussion with the L&T Teaching Committee, course co-ordinators and students. The aim is to have one pilot programme approved by the College Board of Studies in February 2023 for roll-out in 2023-24. In summary, we need to decarbonise the curriculum; we should start with our own subject but a college level approach will have more impact; the key enabler is to provide staff with information so they can incorporate sustainability into their courses and programmes; this is the role of the Sustainability Subject Advisor (SSA).

A slight concern was raised about using the word 'decarbonising' and it was suggested that this should be tested out on a few more people - if the reaction is the same then it could be problematic, and compromise might be required.

DD sits on the Universities UK Climate Sustainability Action Group which recently discussed the educational dimension - he could enquire who might be best to contact about this.

The group agreed this was a good initiative and liked that it is embedded in a workload model. DD would touch base with the VP L&T and take up points on how to support this across the University.

### 3 **2021/22 UoG Carbon Footprint**

SM presented a paper summarising our carbon footprint for the academic year 2021/22 (Total: 40,803 tonne CO<sub>2</sub>e), which was submitted as part of a detailed return to Scottish Government at the end of November 2022, under the Public Sector Climate Change reporting duty.

The 2021/22 carbon footprint for UofG (40,803 tonne CO<sub>2</sub>e) was greater than that reported for 20/21 by ~7,000 tonne CO<sub>2</sub>e.

This increase in emissions was largely due to post-Covid resumption of business travel (+4,000 tonne CO<sub>2</sub>e) and staff/student commuting to and from campus (+6,500 tonne CO<sub>2</sub>e).

These increases were only partially offset by reductions in emissions from gas consumption (-3,000 tonne CO<sub>2</sub>e) and home working (-1,000 tonne CO<sub>2</sub>e).

Reduced emissions from gas consumption during 21/22 were largely a result of maintenance carried out on our CHP engine, which was switched off for longer than during a typical year. However, emissions were also impacted by improvements to the Building Management System, improving the control of heating across the Estate.

Renewed focus is required during 22/23 to further minimise carbon emissions associated with both the heating of the Estate and business travel/staff student commuting.

It was noted that when the CHP plant was closed for approximately 8 weeks for maintenance it had a dramatic effect on our gas carbon tonnage. The CMP states that we seek to switch off the CHP in 2028 but it is a decision about cash versus carbon and it might be something that should be revisited because the CHP could be switched off with immediate effect.

**ACTION:** a paper on this will be brought to a future meeting.

It was noted that staff still seem unwilling to use public transport but these numbers are based on a survey and not actuals. Even so, there appears to be a move back to cars on campus. It was noted that GCC will suspend peak travel costs for six months from April which might help encourage use of public transport.

### 4 **Carbon impact of international student flights for 2021/22**

SM presented a paper about the carbon emissions associated with 'beginning/end of term' air travel for our international students during the academic year 2021/22.

Data on numbers of UG, PGT-T and PG-R students, along with country of domicile were obtained from Planning, Insight & Analytics, for the 21/22 academic year.

The distance of a return flight from the capital city of the country of domicile to Glasgow was determined using <https://www.distance.to/>

All international students (both EU resident students and 'rest of the world') were assumed to have taken one return flight from the capital city of their country of domicile to Glasgow, during the 2021/22 academic year.

The carbon intensity for economy class international flights was applied to the distances calculated, and a total carbon impact determined.

The total carbon impact for international student travel during the 21/22 academic year was estimated at 42,229 tonne CO<sub>2</sub>e.

Flight-related travel by EU-domiciled students during 21/22 made up a small proportion of this total figure, and was estimated at 1,603 tonne CO<sub>2</sub>e.

The carbon impact for international student travel during the 21/22 academic year was estimated at 42,229 tonne CO<sub>2</sub>e.

This figure is greater than the entire 21/22 operational carbon footprint for UofG (40,803 tonne CO<sub>2</sub>e), that was reported to Scottish Government at the end of November 2022.

The methodology assumes that each international student only takes one return flight between their country of domicile and Glasgow, each year. This analysis is therefore likely to underestimate the full carbon impact of air travel by our international students.

The scope of our current carbon footprint, as reported to Scottish Government each year, does not currently include the carbon impact of international student travel. Given the material significance of this impact, the Working Group is asked to consider expanding the scope of our carbon footprint accordingly.

The paper contained a lot of detail but the key point is that the scale of this is substantial and it raises two questions; should we include international flights in the current assessment and what would be the cost and methodology of off-setting such a large amount of carbon.

DD confirmed it was a Court decision that at some point between now and 2030 we are committed to offsetting one round trip per international student per year. In terms of cost, it would be over £1.3M and it gives a sense of the scale. We should continue to investigate the footprint from travel and at the same time contribute to national discussions so we do this the same way as other institutions.

It would be useful to understand when to start offsetting and to have an offsetting strategy in place.

We do not currently account for international student flights or impact of procured goods and services or impact of farm operations at Cochno in terms of fertilizer and manure spreading but perhaps one to think about and might make an interesting student project.

**ACTION:** Fabrice Renaud to be asked about overseeing a student project.

## 5 **PowerBI tool for Business Travel Carbon Impacts**

Jennifer Russell (JR) gave a detailed presentation and a walk through of the PowerBI tool, developed in conjunction with the University's travel planning consultants (Stantec), and how it can be used to manipulate and visualise business travel data. The data contained in the tool is based on business travel bookings by air and rail for the reporting years 2018-19, 2019-20, 2020-21 and 2021-22. All calculations are based on available data from the University Travel Agent - travel not booked through them is not included. The recently launched travel hub will start to improve travel data produced. The historical data from 2018-19 is the last full data set before the COVID pandemic seriously affected travel. The tool provides a breakdown of

business travel carbon emission data from the baseline year 2018-19 onwards. It shows projections of potential carbon to 2030 and highlights the extent of carbon reduction required to meet our net zero target in 2030. It is hoped that this will help Schools and Colleges with their monitoring, evaluation and actions.

The group agreed that it was a very easy to use tool and noted that DD had written to schools and services to ask them to use the tool. A few sessions have taken place about raising awareness.

## **6 Potential for refurbishment and donation of IT equipment**

With the impending move of the School of HSW to the Clarice Pears Building, a question was raised about what proportion of IT equipment disposed of by the university contractor is recycled or broken up to extract metals. This has come about because in the past a lot of community organisations in Glasgow would find old PCs very valuable and it would be helpful to get an estimate from the contractor about this. SM informed the group that until CCL North get back with information about what they are doing with our donated IT equipment it is hard to say. There are provisions in the current framework for us to donate IT equipment to charities so we are not totally beholden to CCL North but there is a cost associated with this.

**Agreed:** to circulate any information received to group when available.

## **7 GUEST updates**

Groups have been selected for the Glasgow Goes Green Festival taking place from 13-19 March and although events have not been finalised they will include a Repair Café, Good Food for Glasgow, GALLANT, Dear Green Bothy and Climate Fest. Recent events on campus include swap shops for clothing and homeware essentials and a climate café and transport café will take place in February. GUEST were recently invited to an introductory meeting with the GALLANT Community Collaborations Steering Group and will attend quarterly online meetings. A meeting will take place with the SRC regarding recycling points and GUEST will update at the next meeting. GUEST are running an open call for sustainable projects and a winner has been selected who will run sustainable cooking classes on campus. Finally, there will be an inter-university workshop in Govan and GUEST hope to work with them more before the Glasgow Goes Green event.

## **8 Centre for Sustainable Solutions update**

In March, the last two of the Future Learn courses will be launched and 1,300 learners have attended the first four courses from across the world. The Centre coordinators have been thinking about how to connect people across the University and have started networking meetings every 5-6 weeks and people seemed very engaged. There will be some themed sessions moving forward and, as there have been a lot of questions about what was going on about energy across campus, Billy Ferguson will be the next speaker. The Centre has been supporting a huge number of research funding bids and is supporting four Centres for doctoral training. One of the bids being led Engineering is looking at new block chain internet technology to better understand the life cycle analysis of plastic. The ESRC funding bid is calling for a Climate Change and Health Centre so we would like to bring together these two strengths. We are still waiting on outcome of the city region Levelling Up Impact Accelerator bid. JT and SM were involved in the Queen's Platinum Jubilee Challenge last year which culminated in a report that has gone as a recommendation to Government. We have also been involved in drafting the UKRI Concordat of Principles for Universities to sign up to. Finally, the Centre is involved in GUILD and is linking more with Edinburgh University through the Earth Initiative.

## 9 Update on Sustainable Food Policy and Action Plan

Scott Masterton (SM) updated the group on the Sustainable Food Policy and Action Plan - the new policy can be found here: [https://www.gla.ac.uk/media/Media\\_926878\\_smx.pdf](https://www.gla.ac.uk/media/Media_926878_smx.pdf)

The three key areas of focus are sourcing, society and environment. The UoG is working closely with suppliers to progress the sustainability agenda; to source products locally and seasonally, where possible; to support sustaining the local economy and reduce environmental impacts; to ensure that our suppliers adhere to industry standards on animal welfare; and to insist on Red Tractor standards as a minimum.

The plan has been updated to reflect completed actions including incorporating the Soil Association Silver Accreditation and the Healthyliving Awards. Local companies are supplying organic milk and eggs; all single use plastic has been removed in restaurants including vending machines except those that are not the responsibility of UoG. There have been challenges with inflation and cost of goods sold and it has been difficult for the team to source how local a produce can be but, Matthew Hallington, Glasgow Coffee roaster was appointed and awarded the local coffee tender for the University and we have been working with Tinderbox and other Glasgow companies. Food accreditation includes Red Tractor, Free Range, Red Lion stamp eggs and vegetarian and vegan foods are being implemented daily.

We are committed to raising awareness of work, food miles and telling the story of work done so far. A system called Label Logic has been implemented on university home made products with a traffic light system. There is a commitment for charity work with a subsidiary company and a new staff member is doing voluntary and charity work. In terms of the sustainability target we have been working with Tom Bryce in Estates and planning a deposit return scheme which comes into law in Scotland on 16 August this year which means when you buy a drink in a single-use container you will pay a 20p deposit which you get back when you return your empty bottle or can.

IC did not appreciate that all vending machines went through catering and should therefore all be procured and asked if Jo Gallagher's team could look at all contracts and ensure no plastic items are included in the vending machines.

The deposit return scheme is quite involved so might be useful to have Tom Bryce attend future meeting to explain complexity of this.

During covid it was agreed that external suppliers could be used to ensure everybody had access to catering and five suppliers were sourced. The Catering and Events team are now in a position to accept most internal catering jobs and all internal requests should go through them as we are keen to keep the work inhouse rather than outsource.

**Action:** JG to look at vending machine contracts

**Action:** Tom Bryce to attend a future meeting to talk about deposit return scheme

## 10 Update on climate change/sustainability staff upskilling course development

Psychology is working on a staff course and the idea would be a condensed version of climate science carbon literacy and an in-depth review of university policy to contextualise everything. This would be followed by a hackathon on how to embed these things locally in practice. It will

be piloted in Psychology and if the model works rolled out to other departments. CS would welcome any materials/thoughts/formats via email.

11 **AOB**

IC to speak to team about Conservation Strategy and report back to a future meeting

12 **Future Meeting Dates**

5 April 2023

6 June 2023

2 August 2023

4 October 2023

6 December 2023