

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

3 June 2021 via Zoom

Attending: David Duncan (DD) (Chair), Jaime Toney (JT), Stewart Miller (SM), Josephine Gallagher (JG), Blair Anderson (GUEST), Dounia Diatsentos (GUEST), Lauren Scott (GUEST), Gioia Falcone (GF), Robert Garnish, Susan Ashworth, Amy McKenzie Smith (SRC), Fabrice Renaud, Minty Donald, Alvero Perez Guardiola, Peter Craig, Rhona Little (Clerk)

Apologies: Ian Campbell, Barry Morton, Nick Wade (NW), Liam Brady (SRC), Kelum Gamage (KG)

1 Minute

The Minute of the meeting of April was approved.

2 Matters Arising

- 2.1 Cochno Farms – DD to follow up with Comms Team
- 2.2 Possible double accounting with airlines – SM to follow up

3 Carbon Offsetting Options (Savills presentation)

William Hawes and Charles Davis joined the meeting to present a brief synopsis of a 50-page report produced by Savills. The scope of the report was to inform the University's strategy for reaching net zero by 2030 on the basis that the University will continue to emit 30,000 tonnes of unavoidable CO₂ a year even after all reasonable emissions reduction and avoidance strategies have been employed. Net zero, rather than zero carbon, accepts that it is reasonable to offset unavoidable emissions through credible and validated capture offset schemes, or carbon capture technology. The report models different ways that the University of Glasgow's offsetting targets can be achieved and analyses the barriers and opportunities of each.

There are only two nature-based offsets currently in the UK which an emitter can use in formal reporting and these are woodland carbon units, registered under the Woodland Carbon Code and peatland carbon units, registered under the Peatland Carbon Code. Both function in a relatively similar way with a few key differences and both provide a method for independent verification of carbon units so they can be used to report against emissions. Projects under both schemes benefit from significant grant funding from the Scottish Government, through Forest Commissions and through a scheme called Peatland Action.

It is unrealistic for the University to attempt to mitigate all its offsets through one method so a blended approach will likely have to be employed.

There are 'off the shelf' offsets for purchasing where carbon unit producers certified under one of the various schemes across the world, can sell units to organisations or individuals hoping to offset their carbon emissions, just like the University.

It must be accepted that the University it not going to be able to acquire or be involved in a scheme that is large enough to offset all its emissions in 2030. The report summarises some schemes that might be viable.

In conclusion, the University is not going to achieve its net zero 2030 with one scheme as its emissions are too large and there is no scheme big enough to fulfil that. We could focus on being involved in several schemes but in terms of resource this is probably quite difficult to achieve. Savills recommend that UoG select one or two very good schemes which have high levels of co-benefits and meet as much of our offset target as possible. This will probably not be achieved through land acquisition. Savills recommend that UoG identifies a landowner who has land

suitable for schemes which meets the University's objectives as far as carbon and co-benefits are concerned. There are increasing numbers of environmentally led land-based business farms or estates which exist to enhance the environment and they are looking for funders of environmental projects, particularly carbon offset schemes, and that is who Savills see the University being partnered with.

The Committee thanked Savills for the presentation and agreed to get a small group together to come back with a proposal to the next meeting.

ACTION: Savills will circulate a final version of the full report to the committee.

4 S-Labs Update

The group received a progress report on Sustainable Labs and LEAF (Laboratory Efficiency Assessment Framework) from Rory Porteous and Viktor Malovs. The current situation has a three-pronged approach building new tools to help labs self-audit and implement sustainable practice; they are developing a road map and training materials focusing on what sustainable practice is.

Quite a few inefficiencies have been identified in labs around campus with the most noticeable problems being with freezers, fume hoods, waste management improvement and tracking of samples. A sustainable lab training module is currently being developed and a moodle course designed to educate on sustainable lab practice should be up and running in June.

Going forward they will be looking at laboratories around campus and asking for support to reorientate towards sustainable practice. Training materials and tools are being developed to encourage faster uptake of sustainable practice.

The group thanked Rory, Viktor and Annamaria on the impressive amount of work they have managed in the short time they had been in post.

5 UoG Business Travel Emissions Reporting

JG gave the group a brief update on carbon emissions from travel providers

- FY18/19 13,000 tonnage and figures do not include carbon from travel expenses
- FY19/20 when we entered lockdown in March the tonnage emissions reduced to 7184
- FY20/21 – from 1st August- 31st May emissions reduced to 187 tonnage, so lockdown has been great for reduction in travel carbon emissions; however emissions are expected to rise again post lockdown.
- As people start to travel again our travel provider Selective are setting up an online booking portal. This will connect to GUID data and there will be a mandatory split of carbon costs to the Colleges even down to individuals. This is still in the early stages but will develop quickly and should be live and up and running in a month.

6 Centre for Sustainable Solutions

JT updated the group on the work of the CfSS:

- £10M NERC proposal has been submitted and we will find out early in November if successful
- The Upskilling Climate and [Carbon](#) Literacy course now has 188 participants and has been given the go ahead to re-run in September (before COP26) and April in subsequent years.
- A second upskilling course has been approved which will be on Systems Thinking for Climate Change and Sustainable Decision Making and will be released ahead of COP26

- MVLS is spearheading mapping of climate [control-change](#) and sustainability research within their own College and a similar scheme has taken place in CoSE. JT is now looking for best contacts in CoSS and CoA.

7 GUEST Update – Progress Report

The group received verbal updates from the GUEST co-ordinators about the work going on in the promotor branches. The Food Survey findings will be available for the next meeting. There are lot of projects coming together and inductions for next year's coordinators are taking place. There is ongoing work in a project about research into urban growing in community gardens. The Transport Branch have been working with Viola Retzlaff, Travel and Transport Co-ordinator carrying out a Changing and Showering Facilities Survey and a report will be produced on improvements to these facilities. Local artists have been working in the wildlife gardens to help turn these areas into mindfulness spaces. There will be an art exhibition in collaboration with the Glasgow School of Art and 32 artists will be submitting their work. Work is ongoing with the Biodiversity Working Group looking at a tree trail around the campus. The co-ordinators have been working in collaboration with Bristol University and various institutions across the UK who want to send students to COP26 in Glasgow to share best practices of sustainability and work is ongoing on having student journalists available to cover the COP26 conference.

8 COP26 Working Group

Rachael Sandison is preparing a presentation for the Court meeting in June.

ACTION: circulate presentation to group

9 Carbon Management Plan

SM provided a verbal update on the work to develop the Carbon Management Plan for the next 5-10 years. The Plan for the most part will focus on how we address emissions from electricity and gas consumption but also emissions from the staff and student community.

In the past the Plan did not focus on IT emissions, but recently Mark Johnson and Pete Mitchell of IT Services have been brought on board to think about how we adapt computing provision and look closely at energy and carbon savings to be made.

The Plan will focus on the Staff and Student community to encourage people out of cars and on to public transport. Based on the 2018/19 Travel Survey there was an estimated 4000-5000 staff and students commuting to campus by car each day and to meet our targets this needs to reduce by 90%.

Electric cars were not built into the previous Carbon Strategy but this could change things quite considerably and Stantec will report on this in more detail.

Ian Campbell will present a Carbon Management Plan to Estates by the end of August and hopes to update at next SWG meeting.

10 Amazon Delivery Logistics

RG reported on a meeting with colleagues from Transport and representatives from the Amazon On-Road Policy Team who look after distribution of Amazon parcels for the last mile of delivery. Around the centre of Glasgow approximately 3,500-4,000 Amazon parcels are delivered daily. Traditionally, Amazon sold deliveries to third parties who carry out deliveries on their behalf. Amazon want to move to a more franchise model and will provide vans, bikes, uniforms and pay others to deliver these routes. A recent trial in London replaced 85 vans with 56 e-cargo bikes without any drop in capacity or time. Amazon are looking to pilot this in 2022 and are interested in partnering with the UoG to offer employment opportunities to students and staff to carry out deliveries. They would need to site a mini hub somewhere in the surrounding area to host e-cargo bikes and this could be a good student employment opportunity particularly when students/staff know the site and buildings better than external delivery companies.

The SRC would oppose a partnership with Amazon as engaging with them on this level could be regarded as legitimising their approach to labour rights and ecological issues.

GUEST raised a concern about space on campus - it would be important to prioritise other areas before agreeing to Amazon using a large amount of space.

The group agreed this should not be taken forward as a sustainability project given the views expressed but, it was noted that we do have to facilitate deliveries so there may well be discussions with Amazon and other companies under another forum.

11 Any other business

The College of Arts is looking at developing a course to launch in the academic year 2023 hopefully in combination with courses offered by CfSS. This is at a very exploratory stage but with a definite intention to launch next academic year.

12 Future dates

- 4 August 2021 – 2pm
- 6 October 2021 – 2pm
- 2 December 2021 – 2pm