

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

3 August 2022 via Zoom

Attending: David Duncan (DD) (Chair), Jaime Toney (JT), Stewart Miller (SM), Fabrice Renaud (FR), Ian Campbell (IC), Peter Craig (PC), Minty Donald (MD), Robert Garnish (RG), Alasdair Thomson (AT)

GUEST Co-ordinators - Fan Henry

SRC - Hailie Pentleton (VP Student Welfare), Katie Fish, (VP Activities)

Apologies: Josephine Gallagher, Gioia Falcone, Kelum Gamage, Barry Morton, Molly Davison (GUEST)

Attending: Mark Banks, Professor of Cultural Economy, Kevin Leomo, Project Assistant, Dear Green Bothy, Rhona Little (Clerk),

1 Minute

The Minute of the meeting of 6 May 2022 was approved subject to the correction of spelling of surname Renaud.

2. Matters Arising

2.1 Updated Waste Management Strategy and Action Plan

Action: SM to follow up with Scott Masterton about waste food recycling

2.2 Updated Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan

Action: SM to contact Michael Muir about Dumfries teaching garden and will take forward with colleagues in Estates.

2.3 GUEST Eco-Hub Proposal

Action: SM been in contact with Robert Partridge who has identified a space at Southpark House to develop into Eco-Hub. Two rooms available so proposal to be amended.

2.4 Times Higher Ed Sustainability Rankings

Action: SM to contact Uzma Khan to analyse successes and areas for improvement

Update: SM had contacted UK's team and has a list of potential improvement items: waste management, strategy & action plan, publication of sustainability report, developing a water re-use policy and a policy around energy efficiency in buildings. The trickiest one is the water re-use policy. Although we are producing a lot of these documents, we are not as good as other institutions at publishing them.

2.5 Circulation of Business Travel Reports for Schools and Colleges

Action: DD and Comms Office to help disseminate information

2.6 Sustainable Travel for Events Hosted at UoG

Action: SM to contact Sara Somerville. There is a mention of sustainable travel in the travel hub but perhaps this could be made more prominent.

Action: DD to pick this up when it is disseminated to the schools.

3. **Carbon Management Plan for approval**

Following the publication of the Climate Change Strategy (Glasgow Green) in December 2020, this paper informs Estates Committee on current plans to reduce the carbon footprint over the period 2020/21 to 2030/31.

The Carbon Management should be viewed as a living document with an annual response to how we achieve our overall strategy and should come back to the SWG for review on an annual basis.

A table in section 3.12 of the circulated CMP summarises the carbon emissions savings expected to be achieved from each of the proposed interventions. The table highlights the following:

Scope 1 emissions have generally increased over this period, due to the installation of a gas-fired CHP engine. At the same time, Scope 2 emissions have significantly decreased, in part because we are now generating some of our own electricity via CHP and in part because of the continued decarbonisation of the national grid. However, it should be noted that ongoing decarbonisation of the national grid means that we have now reached the point where the electricity supplied by the grid is less carbon intensive than that supplied by our gas-fired CHP engine. As such, ongoing use of our CHP engine will incur a carbon cost each year.

Scope 3 emissions from flight-related business travel increased significantly over the period 2015/16 to 2018/19, with the exception being 2019/20 and 2020/21 when coronavirus-related travel restrictions prevented business travel for a significant proportion of the reporting years. Similarly, emissions due to staff/student commuting were also significantly reduced during 2019/20 and 2020/21.

A Director of Sustainability will be recruited in the Autumn within Estates to bring all elements of current sustainability to that role and there is a need to recruit delivery managers primarily engineers.

It was agreed that the CMP is ambitious, and we will really have to focus to get to the 2030 target. Although we will go back to the CMP annually we will not see an annual progression from each year to the next in reductions across all of the headings and we will need to calibrate this very carefully. We also have to balance up business need and costs against where we can make meaningful progress in sustainability while bearing in mind business needs, costs and sustainability.

The working group approved the plan as it stands.

4. **Dear Green Bothy Project**

Mark Banks gave a presentation on the Dear Green Bothy project that ran from June to December 2021. It involved over 50 different public events and partnered academic researchers, artists and communities all working together to showcase how arts and cultural understandings are vital to tackling climate change.

An evaluation was commissioned at the end of the project by colleagues in Information Studies which clearly showed that what had started out as a modestly ambitious project had become a much more extensive and involved initiative. Because of this the CoA were keen to take the DGB to a new phase and build on its success and since the start of 2022 have been looking at how to transition from an events-based programme that was conceived for COP26 to a more permanent role within the university. The DGB would have a slightly different role and purpose and key in more centrally to the research environment and research architecture of the university as well as building links with external partners. Crucially it will continue to be a platform for arts and humanities based around environment, sustainability, and climate change

research. The evaluation showed there was great enthusiasm from students around sustainability issues and getting involved with academics engaged in research projects. All the ideas are contingent on university support and a business case has been made for the next academic year.

Kevin Leomo highlighted a project that ran throughout the DGB which links into embedding educational elements as well as the importance of engaging with local communities. “Local Women of the World” was a 6-month project where UG student mentors helped women develop and realise their creative potential. As part of this, a public event called Bothy Conversations took place in the ARC which drew together researchers from arts and humanities, the social and natural sciences and members of the public and communities to discuss the development of collaborative interdisciplinary and multi-perspective approaches for researching and understanding climate change and crisis.

Action: SM to speak offline with MB and MD about working together on reporting to Scottish Government

Action: CoA to communicate outcome of DGB more widely across university.

5. **GUEST Update**

Fan Henry and Molly Davison are the new GUEST co-ordinators in post and a third co-ordinator will start in September. They have been focusing on changing the team and have inductions with the new promoters set up after which they can start work. Beginning of year projects such as Freshers Fair and Open Day are underway and bigger projects like the Eco-Hub are ongoing with hopefully accommodation being available in Southpark House. They have been contacted by Sam Baker from Walk2COP27, where participants will be encouraged to walk/cycle/run as far as they can over 50 days in their chosen location and progress tracked and trees will be planted by the Jane Goodall Institute for the number of kilometres travelled. Sam would like to get as many students involved as possible, and GUEST are trying to figure out how to get students motivated and make the project work for UoG. Finally, GUEST are trying to organise a pop-up shop during first few weeks of term in collaboration with student halls and The British Heart Foundation.

6. **Centre for Sustainable Solutions Update**

A new Centre Coordinator will be in post soon, based in the ARC. The ‘Greening the ARC Hackathon’ takes place in September and applications are open for PhD students across Scotland. There have been several strategic discussions around the structure of the Centre as there are more research applications going in to RPSC around sustainability and some questions have been raised about whether these should all come under the CfSS. The CfSS is becoming more of an umbrella structure for several other centres arising so we are looking at the possibility of using the word ‘Institute’ and considering the wider structure at an away day in September.

Following the Horizon 2020 European research project that was funded around nature-based solutions, a network called ‘Urban by Nature’ was created and although projected funding has now finished the network is continuing. The Centre will host a UK and English-speaking hub to run monthly seminars and a series of 10-minute YouTube videos and this will be launched during Climate Week in September. CfSS have been commissioned by FutureLearn to develop 6 sustainability short courses with the first two launching in August – ‘Climate Communication for Engaging Action’ and ‘A Critical Introduction to Circular Economies and Business Models’. There will be two more courses launched in October followed by two in January. It is hoped this will become the foundation for the first on-line Sustainability degree with FutureLearn. The Upskilling micro-credential courses have just completed and many interesting connections are

coming through those. CfSS is working with CIVIS to develop both online teaching and a joint masters across several different Universities. A third year MVLS student, travelling to a medical conference in Marseille by train rather than flying will document her travel to see how much carbon she saves and the CfSS are working with External Relations and the Comms team to put something together to publicise this.

7. **Priorities for the coming year**

The following suggestions were put forward for the coming year:

- estates work is a top priority
- being clear about commuting as part of new ways of working agenda and what we expect of staff in discussions with the Director of P&OD
- business travel needs to be communicated to schools to ensure local monitoring of progress
- sustainability lab projects and IT facilities
- general engagement from GUEST network working with student bodies to the DGB to projects engaged through CfSS and garner support across staff and student communities
- compiling a smart action plan with the attributed responsibilities for the climate change strategies with links to KPIs so we can monitor and evaluate our progress.

A business case is being taken forward to commission a third-party IT co-location facility which will have an efficiency on a par with Sauchfield House. There will capacity to host tenants from across the University. We will need to prove this is a workable model as there remains a degree of cultural resistance to this.

The group agreed to monitor this project goes and see what comes out of it

8. **Queens Platinum Jubilee residential update (JT/SM)**

In June JT and SM attended a 3-day residential in Crewe run by the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. About 20 universities and colleges were represented to try and agree on a common approach to achieving net zero carbon emissions across the HE sector in the UK. There was discussion about a standardised scope which all institutions should adopt when it comes to reporting their carbon footprint. Generally, our carbon footprint is broad but other things to consider are the impact of international student travel, student accommodation, international campuses, leased buildings and also the impact of supply chains and procurement. There was general recognition that universities are much better resourced in terms of being able to address the agenda and act on it but many colleges are struggling, and it was suggested that universities could team up with colleges to share expertise and help build capacity. There was an agreement to continue to work together to develop resources and share ideas on how to reach net zero as a sector. Several working groups have been set up in the areas of finance and insurance, principles on net zero admissions, internal skills and resources, travel and transport, supply chain, offsetting and carbon capture, and modelling whole footprint of the sector. SM will attend the travel and transport workshop and JT will attend the offsetting workshop – they will keep the group updated on any new learning gleaned and report back to the SWG.

Fiona Goodwin, Acting Chief Executive of the Environmental Association of Universities and Colleges (EAUC) presented a framework put forward by EAUC and collected feedback from the group on carbon emissions reporting. There was a presentation at the start by the Department for Education. It is worth pointing out that in Scotland we are a little ahead of the game in terms of standardised mandatory reporting frameworks for carbon emissions as this

is done every year as part of our duty under the Public Sector Climate Changes Reporting Returns and not something that institutions in England currently do.

9. **National Initiatives Update**

The Scottish Climate Plan is in its very early days of development.

The EAUC has a science-based target initiative and consultancy that is available and are working on a plan to offer carbon capture. They have funding from the Department for Education to develop a standardised carbon emissions reporting framework for the sector as well as funding from the Environment Agency to develop a carbon framework for universities and colleges. These initiatives may or may not be useful for Scotland but are being taken forward with national funding.

UKRI also has an Environmental Sustainability Working Group that JT and SM attend which is developing a concordat of principles that any research organisation receiving funding from UKRI should sign up to. It is more holistic than merely looking at net zero and includes business and academic travel, supply chains and procurement, infrastructure and partnerships. Both the Queens Anniversary Trust and the UKRI are aiming for the end of this calendar year to release the framework on the concordat.

10. **AOB**

EAUC

To discuss the EAUC's carbon offsetting schemes with Fiona Goodwin. **Action: DD**

Clyde Valley Adaption Group

It would be useful to have a presentation at the next meeting on climate adaptation to revisit our Climate Change Adaptation Plan. **Action: SM**

Homelessness Initiative

The homelessness initiative is a university-wide initiative we are keen to engage staff and students in – it was noted that the student internship model in the GUEST network might be applied to this project.

SWG dates 2022

5 October

8 December