

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

9 May 2022 via Zoom

Attending: Jaime Toney (JT) (Chair), David Duncan (DD), Stewart Miller (SM), Fabrice Renaud (FR), Kelum Gamage (KG), Ian Campbell (IC), Gioia Falcone (GF), Josephine Gallagher (JG), Alasdair Thomson (AT), Meli Vasiloude Bayada (GUEST), Molly Walker (GUEST), Eva Simmons (SRC VP Student Support), Sam Malis, (SRC VP Activities)

Apologies: Minty Donald, Robert Garnish, Thalia Groncott (GUEST), Peter Craig (PC), David Gabra (SRC Environment Officer), Ella McCabe (SRC President), Barry Morton

Attending: Rhona Little (Clerk)

The group welcomed Alasdair Thomson, Director of Infrastructure and Cloud Services, to his first meeting.

### 1 Minute

The Minute of the meeting of February 2022 was approved.

### 2. Matters Arising

There were no actions carried forward.

### 3. Updated Waste Management Strategy and Action Plan

The updated Waste Management Plan was circulated to the group. The plan has been aligned with the broader University Strategy, the Climate Change Strategy (Glasgow Green), and the more recently updated Estates Strategy. The aim is to achieve a 70% on-campus recycling rate by 2027 with zero waste to landfill by 2030. In terms of actions, the single biggest commitment is to upgrade internal recycling provision across the campus to 80 buildings over the next few years as well as improved water fountain provision in our buildings, the promotion of Keep Cups and reusable containers in our catering outlets and the relaunch of the Warp-It Asset Reuse Portal.

It was noted that these documents are University wide and apply to all campuses. The documents could be shared with colleagues.

The University has arrangements in place with food sharing and community groups in the West end of Glasgow with regard to food surplus. This is included in the plan but it was agreed that the issue of getting surplus food to people who cannot afford it should be looked at. In terms of food waste on plates, all our catering outlets have food waste recycling bins that are collected by Enva and the waste goes to anaerobic digestion.

**Action:** SM to follow up with Scott Masterton.

### 4. Updated Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan

This Strategy describes in broad terms what our approach to campus biodiversity management will be. It will be based on the following principles:

- Encouraging a whole-of-institution approach
- Respecting the environment
- Becoming a positive force in the marketplace
- Building knowledge and sharing best practice
- Supporting people and communities

The associated action plan provides a detailed description of the steps that we will take in the next 12 months to improve campus biodiversity. We will update the action plan on an annual basis.

**Action:** SM to contact Michael Muir about Dumfries teaching garden.

## 5 **Climate Ready Clyde Update**

The University will continue to be a member of the Climate Ready Clyde partnership for the financial year 2022-23. CRC published a very ambitious adaptation strategy and action plan that was showcased at COP26 and members of the partnership are now committed to delivering on this. The UoG is one of first organisations in the partnership to develop its own climate change adaptation plan. One of the partnerships flagship actions is the development of the Clyde Climate Forest and there could be opportunities for UoG to get involved in local carbon offsetting initiatives. CfSS hope to work with Sniffer who currently provide the secretariat for the partnership to deliver online adaptation learning resources. Membership of the partnership also has the potential to provide future placement opportunities for our students and possibly for our academic staff to carry out adaptation related research and collaborate with local authorities, public bodies and community groups throughout the city.

Discussions are continuing with Max Hislop about the expansion of tree planting which has proved to be challenging in some areas of the city. Glasgow has recently been awarded status as a climate neutral and smart city through the EU mission which means that there will be funding directed to Glasgow as a recognised city from the European commission and this will give status to research organisations working within the city.

## 6 **GUEST Eco-Hub Proposal**

GUEST have been working on the eco-hub proposal in line with the Glasgow Green Climate Strategy and version 9 was presented to the group. A main point is the commitment to help strengthen the GUEST network and following a stakeholders consultation conducted in January, a speculative timetable was put together which indicated that a dedicated eco-hub space would be well used and energy efficient. A new section of the proposal is dedicated to the Bike Hub which is consistently one of most popular and well attended projects but as it lacks a dedicated space, it must continually move which increases costs and means less time for focusing on sessions. The rest of the proposal ties in with the Waste Plan as the Community Fridge could be in the Eco Hub and GUEST could also run repair sessions for clothing, bikes and electrical equipment.

It was noted that the proposal was improved and better developed. Discussions have been ongoing with Estates colleagues about the physical manifestation on how to follow up the whole student experience strategy and the proposal fits into that as it looks at physical space dedicated for student use and to ensure it is well utilised. Now that specifications are clearer discussions can take place on how this would link in with other student experience work.

**Action:** AM to arrange meeting with IC/Estates colleagues

## 7 **Times Higher Ed Sustainability Rankings**

The Times Higher Education Impact Rankings are the only global performance tables that assess universities against the United Nations' Strategic Development Goals (SDGs). Calibrated indicators are used to provide comprehensive and balanced comparison across four broad areas: research, stewardship, outreach and teaching. UoG did extremely well and was ranked 19<sup>th</sup> in the world, 3<sup>rd</sup> highest in UK and 1<sup>st</sup> in Scotland. One particular success was the

Sustainable Cities Agenda - this is a great credit to the work of academic colleagues across the University. Going forward it is planned build this into our sustainability strategy as a way to express our values as an institution and submit each year.

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

#### 8 **Project Carbon Foot-Printing Tool for Academic Staff**

The group noted the new Project Carbon Foot-Printing Tool for Academic Staff developed by colleagues in CfSS working in tandem with a Masters Student. The tool is a simple excel based spreadsheet to calculate the carbon footprint associated with academic research and provides a way to determine information in the form that funding bodies are increasingly asking for in terms of grant applications.

It would be good to get feedback from research colleagues across the University as to whether this would be useful and how we communicate this to others in Schools and Colleges.

The tool is just for individual use to calculate carbon footprint of a specific research project and, at the moment, there is no mechanism to gather information from this.

The Wellcome Trust now ask for carbon costs of business travel associated with research projects they fund and there is a suggestion that they and the MRC will start asking for more carbon costings for future projects.

CfSS has been in touch with EAUC to enquire if there might be broader interest in the tool which just now is for use by UoG research staff. It may be possible to adapt it to work for other institutions and SM has a meeting with EUAC to discuss if there is any mileage in this. IT Services would be happy to be involved in any work required when the time is right.

#### 9 **Circulation of Business Travel Reports for Schools and Colleges**

The group noted the Business Travel Report and that the University is committed to reporting back to Schools and Services on a 6 monthly basis on their business travel footprint. Optimism was expressed that we will make good progress as people post-covid adjust their travel plans. The reporting tool draws attention to what footprint the is, how it can be monitored, and it gives clear advice and guidance on how to address this. A presentation was given to a HODs forum but more awareness raising should be done at staff meetings. The reports should be seen to come from a senior level to underline the importance of the message.

**Action:** DD and Comms Office to help disseminate information

#### 10 **Sustainable Travel for Events Hosted at UoG**

A query had come via the SMG Question Session about extending business travel guidance to include best practice for organising and/or hosting events at the UoG. While it was agreed that we cannot impose out business travel guidance on external visitors, we can lead by example by considering the carbon cost of hosting events. JT circulated revised wording to work around what considerations are required for hosting an event. This is a grey area and not part of our actual target but is related to our carbon footprint and therefore something we ought to give guidance on. The group approved the wording.

**Action:** SM to contact Sara Somerville

#### 11 **GUEST Updates**

MBV provided the following update from GUEST. Coordinators have been recruited and will attend the SWG in June and promotor applications are in progress. A Q&A event for

prospective promoters will take place on 10 May and a podcast episode will be recorded with the old promoters to hear about their GUEST experiences. GUEST will work with the SRC to plan Climate Assemblies which will start in September and will feed back to the SWG meetings. Most branches' activities running during the semester have now finished. The last Bike Hubs, which were very well attended, will run a small feedback survey but most people are very happy with the service and want more regular Hubs. The Transport Promoter finished her Bikeability lessons and managed to get 3 people to learn how to cycle, and 10 people to cycle comfortably on the road. After the exam period, the Community Engagement Promoter will resume the sessions in schools across Glasgow on sustainable food and gardening.

The food hustings with participants from most parties have been run and went well. The Food Promoter is trying to get the University's Keep Cup Policy advertised more widely as currently lots of people are unaware of this and it is not used in catering facilities even if it formally exists. The Biodiversity promoter is continuing to run gardening sessions and is organising an event in the gardens in May where they will make food with produce from the garden.

MW informed the group she had met with Minty Donald to discuss a GUEST member sitting on the College of Arts Sustainability Working group. The GUEST coordinators recently ran a sustainable careers event, which was very popular and something they are keen to run again. They have been working with the University's new content creators to promote GUEST and sustainability content on the UofG social media pages. The Student Engagement and Communication branches have been working on a climate communication project to make IPCC reports and other scientific climate information more accessible.

The SWG thank the coordinators for their hard work throughout the year and looked forward to meeting the new members at the June meeting.

## 12 **Centre for Sustainable Solutions Update**

The Advanced Research Centre (ARC) is launching with an event in early July to try to green up the inside and to think about how we engage with plants in an inside space. This should be properly managed and engagement with the Estates team is advised. The first point of contact is George Heburn but we will also take advice from a Plant Management company.

**Action:** JT to contact George Hepburn

A new coordinator has been appointed and should be in place by August. CfSS are leading discussion on a Scottish Funding Council bid ARCs (Alliances for Research Challenges) around natural capital and social capital and how they come together. There are two upskilling courses running and contracts have been signed with FutureLearn to offer a series of six new sustainability MOOCs on their platform; there are also conversations at higher level about offering a sustainability degree via this platform. Funding is coming through to allow the Centre to have a new fixed term educational assistant who can help develop the content and put on the course platform.

The Director for Organisational Development is interested in working with the Sustainable Lab Adviser to remodel the online upskilling material to create an introduction to sustainability course for staff at the University.

The CfSS hosted a visit from UK Embassy in Berlin and US Embassy in London and we are looking at how the University and our researchers can link across to various initiatives going on in Germany and the US. The Centre now has a dedicated office in the ARC on level 4 and hopefully will be able to move in soon.

13 **Royal Anniversary Trust Initiative**

The Queen's Anniversary Prize is awarded for great achievements usually in field of research and we have been very successful in winning awards in the last few years. This year the QAP organisers have launched an initiative to raise the profile of environmental sustainability and the contribution that the HE sector can make. A residential event is taking place in June and it is right that the University takes part in this to help shape the approach to environment sustainability. The EAUC will also be closely involved in this initiative. More information will be shared with the group when it is available.

14 **AOB**

Students from Cochno will prepare a presentation to the group after their exams.

15 **SWG dates 2022:**

8 June  
3 August  
5 October  
7 December