**University of Glasgow**  
**Sustainability Working Group**

**Minute of 4 February 2025**

Present: Jaime Toney (Chair) (JT), Anna Brown (AB), Saskia Drijver-Headley (GUEST)(SDH)**,** Gioia Falcone (GF), Josephine Gallagher (JG), Peter Haggarty (PH),Scott Hilditch (SH), Gordon McLeod (GM), Stewart Miller (SM),Viola Retzlaff (VR),Sohail Shakoor (SS), Inge Sorensen (IS),Alasdair Thomson (AT),Paloma Viegas (GUEST), Ronnie Webster (RW),Natlie Welden (NW), Angelica Wilson (SRC), Roddy Yarr (RY)

Apologies: Avril Conacher, Peter Craig, Kelum Garnage, David Duncan, Fabrice Renaud, Sophie Renner, Cat Scothorne

Attending: Amber Higgins (Head of Court / Clerk of Court), Sarah Finlayson (Clerk)

**SWG/2024/13 Welcome and Apologies**

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and noted the apologies.

**SWG/2024/14 Previous Minutes and Actions**

The minutes of 3 December 2024 were approved.

Matters Arising

*SWG/2024/14.1 Sustainability Training (SWG/2024/06)*

It was agreed that DD would put proposal to SMG for sustainability training to become compulsory for staff. RP would also draft a full business case for the resource required along with a job description for a post to set up the sustainability training.

**Action:** JT to follow up with DD.

**SWG/2024/15 Sustainability in the food service offering**

Ronnie Webster introduced Matt Gilmour (Head of Catering & Events) who presented Sustainability in the Food Service Offering to SWG, emphasizing the importance of customer feedback in shaping their offer, encouraging everyone to share their ideas and highlighting the key challenges:

* Balancing commercial targets with sustainability goals, including updating policies and pledges for sustainable catering.
* Encouraging small, independent, and local suppliers while ensuring speed, sustainability, ethics and social / community benefits.
* Collaborating with Estates to improve waste management and promoting reusable cups and schemes.
* Investigating clean energy sources and collaborating on sustainable / electric vehicles.
* Maintaining a balance of healthy, low emission food, and diet for international students.

During the discussion the importance of catering to diverse dietary needs and increasing the use of locally sourced produce were highlighted. The Committee also noted the introduction of new suppliers, such as Noble Water and Moscow Milk Farm, and the implementation of sustainable practices like the 'Sip Responsibly' campaign and the 'Food Made Good' standard.

The development of a new central production unit to increase in-house produce and the hosting of the first-ever UFG Food Festival were also reported. The Committee noted the need for a balance between sustainability initiatives and commercial targets.

A query was raised about the lack of catering services in Dumfries and the need for better connectivity with local stakeholders. It was agreed that Matt and Natalie would take forward discussions on potential solutions. A suggestion was also put forward on reducing meat consumption and removing surcharges on sustainable milk options and it was agreed that this would be considered by the catering team.

The Committee thanked Matt for the informative presentation and look forward to future updates.

**SWG/2024/16 Business Travel Report**

VR introduced Paper 4 – Business Travel Policy Working Group – Update and Recommendations. The Committee noted the data for the 23/24 which showed that carbon emissions from business travel exceeded targets, with most emissions coming from long-haul air travel, particularly in business class. It was reported that nearly 50% of long-haul air travel was related to conference attendance. A recent KPMG audit had also highlighted the issue and made a number of recommendations which would be taken forward.

During the discussion a query was raised about tracking non-work-related activities to demonstrate the wider impact of employees on annual travel, but it was unclear if this would be feasible. Concerns were also raised about the impact of restricting trips on academic progression and also the carbon footprint associated with internationalization.

**Action:** VR and RY to develop the recommendations further, including benchmark information from SWECO, and rank based on sustainability and ease of adoption of policies, aiming to introduce softer measures that guide people towards a sustainable choice. VR and RY to discuss submitting proposals to SMG with David Duncan before presenting to SWG the final recommendations.

**SWG/2024/17 Offsetting update**

The Committee noted that there were ongoing discussions with Scottish Wildlife Trust (SWT) and Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB). It was reported that discussions were progress in relation to a carbon offsetting project. The Committee welcomed this approach and agreed to move forward with developing of the heads of terms for these partnerships, with a potential cost of £10k-£12K. It was noted that legal advice would be sought and the next steps included developing a paper for approval to proceed with the partnerships and presenting this to the Estates and Sustainability Committee and the Investment Committee.

**Action:** JG / PH / RY to take forward the proposal.

**SWG/2024/18 Waterfall Graph and the 2030 Target trajectory**

RY introduced Paper 6 and discussed the development of the Waterfall Graph to illustrate measures being developed against the Target trajectory. It was noted that 2023/24 emissions had risen by 13%. The waterfall graph also illustrated the University's progress towards its 2030 and showed the current trajectory and the various measures being taken to achieve the target, including projects such as decarbonizing gas and reducing business travel emissions. The Committee noted that the pipeline of projects was progressing with several potential areas being looked at from heat pumps to the possibility of buying upland for carbon offsetting.

It was reported that the remit of the Estates Committee had been revised, and this would now include sustainability. The Committee would provide oversight of the University's progress towards its 2030 target.

**Action:** SH / RY to discuss with Head of Communications wider communications of the 2030 target.

**SWG/2024/19 Thermal Comfort Policy update**

The Committee noted Paper 7 Thermal Comfort Policy which had been updated following a discussion with PSG. The Committee approved the Thermal Comfort Policy.

**SWG/2024/20 Update from Centre for Sustainable Solutions**

JT updated on the Center for Sustainable Solutions' activities, including a student placement working on business travel policies and a collaboration with the Sustainable Glasgow Partnership. The Committee also noted that the Centre would be co-hosting a carbon neutral City Alliance in June, collaboration with the European Centre for Academic Studies, Glasgow Centre for Sustainable Energy, and Scotland Beyond Net Zero for sustainable energy futures.

**SWG/2024/21 GUEST Update**

AB updated SWG on various events including: -

* Welcome Week (January)
* Scottish Ecological Design Agency Green Careers Fair (September)
* Collaboration with SRC and Sustainable Lab Workshops
* SRC Veganuary
* Working with Action for Homeless on security
* Glasgow Goes Green – working with volunteers. Also Colleges in Glasgow on Workshops and a March Exhibition in the ARC
* Push for more volunteers in the Eco Hub including induction events and collaboration with SRC
* Bike maintenance stalls on campus (March)
* Earth Week (April) including presentation night demonstrating research projects and sustainability.

AB also highlighted the University Sustainability Week tables and the People on Planet briefings and it was agreed further information would be provided at the next meeting.

**Action:** AB to present Sustainability League Table paper at next meeting.

**SWG/2024/22 Ecohub Q1 report**

SM introduced Paper 10 Ecohub which provided a financial update on the EcoHub, highlighting its positive impact on students and the need for a permanent contract for the current coordinator. The group approved the development of a business case for the EcoHub.

**Action**: SM to produce a paper on carbon savings of the Ecohub.

**SWG/2024/23 AOB**

No substantive matters were raised.

**SWG/2024/24 Next meeting**

Date of next meeting: Thursday 3rd April 10am - 12noon