**University of Glasgow  
Sustainability Working Group**

**Minute of 3 December 2024**

Present: Jaime Toney (Chair) (JT), David Duncan (DD), Peter Craig (PC), Saskia Drijver-Headley (SDH), Josephine Gallagher (JG), Scott Hilditch (SH), Gordon MacLeod (GMacL), Fabrice Renaud, Sophie Renner (SR), Inge Sorensen (IS), Alistair Thomson (AT), Paloma Viegis (PV), Angelica Wilson (AW), Roddy Yarr (RY)

Apologies: Anna Brown, Peter Haggarty, Gioia Falcone, Stewart Miller, Cat Scothorne, Ronnie Webster.

Attending: Amber Higgins (Clerk), Dr Rory Porteous (for Item SWG/2024/06)

**SWG/2024/01 Welcome and Apologies**

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

**SWG/2024/02 Minutes of the meeting held on 8 October 2024**

The previous minute was approved following minor amendment.

**SWG/2024/03 Matters Arising**

The Group noted that discussion in relation to Carbon Offsetting and the development of a procurement strategy was being taken forward by Stewart Miller. An update would be provided at the next meeting following discussion with Jo Gallagher, Head of Procurement.

**SWG/2024/04 Sustainability in the Food Service Offering**

The Group noted Ronnie Webster was unable to attend the meeting, so the presentation on sustainability in the food service offering would be carried over to the next meeting. Members raised concerns about the lack of sustainable catering options on campus, including being able to order from local or community suppliers. DD advised that the University, as an employer, had an obligation to catering staff to ensure that their jobs were protected and that the University used in house catering where possible. It was agreed that DD would highlight the concerns around sustainable food options to RW.

**Actions:** RW to present to the next meeting.

**SWG/2024/05 Public Bodies Reporting Duties Submissions**

RY outlined Paper 1 - University of Glasgow – Public Sector Climate Change Reporting Duty return for 23/24. The Group noted that the carbon footprint for the academic year 23/24, was 56,507 tonne CO2e. Additional carbon emissions associated with the procurement of goods and services accounted for 119,639 tonne CO2e. Thus, the total carbon footprint reported to Scottish Government for 23/24 was 176,146 tonne CO2e.

During the discussion the Group noted that the carbon footprint had increased in recent years which was largely due to a further increase in business travel (+3,400 tonne CO2e) along with increased electricity consumption (+700 tonne CO2e) and gas consumption (+2,000 tonne CO2e). The Group also noted that this was the first year that the additional carbon impact associated with the procurement of goods and services had been reported.

The Group welcomed the use of the waterfall chart to show the pathway to NetZero and recognised that a large amount of work was required in the coming years to meet the target.

**SWG/2024/06 Staff Sustainability Training**

Rory Porteous, Sustainable Lab Adviser presented Paper 2 - Staff Sustainability Training, which detailed a proposal to develop a suite of sustainability training materials. The first would be an online training module similar to existing mandatory training courses focused on giving the background to the climate crisis and the University of Glasgow’s decarbonization goal, and the second an in-person workshop with a focus on specific areas within the University and how to implement sustainable practice in day-to-day operations.

During the discussion the Group noted that the exact resource or skillset required to setup and delivery the proposed training was unclear at present. The Group supported making the training compulsory and it was agreed that DD would take this to SMG for further discussion. A suggestion was also made about the possibility of using existing courses and the possibility of embedding sustainability training in the curriculum for every student.

It was agreed that further discussion was required but in principle the Group agreed that Sustainability Training should be required for all staff. The delivery and content of the training remained open for discussion.

**Actions:** DD to put proposal to SMG for sustainability training to become compulsory for staff. RP to draft a full business case for the resource required along with a job description for a post to set up the sustainability training.

**SWG/2024/07 Town Hall Meeting Schedule**

JT reported that a series of events were being planned in the lead up to the Town Hall scheduled for May 2025. This included the setting up of focus groups, surveys, and a communications strategy to raise staff awareness. The Group also noted that a slide deck for the presentation was also required.

During the discussion the Group agreed that it was important that momentum was maintained and that the focus groups should focus on the urgency of the challenges that lay ahead. The Group also noted plans to host a student placement to collate existing information and guidance from across schools and colleges. An update on progress would be provided at the next meeting.

**Actions:** JT to set up focus group meetings for early 2025. SH to work with JT on a communications strategy.

**SWG/2024/08 Business Travel – University of Reading Approach**

RY provided an update following a recent visit to the University of Reading. The Group noted that the University of Reading policy included:

* no air travel within the UK;
* a levy for sustainability initiatives;
* focus on low-carbon travel option
* targets for reducing non-economy flights and travel to Europe by flights

During the discussion the Group noted that Procurement were working with Selective Travel to include international rail booking as an option in the near future. It was also noted that the system did allow for the rankings of bookings by carbon emissions. The Group was concerned that a number of staff were still travelling by Business Class and it was unclear whether University Policy was being adhered to by all areas. DD noted that a large number of key meetings took place in London/Southern England and therefore it was not possible to always ban UK flights as EDI need to be considered.

The Group emphasised the importance of considering the impact of travel on sustainability and also the impact on all staff groups and services - i.e. conference attendance only if presenting papers, international travel once a year only, ban flights within the UK - as these could have unintended consequences.

The Group agreed that travel working group recommendations would be reviewed in light of this discussion. The Travel Working Group would draft a paper with a clear implantation plan which would be put to SMG for discussion.

**Actions:** RY and travel group to prepare a coherent set of business travel recommendations backed by data and evidence by end of January. A review of related policies conducted and any conflicts highlighted for further consideration – i.e. promotion esteem criteria.

**SWG/2024/09 Update from Centre for Sustainable Solutions**

JT reported that the Centre had been engaged in a number of activities which included:

* Co-hosting a Climate and biodiversity emergencies talks with the German Consulate
* Various consultation calls from the Scottish Government – Wellbeing and Sustainable Development Bill
* Engaging with the Centre for Public Policy
* MSc Student placements
* Sustainability awareness training

**SWG/2024/010 GUEST Update**

PV reported that engagement with the EcoHub had fallen and it was thought that this was due to exams starting shortly. It was also reported that the Community Fridge had been moved inside the EcoHub due to operational matters which had meant this it was only available for limited times. The Group noted that RY was working with Catering to look at various options to ensure that Food Safety and Hygiene standards were maintained in accordance with current legislation.

The Group also noted that a one day event was due to take place on 5 March 2025 in the ARC focusing on diverse ways that sustainability could be integrated across disciplines.

**SWG/2024/11 AOB**

The Group also noted the following:

* Thermal Comfort Policy – paper noting outcome of PSG review of the policy.
* Estates Sustainability Programme Board Update – paper for information
* Cochno Renewables update – paper setting out wind energy draft layout and scope of service for an aviation safeguarding assessment.

**SWG/2024/12 Date of Next meeting**

The date of the next meeting was noted as the 4 February 2025, 1000-1200.