

Sustainability Board Meeting Minutes

14th February 2022 at 10:00am

Via TEAMS.

Attendees:

Victoria Blake (VB)	Becky Bradshaw (BB)	Danielle Bird (DB)
Stephen Wood (SW)	Brendan Fawcett (BF)	Chris Powis (CP)
Janet Jackson (JJ)	John Sinclair (JS)	Emma Stone (ES)
Roger Weston (RW)	Michelle Chodynieski (MC)	Wray Irwin (WI)
Claire Paterson-Young (CPY)		

Apologises:

Chris Forward (CF)	Robert Farmer (RF)	Cathy Smith (CS)
Richard Hazenberg (RH)	June Charlton-Hughes (JCH)	

In Attendance:

Megan Abbott (MA)

1.0 Minutes of Meeting held on 21st June 2021

1.1 The minutes of the previous meeting held on 16th November 2021 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

2.0 Actions of the Previous Meeting

2.1 **Action:** VB urges all to contact EM to ensure we have a contact in every Faculty and Department for EM to discuss single use plastics with.

Action: All

2.2 **Update:** VB's conclusions to review on climate action toolkit covered in agenda.

2.3 **Update:** MA circulated IiE logos and successful media coverage of COP26.

2.4 **Ongoing:** Identification of current staff volunteering policy for future projects, such as project awesome.

Action: BB

2.5 **Update:** COP celebration events proposal covered in agenda.

- 2.6 **Update:** Regularly reviewing and update all webpages to reflect and outline University efforts regarding Sustainability and Environment has been added to this boards agenda.
- 2.7 **Ongoing:** RH to send MA link to infographic report showcasing works of Department of Research, Impact and Innovation with the Faculty of Business and Law for circulation.

Action: MA/RH

- 2.8 **Update:** VB and JH have set a meeting to discuss an appropriate tool and template for carbon auditing and work through the practicalities of implementing environmental impact assessments for fieldwork.
- 2.9 **Ongoing:** VB to develop a draft travel hierarchy to be brought forward to future meeting for discussion, approval and implementation.
- 2.10 **Update:** VB updates on feedback around our Sustainability pages being accessible on our webpages and will remain as current.

3.0 Good Business Charter

- 3.1 On Friday 11th February the University gained the Good Business Charter accreditation, this scheme recognises responsible business practise in its entirety.
- 3.2 The measured are based on our performance and behaviour and we were successful in all 10 areas. The University has paid the Real Living Wage for a number of years and have recently become accredited by the Living Wage Foundation as a Living Wage Employer. As a Living Wage Employer the University has committed to paying employees (including individuals employed by University of Northampton Enterprise Limited) at least the Real Living Wage and ensuring regular contractors also pay their employees the Real Living Wage.
- 3.3 The Good Business Charter includes a simple framework that measures behaviour and performance in 10 component areas: Real Living Wage, fairer hours and contracts, employee well-being, employee representation, diversity and inclusion, environmental responsibility, paying fair tax, commitment to customers, ethical sourcing and prompt payment.

4.0 Environment & Sustainability Team

4.1 Energy

4.1.1 Globally and domestically there is currently an energy crisis with costs expected to increase 50% on gas and electric with further increase forecast. This begins in April with the new delivery periods commencement.

4.1.2 Our entire estate is on 100% renewable energy, due to this crisis and Brexit there is a significant increase on the premiums associated with renewable energy.

4.1.3 Estates & Campus Services are collating a development plan of recommendations including management strategies and optimising our current resources.

4.1.4 Behaviour change campaigns will be beginning imminently, the first being an estate wide switch off. It is confirmed IT will keep the communal printers on for students etc but the switch will be in our office spaces.

4.1.5 JJ requests heating be lowered in the Learning Hub as some rooms cannot have ventilation increased. DB explains heating alterations are being reviewed with 1st Degree Facilities as these are difficult to arrange as our systems run on a building wise basis.

4.2 Travel

4.2.1 The Environment & Sustainability team are working with North Northants and West Northants Councils on an ebike incentive scheme, wherein individuals can try out these bikes during a 4 week period in April. 20 ebikes have been allocated to the University for use by staff, please email the travel team to register interest. JS offered to support this project through blogs and testimonials if needed.

4.3 Projects & Initiatives

4.3.1 A waste management and waste avoidance policy looking at single use items across campus is in development and an audit of these items across the Ground and the Market has been completed.

4.3.2 The University recycling rate has reduced from 70% to 63.3% which is disappointing given our target is 80%. The decrease is considered to be due to contamination which the team are aiming to combat during Go Green Week. Encouragingly, 72 000 cups have been recycled across the estate during this period.

4.4 Projects & Initiatives

4.4.1 The University has been working towards Gold Hedgehog Friendly status with an application submitted at the end of 2021.

4.4.2 Two hedgehogs, Phantom and Warlock, have been released on campus, with supported offered from various individuals.

4.4.3 A plan to maintain Hedgehog Friendly accreditation and enhance our Hedgehog Friendly status is currently in development. It was acknowledged that this work had previously been led on by a student who will be leaving this summer and the Environment & Sustainability team will lead at this point. JJ adds we need to begin collating 5-year measurable targets as our report currently covers Waterside only, BB explains the entire estate should be included in all initiatives going forwards.

4.4.4 JJ explains to increase the Hedgehog Friendly campus' reports remit further budget may be required. ES will identify targets and corresponding costings. **Action:** VB and ES to ensure budgets utilised to target appropriately.

Action: VB & ES

4.4.5 BB asked if we have a target date on completion of our Biodiversity Plan, ES confirms this will be March following some delays.

4.4.6 Project Awesome has mainly been focusing on Hedgehog Friendly plans, with mainly spreading information on social media and looking at our biodiversity. The team

needs to be regrouped and actions reviewed, ES emphasises it is important we gain as much student and staff engagement as possible.

4.5 Heat Decarbonisation Plan

4.5.1 ES reported that the first draft of the Heat Decarbonisation Plan has now been received from Siemens.

4.5.2 The final plan is due on 4th March. ES has been attending Salix briefings to ensure they are fit for purpose with quality control. **Action:** Plan to be added in agenda and shared in next meeting.

Action: ES & MA

4.6 People & Planet

4.6.1 The University's People & Planet league table positioning moved up from 102 to 81 in the 2021 league, with classification increasing to a 2:2 following progress in many areas.

4.6.2 It was noted that whilst progress was encouraging there were a number of areas where improvements to publicly available information could improve the University's assessment considerably and these are the focus for the first stages of a revised action plan. **Action:** ES and VB to share People & Planet plan at the next meeting.

Action: ES & VB

4.6.3 BB passed on UMT thanks for the teams effort and acknowledged the frustration in current scoring with full support on further actions.

4.7 COP27

4.7.1 Building on the success of the COP26 week long event last year the Environment & Sustainability team introduced the possibility of running another event for COP27 which is due to take place between 7th until 18th November 2022

4.7.2 It was proposed that the previous format which included a steering committee and working group for organisation, would continue.

4.7.3 The length of the event was discussed and SW suggested evenings sessions may appeal to a greater volume of students and would enable staff to participate without interrupting their working day. All agreed 3 days starting at lunchtime and finishing at 6-7pm would be sufficient.

4.7.4 VB explained the event would run alongside COP27 to generate and maintain interest, however this is being held in Egypt and unlikely to have the same momentum as COP26.

4.7.5 In keeping with last years schedule, theme days and external speakers would be a beneficial addition. BB suggested the NUS sustainability lead and a variety of speakers to provide a board showcase. DB explained last year a wide range of speakers were reached out to, with budget, however dates need to be confirmed well in advance to ensure we acquire who we want. All agreed dates need to be selected as soon as possible. **Action:** Dates confirmed for COP27 3 day event.

Action: BB & VB Team

4.7.6 RW explains from a student engagement point of view we should link in with activities students are already involved in as a wholly speaker orientated event will not be successful with students. Students are more likely to participate if they already know and contribute to what we are offering. RW adds we previously had a few grants to offer students which really gained their engagement in improving what they had been participating in.

4.7.7 **Action:** RW to be added to committee and aid with steering group, VB to include.

Action: VB

4.7.8 BF suggested potentially looking at other events and specific issues throughout the year as COP27 will not gather the attention it did, particular UK wise in 2020. ES will be organising Go Green week and the team continuously runs events throughout the year.

4.7.9 BB explained we are looking to introduce an engagement officer style role to the Environment and Sustainability team. **Action:** VB and team to develop an engagement calendar for the year and bring this to a future meeting.

Action: VB

5.0 **Webpage Updates**

5.1 **Action:** The board is urged to share any feedback on our webpages or updates on activities that could be included, to keep this relevant and accurate as possible, contact VB.

Action: All

6.0 **Times SDG Impact Rankings**

6.1 The Times Higher SDG Impact Rankings submission has now been made and BF thanked all for the aid and information provided.

6.2 It is acknowledged this years ranking may be reduced due to the popularity of the goals and competition increasing.

7.0 **LLS Environmental & Sustainability Assessment**

7.1 VB was invited to speak to the Library and Learning Services management team, who were inspired to create a more sustainable ethos throughout all their works and processes.

7.2 Georgina Dimmock has volunteered as the liaison for improvements around the sustainability of the team.

- 7.3 An LLS sustainability audit is being undertaken to then identify potential areas where a reduction in carbon footprint can be made. VB and her team will then assist with creating a sustainability plan with corresponding KPI's from the results of this audit.
- 7.4 The audit has firstly reviewed the teams daily work, processes regarding teaching and learning etc. It is now focusing on the impact of travel whether this be commuting for work or for fieldwork. Social factors such as clothing expectations also impact out footprint.
- 7.5 CP explains COGS work is underway which focuses on implementing the SDG framework to develop out leaning outcomes.
- 7.6 CP adds his team have been looking at tools for assessing systems with Procurement to potentially look at RIGO as out future test supplier.
- 7.7 The University reading lists currently links to Amazon if an item is not available, this could be substituted to a more environmentally conscious organisation. Similar to this Google is out default search engine for teaching. Both options will be explored further.
- 7.8 At the end of term the department will hold a meeting to identify their sustainability champions to begin works on the sustainability plans implementation.
- 7.9 It is agreed this is a great leap forward. **Action:** VB a more formal proposal on the partnership of the sustainability and environment team working alongside faculties and professional services will be created.

Action: VB

8.0 Any Other Business

- 8.1 None.

Date & Time of Next Meeting: Thursday 12th May 2022