

## Sustainability Board

16<sup>th</sup> November 2021 at 14:00

Via TEAMS.

### Attendees:

Victoria Blake (VB)	Becky Bradshaw (BB)	Owen Morris (OM)
Gerogina Dimmock (GD)	Janet Jackson (JJ)	Hollie Darby (HD)
John Sinclair (JS)	Stephen Wood (SW)	Paul Bramble (PB)
Richard Hazenberg (RH)	Robert Farmer (RF)	Wray Irwin (WI)
Danielle Bird (DB)	Amy Moore (AM)	Emma Stone (ES)

### Apologises:

Michelle Chodynieski (MC)	June Charlton-Hughes (JCH)	Cathy Smith (CS)
Chris Forward (CF)	Chris Powis (CP)	Mark Hall (MH)
Brendan Fawcett (BF)	Sophie Hose (SH)	Mark Cusiter (MC)
Kathryn Kendon (KK)	Claire Paterson-Young (CPY)	

### In Attendance:

Megan Abbott (MA)

### 1.0 Minutes of Meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2021

1.1 The minutes of the previous meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> June 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:** Regarding the travel survey AM shares the link in the chat box.

2.2.1 Our single staff occupancy car travel has reduced from 71% to 56%, our student % also decreased by between 10% and 20%.

2.2.2 The majority of questions were around cycling facilities in terms of lockable storage, improvements in showers etc. These have all been improved with lockable storage, shower doors, mirrors and hairdryers.

- 2.3 **Ongoing:** VB has been reviewing the climate action toolkit and aligning this with the sustainability scorecard, the project remains in progress and is half way completed.  
**Action:** VB to show findings and actions in next meeting, MA add to agenda.

**Action: VB & MA**

- 2.4 **Update:** Our Travel Roadshow was advertised well however turn out was low, partially due to it being during the COVID period. We had some people book on our Dr Bike Service; the Police attended to complete bike tagging and Renault attended who have now applied their family and friends discount on electric vehicles for UON. VOI were unable to attend due to short notice.

- 2.5 **Update:** DB explains we did not use a Branding based logo as they did not have the resources, so a 3<sup>rd</sup> party designed some posters.

- 2.6 **Update:** Nick Petford opened COP26, and John Sinclair closed it off.

### **3.0 Environment & Sustainability Annual Report**

- 3.1 This has been circulated to all Sustainability Board members, VB explains it is a condensed showcase of sustainability performance throughout the University and action undertaken towards our carbon and energy targets, waste reduction, biodiversity etc.
- 3.2 BB explains this is for comments queries or feedback, there has been a substantial amount of work completed in this area despite the challenges during the pandemic. BB recorded UMTs thanks to the Environment and Sustainability team for all their hard work outlined as well as their plans linked to the Sustainability Scorecard.
- 3.3 BB added that we may see a reverse of the decline in utility consumption and single car use as we return to non-pandemic status and increase occupancy on campus.

### **4.0 Environment & Sustainability Update**

#### 4.1 Pledges

4.1.1 VB explains the team are currently working on our new Carbon Management Plan which will be ready in the first format for review at the beginning of next year.

4.1.2 UON has signed up for a target of Net Zero Carbon by 2030. We have signed up for One Planet Pledge and SDG's.

4.1.3 We have introduced Race to Zero which is a faster plan, wherein you make a pledge, which we have done, then complete a plan. VB explains we have 12 months from signing up to the pledge to then publish our plan and on a yearly basis we publish how we are proceeding with the plan. The EAUC formally support the Race to Zero.

#### 4.2 Salix/Heat Decarbonisation

4.2.1 The University bid for a 100k as part of the funding opportunity for Salix Low Skill Carbon Fund and was successful.

4.2.2 This funding will enable exploration of the action required to decarbonise our heat network, and the long term financial commitment required to deliver this.

4.2.3 The project is currently underway with Siemens appointed as our delivery partner and delivery is expected by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022.

#### 4.3 Green Gown Awards

4.3.1 The University and our Upforthe Cup project has been shortlisted in the 'Student Engagement' category of the upcoming Green Gown Awards, to be held on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> December.

#### 4.4 liE Accreditation

4.4.1 Following a successful Investors in Environment audit (the University's chosen environmental management system) in September, it is pleasing to note that the University have again secured Green level accreditation.

4.4.2 **Action:** EM to send MA liE logos for circulation to the group.

**Action: EM & MA**

#### 4.5 Best Waste Reduction

4.5.1 The UpfortheCup project was successfully awarded the Investors in Environment Award for Best Waste Initiative at the recent liE awards ceremony. The team received positive feedback on engagement with students and partnerships with the town.

### 5.0 Review of COP26 Awareness Week

5.1 BB explains this was fantastic week for engagement with a variety of workshops, seminars and activities showcased from very different areas within the University. BB and JS conveyed UMT's thanks to the Environment & Sustainability team and everyone evolved in making the event a success.

5.2 DB outlined content included in the week long event and added that feedback from guests, participants and speakers had been extremely positive.

5.4 The board agreed there was good coverage across a variety of media platforms with students also engaged with media coverage. OM has provided a summary of press coverage and thanked those who spoke to the press with particular thanks extended to DB. **Action:** OM to send MA the media summary report, MA to circulate to the group.

**Action: OM & MA**

5.5 DB explained there was a lack of student engagement across the event but the group felt the limited number of people on campus at present probably contributed to this.

5.6 JJ added that some staff were unable to engage due to workload and commitments and asked if there is an institutional policy on attendance at such events and supporting through volunteering. JC explains we used to have a staff policy on this however JC and BB are unsure if this is still in place. **Action:** BB to investigate staff volunteering policy with Human Resources.

**Action:**

- 5.7 BB reported that UMT have expressed their support for a similar event in the future, maybe on an annual basis, over a slightly shorter timeframe. It was agreed that the Environment & Sustainability team would develop a proposal for a regular event to coincide with future Conference of the Parties events. **Action:** VB to develop a proposal for future COP celebration events and bring forward to a future Sustainability Board.

**6.0 Times SDG Impact Rankings**

- 6.1 RH thanked colleagues who helped with the Times Higher SDG Impact Rankings submission for 2021. Although the work undertaken for the previous submission provided a solid foundation for the 2021 submission there was unfortunately still a considerable amount of work to bring the information to a point where it could be submitted with the greatest chance of success and therefore the assistance was appreciated.
- 6.2 The submission built on last years submission which included SDGs 3, 4, 5, 7, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15 and 17 and it is expected that we will see an increase in each of these The rankings are published in April 2022 and although we are expecting an improved position it should be noted that Northampton's placing overall will become more and more difficult as further HEIs submit to the rankings.
- 6.3 The Environment & Sustainability team have reviewed content on the Sustainability webpages and made any updates that are relevant but it was noted that the Press & PR report for COP26 mentioned earlier in the meeting would be useful to this exercise.
- 6.3.1 BB added that there would be a potential contributory benefit to our People and Planet marking as around 50% of our overall score is taken from information that is publicly available on our website.
- 6.3.2 All are asked to provide any updates throughout the year. **Action:** MA to add to further agendas so web updates becomes a permanent fixture.

**Action: MA**

- 6.4 This year we completed a report as well as our webpages for the SDG submission.
- 6.5 The Department of Research, Impact and Innovation are working with FBL around reports to ensure we can showcase some of our work and turn this into an infographic report as well. **Action:** RH to send MA infographic link so this can be circulated.

**Action: RH & MA**

**7.0 Royal Geographical Society Principles**

- 7.1 JS provided a summary of the Royal Society (RGS) Principles for Sustainable Fieldwork, explaining that the Geography and Environmental Science teams had requested that the Board consider signing up to support and delivery of these principles in our own fieldwork planning and management.

- 7.2 It was agreed that 4 of the 5 principles for undergraduate field work could already be evidenced, these include Fieldwork Learning and Value, Safe and Ethical fieldwork (to include appropriate safety management), Accessibility and the provision of training to staff to facilitate these principles.
- 7.3 The Board felt we could not currently evidence the completion of carbon auditing of fieldwork but that we could demonstrate where low carbon alternatives were offered. It was agreed that the Environment & Sustainability team would work with the Faculty of Arts Science & Technology to develop a tool to audit fieldwork associated carbon. **Action: VB to work with JS to identify an appropriate tool and template for carbon auditing.**
- 7.4 The next stage is an evaluation and mitigation of environmental impact which should include our students. we should review our carbon footprint of field education annually.
- 7.5 Similar to the risk assessment templates it was agreed the carbon assessments should be user friendly and shared with students which can be reviewed each year as they can be reported on an annual basis.
- 7.6 The Board agreed that they would like to see an annual review of the carbon associated with fieldwork which could then be used to identify key areas for intervention. **Action: VB to include fieldwork associated carbon within the Environment & Sustainability annual report.**
- 7.7 VB has looked at the weblink and resources, suggesting sticking to green gas protocol for calculating carbon etc. this can be included in our methodology.
- 7.8 VB explained a travel hierarchy may be beneficial in order to articulate the rationale for travel and provide alternative options that could be considered. BB suggested that as the University is trying to minimise travel the travel hierarchy should be considered for the whole institution and not just fieldwork. **Action: VB to develop a draft travel hierarchy to be brought forward to a future meeting for discussion, approval and implementation.**
- Action: BB & VB**
- 7.9 VB explained the Environment & Sustainability team can support with environmental impact risk assessments. **Action: VB and JS to meet up and work through the practicalities of implementing environmental impact assessments for fieldwork.**
- Action: VB & JS**
- 7.10 DB asked if we will consider students experience outcomes from this methodology, as non-domestic trips can be more enticing for students who would like to review subjects in different countries. JS agreed adding the RGS paper is not to preclude international travel where appropriate, we can always review for example planes instead of trains etc.

## **8.0 UK Research and Innovations' Environment & Sustainability Strategy**

- 8.1 PB shared a presentation explaining the launch of the 2020 UKRI Research Environmental Sustainability Strategy which is composed of 9 councils and last year gave a range of funding to successful Universities on applications.
- 8.2 They are developing and looking at reducing emissions associated with travel etc. also adopting biodiversity action plans across the estate and imbedding these into their investment decisions.
- 8.3 By 2025, they will have surpassed just looking at research, and review how organisations implement the 'Sustainability Scorecard' and how Procurement works.
- 8.4 Last year, 2020, 5 interdisciplinary circular economy centres were being established, around reducing waste material in textiles, construction, chemical and metal industries.
  - 8.4.1 In 2021 the Sustainability Scorecard will be implemented, to review and amend the UKRI Grant and training terms and conditions to reflect environmental sustainability ambition.
  - 8.4.2 In 2022 they will embed environment and sustainability considerations into the ways of working etc.
- 8.5 PB explains we are in a strong position sustainability wise; we will be reviewing our UON Sustainability Policy to meet the UKRI Sustainability Scorecard. There is a need for greater awareness of sustainability for those who engage in research and innovation actives across in all disciplines.
  - 8.5.1 We need to make our research more sustainable firstly by identifying how, exploring different technology options, reducing travel etc and how we can then implement these.
  - 8.5.2 We need to review the high energy-usage equipment to undertake essential research, such as computers, electrical data storage and equipment in the Leather Centre.
  - 8.5.3 We need to ensure we are sharing best practise, brining in a range of voices and perspectives of staff and students to become future leaders and lead into future research.
- 8.6 The question is raised if we have a centre for sustainability, if so could we include more of our staff, strengthening and aligning engagement.
- 8.7 BB explains there is a lot for us to think about and begin to action here as the criteria becomes available. BB asks PB what our next actions should be, and he explains today's presentation was to highlight what is happening in the research environment, once we get the scorecard then we can begin to work on moving this further.
- 8.8 GD explains she works in LLS in research and ethics committee and will take this to them, specifically from an ethics of research data management plan angle. BB suggests we raise this at the institutional research and ethics training committee not just in LLS.

8.8.1 BB adds we do have intentions to look at training and development for staff and could look in this particular area, build on this training wise and once we have the scorecard can pick this up in detail to take in a broader content to UMT, JS agrees.

8.8.2 PB's team support the application and funding process, they have a training programme for researchers so this could be added in also.

8.9 We will need an ongoing and updated statement around what we do as an institution, all the awards etc. BB confirms all this information would be within our webpages which VB agrees and emphasis we need ensure this information is kept up to date and people submit their information to VB and RH.

8.9.1 RH adds if people are pulling together information to let us know for the mapping of SDG's. JS thinks this would be a good faculty incentive, BB agrees an opportunity to work more collaboratively across the professional service and faculties.

8.10 BB thanks PB for his presentation and asks him to return with more information once this is available.

## **9.0 People & Planet League**

9.1 VB explained that we were awarded 2:2 accreditation in the 2019 version of the People & Planet League and although the league did not run in 2020 the University had been assessed for 2021. Results will be published in December and will be communicated accordingly.

9.2 EM explains we have updated our webpages, highlighting all the positive things we are doing and once the results come through, we will identify the clear gaps and update these. EM is checking this regularly and will update the group in the next meeting.

## **10.0 Any Other Business**

10.1 VB to pick up on JJ's point regarding the difficulty in finding the Sustainability pages online, and possibly making them more prominent as it should be more accessible.

**Action:** VB to pick up with web team, OM suggests Steve Hamer as a contact.

**Action: VB**

**Date & Time of Next Meeting:** 14<sup>th</sup> February 2022