

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

6 June 2023 via Zoom

Attending: David Duncan (DD) (Chair), Jaime Toney (JT), Peter Craig (PC), Gordon McLeod (GMcL), Chrissy Sanachan (CS), Erika Makipere (SRC Environmental Officer), Stewart Miller (SM), Robert Garnish (RG), Alasdair Thomson (AT), Josephine Gallagher (JG), Fabrice Renaud (FR), Gioia Falcone (GF), Ross Barker (RB)

GUEST Co-ordinators - Laila Elaasar (LE), Fan Henry (GUEST)

Apologies: Ian Campbell, Rinna Vare (SRC President), Barry Morton, Hilda De Groot (HDG), Hailie Pentleton-Owens (VP Student Welfare), Katie Fish (VP Activities), Minty Donald, Molly Davison (MD)

In attendance: Ross Powell (Palladium Group), Emma Davies, Aude Delmer, William Hawes (National Parks), Rhona Little (Clerk)

1 **Minute**

The Minute of the meeting of 8 February 2023 was approved subject to the update on the Sustainable Food Policy and Action Plan (see below) and to note point about UoG Commercial emissions.

2. Matters Arising

2.1 Update on Sustainable Food Policy and Action Plan

NB: the Sustainable Food Policy had been reviewed and published and the 8 February 2023 minute updated.

2.2 Carbon Footprint item CHP engine

Action: paper to be brought to next meeting (IC)

2.3 Carbon impact of international Student flights for 2021/22

Action: to investigate this and report back to next meeting (FR)

2.4 Potential for refurbishment and donation of IT equipment

Action: circulate information from SEPS (SM)

2.5 Vending machine contracts

Procurement are looking at contracts in place but are not yet in a position to update the SWG.

2.6 Deposit Return Scheme

Depending on how Ministers vote there may not be a deposit return scheme. If UK Government do not agree to glass the Scottish Government is threatening to pull out of the whole scheme and it might be shelved to 2025 in line with UK rollout.

3. **Potential Nature Restoration Partnership in Loch Lomond and the Trossachs**

Revere is delivered through a partnership between Palladium and the UK National Parks who catalyse private finance to restore the UK's 15 National Parks at the scale and pace needed to tackle the climate emergency and biodiversity crisis.

Palladium is a global positive impact company operating in over 90 countries which works with governments, businesses and investors and believes that collaborative models and systemic approaches are the way to achieve progress and success.

National Parks Partnerships LLP (NPP) devises and manages UK-level partnerships between the 15 UK National Parks and the private sector.

Representative of the Palladium Group and National Parks joined the meeting to outline how a partnership with Revere would help the UoG become a leader in UK nature restoration to meet its annual offsetting requirement and deliver additional benefits for the University community.

Nature Carbon projects use a pioneering model that overcomes barriers currently blocking large-scale investment into UK nature restoration and leave a legacy on the landscapes of our National Parks in the following ways:

- Developed aggregate restoration projects across a geography into a project portfolio.
- Raise capital investment at a portfolio level to pay for upfront project delivery costs.
- Generate revenue from the sale of ecosystem services to ethically vetted corporate offtakers (the university)
- Revenue used to repay the investor and profits distributed to landowners, community, National Parks Authorities and Revere
- This model allows smaller landholdings to get involved and scale is created to crowd in large-scale institutional investment.

It was suggested that a partnership with Revere would deliver a dedicated supply of high integrity carbon credits for the UoG.

- A bespoke solution that will rapidly advance progress towards the University's climate goals and demonstrate environmental leadership.
- Map and design a scalable project to contribute towards the University's carbon offsetting requirements in Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park, less than a two-hour bus ride from the campus.
- The solution will provide UoG with priority access to high integrity UK carbon credits fully audited and verified by the woodland and peatland carbon codes.
- The project will prioritize the right species mix for local landscapes and biodiversity to help meet ambitious targets for Scottish woodland creation and peatland restoration, overseen and quality assured by a National Park Authority.
- From design stage to implementation, the University can engage with every aspect of the project development benefitting from hands-on learning opportunities at the forefront of pioneering nature restoration finance.

Modelling of woodland creation across the park estimates the University's annual offsetting requirements could be achieved around 10-15 years after planting begins.

Revere delivers Carbon+: high-integrity carbon credits:

- All woodland creation is based on native broadleaves species – no conifer or commercial planting.
- Each project includes significant herbivore control with an initial deer cull followed by annual deer stalking.
- Due to the economies of scale at a platform level, smaller landholdings can access the carbon market benefiting more members of the community.

- Additional biodiversity intervention in the form of invasive non-native species (rhododendron) control
- Local communities will benefit from a profit share facility by a community fund for projects/infrastructure decided by and for the community.
- Regular monitoring of the new woodlands to ensure successful establishment and replacement of any dead trees.

Revere's Nature Capital Platforms aim to provide multiple benefits to all stakeholders as well as academic opportunities. To ensure they are meeting this commitment:

- It does not purchase land, instead engaging existing landowners in agreeable contracts.
- Stipulates that a portion of revenues must be shared with the community through a Community Trust.
- Maintain a close relationship with the Scottish Land Commission to ensure that Revere maintains best practices and standards for engagement on land use change and community consultation.
- Will only engage with corporate off takers that meet their stringent Ethics Charter.

The cost of delivering a nature carbon project will be split across six key deliverables over circa 9-12 months with a total cost of £449K.

To summarise, a nature carbon project will:

- Help the University achieve its climate ambitions.
- Provide opportunities for engagement and learning.
- Further connect the University to the communities of Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park.
- Create a legacy in one of Scotland's most culturally significant natural landscapes.

The group agreed it was a helpful presentation and went on to discuss a range of ethical issues. With the 2030 deadline looming, a decision will have to be made about off-setting. Over the next few months, it would be useful to have a formal proposal to persuade the Court how much investment would be needed to meet our targets. This could be one route, carbon coalition another but other proposals with high ethical standards could also be considered.

Action: the group agreed to have further conversations with Palladium to include both business and academic proposals and to speak to colleagues in Procurement, in Finance and the Investment Committee and bring a proposal back to the next SWG which addresses the issues raised.

4. **GUEST EcoHuB update** – (GUEST Laila Elaasar)

General updates include a 25p discount which has been implemented with hospitality from all outlets that the University has price control over when students bring own cup; currently running drop offs for circular economy for student homeware and will have swap shop for homeware in September; running workshops on how to reuse old fabric but other than that it has been quieter because of the exam period.

EcoHub update include visits to other Universities that have hubs on campus and will take notes and implement our own EcoHub.

Noted that the Keep-a-Cup should be updated to green on the Waste Management Action Plan.

The group noted that the Student Experience Committee and the Investment Committee have approved development of an EcoHub on the ground floor of Boyd Orr Building with the aim of opening formally early 2024. Discussions have taken place with Commercial Services to provide

food and drink as well as several other services in conjunction with GUEST such as a community fridge, a bicycle repair workshops, clothing swap shops, clothing repair and end of term drop-offs. The space will also be used to host events such as workshops and documentary screenings and other clubs and societies with an environmental ethos would be able to book out the space.

A second phase of the project would be to reach out to independent institutions to encourage the Keep-a-Cup scheme.

5. Cochno Tree Planting Update (SM)

A procurement process has been completed and contracts exchanged with a suitable supplier which have been signed and work is about to be started. A lot of fencing work will happen over summer with a view to planting in the autumn.

6. Waste Management Strategy and Action Plan update 2022-27

Tom Bryce, Cleaning and Waste Adviser attended to give an update on the action plan (non-hazardous waste). There are 34 projects and topics which identify areas where we can improve our waste management and strategy and progress against each action is categorised as being either red, amber or green.

The Plan applies to all campuses although there could be contractual variances because of lease agreements, particularly at Dumfries.

There was discussion about whether the new Carbon Management Plan could be made into policy rather than just guidance so perhaps a phased approach where SWG could look at some guidance to raise more awareness of the WARPit scheme would be useful.

Estates and Procurement should get together and support relaunch of WARPit and Procurement could do some training with purchasing officers to encourage use of WARPit.

7. DRAFT Carbon Management Plan

The draft carbon management plan was circulated. IC was not in attendance but had highlighted several key items:

- We have set out the annual savings to achieve our targets; this will help create a detailed annual plan to monitor progress.
- There has been a significant change towards heat source reductions in the plan and a move away from building fabric improvements. This reflects our learning over the last year.
- A debate is required as to whether we should mandate the business travel guidelines.
- We have made progress with regard to IT sustainability but believe there is scope for further savings in this area; work over the summer will help identify if we are correct.
- We have significantly increased our targets on 'embodied carbon'.

As Ian Campbell was not in attendance, the following questions/concerns have been raised and a response required before the next SWG:

- are we now committed to Clyde Climate Forest?
- is there a tracked changed version of the CMP - it was noted there is a chart at the end of CMP where it would be possible to compare changes that have been made.
- do the figures in the report take into account the most recent working trends as there is a risk of split message/management that could cause diversity issues.
- will buildings that are difficult to retro fit be discarded and become a problem elsewhere.
- could a date be provided when offsetting international students would be included in CMP

Action: a further discussion to take place at the next meeting

Action: FR to bring students project information to next meeting

8. Sustainability Team Recruitment

As IC was not in attendance, this item would be deferred to the next meeting. JT reported that she was on an interview panel for the Director of Sustainability post and there were two highly appointable candidates so the hope is that one of them will take up the position.

9. Centre for Sustainable Solutions update

JT provided an update:

- All MOOC courses are now live including 6 sustainability courses that over 2000 students have attended since their launch in September 2022;
- upskilling courses still going strong with 130 students on courses just now;
- to note that a member of Faculty of Public Health who took the Systems Thinking Upskilling Course has been in touch with SWG regarding public health education provision;
- there have been a lot of informal networking events with in in March looking at University heating systems;
- in May there was a focus on AV and IT;
- CfSS is working closely with VP Chris Pearce on an initiative – Glasgow Changing Futures – looking at bringing together teams of interdisciplinary researchers to address some of the biggest challenges;
- CfSS are involved in two bids – one for a Centre in Health Equity and Climate Action and a local policy innovation partnership bid looking at building innovative partnerships around the city region;
- CfSS have been in partnerships with the Glasgow Tool Library who are losing some of their public funds and are looking for a new home and there is a possibility that the student-led EcoHub might be able to help out;
- working with Stanford University Doerr School of Sustainability who have had an investment of £1 billion US dollars from an alumni into the sustainability school;
- have had conversations with Sydney University about building partnerships and working with Edinburgh University at a strategic level to look at how we are addressing net zero and beyond within Scotland;
- partnered with the Chamber of Commerce who will be running e-cargo bikes throughout duration of world cycling championships;
- working with new start up company and collaborating on a pilot scheme to minimise carbon footprint of the UoG sustainability website; engaging with sustainable Glasgow hubs;
- brought in a landscape architecture firm who do green designs and hope to help how to green the ARC;
- the Centre has been approached by individuals interested in acquiring a long-term lease on land next to the Argyle Wind Tunnel and enquiries have been passed to Estates to deal with.

Anyone interested in getting involved in any of these initiatives to get touch with JT.

10. AOB

Peter Craig colleagues had raised issue of divestment and participation of fossil fuel companies links to Career Fairs. A discussion at SWG had taken place a while ago but perhaps this should be addressed again.

Action: to add as an agenda item for a later meeting.

11. Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 2 August 2023 – 10:00am

