

## SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE

### Minutes of the meeting held on 6 July 2022



#### Members Present:

Provost and Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Chair), Prof Christine Bovis-Crossen (CBC)  
Chief Resource Officer, Ian Callaghan (IC)  
Director of Estates & Facilities Directorate, Stephen Wells (SW)  
Director of Admissions, Recruitment and Marketing, Angelina Bingley (AB)  
Governor Apprentice of Council, Mei Ren (MR)  
SU Campaigns and Democracy Officer, Serene Shibli (SS)

#### With:

Head of Operational Assets, Charlie Downen (CD)  
Assistant Energy and Utilities Manager, Jeremy Carter (JC)  
Lecturer, Education and International Development, Dr Hannah Hoechner (HH)  
SUE, Business Support Officer (Minutes), Lee Nairn (LN)

#### Apologies:

Pro Vice-Chancellor (SCI), Prof Mark Searcy (MS)  
Chief Operating Officer, Jenny Baxter (JB)  
Executive Director for the Tyndall Centre, Asher Minns (AM)  
Assistant Head of Internal Communications, Rebecca Holmes (RH)  
Senior Lecturer, Geography & International Development, Dr Jessica Budds (JBu)  
Assistant Director of Social Enterprise (Venues, SU), Richard Hunter (RH)  
Management Information Officer, Dr Hannah Kent-Webb (HKW)  
SU Environment Officer, Sophie Ciurlik Rittenbaum (SCR)

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## MINUTES

### 1. MINUTES

To confirm

the Minutes of the meeting held on 26 May 2022 (**SUS21M003**, enclosed)

Committee members confirmed the minutes of 26 May 2022.

### 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (IF ANY)

No new declarations were announced.

### 3. STATEMENTS BY THE CHAIR

Members of this committee would have received communication from me with regards to the strategic review program and one of our guiding principles pertinent to this committee, is our commitment to net carbon zero by 2045 as well as to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for our commitment to sustainability in its broadest sense.

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## **SECTION A: ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND ACTION**

### A1. NQA MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS SURVEILLANCE PROCESS AUDIT: ISO 14001:2015 – MAY 2022

To consider

The summary of findings from the audit, including non-conformances (**SUS21D024** enclosed).

Minutes (Ref SUS21D024)

CD stated the audit was done by NQA on site and remotely and involved the Grounds and Maintenance departments. It was a four-day surveillance on the ISO 14001 management system, looking at documentation, certifications and processes to confirm the management systems have been established and implemented in accordance with the audit standards of the ISO14001 2015.

The four non-conformances (only minor) from last year were all closed out. The auditor was very complementary about the leadership and how things were managed. We had a couple of non-conformances this year, also only minor but the auditor confirmed he will recommend continuing the certification which runs until May 2024 and we are waiting for confirmation of the next audit date.

The auditor's findings:

- Katherine Middleton's departure has left us with a gap which is still the case at the moment.
- COSH documentation was not available but has since been discovered that it was already in place.
- A waste consignment note was missing which has now been completed.
- Competence and training records not being in the correct place but have now been passed on so they have received all of these.
- One opportunity for improvement for Catering, with waste oil to be bunded which has now been put in place.

We have closed out all last year's and all this year's minor non-conformances and opportunities for improvement. It was also noted that the system continues to provide a required level of control, organisation, a well-defined content, and leadership is effective and demonstrated throughout the whole process. The auditor reflected that there are high

levels of legal compliance and operational control. This was clearly evident and appropriate to the risks and opportunities identified, which was obviously good feedback.

Our next steps have been to engage with a consultant due to the current difficulty in finding someone to fill these roles especially regarding net carbon zero. The consultant will look at where we are at, what we need to do going forward regards the jobs we have got, the job descriptions and are they fit for purpose. We are also looking at it from a different dynamic because the Research Park, the hospital and other universities are all doing the same thing so we are looking to work collaboratively with what they are doing, and how we fill our roles and manage the sustainability agenda going forward.

We are also starting to work with students as they are our future and we are engaging with them to find what are their thoughts, what they are looking at, and how we can work in partnership with them to drive this forward. We hope to work collaboratively within the university but also wider with everybody within the university sector, as well as our service partners across the road and within the Estates department.

We are waiting to hear back from NQA for their approval on the control measures that we have put in place and the actions that we have done. Well done to everyone, especially Katherine Middleton who managed the audit.

SW reinforced how we have only got three FTEs in the very small sustainability, utilities and engineering team within Estates, with two of the most senior roles being vacant and JC is the third FTE so we do need to look at that. The Estates Director of the hospital are also going out to advertise for a Head of Sustainability at around the same salary that we offer. SW said to them that they were not likely to be successful but has started conversations about the possibilities of sharing resources.

In the interim period we are getting a consultant in to support the continuation of the ISO standard to avoid leaving it until 2024 when we would be a long way from where we would need to be. However, we do need to bring UEA staff back into the fold to deliver our large and diverse agenda. We are behind the curve of where we need to be so we do need to think about how the resource is in the current market and come up with a solution, which SW will then take offline with CD and then discuss with CBC and IC. We will have external consultants for the next six months until we develop a plan that needs to be implemented as soon as possible.

CBC extended her formal thanks to Katherine Middleton for the hard work that she put in with regards to preparing for the audit and the professionalism with which she carried through the audit and working with colleagues, knowing that she was going to be leaving a few weeks later. So a huge vote of thanks to Katherine around that and thank you as well to everybody who participated in the audit. CBC also thanked CD and ensured that this gets reflected in a report to the Council as it is important

for them to know that there was a recommendation to continuing certification for ISO14001.

## A2. SUSTAINABILITY PROPOSAL BY STEPHEN WELLS

To consider

the recommendations in the report: Journey to net carbon zero and developing a carbon management plan (CMP) (**SUS21D025** enclosed) with the supporting Appendix 2\_Net Zero UEA\_Stakeholder Workshops\_December 2020 (**SUS21D026** enclosed).

Minutes (Ref SUS21D025/ SUS21D026)

CBC: the proposal has gone to the Executive Team (ET) and suggestions were being made. This proposal is coming to the Sustainability Committee as the first stage for consultation, not for approval and will be brought back for approval in the Autumn, to go forward.

SW: The Appendix 2 is the stakeholder workshop final report dated December 2020, which gives us a baseline of where we need to get to. The vision is clearly set in being net zero carbon by 2045 with 80% reduction in Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions by 2030, therefore time is very short. In order to align the physical estate with the world leading academic research that we do within climate change, we need to get on with this very quickly and raise our game significantly from where we are.

SW's paper included the recommendation to have the clear science-based targets articulated in our material going forward and that the carbon management plan for the physical estate, which is predominantly Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions, should be led by the Estate Directorate.

We would need to develop a plan to understand how we would get effectively to net carbon zero. That would be in three stages: doing some physical interactions, for example with ground source heat pumps, LED lighting etc.; the second phase would be a consultation and conversation about how we use as minimal energy as possible; and the third part will be onsite regeneration and carbon offset.

The next stage would be to discuss Scope 3 emissions, such as business travel and home working with the consumption of energy there which is part of operating as a business. Scope 3 is outside of the remit and leadership of the Estates Directorate but is a parallel track of work that we would need to resource as a university. There is clear evidence from Warwick University that says about 60% or more of a university's carbon production is from Scope 3, therefore Scope 1 and Scope 2 is only about 40% of the target.

In Appendix 1, the photograph from an AUDE conference 2022 is a waterfall diagram demonstrating how the University of Birmingham get from where they are today to net carbon zero for Scope 1 and Scope 2. SW proposed we go out to the market which we are doing already with

consultants that have done this in other universities, to see what they can offer us and then look to fund that activity. Once we have developed a plan, we would then have the challenging conversation on how we fund it. Just as an example, the waterfall diagram from the University of Birmingham has got an associated cost of circa £300M. In context for UEA, we have a listed and aging estate. As an example, the building 3 refurbishment will reduce the carbon consumption by about 80% to 85%. But it still means that we have effectively got 20/15% that needs reducing, that is not carbon offset so we need to do a lot more which will be a part of proposals the work that Estates will lead on to develop a plan for funding.

CBC: It is a dilemma for the institution as we do not want to use carbon offsets as we move towards net carbon zero. However, other institutions are claiming their net zero carbon but through the purchase of offsets. We need to do diligence about how many others within the sector are moving towards that and whether or not that sits well with UEA.

MR: Birmingham University took this approach and formulated a partnership with Siemens to fund their equipment and the University of Leeds want to do it themselves so their target on for Scope 1 and Scope 2 is to be net zero by 2030 without relying on offsetting. They started to build an initial priority list of batches work to be delivered within the next seven years to focus on 18 buildings to have the biggest potential carbon reduction.

It is a dilemma in how we prioritise according to our budget and within the measures we have for the work we need to do to make the building fabric as best as possible. Also, to look at the degasification to move away from gas to electrification overhead and renewable energy. MR agrees with the approach in starting with the baseline to monitor our progress towards 2030.

CD: to support SW, regarding our tender process with our service partner, sustainability was a big thing in how they supply and what they do to help support this and going forward. Net carbon zero is in all our service partner and contractor agreements and how can they be effective and how can we effectively use the money we have got and cost options.

HH agreed SW's paper highlights the urgency. Phil Hunt had also developed a carbon reduction plan so there is not a lack of ideas including from various workshops taken place, it is more about the lack of commitment to put the money there. Also related to Scope 3, we need to find a solution to that urgently because that will not be resolved by Estates. Pre-covid, a really an important role was advertised in the VCO office for a sustainability lead who would be able to coordinate across the different elements of the university, including looking at research and teaching practice and all the emissions that come from that. Without this role, we are not likely to achieve anything in terms of getting on top of our Scope 3 emissions and we do not even know what they currently are.

There is a risk in focusing all our attention on emissions and carbon as we also must clarify biodiversity emergency and we do not currently have that included so much. The rest of the university would also be important to commit to targets in terms of biodiversity gain that we do not currently have and that would probably include bringing somebody into the sustainability committee who has expertise in biodiversity protection.

SW agrees we need to look at biodiversity and Scope 3 and is conscious this is a multi-pronged approach but he has focused on carbon as it is the first thing people go to. SW and CD will get a plan together over the next 6 months and come back with a waterfall diagram which will be the high-level infographic of what the solution will be and identify what the cost for each of the work stream or breakdown structures will be. Then discuss what we can fund ourselves, what we can fund in the next few years, and what we need in order to go to the marketplace to get private finance to do that.

AB: given the importance and that we are behind the pace, can we not look institutionally to put Scope 3 in, otherwise it does not feel like we are doing it completely? It seems odd to just concentrate on Scope 1 and 2.

Sustainability was not really spoken about at yesterday's SRP so where does it come and where is this funding to come from? There were the two enablers, digital transformation and CDP, but sustainability feels like it needs to be that third one and have a fully costed priority line to it.

With carbon offsetting, it was originally said it was going to be by 2045 and we were not doing carbon offsetting. Obviously, we pushed back a bit in terms of the messaging point of view and, as a university, given our reputation in these areas and that other universities were looking to be better than us, but obviously got the pushback that we did not want to do it via carbon offsetting. From a messaging reputation perspective, can that give us a unique positioning to say we are doing it properly, where others are not? Or do we look and see if that is goal placing it too much and we cannot necessarily afford it and if we need or want to do it quicker, we need to relook at that messaging and our pledges?

SW: there is evidence that carbon offsetting is not the right thing to do but we need to look at it as an interim solution whilst we look at the full onsite regeneration and effectively generate the power that we use.

Scope 1 and Scope 2 is predominantly about engineering type solutions, whereas Scope 3 is a very different way of operating. We would need to discuss and identify exactly what Scope 3 emissions are and we have some very bright, intelligent PhD students that could get involved in those discussions with alignment between our physical challenges and their academic challenges would be exciting. Scope 3 is the part of that conversation in how we operate as an institution and business. It is almost separate, but it makes up the whole.

HH believes AM would feel very strongly about not offsetting and would probably argue that this could be a source of reputational damage if we

went back on that commitment. HH did not think 2030 was particularly ambitious for net zero and it is saying in a way that we will not be offsetting to achieve 2030 and that it is acceptable rather than an earlier target.

The problem with Scope 3 is that no one really owns it and we have probably seen it with the business travel policy which kind of fell off the agenda for a year. Who will own this and should it be somebody within the VC office seeing that it cuts across all the operations of the university? How do we reduce our Scope 3 emissions if we do not have a clear person responsible for taking the lead in developing ideas? Without this, we are not likely to see any progress.

CBC confirmed that she would be the person in the VC office overseeing Scope 3 and being the executive team lead for sustainability for the institution, it is part of CBC's job description. Regarding the sustainability position previously advertised and before the pandemic, CBC asked when are we going to stop doing because we do not have finite resources and this is about prioritisation. If the university says that this is our priority amongst our highest priorities, then resources need to be taken from someplace else to make this happen. This needs to be a collective decision by the institution, the Executive Team, Council and Community, to decide that this takes priority over X and therefore we are going to put the proper resource in to make that happen. But that means we may not, for example, be hiring a lecturer in a particular area because we need to move those resources around and that is the more difficult thing to decide.

MR was struck by how much carparking space there is on campus. Firstly, should we carry out the travel audit to see the baseline of what our travel pattern is and what kind of Scopes are travel related carbon emissions? Secondly, can we take advantage of the massive space into a solar port and encourage solar PV with electrical bikes and vehicles and so linking this with energy regeneration?

Regarding funding, there is the funding for Phase 3 which will start in August to cover many buildings and in terms of the carbonisation of public sector buildings, you need to be ready to apply for the funding. Certainly, a lot of people that MR talked to in northern UK are looking at putting forward their funding costs, so let us at UEA start in August.

SW agreed that UEA does have carparks that could have solar PV but the first thing we would need to do is put the solution into the ground source heat pumps. The other thing to consider is that the main carpark is shown as a future site to be developed at some point so we need to think about the challenge of where we are allocating space for solar PV and what that means to our potential growth as a university. It has got to be done in a sequential process.

CBC: More universities are pushing their car parking into the hinterlands of their campuses and some have reduced it to the point that there is only park & ride, with exception for blue badge holders and limited space for visitors.

CD: we are revisiting ground source heat pumps and PV as the costs in utilities have risen so much now. We are also working with transport regarding electric charging points and electric on the bus stops.

CBC: regarding moving to a district energy system that is largely electrified, CBC's previous Canadian institute received a donation of funding, although they called it a grant, from BC Hydro to move away from the use of natural gas. Interestingly, that institute will probably be the first university campus that goes almost entirely electric for all sorts of sources. I can pass information onto SW about how that unfolds but it is not likely that we are going to have any companies donating large sums of money to UEA.

SS had not had the chance to read the report and so asked if SW's report included the fact that we do invest in places because he talks about having to invest on campus but we are becoming carbon neutral, so our investments and where we put our money, seems like a very important place to go.

SW confirmed the report does not specifically go into that but it is not that we are doing nothing but are doing various things. We need to increase our activity to get to net carbon zero quicker. As HH said, our 2030 target is not an ambitious timeline. It is a difficult timeline to meet but we should be doing this quicker, especially as we have declared a climate emergency. We have the technology but it will be funding that will slow down the delivery.

SS asked why SW did not include things that the university invests into in his report because we can affect the things the university does. Therefore, if we invest in something that is ethically dicey, then there are omissions that are on our head. If we are to become net neutral, we need to be also looking at where we are investing holistically and bringing it into all these discussions.

SW agreed with SS's comments and requested after she reads the report to send her comments or have an offline conversation. SW has been clear about what is within his remit and what he will be looking at, which is Scope 1 and Scope 2. HH's point about what do we do with Scope 3 is a difficult one because there is no university that has a clear plan to reduce its Scope 3 emissions down to zero. It is all about offsetting, buying energy from different places and producing your own energy but actually there is this conversation about the things that we do in our daily lives, such as use of plastics or leaving lights on. This is a cultural and societal challenge and about personal behavioural change.

We do need resource to deliver the Scope 3 challenge and answers but we are not currently resourced adequately. It is relatively cheaper to use our PhD students than it is to use highly paid consultants and use their ecosystem of resource to deliver the solution to ourselves. We are a world leading institution in climate change and Environmental Research.



SS agreed using PhD students is good and it needs to lead on to how we spend our money. If you invest somewhere, even buying something from South Africa, that is saying it is okay. But if we can change what we are investing in, it might not cost anymore because we are just changing where we are putting the money and that would offset and remove some of our cost of the carbon we are producing. If we can divest from Barclays, invest the investments that might not lose us any money and can reduce our carbon output just by how we look at it holistically and where we put our money, is voting for what is okay.

CBC: we are tiptoeing into other territories under the guises of Scope 3 and IC has put in the chat that firstly, we do not invest in Barclays. Secondly, the investment policy is the Finance Committee's responsibility, not ours. So just with regards to delineation of responsibilities from committees, this has been a fascinating and important conversation but we need to recognise that when it comes to the investment policy, that is down to the Finance Committee. SW has given a good explanation of why there is the focus on Scope 1 and Scope 2, and why at this stage, we cannot go down the road of Scope 3, no matter how much we may be interested in doing so.

Where do we actually prioritise because if it is the will of the institution at large that sustainability, net carbon zero, biodiversity and climate change crises are absolute priority, then we will be looking at things like cutting the travel budget by 50% across the board in order to invest in those positions and we are not going to be hiring in defined areas because we need to invest in either the capital piece or the human piece. These are the real choices we are going to have to face as an institution because there is no magic money tree. If that means assessors must go up slightly because we need to invest in positions, then that is the distinct choice that we must make as an institution. CBC does not hold any budget, so it will be down to the faculty, PVC's and the directors and it is not all on estates.

MR asked how we communicate and get across to the university our work in progress on sustainability? There does not appear to have been much communication to the student body since the December 2020 workshop to now. It is early stages in terms of this net carbon zero Scopes 1, 2 and 3 but some kind of message needs to get across on the work in progress.

CBC is not entirely sure that when we say we need to make a £200 million or even £500,000 investment in positions to do this, whether or not people will ask what about this or that, we need to think this through.

CBC thanked the panel for the lively and important debate and discussion, and to MR for her contributions not just to this committee but to all other committees including the Estates Committee and Council as a Council apprentice and wished her all the very best for the future.

**SECTION B:**

**ITEMS WHICH CONTAIN RECOMMENDATIONS BUT WHERE NO DEBATE IS ANTICIPATED**

*Please look under 1. Business of the Agenda for details of how to view these documents.*

None submitted.

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**SECTION C: ITEMS FOR REPORT**

*Please look under 1. Business of the Agenda for details of how to view these documents.*

None reported.

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**SECTION D: RESERVED AGENDA**

*Please look under 1. Business of the Agenda for details of how to view these documents.*

None reported.