

## SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 22 September 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)  
Pro Vice-Chancellor (SCI), Prof Mark Searcy (MS)  
Executive Director for the Tyndall Centre, Asher Minns (AM)  
Director of Admissions Recruitment and Marketing, Angelina Bingley (AB)  
Assistant Director of Social Enterprise (Venues, SU), Richard Hunter (RH)  
Management Information Officer, Dr Hannah Kent-Webb (HKW)  
Lecturer, Education and International Development, Dr Hannah Hoechner (HH)  
SU Environment Officer, Sophie Ciurlik Rittenbaum (SCR)

### With:

Assistant Energy and Utilities Manager, Jeremy Carter (JC)  
Administration Manger (Minutes), Sharon Weekley (SWe)  
Executive Assistant and Project Officer (VC), Freya Elliott (FE)

### Apologies:

Assistant Head of Internal Communications, Rebecca Holmes (RH)  
Senior Lecturer, Geography & International Development, Dr Jessica Budds (JBu)

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## MINUTES

### 1. MINUTES

To confirm  
the Minutes of the meeting held on 6 July 2022 (**SUS21M004**, enclosed)  
  
Committee members confirmed the minutes of 6 July 2022.

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

No new declarations were announced.

### 3. STATEMENTS BY THE CHAIR

Formal thanks to Lee Nairn, who supported the Sustainability Committee and has now left UEA. Freya Elliott will support this Committee going forward.

Proposed changes to the University Committee structure. The recent governance review found that there were a significant number of Committees reporting to Council and a proposal was put forward to streamline these. The Sustainability Committee will become a formal sub-committee of the Executive Team and will be reported to and make formal recommendations to the Executive Team. Formal approval of this will be communicated following Council in October. No comments or observations made by the Committee.

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## SECTION A: ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION AND ACTION

### A1. General Update

To consider

Presentation (**SUS22D001** enclosed).

Minutes (Ref SUS22D001)

CBC stated that this presentation is also going to Council this evening and invited SW to present highlights.

SW thanked Charlie Downen for preparing the presentation. We have signed up to the ambition of an 80% reduction in our Scope 1 and 2 by 2030 and to be Net Zero Carbon by 2045 with no carbon offsetting.

SW concerned in context of physical estate UEA holds in how this can be achieved. Working with consultants to map out costs and deliverability of the Net Zero journey. Plan and budget are currently unknown. We need to correlate this with the wider institution in that we have not recruited student numbers required, which impacts the financial plan and means we do not have the funds available for works on our physical infrastructure.

The presentation shows the issues around insulation and listed building constraints. Building 3 goes to planning committee next week and a large part of that will involve the difficult conversations we have had with Historic England, 20<sup>th</sup> Century Society, Norwich City Council's Conservation Officer regarding the windows in Building 3. From a carbon perspective we cannot leave the windows as they are given the thermal inefficiencies. This is just one example.

In Summary, as shown on slide 16, we are two years behind where we had planned to be, complicated by Covid since we are using more electricity for activities like air handling. We have a resource issue as Jeremy Carter is currently the only member of the Sustainability Team within UEA. This is being supplemented by others in the Estates directorate.

The presentation clearly shows what is under the direct control of Estates, Scope 1 and Scope 2.

It refers to the research from Warwick that shows that circa 60% of emissions from an institution is Scope 3, which needs to be investigated.

We are behind in comparison to our competitor group. We have declared a climate emergency and need to move as quickly as possible, but this needs to be in the context of our Campus Development Plan, a difficult estate and how we operate within financial constraints. The purpose of the presentation is to show where we are, to promote a conversation about how we can begin to move faster and how this can be achieved within the financial budget available.

CBC thanked SW for this overview and confirmed that this needs to be taken in context with competing priorities for the institution, physical and digital infrastructure and the aspirations for net carbon zero.

AM asked if there were 'low hanging fruit' that we could address quickly.

JC said that we could move from a gas fired heating system to a carbon efficient heating system by changing boilers and CHP for heat pumps. We currently run a heating network with an operating temperature of 75°C. If we replace this with an air source heat pump it will only get us up to 55°C. We would need a boiler to top this up, which is why SW point about replacing windows and making buildings thermally efficient is so important. Lasdun Wall is not thermally efficient at all.

SW said we can translate some of the activities we consider within our own homes to the Campus, e.g., changing lightbulbs to LED. We know that, excluding the Lasdun Wall, doing this across Campus would cost £1.2million. This would break even within 5.4 years. That is something I believe we should be doing. We also need to think further about how we heat rooms, in that if you were at home, would you turn on the heating or put on a jumper. Reducing the heating levels across the estate would save both money and carbon and this has been discussed within Estates. We plan to do this centrally and interact with customers if any complaints are raised. Heating residences at circa 23-26° as some are, is not acceptable. We would not heat our homes to that level.

Other fundamental behaviour changes, such as turning off lights and computers, which people follow at home, need to be promoted on Campus. As the presentation shows, we have a 71% increase in energy costs over the next two years, even with fixing prices ahead of time, so AM is correct, we need to get these basics right. We need to have a consistent plan to address these issues.

MS asked if we could take a building-by-building approach to take account of better thermal efficiency.

SW said we are doing this already, but we cannot continue to increase

energy consumption to increase the temperatures in thermally inefficient buildings. Using The Registry as an example, we changed the heating system, simply to give ourselves a ten-year life, but did not have the funding to replace the windows. This means we are pumping that heat straight out the windows. SW reiterated that if you had this issue at home, you would buy thick curtains and it is using these basic principles in a Campus context that can make a difference here. The increase in energy consumption from £5million to £10million must come from somewhere and if we do not have additional students, or additional income from students, we need to consider our options.

SW suggested that with the economy as it is, staff may decide to return to work in larger numbers to avoid paying for heating at home, which will raise issues with additional heating, as well as space resources, on Campus. There are also concerns that staff bring in electric heaters that as well as not going through electrical testing, increase the consumption load. Leadership by example is essential to changing behaviours.

CBC was very concerned with the idea of staff bringing in portable heaters, given the fire risk alone. In her previous institution, because of these risks and the electrical load, sign off was required by three levels before approval was given for this, by the line manager, Director of Estates and People and Culture. Reference comments in the chat, CBC confirmed that it was understood that some heaters were already provided by Estates when needed.

JC explained that during Covid we turned heat recovery off and super ventilated buildings, which increased our carbon emissions significantly. He would like confirmation that we can now turn heat recovery back on and stop over ventilating buildings.

SW said that HSE has issued new guidance and that we need to go through this with Charlie Downen when she returns.

AM raised possibility of crowd-source funding through the campus community, including staff. He is working with the Norwich Climate Commission on community energy and there may be other models regarding funding for things like solar PV, where investors become shareholders and get some return on their investment, but also to meet their own goals and values. Surveys show that UEA staff have an interest in the environment and are investing in solar PV and wind farms in other places. Example given of Ripple raising £2million in 48 hours with an online share offer in wind turbines in Scotland.

AM asked if there was a prediction regarding planning permission and if any support from them as energy experts would help. AM ended by saying that SCVA is held at sub-tropical temperatures, and this is not a thermally efficient building. AM asked if it was better for these to be discussed in offline meetings with SW rather than at the Committee.

CBC and IC raised the point that temperature and humidity controls are required for the protection of artifacts within an art gallery environment.

JC confirmed that a destratification project was previously rejected for SCVA. This project was to add fans into the roof to capture rising heat and sent it back to ground level. This would have provided a consistent temperature at ground level, where it is required, as well as significantly reducing energy consumption and costs so this rejection under planning permission was frustrating.

SW said this is part of an interesting strategic conversation around our desire to achieve net carbon zero and how that relates to technology. One example is the angle of solar panels for Building 3. We cannot have as many as we wanted due to Planning, and they have also asked us to angle them down so they cannot be seen from the Ground floor when we know that they would be more efficient if angled higher. Planning Regulation does not currently support our ambitions for net zero, especially on a listed building estate. In contrast, Lancaster University put a wind turbine on their campus, which was HEFCE funded, and so successful that they are adding an additional turbine as well as adding a solar farm, so they are clearly being supported by their local Council in this. As a country, I feel that planning regulations will need to change for us to achieve our net zero commitments and become self-sufficient for energy.

Regarding planning permission, SW said that the Planning Officer for Building 3 has written his report supporting approval. SW is moderately confident that we will get approval. AM congratulated the Estates team for getting it to this stage.

AM said that he serves as co-Chair on the Norwich Climate Commission, and they are working with Norwich City Council to raise the ambition for net zero. The Campus is part of Norwich emissions so there are lots of conversations that overlap.

CBC thanked AM for the reminder of his co-Chair responsibilities and engagement with the Council on energy initiatives.

AB asked about the strategic direction for the University around Sustainability. We understand that we want a buzz on Campus and a sense of belonging but how does this tie in with our ambitions for saving carbon and how do we avoid making decisions that could have unintended energy consequences. SW said that his impact on this is ensuring that ET and Council have the right information around CDP, Lifecycle Maintenance and Net Carbon Zero, including what the costs look like. We will have to make some difficult choices.

SW said we need to ensure that the size of our institution matches our activities. A smaller footprint would reduce our carbon and costs and we do not want to heat and light space that is not used or needed. We need to examine what functions are needed and provide the right level of space for that requirement. We need to start that conversation by having all the of data needed to make those decisions.

CBC: Regarding strategic direction, we have the four success themes, staff, student, global and research. We do not have sustainability as a success theme, but I would argue towards the vision for 2030 or 2040 having sustainability woven throughout the next strategic plan, not just around environmental sustainability but social and financial sustainability too. This needs to be debated and discussed but AB has raised an important point as we start to think about the future and how we place sustainability at the heart of what we do.

CBC: HH had raised questions about sustainability and the travel policy prior to this meeting so was invited to discuss this with the group.

HH: Reference the UEA Business Travel policy and strategy. A consultation has taken place recently and is ready for final approval. Feedback received during this consultation included the offsetting of flights. This was to raise the cost of air travel in comparison to more sustainable options to budget in the environmental costs and help staff to make a clearer choice about travel. Though understanding why the University strategy is to avoid offsetting where it is not necessary, are flights one example of where this would be an option? Can we also raise the idea of a 'carbon tax' already practiced in Zurich, where the funds raised are used to support greener travel initiatives? These could be incorporated into the current version of the policy along with other issues, like collecting data on travel emissions, which could be incorporated in the future. CBC thanked HH for these and confirmed that ET looked at the proposed revisions, including carbon offsetting and carbon tax. We are currently at the early stages of this discussion. CBC asked HH to send across her example of how the carbon tax is used in Zurich.

CBC: We need a longer-term strategy to have longer term reduction in air travel. I would like this on the agenda for the Sustainability Committee to explore and make recommendations to the Executive Team to review if this is something we would be able, and wish, to do. Once we have data on how much air travel takes place, how could we put that forward to say that UEA will reduce its air travel by an appropriate percentage? I believe this is something we need to grasp as an institution and this Committee definitely has a place in how we shape strategy around travel.

CBC: As we close, are there any initial thoughts that we can incorporate and follow up on with the group to seek feedback? Nothing further was raised at this meeting.

**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.