**University of Glasgow**
**Sustainability Working Group**

**Minute of 6 June 2025**

Present: Jaime Toney (Chair) (JT), David Duncan (Co-Chair) (DD),Anna Brown (AB), Josephine Gallagher (JG), David Hall (DH), Scott Hilditch (SH), Gordon McLeod (GM), Stewart Miller (SM),Fabrice Renaud (FR), Sophie Renner (SR), Viola Retzlaff (VR),Cat Scothorne (CS), Ronnie Webster (RW),Roddy Yarr (YR)

Apologies: Avril Conacher, Peter Craig, Gioia Falcone, Kelum Gamage, Peter Haggarty, Inge Sorensen, Alasdair Thomson, Paloma Viegas (GUEST), Angelica Wilson (SRC)

Attending: Sarah Finlayson (Clerk)

**SWG/2024/35 Welcome and Apologies**

The Chair welcomed members to the meeting and noted the apologies.

**SWG/2024/36 Previous Minutes and Actions**

The minutes of 3 April 2025 were approved.

Matters Arising

*SWG/2024/36.1 Sustainability Training (SWG/2024/06)*

*DD informed the Committee that he had raised the suggestion of making sustainability training compulsory with the* *Principal, and Director of People & Organisational Development, and it had been agreed that this would be taken to SMG for further discussion. This* *would be pursued over the coming weeks.*

DD informed the Committee that following a discussion, SMG felt the range of current compulsory courses for staff was enough. There would be a strong expectation of staff to undertake sustainability training regardless, and wording would be devised to encourage staff. The matter would be revisited at a future date.

*SWG/2024/36.2 KPMG Internal Audit Report (SWG/2024/27)*

*SF to confirm if overnight sleeper trains to London could be booked via Selective Travel.*

JT confirmed to SWG that this was the case, and JG added that instructions had been added to the Travel Portal for staff.

*SWG/2024/36.3 Estates and Sustainability Committee (March Meeting) (SWG/2024/30)*

*RY to draw attention to differing views of Schools to the Chair of Estates and Sustainability Committee.*

RY reported that this was outstanding.

**SWG/2024/37 KPMG Audit Action Tracker**

RY introduced Paper 3 – KPMG Audit Tracker, reporting that progress was being made in the four key areas. Actions were currently marked as red (not implemented), and the group discussed whether these should be changed to “partially implemented”, as work was progressing.

**Action:** RY to amend.

**SWG/2024/38 Offsetting Update – Cashel Lot 4**

RY introduced Paper 4 – Offsetting Update – Cashel Lot 4. Following a previous site visit and discussion at SWG, several follow-up queries were addressed by Cashel Trust in the corresponding document.

The group discussed whether the option should be pursued. The consensus was that it should not be.

**SWG/2024/39 Offsetting Strategy – Options Discussion Document**

SM introduced Paper 5 – Offsetting Strategy – Options Discussion Document. The group discussed the available options and conceded to international offsetting being avoided. It was agreed to proceed with developing Heads of Terms for the RSPB Scotland and Scottish Wildlife Trust partnerships. A tender process to investigate other sources within the UK would also potentially identify other solutions.

**Action:** SM to begin tender process.

**SWG/2024/40 Travel Survey 24/25 Results**

VR reported that the 2024 travel survey results showed staff travel comprised of 40% public transport use, 30% active travel (cycling and walking), and 30% car based. VR highlighted that comparisons with the 2022 results showed a decrease in walking and wheeling, while public transport use rose. Car driver numbers had reduced from 29% to 23%.

Student travel comprised of 50% public transport use, 42% active travel, and 8% car based.

Carbon emissions for staff in 2024 showed a value of 3,900 Tonnes, with a target of 1,300 by 2030. Travel day targets by 2030 were 3 days, with 2024 values showing 3.4 days.

Student travel showed a value of 6,200 Tonnes, with a target of 2,000 Tonnes by 2030. Travel day targets by 2030 were 3.6 days, with 2024 values showing 4.2 days.

VR reported that travel survey results and an interactive dashboard were now publicly available:

<https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/sustainability/travel/2024travelsurvey/2024travelsurveyresults/>

VR was also reviewing and responding to comments raised by the travel survey.

Next steps, as informed by the KPMG Audit Report, were to analyse staff commuting emissions data via an appropriate forum such as the Sustainability Working Group. A Strategic Travel Transport Plan review with new action plan and targets would be undertaken, an active travel strategy developed, partnerships with local authorities and public transport providers, and continue support for active and sustainable travel. VR and RY would formalise evidence and a response for KPMG.

The group discussed improving data collection of the survey, perhaps through other surveys such as car parking and staff satisfaction, to encourage a greater number of responses

**SWG/2024/41 Business Travel Policy Principles**

DD reported that the requirement for air travel to be approved in advance by Line Managers had been approved by SMG, as well as short flights (e.g. Glasgow to London) to be made in exceptional circumstances only. No business class flights for less than 5 hours would be approved. A memo would be sent to Heads of College and HOPS to discuss before general circulation. Conference travel would be encouraged for speakers only.

Line Managers within Schools and Services would be encouraged to discuss travel and opportunities during the P&DR process, considering factors such as early career researchers requiring more travel than longer serving academics. Schools would also be encouraged to compare progress against their own performance and attempt to reduce their own impact where possible.

Confirmation was sought from SWG on the upload of carbon emission data from Power BI reports to the Insight Hub. Members discussed and agreed that the Business Travel Working Group should discuss contextualising the data to reflect fixed emissions.

JT introduced Paper 7 – Business Travel Policy Principles and explained that this was presented to SMG in April, with an agreement made that a second paper be circulated to SMG via email, to agree policy recommendations.

Paper 7 reflected the principles agreed, which would be actioned as policy processes, and the background documents and context created by the Business Travel Working Group would feed into the information shared ahead of the Town Hall.

Action: DD to request a change to the order of options in the travel reason dropdown menu to improve data accuracy.

**SWG/2024/42 Sustainability Project Programme**

RY updated SWG on the intensive work being undertaken within Estates to bring forward the master schedule of the decarbonisation schedule and numerous sub-projects. Each project lead had been identified, as well as capital / revenue costs, cash flow model, and a programme for each. The use of a new cost per tonne of carbon tool was being used to prioritise projects. The tool was also being used beyond sustainability, in asset management as part of the selection process.

**SWG/2024/43 Update for Centre for Sustainable Solutions**

JT updated SWG on the Centre, including the film screening of ‘Purpose’ about wellbeing economy and post growth economic activity, and a successful meeting with the filmmaker with the notion of bringing the film into teaching or future film screenings. JT reported on collaborations with colleagues working in the international space, exploring connections and trying to operationalise wellbeing economy aspects.

Preparation for the Business Travel Town Hall continued, with a working group scheduled in advance of the Town Hall. Collaboration with the web team continued, to ensure information on sustainable travel was amalgamated, based on past recommendations.

Collaboration with Adam Smith Business School to develop and deliver a joint podcast series on sustainability was in early planning stages and would include information from previous webinars related to urban sustainability.

An away day and celebration of 5 years of the Centre for Sustainable Solutions was scheduled for June 2025, including prioritisation of future activities and initiatives.

A former intern from 2024, recently in post with Scottish Fair Trade, would be developing connections with the Eco Hub, possible internships and links to procurement.

SM reported an update on work with 2 groups of undergraduate computing science students over the last academic year to develop a web app version of the carbon foot printing tool hosted on the CSS website. Progress was continuing for preparation to launch, for university staff, as well as UK sector wide. Glasgow University Software Service could provide resources to correct issues, launch and maintain the tool for 6 months. Cost was to be determined.

**SWG/2024/44 GUEST Update**

AB updated SWG on the Eco Hub, including:

* Plant Swap
* Propagation workshop
* Donations (student essentials / homeware)
* Community fridge and pantry set up in collaboration with Commercial services
* Glasgow Science Festival

An application was submitted for a Green Gown Award including data on carbon saved due to swap shop, including:

* 1,100 clothes swapped (200kg carbon saved)
* 1,500 items of clothing purchased (325kg carbon saved)
* 12,000 items of student essentials such as bedding and towels (440kg carbon saved)

AB and CS would be ending their term and as such, a handover period had begun for future staff, including recruitment. It was felt that the quality of candidates was high. This spoke to the success of the project.

The group thanked AB and CS for their contribution.

**SWG/2024/4 AOB**

A query was raised regarding Microsoft providing carbon impact data to the University in relation to the new Co-pilot tool, for future discussion. The group discussed whether would it be appropriate to add data on the climate and environmental impact of A.I. to the Sustainability Web Pages. VR confirmed that a general update was progressing and could include links to existing College pages with relevant data.

**Action:** JT to add to agenda.

**Action**: SR to investigate existing data.

CS thanked SWG for the experience and requested that staff focus on divestment from weapons, adding that the climate impact of weapons, and the definition of sustainably in protecting human life, could be discussed further.

**SWG/2024/46 Next meeting**

Date of next meeting: Tuesday 5th August 2025 10am - 12noon