

**ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGIC PLANNING GROUP**

**Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> June 2022 15:30-17:00**

**Microsoft Teams Meeting**

**Attendees:** Simon Park (SP), Yvonne Flynn (YF), Michael Corner (MC), Ninette Harris (NH), Jack Ballingham (JB), Robert Song (RS), Glenn McGregor (GMG), Naomi Green (NG), Steve Willis (SW), Jayne Dixon (JD), Michael Harkness (MH), Linda Joyce (LJ), Claire Mohan (CM), Charley Murdoch (notes)

**Apologies:** David Loudon (DL), Nicky Tonner (NT)

No.	Agenda Item	Action
1.0	<b>Welcome and Introductions</b>	
	Introductions were made by all members of the ESSPG.	
2.0	<b>Chairman's Business</b>	
	SP noted that the Associate PVC for Sustainability role is to be discussed by UEC next week. SP will continue to Chair the meeting until there is more direction on the proposed role.	
	Greenspace Festival is taking place on Thursday 16 <sup>th</sup> June from 14:00-19:00. There will be a variety of stallholders, guest speakers and activities. NG to discuss further in Item 5.0. Colleagues at Collingwood College were thanked for being so accommodating for the festival.	
	SP thanked colleagues in Procurement, Catering and HR for their assistance with answering questions about the Fairtrade Accreditation and Sustainable Restaurant Association "Food Made Good" Accreditation. NH was also thanked for working on gathering the information required.	
	DL and SP met with the Vice Chancellor in May. SP gave a presentation including Sustainability and the Greenspace timeline, documenting all actions since 2005. The Vice Chancellor was positive and keen on implementing the Biodiversity Strategy and Carbon Management Plan. SP is to begin working on a 1-page document requested by the Vice Chancellor summarising Sustainability into one ambition statement. The statement is to be drafted and circulated to the group for feedback.	<b>SP</b>
	SP attended the Strategy Implementation Committee on 18 <sup>th</sup> May and presented the Sustainability Action Plan. The Action Plan will form an appendix for the UEC document and feedback will be received. Overall, progress is being made.	
3.0	<b>Minutes from the previous meeting (Document 1)</b>	
	The Minutes from the previous meeting were agreed by the Group.	
4.0	<b>Matters arising from minutes (Document 2)</b>	
	The action log was updated and approved by the Group.	

5.0	<b>Greenspace Movement Update – App &amp; Festival (16th June)</b>	
	NG has been working on Greenspace Festival preparations. There are 35 confirmed stallholders, and speeches are planned from Jason Oakes, Martin Baxter and Maddie Diment. There will be a Carbon Management workshop run in game-changers format. NG shared the program with the group.	
	NG has been running pop-up events and stalls in Colleges to promote My Greenspace. An average of 20 new members have been signed up at each event.	
	NG is currently working on the Green Move Out which will become the main focus after the Greenspace Festival.	
6.0	<b>EcoCampus – External Audit Outcome &amp; further updates</b>	
	NH provided a detailed update on the Environmental Management System at the last meeting. The management process has been slightly amended, along with the register of compliance and legislation.	
	The university also have a new membership to Cedrec which provides monthly email updates on key legislation. There are some updates to building regulations that will need to be reflected in the management system.	
	The Environment Act has also released some new targets that will be finalised by the end of 2022, meaning that the current university sustainability indicators will need to be slightly amended to incorporate the targets. This will enhance the sustainability action plan and align this with the government strategy. The Sustainability Team are holding monthly meetings to ensure that nonconformities raised through internal and external audits are closed out in a given time period.	<b>SP</b>
	SP thanked GMG and Team for allowing the Energy & Sustainability Team to carry out their internal audit.	
7.0	<b>New Environmental Sustainability Action Plan &amp; Indicators</b>	
	SP shared the Sustainable Action Plan with the Group. The Plan is based on the previous ESSPG Action Plan and the EAUC Climate Action Toolkit. The Plan will be taken to UEC on Tuesday 14 <sup>th</sup> June. Once approved, the Plan can be uploaded to the webpage and will increase the marks for the People and Planet ranking.	
	The Plan begins at the highest level possible, and filters down to the focus area, the action and its details, the sustainable goal, target date, progress and an option to filter actions.	
	There are 95 actions in total and each has a unique reference number.	
	One area that is currently outstanding is the Procurement actions. LJ and RD to look at procurement actions and provide SP with an update. SP to send the Action Plan points to LJ.	<b>LJ/RD/ SP</b>
	Monitoring the achievement of the sustainability indicators was discussed by the Group. SP noted that for areas with more data such as energy, water and carbon, achievement can be more easily monitored. However, areas such as Biodiversity are more difficult to monitor.	
	The Action Plan is to be finalised by July 2022 and uploaded to the website.	
	SP shared the Sustainability Indicators document with the Group. The layout of the indicators document is similar to the Action Plan layout. There are 75 indicators in total.	
	The target for People and Planet is to get into the Top 20 ranking by 2025. The University came 30 <sup>th</sup> in last year's rankings. SDG's have been aligned with the responsible ESSPG member and given a reference number and an aspect of how it relates to the environment management system.	
	Some of the indicators are highlighted in yellow and this suggests that there is no data to support these as they are more difficult to measure.	

	Biodiversity is currently highlighted in red because it is very difficult to monitor. The Biodiversity Action Plan will help provide more clear measurements.	
	The open module for students to enrol onto has been moved to a first-year module by the geography department and open to all students. RS has been in discussion with the Director of Undergraduate Studies to agree the importance of encouraging students to enrol. 280 students enrolled for 2021-2022 which shows there is good appetite for the course.	
	The team are looking into the sustainable curriculum as part of the People and Planet methodology. Last year, the University scored 90 out of 100 on curriculum. NH to check whether the methodology for People and Planet has changed and confirm with the Group. Sustainable curriculum is to be highlighted in the sustainability indicators document and will include information on the new Sustainability Master's degree being rolled out by the Business School.	<b>NH</b>
	Case studies for the Sustainability Research Focus are being considered. Biosciences was highlighted for their excellent work on considering the impacts of climate change on biodiversity. More case studies can be found by using the search facility on the university website.	
	Work is being conducted with RIS on research examples for the online module development. The long weather record from the Observatory was discussed as a good example for climate change, as the records date back to the 1840s and are the second longest records in the country.	
	SW confirmed that the sustainable indicators plans can be supported financially.	
	As part of the Woodland Management Survey, trees across campus are being marked with a metal label to help account for woodland available. The survey records the state of trees and whether any immediate action is required. There is a student interim programme each year to assist with the recording of trees.	
	Tree species are also being recorded as part of the Biodiversity Action Plan, most native species are known but there is no database to record ornamentals. It is important to ensure that natives are always used where possible, as ornamentals do not have the same biodiversity benefits.	
	The Sustainability Indicators document will be finalised by the end of July 2022 and uploaded to the website.	
8.0	<b>People &amp; Planet 2022 Gap Analysis</b>	
	The gap analysis is divided into 4 sections, the top sections relate to publicly available information for People and Planet to mark. The bottom sections relate to less-available information such as carbon and water information, taken from HESA records.	
	All 14 items equal different amounts of the overall score. For example, <i>policy and strategy</i> is worth 4% of the score whereas <i>environmental auditing in management systems</i> is worth 10%. The University score an extra 15% for achieving the EcoCampus Platinum Award.	
	The Team are looking to recruit a new Sustainability Coordinator for Staff Engagement.	
	The People and Planet methodology changes every year and the University will need to continue to progress to maintain and improve scoring. A new Action Plan is to be created and made public to help maintain the 100% score achieved in 2021.	
	There is scope to improve the ethical investment and ethical careers section. This section is worth 2% of the total. There is scope to review the ethical investment policy. The University is not expected to score highly in ethical careers based on feedback received from companies. A sway could be created to help increase scores.	

	The University does not want to become a living wage accredited employer and therefore is unable to score extra 2% of marks in this area. This is due to the risks of being tied into the accreditation if circumstances were to change. Living wage accreditation is reviewed annually and this might change in future.	
	People and Planet can change the methodology annually and it could be difficult to gauge the University's progress. Other scores are lowered if new scores are introduced. The top 29 universities get ranked first class and last year we were rated 30th. The University score is estimated to be 62.2%, and it is hoped that this will achieve first class accreditation.	
9.1	<b>Integrated Sustainable Travel Plan</b>	
	The Travel Survey was launched and has now closed. 449 staff members and 258 students completed the survey, which had been widely advertised. It was noted that this time of the year might not be best suited to students.	
	YF is in the process of negotiating and updating the new Arriva contract from September 2022. YF is also looking into the possibility of Go North East bus discounts.	<b>YF</b>
	The e-bike is now being trialed by CIS and eight journeys were taken in the first month, 24 miles travelled in total.	
	YF is looking into options to introduce pool cars to assist staff and change modes of travel to work. This will encourage more people to walk or use the bus if they know a pool car is available for them to use for business travel.	<b>YF</b>
11.2	<b>Carbon Management</b>	
	Scope 3 screening exercise with the Carbon Trust is underway to help calculate the university carbon footprint. Scope 3 emissions covers anything that happens off-site.	
	The current scope 3 carbon footprint is 70,000 tonnes of carbon, the top areas for this is purchased goods and services which covers 21,221 tonnes. Capital goods was also high, but the figures for 2018-2019 will include the construction of the Teaching Learning Centre and Graham Sports Centre. The Carbon Trust have advised to separate these two areas out of scope 3 to reduce the figure.	
	SP is a member of the Northern Research Intensive University Group who are working together to try and calculate purchase goods and services more accurately, using supplier specific carbon conversion factors.	
11.3	<b>Catering Update</b>	
	The Sustainable Restaurant Association "Food Made Good" accreditation has been submitted and achieving 1 star is looking likely. SP thanked colleagues in catering who have answered a 250 question survey to assist with the accreditation.	
11.4	<b>Biodiversity Sub-Group: Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan 2021-2026</b>	
	There has been no Sub-group meeting for some time and this is due to be arranged.	
	The Group are still waiting for feedback from Durham County Council and Durham Wildlife Trust about the Biodiversity Strategy document.	
	Rehomed hedgehogs that did not go into hibernation last year were looked after by the university and were released onto the grounds in spring. Hedgehog boxes have been distributed across the Estate, but some hedgehogs did not return back to their original box.	
	A wildflower trial at the Botanic Garden is underway to look at different methods of establishing a wildflower garden, to give a clearer understanding of how a wildflower meadow could be created. Group members are encouraged to have a look at the trial area which is located at the entrance to the Botanic Garden. SW to look into arranging some press release around the wildflower garden trial.	<b>SW</b>

	Members of the Botanic Garden Team are going to produce some signage indicating different methods that are being used in the trial.	
	The Group are engaging with neighbours to identify invasive species such as Japanese knotweed and working with the Volunteering Team on collaborations across Durham. The group are also looking to work with the River Wear trust on the management and conservation.	
11.5	<b>Procurement</b>	
	Work on the Fairtrade Accreditation is underway and the Team are working to identify Fairtrade products provided in catering outlets. Many items sold already are Fairtrade.	
	Awaiting the results of the final audit report, NH to share these at the next meeting.	<b>NH</b>
	Procurement are looking at introducing a rating system for cleaning products, rating them gold, silver or bronze depending on how sustainable the item is. The team are working towards identifying products that can be moved from bronze to silver, and silver to gold.	
	The Team are also moving away from using paper towels. Some of the towel dispensers are restricting the types of products that can be bought, and this is being looked into by the team.	
11.6	<b>Energy and Water</b>	
	The Team are working on improving energy efficiency and increasing the amount of renewable energy generated onsite as part of the Sustainability Action Plan.	
	The Team are looking into recovering heat from a data centre from the Arthur Holmes Building, as well as opportunities for installing solar PV on a number of buildings including the old Maths and Computer Science building and Maiden Castle.	
	Work to cavity wall insulation on a number of buildings is being completed.	
	A hybrid heat pump gas boiler system was installed at Howlands earlier in the year which are now providing some of the energy for hot water.	
	An overspend is expected due to the rising energy costs. The overspend has also impacted the university decision to no longer purchase renewable energy electricity. Other options are being explored.	
11.7	<b>Waste and Recycling</b>	
	A review of the hazardous and clinical waste processes is underway with a view to retender the contracts.	
	Looking to run a trial for recycling coffee cups with Biffa. A new confidential waste contractor may also be coming on board, NH is currently reviewing the documents.	
11.8	<b>CIS</b>	
	This item was not discussed in the meeting.	
13.0	<b>Any other business</b>	
	There are a number of policies that are due to be reviewed, including the Energy Management Policy and the Space Heating policy, as well as the one-page ambition statement.	
	The new Director of Construction Services, Ian Rooney, is due to start this month and once in post, the Sustainable Construction and Renovation Policy will be reviewed.	<b>SP</b>
14.0	<b>Future Meeting</b>	
	TBC – December 2022	