

**Trinity College Dublin  
The University of Dublin**

**Minutes of the Environment and Sustainability Principal Committee of Board**

**Monday, 4<sup>th</sup> December 2023, 11.00 -13.00**

**Trinity Board Room**

**Present:** Mary Kelly (Chair), VP Biodiversity and Climate Action & Secretary (Jane Stout), Chief Technical Officer & Unite Rep. (Maurice Sweeney) Associate Dean of Research (Immo Warntjes), Chief Operating Officer (Orla Cunningham), Interim Chief Financial Officer (Louise Ryan) , Librarian And College Archivist (Helen Shenton), Dean of STEM (Sylvia Draper), Mr. M. O’Cinneide.

**In Attendance:** Ms J. Hackett (Sustainability Manager and Minute-taker)

**Apologies:** Vice Provost (Orla Sheils), Student Counselling (Caroline Forsyth), no student reps allocated to the committee yet.

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**ESC/23-24/1 Statements of Interest**

There were no statements of interest declared by members.

**ESC/23-24/2 Minutes**

1. Welcome and introductions

Mary Kelly (Chair) welcomed the Committee and noted that this is the first time that Board has a Principal Committee dedicated to environment and sustainability, and that this is an important committee. COP28 is currently ongoing – there is lots happening on world stage as well as in Trinity.

Committee members introduced themselves, their roles and what they can bring to the Committee.

MK noted the importance of acting as a Committee and not as a set of individuals. Committee should hear context and background of issues and developments together as a Committee to avoid an imbalance of information, particularly for the external members but also for internal members who come from different areas and may not have access to all Trinity activities.

Committee is due to meet 5 times per year. A schedule will be circulated in advance.

2. Terms of Reference

ToR were circulated and assume that they have been read. The ToR are part of the college statutes, and they are detailed and very extensive. The Chair invited the

Committee to begin to define the priorities for the coming year. The Committee went through the ToR in detail. The main points raised were in relation to the following:

*ToR 2. Membership of the Committee –*

It was noted that there is provision for one more external member to be decided at a later date. JS noted that there is also a vacancy for another academic member of staff.

Membership will be reviewed annually, at the end of 2024, with a view to proposing changes to ToR if required for Board endorsement.

It was acknowledged that the gender balance is 6 women and 3 men. Gender balance to be kept in mind when proposing/appointing new members from the student body or other constituency. This may change when the student reps are elected.

*ToR 3. Meetings and Quorum -*

Advisory groups or taskforces may be appointed depending on the issues.

Draft minutes of Committee meetings will be circulated to Trinity Board along with a brief summary of the meeting.

*ToR 4. Duties-*

It was noted that the duties are extensive, and it will be worth reviewing at end of 2024.

A workplan for the Committee will need to be drawn up, based on the duties set out in the ToR, bearing in mind that delivery of the Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan (adopted by Board at its December 2023 meeting) will need to be reported to the Board.

Advising of, monitoring compliance with, and reporting to Board on regulatory requirements in the environmental and sustainability fields will be an important duty of this Committee.

Monitoring the implementation and delivery of the recently adopted Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan will be a key priority for the Committee.

There was a discussion on the role of the Committee in writing policies in the context of Article 4.2 which requires the Committee to assist the Board in **formulation**, co-ordination, and implementation of policies. It was agreed that this Committee will review relevant policies to give oversight, discuss and propose amendments, but not necessarily write them from scratch. The Committee may identify gaps in policies and propose new policies which would be drafted by others for the review of this Committee. Relevant policies include travel, procurement, sustainable investment

policy. Currently the sustainability policy needs revision by Trinity Sustainability and will need to be brought to the committee.

It was agreed that the secretariat would compile an initial list of policies which would come under the ambit of this Committee for review, for presentation to the next meeting.

Risk register should be a standing item at each meeting, with an annual review.

Finance reports go to the Board in the Hillary term, so the ES committee should meet before this (end of Feb). The committee should note that there is no requirement for CSRD reporting for 2024.

Capital projects should be reviewed from an environmental sustainability perspective, and this committee should make recommendations on good practice.

This committee should also consider environmental effects of digital resources. MK – we can expand interpretation of 4.11 to capture these ‘invisible’/ less tangible areas.

Action 2.1 – Identify the risks relevant to sustainability for next meeting and review, identify gaps etc.

Action 2.2 - Compile an initial list of policies for review.

Action 2.3 - Draft Workplan for Committee.

*ToR 4. Authority –*

Important that this committee integrates with the other Principal Committees of Board. Chair to liaise with chairs of other principal committees. Noted there is overlap amongst some members of ES Committee and other Committees.

Possible role for Trinity Board Secretary Office to assist with the integration between Principal Committees of Board.

Healthy Trinity – JS noted that this initiative is part of Trinity Sustainability and one of the three key priorities of the Sustainability Strategy, but not in ToR at the moment, review in 2024.

Action 2.4 – Healthy Trinity to draft a presentation for the committee.

DECISION - Accept ToR as they stand. Review end 2024.

3. Work to Date – update from Trinity Sustainability, including Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan.

VPBCA presented overview of Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan, with reference to papers circulated in advance of the meeting. This was followed by a discussion, summary as follows:

- How is progress on strategy to be measured as a whole? Will targets be achieved if we do everything outlined in strategy?
- Noted and acknowledged that 89% of emissions are Scope 3 emissions and difficult to mitigate. Same for other universities.
- Difficult to see how TCD can achieve net zero targets without carbon offsets which need to be handled very carefully.
- Estates and Facilities have a good handle on what would need to be done but costs will be prohibitive for retrofitting etc. Need to push government for support.
- Retrofits need to be included from early stages of projects and new build, where necessary, designed with zero emissions in mind.
- A request for resources for this committee and Trinity Sustainability is to go to planning group in December 2023. Chair requested that in the future funding proposals should come to the committee before progressing. This would also allow the Committee to have oversight and to give advice. It was felt that the weight of a Principal Committee behind such proposals should be beneficial.
- It was proposed that the SEAI Gap to Target figures be presented to the Committee at its next meeting.

Action 2.5 – SEAI Gap to Target (GTT) presentation for next meeting

Action 2.6 – Circulate the funding proposal that is going to Planning to this committee.

#### 4. Work Plan and priority issues for the committee

Suggestions:

- Monitor and report on compliance with statutory requirements.
- Monitor and report on Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan.
- Sustainability Policy is out of date and out of line with the new strategy – requires updating.
- Review risk register and then have as standing item on committee.
- Partnerships and collaborations – work with Ethics committee.
- Resources – proposal to Planning Group next week (December 2023) – need to keep this on the agenda.
- Board needs regular updates on any changes in external policy.
- Committee needs regular updates on what’s happening in Trinity (e.g. Climate+ Research Centre).

MK asked - What other issues should be on the list? One suggestion was as follows:

Noted that the strategy is very light on culture, behaviour and attitude. Develop programme of work. The committee should also integrate with People and Culture committee (SD and OC are on this committee) and the HEA performance framework.

**ESC/23-24/3 Any actions before next meeting**

- Identify the risks relevant to sustainability for next meeting and review, identify gaps etc. – JS & JH
- Compile an initial list of policies for review. – Secretaries Office
- Draft Workplan for Committee. – JS & JH
- Healthy Trinity to draft a presentation to the committee. – MM (Martina Mullin)
- SEAI Gap to Target (GTT) presentation for next meeting. - OC
- Circulate the funding proposal that is going to Planning Group. - JH
- Circulate dates for ES Committee meetings for 2024.- SL

#### **ESC/23-24/3 Dates for 2024 meetings**

- ES Committee meeting dates are as follows; Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> February (10-12pm), Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> May (10-12pm), Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> June (10-12pm).
- Suggest this committee meets in Feb, early Apr, Jun, Sept, Nov – possibly on a consistent day. Face to face meetings preferred but to make allowances for remote attendance.

Action 3.1 – JS to ask Sarah Lardner to arrange.
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#### **ESC/23-24/4 Any other business**

none