Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin

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Minutes of the Environment and Sustainability Committee

Tuesday, 27 February 2024, 10.00-12.00
Trinity Board Room

Present:	Mary Kelly (Chair), VP Biodiversity and Climate Action & Secretary (Jane Stout), Chief Technical Officer & Unite Rep. (Maurice Sweeney) Dean of Research (Sinead Ryan), Librarian and College Archivist (Helen Shenton), Mr. M. O'Cinneide.
Apologies:	Chief Operating Officer (Orla Cunningham), Interim Chief Financial Officer (Louise Ryan), Vice Provost **(**Orla Sheils), Dean of STEM (Sylvia Draper)
Vacant:	Undergraduate/Post-Graduate Student Representative.
To note:	Dean of Research (Sinead Ryan) left at 11.30am and newly appointed Staff Member (Colm Ennis) arrived late.

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

ESC/23-24/5   **Statements of Interest**
There were no statements of interest declared by members.

ESC/23-24/6   **Minutes of the Last Meeting**
The minutes of 4th December 2023 were approved by the Committee for signing by the Chair.

ESC/23-24/7   **Matters arising from the Minutes**
Progress has been made on all actions. A date for Healthy Trinity to present to the Committee has yet to be agreed.

ESC/23-24/8   **Proposal to Planning Group Update**
The VPBCA gave an update about the funding proposal which was approved by the Planning Group on 23rd January 2024. The proposal sought funds to recruit two part-time (PTE) and four full-time (FTE) members of staff across a range of areas including; Green Labs, communications, education, student engagement and health. Approval was also given for non-pay funds to deliver some of the actions under the Sustainability Strategy. The budget is approved for the 2023-2024 academic year so there is some pressure to recruit staff and procure services. Further funding to be reviewed.

A discussion took place regarding the potential roles required, length of time for recruitment, length of contracts, internal and external recruitment, necessity to

recruit quickly and show some early results to support long term funding. The role of the committee with respect to supporting funding applications was discussed with members feeling that endorsement from the committee should hold weight with Planning Group

Information about global travel in relation to international students and staff travel was sought i.e. how can CO_2 emissions be reduced when there are other priorities for the university. JS stated it is something being discussed with Trinity Global to understand what they are doing and also looking at international partnerships and research partnerships with other universities. It was noted there is also an initiative for senior staff members to investigate ways in which international travel can be more strategic to reduce the number of flights taken.

The Chair acknowledged there is a compromise between reducing emissions and international travel.

ESC/23-24/9   **Risk Register – Presentation from the Chief Risk Officer (Julia Carmichael)**

The presentation focused on the strategic university wide risk register (risk management framework) and introduces where the sustainability risk sits. The E&S Committee forms part of the risk management framework of the University in terms of governance. A red risk should draw attention to a particular issue and does not necessarily mean it cannot be resolved. Mitigation plans should be realistic and achievable. It is important that every department has a register at a local level so that the key issues facing each dept/unit can be drawn up through the organisation to the university risk register. The local risk register allows reporting on the risk at local level which can be brought up to the board level. A regular annual risk register review cycle is envisaged and a new system will be in place to help record all risk registers across college. If a risk is to be included at the university level it should have a university wide implication. The Committee should consider whether it should develop its own risk register. It was noted that the university risk register is open to FOI requests.

There is a need for staff to be trained about risk. Researchers are also required to assess risk associated with their research and how to share knowledge where cyber security is also a risk.

The Committee should consider whether environment and sustainability risk is sufficiently represented on the risk register. in particular whether the reputational risk associated with sustainability issues are taken into account. Currently, the only sustainability risk listed on the university's risk register is failure to comply with legislation.

All principal committees will be trained in May/June '24 on the decision time risk management system. A number of other similar organisations are using this system which allows for more engagement by risk holders and managers. There are 8 core

risks on the high-level university risk register, one of which is sustainability which scored 20/25 on the register.

The Chair thanked the CRO for the presentation which was clear and pragmatic and invited questions. The CRO was asked by a member what advice she could give this committee as it endeavours to embed a culture of sustainability across the university from her experience of embedding a risk culture in Trinity.

The CRO responded that it is a culture shift – the question needs to be asked how does it make life better? How will it improve your day to day? The key lesson was that everyone needs to come into the room and acknowledge that sustainability is an issue that we all have to face together. Culture shift comes every 20 years especially with a generational shift. There is a need to engage with the SU and other student societies to assess what students require and to add to the work that is already taking place. Covid brought risk into focus and now people understand the need for risk strategies etc. Team in Risk are now getting trained up in sustainability risk to understand what is happening in terms of assessing risk.

Action 9.1 – Assess whether a risk register for the committee should be developed.
Action 9.2 – Review the draft sustainability risk register.

ESC/23-24/9   **Work Plan 2023/24**

VPBCA outlined the draft workplan which show the main tasks outlined in the ToR as well as the key strategic areas that are required to be completed. The proposed workplan looks at the risk register, proposals to planning group, policies and policy review, legislation and regulation. The Climate Action Plan is the main piece of legislation – this needs to be moved up the agenda as it is required for submission in June, Management and advisory groups can feed into the committee at different times, partnerships and collaborations will need to added (CRU, Dean of Research, Alumni – need to work with the ethics committee), college wide large scale projects need to work with the Critical Infrastructure Committee)

This was followed by a discussion, summary as follows:
- The Critical Infrastructure Committee (CIC) has a big agenda and looks at all spend over €3million. There is a real need to bring sustainability onto and into this committee including around the area of digital infrastructure especially in terms of transformation and infrastructural provision. Trinity East is also a large project which we should be involved in as the whole basis of it is sustainability.
- Concerned about the digital infrastructure piece as there is a lack of knowledge about what it should look like and how we should be informing the future development of infrastructure.
- Role of communications especially focussing on Trinity's recent communications regarding the proposed Dublin Metro project and how it

could be construed that Trinity is 'opposed' to the entirety of the project which is not the case.

- A communications strategy has been drafted which will focus on internal and external communications and we are working across with the communications team.
- It is important to discuss IT and we should bring in the IT Director to discuss the work they are doing in terms of sustainability.
- An overview of the CIC dashboards for the committee should be sought.
- Key actions in the Sustainability Strategy Action Plan have been developed to support the greening of IT services and the digital transformation.

The proposed work plan was adopted by the Committee taking account of suggestions made.

Action 9.3 – ask for the CIC dashboard from the secretary of the committee.
Action 9.4 – Contact IT director

ESC/23-24/10   SEAI Gap to Target Tool (GTT) – Presentation by the Director of Infrastructure (Mike Clark) and Carbon Reduction Manager (Peter Breen)

A presentation was made by MC and PB on SEAI's GTT. The tool is used to assess how Trinity will meet its 51% GHG reduction with respect to Trinity's energy and electricity use. Key points raised during the presentation were:

- Targets associated with electricity should be met largely by the electrification of the grid. However this is not the case for fossil fuel reductions relating to thermal energy use. There is no pathway for the decarbonisation of our thermal usage. A number of boilers and chillers are now at their end of life so some will need to be changed, either with more efficient boilers or using new technology i.e. extracting heat from the chillers to heat space etc. However this will not be sufficient to meet our emission reduction targets.
- There is some confidence that we can deliver the projects outlined in the GTT especially around energy efficiency targets and electricity usage. However this is dependent on the availability of funding. Fossil fuel system in front square has been audited to assess if there is an option for air source heat pumps for some of our old buildings.
- When retrofitting buildings we will need to assess our lifecycle carbon in terms of existing and new buildings. The Rubrics renovation and retrofit project demonstrated that it could be done, but the cost was very high, ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ for the ground source heat pump alone), E3 – Near Zero Emissions Building, Dartry – refurbishment and retrofit of student accommodation as well as Trinity East i.e. should this be passive house standard? And how much CO2 will be generated when we are retrofitting the existing buildings.
- Other things to consider include; twice yearly space audits are required by the HEA, ISO5001 is mandated in the Action Plan E&F want to train their staff as retrofit champions over the coming years to focus on skilling staff as well as

ensuring the new Trinity masterplan should focus on placemaking, existing buildings and use of the site as opposed to new build. Also mentioned importance of the district heating potential of the Ringsend incinerator to supply Trinity with heat. Need to continue to lobby Dublin City Council on this.

- The reality of the baseline of energy use even over the Christmas period, still assessing what the uses of our main buildings are in terms of energy use and what can be switched off. We have too many buildings open even when they are in use only partially, other universities are shutting down spaces or amalgamating spaces to achieve targets. Need to consider energy usage when proposals for weekend/holiday/nighttime courses are offered.
- Outlined the ambitions of other universities – DCU- with respect to investing in retrofitting buildings and there is a need to invest heavily in this area. This should be seen as a wake-up call for the university in terms of the work required and investment that's needed.

This was followed by a discussion, summary as follows:

The Director of Infrastructure estimated the cost of the investment which would be required to meet targets to be about ████ although this has not been fully scoped. It is not clear where this investment will come from. The refurbishment of the Rubrics can be used to estimate the amount needed to retrofit the historic estate. It was also noted that sometimes our historic buildings aren't the worst offenders as younger buildings which are 25-30yrs of age are not energy efficient. They also require upgrading in terms of internal infrastructure so its very costly and also the decanting of the spaces during a project.

The committee felt it was very important to raise awareness of the true cost of these works so that people are fully informed of the cost, and it's brought up the agenda.

It was noted that some universities in Australia have embargoed new buildings.

The Librarian noted that when she was the sponsor of the Old Library Redevelopment Project, she brought up sustainability as part of the project, and how challenging this is on an historic building with vulnerable collections. The Librarian pointed out the challenge re sustainability with students wanting 24hrs library opening hours. One library is open 24 hours (Kinsella Hall) and the Hamilton Library is to be opened on a 24 hour basis now for 6 weeks in the run up to exams, and the uptake will be monitored. The Library staff are very conscious of the different 'agendas' especially around healthy campus and student wellbeing, and sustainability.

The Committee thanked the Director of Infrastructure and the Carbon Reduction Manager for a very worthwhile presentation pointing out the difficulties of achieving the required targets. The Director of Infrastructure in turn asked the Committee to let them know what data and information is required for the Committee's work so

that they can prepare the correct information. It was agreed that there will be further interaction as time goes on.

ESC/23-24/11 Policies for Review

The VPBCA outlined where all of Trinity's policies were collated and provided a list of same. A discussion followed to determine which policies should be reviewed with sustainability in mind. It was agreed that four policies should firstly be reviewed: the sustainability policy, sustainable procurement policy, travel policy and waste management policy.

Action 11.1– Identify who reviews the policies, any proposed changes to be made and feed back to the Committee.

ESC/23-24/11 Culture

It was agreed that the Committee would benefit from the expertise of a behavioural scientist who could help to address behaviour change. The Chair will approach someone from ESRI to invite them onto the committee.

ESC/23-24/12 Obligations under Climate Action Plan and Public Mandate

Mike Clark and Peter Breen may need to attend further meetings namely in relation to the drafting of the annual Climate Action Roadmap.

ESC/23-24/13 Proposal to join Climate and Health Alliance and support a Declaration from HSE

The VPBCA outlined a proposal to join the Climate & Health Alliance, an initiative of the HSE, whilst considering the rationales, risks and agreement to sign up to the declaration and the proposal. The committee was asked to support this proposal.

Decision – Since a number of members of the Committee were not in attendance the Chair decided to defer the decision to the next meeting.

ESC/23-24/14 AOB

No further items were raised, and the meeting was concluded.