



**Trinity College Dublin  
The University of Dublin**

**Environment and Sustainability Committee**

**Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2025**

**Room 2026, Arts Block**

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**Present:** Chair, Mary Kelly, VP Biodiversity and Climate Action & Secretary (Jane Stout), Vice Provost (Orla Sheils), Librarian and College Archivist (Helen Shenton), Dean of STEM (Sylvia Draper), Deputy CFO (Patrick Moore), Bursar (Eleanor Denny), Chief Technical Officer & Unite Rep. (Maurice Sweeney), Mr. M. O’Cinneide, Director of Campus Infrastructure (Mike Clark) in place of the COO.

**Apologies:** Dean of Research (Sinead Ryan), Chief Operating Officer (retired), Staff Representatives (Dr. Conor O’Kelly), PG Student Rep (Luke Gibbons), UG Student Rep (Sam Brooks)

**In Attendance:** Sustainability Manager and minute-taker (Jane Hackett).

**Late Arrival:** Staff Rep (Collie Ennis)

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**ESC/24-25/53 No statements of Interest declared.**

No conflicts of interest

**ESC/24-25/54 Minutes from last meeting**

Minutes from January 23<sup>rd</sup> 2025 were approved by email

**ESC/24-25/55 2025-26 Work Programme**

The work programme for 2024- 2025 approved. The meeting of June 5th should focus on the Climate Action Plan and Sustainability Strategy.

**ESC/24-25/56 Risk Register**

The Sustainability Manager presented the Level 2 Risk Register and asked for Committee input as it is to be formally reviewed in May/June. The committee discussed each risk, in many cases the risk was reduced by the controls in place, but the overall risk was still considered to be high. It was noted that ESD and Green Labs metrics are part of the HEA Framework agreement, and so there is additional financial risk to the University if these are not met. Suggestions were made for improved tracking and dissemination of energy use to support behaviour change. It was noted that all external risks will increase due to ongoing global geopolitical unrest. Specifically, climate and sustainability are at risk of being deprioritised and this

committee should seek to ensure College supports climate, nature and health action so that sustainability does not go off the table .

**Action 56.1:** Level 2 Risk Review - review risk scores, particularly in relation to other risks; review control text as there may be additional actions to be taken that keep the risks high.

**Action 56.2:** Emphasise at Board level the importance of continuing sustainability work in College and advocating for climate, nature and health action more broadly.

The Sustainability Manager presented the Level 3 University Risk Register (URR) for consideration. It was noted that many risks are linked, we may not have the control or any way to mitigate global risks, but we should include mention of biodiversity loss as well as climate change, and that there are non-resource related constraints to meeting legislative targets. The Level 1 Risk Register for Trinity Sustainability is in development.

**Action 56.3:** Level 3 Risk Review - review wording, add “biodiversity loss” and “capacity to deliver”

#### **ESC/24-25/57 Culture**

Trinity Sustainability’s Communication Officer presented an update about a number of initiatives including Green Week and the ‘Our 51% Challenge’ campaign.

- a. Green Week: Highlighted events that were successful in terms of engagement, included; Mary Robinson Conversation, Shannon Healy talk and the Sustainability Leadership Awards. It was emphasised that Green Week is a good opportunity to bring people into Trinity (e.g. Green Schools) and increase opportunities for students to run their own events. Communications were through a range of channels (Instagram, website, weekly wrap-up, campus screens). Successful events like the cycle clinic and swap shop should be held more regularly.
- b. Our 51% Challenge: The campaign is focused on reducing energy related emissions by 51% by 2030. The campaign to date included communication by email to staff, 3 focused roadshows, an all-staff and student webinar as well as regular updates given through a range of channels (website, staff updates, campus screens, Sustainability newsletter). The campaign’s aim is to reduce 10% of our energy use over the over next academic year. This is a joint campaign between Trinity Sustainability and Estates & Facilities.
- c. Sustainability Newsletter— a new newsletter (e-zine) has been developed to give more information about the work taking place in the College.

There followed a general discussion around student engagement which will be elaborated in the upcoming Student Engagement Plan. The Bursar welcomed the building-by-building sub-metering as from a behavioural economics perspective, knowing consumption, in relation to others, can help drive change, and advocated for us to think bigger, for example, can we incorporate energy and space use into the financial system.

**Action 57.1:** Deliver the roadshows to staff within the Faculty Forums to inform the Heads of Schools.

**Action 57.2** E&S Committee members should also be recipients of the newsletter.

**ESC/24-25/58 Trinity Master Plan**

The Bursar presented on the master planning project and clarified that the timeframe had been extended with completion by the end of 2025. She proposed that as it progresses, a joint workshop between the E&S committee and CIC committee should be held. This to take place in September 2025. She informed the committee that the next Provost Update will focus on the Master Plan.

**Action 58.1** – Set up a joint workshop for the E&S committee and CIC committee members.

**ESC/24-25/59 Updates from other committees**

- a. Audit Committee – no overlap with this committee membership, no feedback received.
- b. Risk & Compliance Committee– COO not present, no feedback received.
- c. Finance Committee – college accounts approved, and an update was given about the HEA budget meeting. FSD gave a presentation about the ESG Gap Analysis report.
- d. CIC Committee – updates on Trinity East and South, strategic space management, research infrastructure, library and the risk register. There is some overlap with this committee in relation to decarbonisation of the physical estate.
- e. People and Culture Committee – the committee hasn't met recently as the new Director of HR was not in place. Opportunity at some stage to introduce sustainability culture to this committee.

**ESC/24-25/60 Trinity Sustainability Updates**

- a. Sustainability Management Group - VPBCA presented the annual report from the Sustainability Management Group. It was noted that around a third of the actions are not yet started, and there may be a risk of loss of momentum, and that overdependence on the Trinity Sustainability team was a weakness. There was also concern raised around actions in progress and the timeframe for completion.

Discussion followed on the Decarbonisation Plan (as one of the outstanding actions). The Director of Campus Infrastructure reported that his team have identified 14 projects for decarbonisation of thermal heating systems across the College Green Campus (as reported to this Committee last June, to reduce GHG emissions by 4,500 tonnes, i.e. 51% reduction), four of which are being fast-tracked as "energy centres" (replacing oil boilers with large air-source heat pumps that will serve clusters of buildings), and the remaining 8 as a mix of physical interventions and behaviour change to reduce energy consumption (including simple measures like turning off the heating in the summer months). The feasibility plans for the four energy centres are being progressed as part of the master planning project by the engineering consultants (Buro Happold), who have exemplary track records in sustainable interventions. There is concern that building the energy centres could be quite disruptive and subject to planning approval. There is also concern that the budgets

for the decarbonisation works will not be available. Concerns were voiced by the committee regarding alternative plans to the energy centres, should they prove not to be feasible (logistically, financially, within the time-frame needed), that the decarbonisation of scope 1 emissions (removal of all fossil fuel boilers) needs to be compatible with the reduction in scope 2 emissions (i.e. reduced electricity use). It was noted that any decarbonisation works, and any electrical efficiency projects, should run in tandem with other maintenance works, to reduce disruption to research/teaching, and that space utilisation should not be ignored as this is integral part of reduction in electricity consumption.

**Action 60.1** – Trinity Sustainability to engage again with the Master Planners, and E&F energy team to clarify who will produce the decarbonisation report bringing all the data together, outlining the options (with feasibility/pros and cons of each option in terms of financial costs, carbon savings and other considerations associated with each project), giving a time-line to scope 1 and scope 2 emissions reductions to the 2030 target and estimated costs.

**Action 60.2** – Select the 10 actions that are outstanding/in progress that are the most important to achieving the aims of the strategy.

**Action 60.3**– Engage with the Data Analytics and Strategic Initiatives Unit to assist with monitoring/live tracking of data.

**Action 60.4** – Invite the Senior Lecturer/Head of Academic Practice to make a presentation about progress being made to embed sustainability through the curriculum.

- b. Responsible Futures – VPBCA presented the report and presentation, which were noted by the committee, who also commented on the apparent disconnect between what students know and the University is doing. It was suggested that the accreditation could be used as a mechanism to get the student body more involved, if students value the accreditation. It was noted that the Student Auditors were paid by Trinity Sustainability for their work.

#### **ESC/24-25/52 Sustainability Policy**

The draft Sustainability Policy was tabled for approval. A proposal received since the last meeting to include specific mention of Unions was discussed. The Committee felt that since it would not be possible to list all stakeholders it would be preferable not to list any. The Chair agreed to the request from the staff representative to consult back with the unions, and to agree the policy via email after that, with the proviso that agreement was reached by Mid-May, so that the policy could go to the June Board meeting.

**Action 52.1** – The staff representative will consult with unions and feedback via email to the VPBCA.

#### **AOB**

- **Next meeting 5<sup>th</sup> June 2025**