



Trinity College Dublin

Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath

The University of Dublin

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Environment and Sustainability Committee

Thursday 22nd January, 2026

TBS Boardroom, 5th Floor, TBS

Present: Chair (Mary Kelly), VP Biodiversity and Climate Action & Secretary (Jane Stout), Vice Provost (Orla Sheils), Chief Operating Officer (Noel Gorman), Dean of Research (Sinead Ryan), Bursar /Acting Chair (Eleanor Denny), Chief Technical Officer & Unite Rep. (Maurice Sweeney, Professional Staff Representative (Aisling Hurley), College Archivist (Helen Shenton), Staff Representative (Conor O’Kelly)

Apologies: Dean of STEM (Sylvia Draper), Deputy CFO (Patrick Moore), PG Student Rep (Luke Gibbons), UG Student Rep (Amelia Flanagan)

In Attendance: Sustainability Manager (Jane Hackett), Administration Lead, Trinity Sustainability (Laetitia Deering) – minute taker, Director of Campus Infrastructure (Mike Clark), Engineering Services Manager (Peter Breen), Head of Space Management & Workplace Strategy (Kieran Brassil), Richard Tetlow (Buro Happold), Jake Williams (Buro Happold), Head of Preservation and Conservation (Sarah Vansnick)

Late Arrival: Dean of AHSS, Carmel O’Sullivan (in attendance for Dean of STEM), COO

New Member:

ESC/25-26/01 No statements of Interest declared

ESC/25-26/02 Minutes from last meeting
Minutes from 27th November 2025 were approved subject to revisions.

ESC/25-26/03 Matters Arising - Updates on Actions from Previous Meeting
Retirement of external committee member, who was thanked for input.
Replacement currently being sought.

ESC/25-26/04 Library Sustainability Framework & Plan

Presented by the College Librarian and Head of Preservation and Conservation.

Comments included suggestion of cargo bikes instead of electric vehicles for internal deliveries, which Librarian confirmed has been considered.

Presenters clarified that space use efficiency is being looked at not only under the lens of Sustainability but more broadly in terms of the Library in general.

Engagement with several researchers has begun to ensure as many are represented.

Work is in progress to determine impacts/trade-offs of electronic vs physical legal deposits.

The framework and plan were noted and committee commended library for work on sustainability it was suggested that the model could be transferable to other units in college.

ESC/25-26/05 Decarbonisation Plan

The proposed decarbonisation strategy for Trinity was presented by Buro Happold consultants

The detailed proposed strategy which included a costed roadmap providing a prioritised list of projects with a high level timeline for decarbonisation was welcomed.

The Committee noted that Target 1 could be achieved through grid decarbonisation and low cost optimisation Target 2 requires major heat decarbonisation and higher investment even taking into account that many boilers coming to the end of their useful life would need replacement anyway. The Committee also noted that there would likely be major disruptions in some areas and the recommendation from the consultants to prepare and move early on implementation.

The evidence-based roadmap for decarbonisation was welcomed.

The question of how to fund decarbonisation works was raised – whilst some funding has already been allocated via the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) Pathfinder Programme (which assists public bodies in achieving their energy performance and retrofit goals), it will still be challenging to meet targets. A full report on what grants are available to fund aspects of the Plan is required. The reliance on the decarbonisation of the grid is a risk that all public bodies are facing. Importance of behaviour change, and incentivising this, was discussed.

Conversations have been initiated with St James' Hospital, particularly in regards to Trinity's presence on the site and opportunities for learning and synergy.

It was clarified that air source heat pumps were not suitable for all buildings, and that clusters of buildings are suggested in the plan.

It was noted that there is no mention of carbon costs associated with installing new infrastructure. This should be considered as things move forward.

The risk of grid stability was raised, and need for back up plans or alternatives (eg solar/wind) to support essential infrastructure. It was confirmed that solar power can help reduce demand on the grid, but it would not be a solution in terms of the capacity needed across the whole campus.

In terms of Thermostatic Radiator Valves (TRVs), it was confirmed that control of these would be centralised, and that existing radiators would not need to be replaced.

Consideration should be given to degree of appetite for disruption and optimised space utilisation should be considered in this context.

Chair suggests costs should be outlined in terms of where the funding will be derived from and what sum is expected from the College and what areas.

The Committee thanked the consultants for a comprehensive and very useful presentation.

Action 05.1

A report illustrating a breakdown of financial costs and expected sources of funding / grants along with the corresponding timeline to be produced by office of the COO

ESC/25-26/06 Key Updates from other Principal Committees

Verbal updates included:

Audit Committee – no overlap with this committee membership.

Risk & Compliance Committee – no members present

Finance Committee – no meeting since last committee meeting

People & Culture Committee – no members present

Critical Infrastructure Committee – no meeting since last committee meeting

ESC/25-26/07 Digital Transformation

Presentation from COO followed by brief discussion.

Member asks if an analysis through the whole lens of sustainability can be done – is that part of this project? The response is that this is challenging but there should be a rationalisation of the number of systems used. Energy is not part of the remit of the tender but it can be picked up elsewhere as it's a different skillset.

Member suggests that this consideration should be brought in from the beginning. Environmental impact assessment is suggested.

A point is made to take this consideration in when assessing tender partner.

The Committee noted the presentation with a recommendation to keep sustainability issues high on the agenda when progressing the strategy and to consider the environmental impact.

ESC/25-26/08 Sustainability Management Group Report

Taken as read – it is summarised and any questions can be directed to VPBCA. Committee notes this.

ESC/25-26/09 Annual Committee Review

Approved

ESC/25-26/10 Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty

Approved

AOB

- **Next meeting – Thursday 26th March 2026 in The Arts Conference Room (Room 2026), Arts Building**