

DBS Sustainable Environment Group Proposal Document

In line with the goal of achieving a sustainable future for DBS the Sustainable Environment Group has drafted the following set of proposals for consideration by the Senior Leadership Team.

Each proposal has been researched, discussed and where appropriate also costed by members of the group to ensure maximum benefit and potential for success.

The terms of reference of the group are:

- Determine as best as possible DBS's current impact on the environment by examining how we consume utilities and manage waste.
- Identify ways in which DBS could have a significant positive impact on its environmental actions. Include ways in which impact can be measured.
- Prepare an outline 3-year plan for reducing DBS' environmental impact. The plan should be costed in discussion with the relevant managers at DBS.
- Submit a plan to the SLT for consideration.
- Once approved, oversee the implementation of the plan.



DBS SE Group Members

Donal Casey
Rita Day
Lori Johnston
Tony Kenny
Mary Nolan
Eddie Ormonde
PJ Paul
Francisca Knight - Chair
Macdara OMaolbhuidh - Secretary

The DBS Sustainable Environment Group was formed through a mixture of volunteer members and members who have a vested interest in the DBS Sustainable Environment policy.

The first meeting took place on 14th February 2020. Francisca Knight was voted Chairperson and Macdara OMaolbhuidh was voted as the Secretary by the members of the group.

Subsequent meetings were held on:

04th March 2020
15th April 2020
20th May 2020
24th June 2020
8th July 2020

Minutes for these meetings can be found [here](#).



Introduction

In previous years significant investment was made to achieve improvements on our utility use. The upgrade from oil to gas supply along with the installation of new lifts in Castle House. The continuing move from fluorescent bulbs to LED lighting, the upgrade to modern efficient air conditioning units and the replacement of old windows in Aungier Street as examples. On the waste management side we employed the services of a leading company in Keywaste to manage the disposal of our general and recycling waste, along with Cyclone Shredding for confidential paper which is recycled also.

The DBS Sustainable Environment Group agreed on a set of proposed actions which will make up the strategy for DBS over the coming 3 years. The Group sought to lay out actions which could be looked at in the short, medium and long term as well as reviewing and highlighting existing practices.

The Group will, on agreement from the SLT, agree on a policy document for DBS which will be made available to stakeholders.

The Group will seek engagement with the student body to allow for oversight and collaboration on different projects and awareness campaigns for staff and students.

Note: Some of these recommendations will be impacted by Covid-19 and will not be directly applicable in the coming academic year. We have tried to take that into consideration but also shaped an overall plan for the college post Covid-19 wide ranging restrictions.

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Proposed Actions

SHORT TERM/ONGOING

1. STUDY ROOMS

Currently students use empty classrooms in the college buildings to congregate and study either individually or in groups. Often students will take a whole classroom for one person to study and turn on lights and heating in multiple classrooms.

Leading up to and during exam time, the timetabling team book specific study rooms for students that they can view on the timetable. This is in order to allow the maximum number of students to use classrooms and spaces to study.

Proposed Action

We propose that “Study rooms” be implemented on a year-round basis to manage student room use by directing students to designated classrooms only for the purposes of private study.

Cost/Resource

There would be no extra resource cost but there would be cost reduction in terms of energy efficiency.

Timeline

This proposal can be implemented from the start of the new Academic Year. The proposal also strengthens the ability of DBS to control student room usage during this period.

Result

Building energy efficiency improvement through control of classroom utilisation. Additional benefits during Covid-19 period due to increased ability to control student use of classrooms.

2. SINGLE-USE PLASTICS

There is growing public awareness of the fact that single-use plastics are a major source of pollution. There also appears to be growing support for the banning or reduction in the use of such items, especially amongst young people.

Proposed Action

We propose banning the sale and use of single-use plastic items on campus.

Cost/Resource

There would be no extra cost to DBS. Wooden stirrers for tea and coffee already in place.

Timeline

Implementation would be possible once approved. A ban on the procurement of any plastic items such as water bottles etc. could come into effect at an agreed date.

Result

The banning of single-use plastics on the DBS campus would be of benefit to the environment and would also be a visible marker of DBS's commitment to sustainability.

3. STUDENT SWITCH-OFF POLICY

The Student Switch Off is a campaign that aims to encourage students to save energy by switching off lights in classrooms that are not being used. It also encourages students to look at their energy usage at home and to switch off computers and devices when not in use.

Proposed Action

Encourage students (and staff) to switch off lights in rooms that are not being used. Create awareness campaigns for students to reduce their daily energy usage.

Cost/Resource

The active cooperation of staff and students. The initial cost of reminder 'switch-off' signs or stickers next to light switches.

Timeline

Awareness campaign for students to be rolled out over the coming academic year. This will be integrated into the Green Campus submission in point 13.

Result

Greater energy efficiency for DBS. Positive habits by students which are of benefit to the environment.

4. CARBON OFFSET CALCULATOR

A carbon offset calculator is a way of calculating the carbon footprint of an individual, household or institution. These calculators can play a role in highlighting the individual's carbon footprint while they go through their daily life. They can be used to assist in taking responsibility for the greenhouse emissions we create. There are a number of carbon offset calculators available, many of which come in the form of apps. Some examples can be found here:

<https://www.epa.ie/climate/calculators/>

Proposed Action

Encourage students (and staff) to use a specific, recommended carbon offset calculator.

Cost/Resource

The active cooperation of staff and students.

Timeline

To be rolled out over the coming academic year. This will be integrated into the Green Campus submission in point 13.

Result

Positive habits by staff and students which are of benefit to the environment. Positive public marker of DBS's commitment to the environment.

5. BIODIVERSITY

There is a growing awareness of the importance of and threats to biodiversity and conservation in our world. As a large educational institution DBS can have a significant influence on promoting biodiversity in the surrounding environment. DBS has been invited to participate in the Dublin Town Sustainability Working Group which will look at biodiversity throughout the city.

Proposed Action

Promoting biodiversity awareness on DBS campus, and Dublin city as a whole, through awareness campaigns and projects and as part of the Dublin Town Sustainability Working Group.

Cost/Resource

Participation in Dublin Town Sustainability Working Group by member of Senior Leadership Team.

Timeline

The Dublin Town Sustainability Working Group is due to commence in the coming months.

Result

The public participation by DBS in a group aimed at restoring and enhancing biodiversity in Dublin City would have an intrinsic value but would also demonstrate the proactive ways in which DBS is engaging with the wider community on environmental issues.

6. FINANCIAL PLANNING & CAPITAL PROJECTS

Make sound financial investments in sustainability-related projects and procurements in order to maximise financial savings and environmental benefits. In addition, when engaging with suppliers, we will request the supplier's sustainability policy.

Proposed Action

The budget planning process will include recognition of the sustainability values and apply this where possible in the operation of daily tasks on procurement.

The College's Capital Project Planning and approvals process for major renovation of existing facilities will be assessed using life cycle cost-benefit analysis.

Cost/Resource

A cost analysis needs to be completed in advance of issuing orders

Timeline

Ongoing.

Result

A commitment to the environment by incorporating the above actions.

7. NON-RECYCLABLE WASTE

As not all waste is easily recycled, we propose drawing attention to this fact through an active campaign of information. Our non-recyclable waste is incinerated as part of Dublin Waste to Energy¹ scheme.

Proposed Action

We propose implementing an awareness campaign about non-recyclable waste disposal. The incinerator plant is capable of producing 60 megawatts of electricity, enough to power 80,000 homes and provide district heating for up to 50,000 homes in the Dublin area.

Cost/Resource

Short campaign to students and staff around how waste generated in the college is processed. This is also an activity that students can partake in through the Green Campus committee and the Green Society.

Timeline

Information will be delivered throughout the Academic year via social media and posters/visually throughout the campus. A focal point can/will be the annual Green Week in the first Semester which will be the flagship Sustainability Environment Group/ Green Campus event currently planned by SESU for November.

Result

Foster an understanding of DBS's commitment to ensuring efficiency in waste management.

¹ <https://www.dublinwastetoenergy.ie/>

MEDIUM TERM

8. PRINTING

Approximately 3.4 million pages were printed between April 2019 and April 2020 by DBS staff and students. This is equivalent to 106 trees² when utilising recycled paper. Printing in such quantities has both a high economic cost to DBS and environmental costs. Waste is produced from printer cartridges, excess printing and there is also the cost of shredding of sensitive/unwanted documentation that is not required to be filed away.

Proposed Action

Reduce student and staff printing volumes from current high levels through agreeing and implementing a “sustainable printing policy” which would place a limit on accounts and encourage awareness of the environmental cost of printing. Staff and students will need to consider and then request larger amounts of printing.

Cost/Resource

Implementing a “sustainable printing policy” can reduce costs (paper, printer maintenance etc.) Alternatives to paper printing, such as greater use of Moodle, Panopto recordings and other e-resources are currently being actively promoted throughout DBS making this an ideal opportunity for promoting digital alternatives to printing.

Timeline

Once a policy and amounts of printing are agreed this can start to be implemented immediately.

Result

The successful implementation of this policy will result in both reduced environmental impact and considerable cost savings for DBS. The proposal has the additional benefits of minimising the use of a shared printer by students/staff during the Covid-19 period and also minimises the potential for student and staff GDPR breaches with printed material. Analysis of figures from a recent report ([see here](#)) show a 95% reduction in printing over the Covid-19 closure yet the

² <http://www.10thousandtrees.org/detailed-calculator/>



business continued to operate successfully which suggests there is an opportunity for decreasing printing volume with minimal detriment.

9. RECYCLING

It is becoming increasingly common in both private homes and public buildings to separate litter and rubbish correctly at the point of disposal for the purposes of recycling. There is considerable public support for these types of measures, especially amongst young people.

Proposed Action

We propose improving the culture and practice of recycling within DBS through providing segregated waste disposal units throughout the campus.

Cost/Resource

The cost of 45 new bins is €23,000. It is proposed that the purchase be phased to protect cash flow by starting with CH in 2020 and then AS in 2021.

Timeline

A phased approach is proposed for introduction of these bins throughout the college. This would mean that segregated bins in high traffic areas (reception areas, canteen, common room) would be prioritised to minimise spending and maximise impact.

Result

The proposed reduction in costs for printing may benefit other measures that require investment, such as segregated bins.

10. STRATEGIC SUSTAINABILITY POLICY

It is important that all stakeholders have a clear understanding of the underlying ethos of any new sustainability policies in DBS. A succinct and accessible sustainability policy document would serve this purpose for both staff and students.

Proposed Action

The creation and promotion of a 'strategic sustainability policy' for both staff and students. A proposed policy document can be viewed [here](#). Note there would be 2 separate policy documents for staff and students, however there would be significant overlap in content and form between the two.

Cost/Resource

The development of the student policy would require the active cooperation of DBS Student Services and the DBS Students' Union. DBS Student Services has been consulted and supports the proposal. The staff policy would be shared via the staff intranet for comment and contribution.

Timeline

It is proposed that following broader consultation through sharing the proposal for comment with staff throughout the college (via staff intranet) for feedback and inviting feedback from students involved in the Green Campus Committee/ Green Society this can then be published online and via posters in key locations (reception, canteen).

Result

This policy document will express the ethos and practice of DBS's commitment to sustainability in a clear and accessible manner, which will explain and contextualize DBS sustainability policies and practices. Making this document available on the DBS website would also contribute to the positioning of DBS as proactively "*#making a difference*".

11. EDUCATION

Education is a key component in the promotion of sustainable practices. DBS is in an ideal position to promote sustainability both as part of existing courses and through providing new programmes. Existing practices in partner institutions and other institutions have been reviewed ([see here](#)) to contribute to the proposal.

Proposed Action

Integrate “education for sustainable development” modules/material across academic programmes, where possible. Develop new academic programmes such as the proposed new DBS Professional Diploma in ‘Sustainability Management in Business.’

Cost/Resource

Resource/staffing cost. The development of new courses. (Note funding may be available to assist in this)³.

Timeline

Since the instigation of the group a Professional Diploma in Sustainability has been launched and sustainability has been integrated in the following Bachelor of Business modules put forward for programmatic review - Business Environment, IT Applications for Business, Digital Marketing Planning & Management, International Marketing Practice, Business Ethics & Research Practice.

It is proposed that this process of integrating education for sustainable development be continued throughout DBS on a long term basis.

Result

This proposal aims to develop the knowledge and skills necessary for students to transform themselves into life learners and action oriented global citizens empowered with a mindset to become innovative agents of change and to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing world in both their professional and personal lives, *#making a difference*.

Through integration of “education for sustainable development” material across the curriculum, DBS will be educating and empowering learners to deal with the challenges ahead.

³ UCC recently launched a project (funded by the National Forum for Teaching and Learning) to develop a suite of digital resources to assist teaching staff with the integration of Sustainable Development Goals into curricula.



This will also have the potential to attract new students to specialist courses in sustainability. There is existing demand from European partners in particular for sustainability related modules. Sustainability from both an institutional and educational perspective formed part of DBS's recent *Erasmus+ Programme* application. Recent CAO data, ([link here](#)) has shown a jump in demand for climate related courses in Ireland. Through implementing and promoting this proposal DBS improves its market position, adds value to its brand and creates further opportunities.

12. BUSINESS INITIATIVES

A review carried out ([link here](#)) has shown a number of institutions and organizations in Ireland - such as Dublin City Council, Enterprise Ireland and the Environmental Protection Agency - provide courses and/or guidelines on how to make your business more sustainable. Linking in with these organisations will help strengthen the position of DBS on its pathway to a more sustainable future.

Proposed Action

Participation by a SE member (Donal Casey) in the recently-launched (April 2020) Dublin Chamber of Commerce Sustainability Academy, which provides training and workshops on areas such as carbon-foot-printing, sustainability in business and the circular economy. The courses currently take place as 4-hour webinars.

Environmental Protection Agency 'Green Business Initiative'. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) 'Green Business Initiative'.

The EPA 'Green Business Initiative' greenbusiness.ie is an interlinked suite of projects to help businesses to "go green" (and save money) by using less energy, less water etc.

Cost/Resource

The cost of course participation for individual members of the DBS Sustainable Environment Group. €150 (for members of the Dublin Chamber of Commerce) - €290 otherwise.

The EPA 'Green Business Initiative' is free of charge.

Timeline

Can proceed once approval is given.

Result

DBS can be a leader in the private education sector as regards proactively tackling the challenges of climate change and sustainability. This would also enhance the reputation of DBS and potentially offer further opportunities for collaboration with sustainably-minded businesses and organisations in the process.

LONG TERM

13. AN TAISCE 'GREEN CAMPUS' AWARD PROGRAMME

The 'Green Campus' programme ([documentation here](#)) helps a campus community to engage in a meaningful way to enhance sustainability on campus. It rewards long term commitment to sustainability and the environment in order to ultimately qualify for a 'Green Campus Award'. The award offers a tangible, internationally recognised award that is a strong driver for student interaction and participation.

Proposed Action

Register DBS in the "Green Campus" Programme and pursue the "Green Campus" award. As student engagement is key, Student Services have been consulted ([meeting notes here](#)) and a number of proposals have been formulated including integrating with the existing "Green Week" as a flagship Green Campus event, the setting up and support of a "Green Society" and integrating a sustainability role into the Student Union.

Timeline

Campuses typically take 2-3 years to achieve their first "Green Flag". After being awarded the flag "bullet-point" updates are provided annually for the first 2 years with a re-evaluation taking place in the third year. It is hoped that considering the advanced stage of the sustainability proposals at present DBS could achieve the award within 2 years.

Cost/Resource

SLT Support and sign-off will be required for registration ([link here](#)). Student interaction and cooperation.

Result

DBS can benefit from the structure of the 3 year cycle of the programme, external accreditation for our successes if we gain the "green flag" and direct access to a network of knowledge from campuses that have already been through the programme through networking events and communication. The additional recognition and the permission to use the Green Flag symbol for branding and marketing purposes has potential benefits. Crucially all of the proposed actions in



this document integrate into the “themes” of the Green Campus programme making it an attractive opportunity.