

<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Carbon Footprint Report: next steps</b>
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<b>Purpose of the paper</b>	To update on the Union's 'next steps' following the carbon footprint report by Small World Consulting and discussions at Trustee Board and with LUSU Green.
<b>Intended outcome</b>	For information.
<b>Submitted and presented by</b>	Jack Watson (LUSU Activities Officer and officer co-lead on sustainability)
<b>Dependencies</b>	N/A
<b>Persons / Bodies consulted</b>	Darren Axe (LUSU Green Manager, Sep 24) Full-time Officer Team (Oct 24) Trustee Board (Oct 24) LUSU Green team (Oct 24)
<b>Confidential / Restricted</b>	Restricted to members of Union Assembly until publicly released to students.

## **1 Summary**

Following the 'Carbon Footprint Report' submitted to Governance sub-committee on 12th September 2024, the Trustee Board has recommended actions to reduce the carbon impact of Lancaster University Students' Union.

Outlined in the report was the Union's carbon footprint from the 2022-2023 academic year. The comprehensive report published by Small World Consulting (SWC) shined light on the largest contributions to the Union's carbon impact and provided three options for the Union to consider going forward. The Full-Time Officers believe with this in mind; the Union should explore a fourth option.

## **2 SWC Report findings**

From Governance sub-committee (12 September 2024)

- Small World Consulting (a company based in Lancaster Environment Centre) completed the Greenhouse Gas analysis during the 2023/24 academic year, with the analysis looking at LUSU data for 2022/23 financial year as an indicative or baseline year as no specific carbon reduction measures are known to have taken place during this given year.
- The report identifies the total and breakdown of Greenhouse Gas emissions (GHG) associated with LUSU operations and uses purchase ledger information to provide the data.
- GHG emissions are often and more commonly discussed as 'Carbon' emissions. LUSU's greenhouse gas footprint (or Carbon Footprint) is expressed in tonnes of Carbon Dioxide equivalent (CO<sub>2</sub>e) as is common for these analyses. CO<sub>2</sub>e expresses the footprint associated with emissions of a range of gases with global warming potential as a sum of the equivalent of their output as Carbon Dioxide.
- LUSU's Total GHG footprint for 2022/23 was 2,093.4 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e.
- To put this figure into perspective and scale, Lancaster University's carbon footprint in 2019/20 was 73,437 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub>e.

- At a high-level, LUSU's carbon emissions break down in some of the most significant spending categories as 59.6% food and drink for resale, 18.1% housing fuel and energy use and 14.1% other operational procurement.
- See the report, page 4 for the full breakdown and subsequent pages for a detailed breakdown of each spend category.

### **3 SWC recommendations for future carbon analyses**

The following work package options were set out by Small World Consulting in moving forward:

- 1. Decarbonisation actions quantitative tool (£1,809.00 exc. VAT)**  
SWC to set up and populate an Excel tool which allows different actions and scenarios that LUSU can take to be evaluated, and their impact quantified, based on their potential impact on the carbon footprint and/or carbon intensity of LUSU's operations and products. This will build upon the already calculated baseline carbon footprint to allow actions and impacts specific to LUSU to be evaluated. The tool will include, where possible, potential actions identified by LUSU staff, alongside SWC's own ideas, and any learnings from the wider industry. The populated Excel tool will be provided to LUSU in a user-friendly manner to facilitate further in-house investigation.
- 2. Decarbonisation target and actions workshop (£2,972.00 exc. VAT)**  
SWC to lead a half day workshop with relevant stakeholders and decision makers in LUSU with the aims of:
  - a. Building shared understanding of the climate crisis and its applicability to LUSU.
  - b. Briefly recapping the baseline carbon footprint and what it means for LUSU.
  - c. Evaluating the current 'Carbon Neutrality by 2030' target and its appropriateness.
  - d. Developing and evaluating potential decarbonisation actions (but without quantification of their impact as is achieved in work package 1).
  - e. A workshop setting with the relevant decision makers involved will allow building of joint understanding and momentum for climate action and allow the decision makers to suggest and evaluate realistic actions that fit the context of LUSU. We have undertaken similar sessions with other medium sized businesses, and it has been a productive experience for all involved.
- 3. Combined delivery of both of the above (£4,000.00 exc. VAT)**  
Developing a quantitative tool for evaluating potential impacts, which would then inform the workshop session. The tool would be fully populated following the workshop and handed over to LUSU to see what the combined savings from their expected actions would be.

The above suggested work packages rely on two important aspects. 1) The Union believes that the Carbon Footprint Report is accurate and inclusive of all Union practices, and 2) The Union believes it can financially support one of the above three work packages.

### **4 Accuracy of the SWC Carbon Footprint Assessment for future academic years**

The SWC carbon audit was produced based on data collected from the following sources:

- Purchase ledgers;
- Office floor space and building energy use;

- LUSU Housing property list;
- Food and drink supplier invoices;
- Staff numbers.

Primarily, the purchase ledger data will provide the brunt of the information required for SWC to carry out their audit. However, all associated activity delivered by the Union in relation to Sport is not included in the Union's purchase ledger, and instead currently within an independent budget administered by Lancaster University. As a result, an assessment of the significant carbon impact of sporting activity delivered by the Union is not included in the Carbon Footprint Report presented to Governance Sub-Committee.

As LUSU looks to take back ownership of said budget, this will significantly influence the carbon footprint estimation of the Union.

## **5     Next steps**

It is the recommendation of the Full-Time Officers and the Trustee Board that the Union takes the following course of action.

1. Publish the Union's Carbon Footprint Report in the interest of transparency. This will begin the conversation between students around the carbon impact of the union and its future.
  - a. This begins with the Union Assembly, who will receive the report in full.
  - b. The report will then be published ahead of Lent Term 2024-2025, along with an article to explain the report and its main findings in a digestible and readable format.
2. Host 'citizens assembly' type discussions with students over the next academic year (Lent and Summer Terms 24/25) in a two-part event. This event can be held as many times as the Union desires until it feels it has received enough insight from students.
  - a. Part 1: Presenting the carbon audit and its findings.  
Part 2: Workshopping how students would approach reducing the Union's carbon footprint.
  - b. The same discussion will be presented to Union Assembly sub-committees (e.g. Presidents Committee, Sport Committee, Societies Committee, Faculty Forums, etc.)
3. Concurrently within the same academic year as (2), host an informed session with Trustees to go through the carbon impact assessment with a professional, so that members of the Trustee Board understand the extent of LUSU's carbon footprint, and what tangible steps the Union can take to achieve such things based on the SWC Carbon Footprint Report.
4. Take action to reduce the Union's carbon impact following the above, with suggestions taken from the 'citizens assembly' and Trustee Board workshop. Implementing a series of changes that aim to reduce the Union's carbon footprint in the most substantial way with due consideration of its impact to the Union's financial position.
5. Employ SWC in a future academic year (suggested 25/26) to complete another carbon audit to:
  - a. Analyse the impact of carbon reduction measures set out by trustee board following analysis of previous audit and recommendations from citizens assembly.
  - b. Include carbon footprint of sport and Roses as to ascertain an in-depth and complete picture.

**6     Union Assembly are asked to**

- Note the paper and report for information.
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