

Edinburgh Climate Commission Minutes

Minutes from the meeting of the Edinburgh Climate Commission held on 26th August 2021. The meeting was conducted over Zoom due to the current restrictions of Covid-19.

Attendees:

Dr Sam Gardner (Chair), Irene Beautyman, Teresa Bray, Alex Hilliam, Jane Hopton, Dairmaid Lawlor, Sinead McNulty, Andrea Nicolas, Professor David Reay

Welcome from Dr Sam Gardener

Apologies, Andrew Kerr, Adam McVey, Bridie Ashrowan, Sophie Eastwood, Kasie Rayner, Andrea Nicholas

Updates

Sam Gardner and Alex Hilliam presented to the 3rd August 2021 Council Policy and Sustainability Committee. Commission presentation on the Commission website.

Climate Compact:

- Since the launch in December 2020 quarterly meetings were held to identify challenges and share best practice and help other in their own organisations.
- 15-16 organisations currently signed up – with another dozen at various stages in the joining process.
- There are monthly events taking place – e. g. participation in Chamber of Commerce event in August to promote compact to SME's.
- Scottish Cities Alliance event on 14 September: Glasgow has taken the Compact and turned it into the Glasgow City Charter. We are trying to encourage other cities to replicate the model to increase our impact.

Sinead McNulty led a Young people's Organisations event focused around the City's 2030 Climate Strategy. Outcomes of which will be included in the Commission's consultation response.

Commissioner Blogs on the Climate Strategy are going out this week.

A final written response on the strategy will be shared with members on 3rd September for final written comment/feedback before being shared with the council before the end of the public consultation.

Jamie Brogan presented on the Green Skills work being led by Commissioner Diarmaid Lawlor and supported by Alix Davies and Jamie Brogan. The work responds to the need to identify the skills required to deliver 2030 Climate Strategy, including identifying new and emerging roles and those existing roles affected in transition to net zero.

Reflection on the past year: Dr Alex Hilliam

Alex Hilliam commented on the challenge of not seeing each other caused by the pandemic and the on-going challenges of capacity and resource. He expresses a desire to focus on areas where the commission can make the most difference and how we can best make impact.

Reflecting on the work of the commission to date Alex highlighted:

- Green recovery work, led by Commissioner Kasie Rayner with contribution from all commissioners. This work cumulated in the Forward, Faster, Together report and demonstrated how the commissions collective knowledge can have an impact and directly influence the Council and others.
- Edinburgh Climate Compact, led by Clare Foster and supported and developed by team of commissioners. Successfully targeted business communities with ambitious and clear actions.
- Draft 2030 Climate Strategy – led by Commissioner Alex Hilliam with contribution from all commissioners. A different type of intervention, tangible impact on cities net zero strategy – the commission taking a key shaping role over strategic decisions that will affect the city for the next 9 years.

The significant role played by the Commissions Secretariat, Alix Davies, in the strategic development and delivery of work was acknowledged.

Looking forward to 2022: What does 2022 look like from your perspective

Short presentations were given by Paula McLeay of City of Edinburgh Council; Irene Beautyman of Improvement Service; and Teresa Bray of Changeworks to highlight important challenges and opportunities in 2022.

Topics included:

- Holding of Council and Scottish Government closer to account to enable Edinburgh to go further and faster
- Role of Commission as critical friends
- COP26 and legacy
- Elections
- COVID recovery
- National Care Service proposals potential to rewrite role of local government
- 20 minute neighbourhood and role in promoting wellbeing
- Opportunity to address inequalities, support wellbeing and meet national outcomes and public health priorities
- Greater calls on Scottish Government to finance the cost of change
- “A role for us to be pushing that and speak on behalf of organisations like the Council who may not feel they have a voice”
- Opportunity and need to support behaviour change
- Consideration of how early demonstrators can be scaled

Planning for 2022: Gaps and Opportunities

Edinburgh's Climate challenge's - gap & opportunities analysis (discussion). Questions considered:

- What are the systemic challenges we see in Edinburgh? What can we do to respond to them?
- Within the skills and capacity of the commission where might we add the most value in the city?
- What important issues are on the horizon?
- What important issues have we not yet tackled as a commission?
- Are there existing opportunities, relationships, organisations that we might be able to support/develop to have greater reach and impact?
- Analysis of this discussion will form the basis of the 2022 Commission workplan which will soon be published

Closing Remarks

Sam Gardner will stay on as Chair of Commission for an additional year. Sam thanked the commissioners for their support. He stated he was hopeful that 2022 we will be able to meet in person and continue with a focused work programme.