

Edinburgh Climate Commission Minutes

Minutes from the first meeting of the Edinburgh Climate Commission, held on 15th April 2020. The meeting was conducted over Zoom due to the current restrictions of Covid-19.

Attendees:

Dr Sam Gardner

Bridie Ashrowan

Teresa Bray

Sophie Eastwood

Clare Foster

Alex Hilliam

Dairmaid Lawlor

Adam McVey

Calum Murray

Daisy Narayanan

Andrea Nicholas

Kaisie Rayner

Welcome & Update

Sam Gardner welcomed all the members of the Commission and made apologies for those not able to attend. The meeting started with a brief update on the situation in the city on Covid-19 and its effects, and an outline of the agenda.

Summary of Commission Operating Principles

Commissioners were thanked their contributions to the proposed operating principles of the Commission. The feedback was considered and used to develop the final draft prior to the meeting.

Proposed Workplan & Discussion

Sam Gardner introduced the workplan and explained the need to respond to the current context with a Green Recovery Plan for the city. Other workstreams to be covered were developing city partnerships, accelerating city climate activity through highlighting best practice and removing barriers to action, and developing a framework to report on the Commission's progress.

During the discussion of the workplan, the need to focus work and to not take on too much was expressed by Commissioners, in order to produce outputs that were of good quality and useful for the city. It was suggested that the Commission needed a vision in order to guide its own work, and that stakeholders and citizens in the city could align to. However, it was also noted that people needed clear and simple guidance to follow in order to feel connected to the net zero carbon agenda.

It was felt the current situation had drastically changed previous assumptions regarding aviation and transport, broadening the perspective of what was possible for climate action. The widespread community and local action that has developed during the pandemic was cited as being important to harness during the recovery from Covid-19, and that it was important to look further than traditional city partners when designing the recovery plan.

It was agreed the Commission needed to sequence the workplan and assign Commissioners to oversee different workstreams, and that Commissioners should reach out to their own networks to promote importance of making net zero and a just transition front and centre of recovery and future planning.

The Green Recovery Plan – Discussion

The majority of the meeting was spent discussing how to take the Green Recovery Plan forward. It was highlighted that the Commission must bring in outside voices and build on existing grassroots responses to Covid-19, but not ignore the institutional systems that need to change for the right kind of recovery.

Several Commissioners stressed that the current situation was very challenging for certain sectors and also small to medium sized businesses, who are navigating the furlough scheme and adapting their services. Therefore, it was important to be strategic and sensitive to timing when engaging on a green recovery from Covid-19.

To inform the Green Recovery Plan the Commission would need to collect information and expertise from across sectors and take a place-based lens for recommendations. It was felt to be critical to have practical steps to give companies to prevent bad decision-making on sustainability, particularly during the recovery period. However, it was also important to capture what lessons have been learned during the lockdown, and what positive changes could be built on in the future.

Six Commissioners put themselves forward for being part of the team on the Green Recovery Plan.

Actions

- Commissioners will send in cited materials to help development of Green Recovery Plan.
- Six identified Commissioners will meet in two weeks to discuss Recovery Plan workplan.
- One Commissioner will be identified to lead the team.

Closing Remarks

The Chair thanked everyone for their contributions, and encouraged the continued sharing of useful information and materials online. The team working on the Green Recovery Plan would meet in two weeks' time, and would keep the Commission informed of their progress. The secretariat and Chair would be in touch with Commissioners on allocation of appropriate workstreams.

Actions

- Secretariat will amend workplan to incorporate comments from Commissioners.
- Chair and secretariat will discuss allocation of workstreams and contact identified Commissioners.