

Principles to shape a net zero recovery: Forward, Faster, Together

Re: An open letter to all who will play a part in shaping Edinburgh's recovery from Covid-19 and our response to the climate emergency.

The Edinburgh Climate Commission was established to help galvanise action across the city in response to the climate crisis. With the arrival of Covid-19 everything has changed and yet nothing has changed. 2019 saw record breaking global greenhouse gas emissions and we remain locked into ever more dangerous and systemic impacts from climate change. The significant drop in climate emissions driven by the Covid -19 lock down is temporary unless we take steps now to build back better. The aim of the Commission is the same now as it was when it formed just a few months ago - to accelerate a just transition to net zero.

It is against this context that we must build a response to the acute health and economic crisis created by the Covid-19 crisis. The decisions taken in the coming weeks and months will determine if we lock ourselves into a climate chaos pathway or instead build back to a fairer society that releases the multiple public benefits of a net zero economy.

The Edinburgh Climate Commission intends to publish a short paper by the end of June setting out key recommendations that if adopted will help not only accelerate our climate response but also create good jobs, improve public health, strengthen the resilience of our city and attract investment.

In advance of publishing this report we are presenting the principles that will guide our thinking and which we urge others to adopt in the prioritisation of their actions. These principles draw on an already strong and consistent body of work from the UK Committee on Climate Change, the OECD, leading academics, C40 Cities, The Energy Transition Commission and others. We know that climate-friendly stimulus policies to reboot economies offer a far better mechanism for boosting jobs and growth, compared to unconditional bailouts for high carbon industries. We can see this in the higher than average returns from the green investments made following the 2008 financial crisis. Armed with this understanding, and driven by the urgency of now to address inequality, improve public health and tackle climate change, we must act to prevent the climate emissions bounce we saw in 2010 and instead build back better.

Clearly the City of Edinburgh Council has a hugely important role to play in reshaping the city. However, the actions of others will also greatly determine the path we emerge on. Of critical importance will be the support framework provided by the Scottish and UK Governments and the actions of businesses across Edinburgh. Companies are looking across their business models and practices and they too must look to build forward faster to a fairer, net zero future, and respond to the changed needs of people in our city. Many of these companies are committed to the Sustainable Development Goals and now progress towards those goals can be accelerated by applying the following principles.

FORWARD
FASTER
TOGETHER

Edinburgh Principles

NET ZERO
BY 2030

1. **GO FASTER:** Accelerate the transition to net zero; lock in carbon reductions & low carbon behaviours; lock out a rollback to business-as-usual.
2. **DO BETTER:** Measure what matters; judge success against more than economic indicators; include biodiversity, wellbeing and carbon reductions.
3. **BUILD STRONGER:** Unleash the potential of local communities & producers; showcase innovation & positive adaptation; empower everyone to play their part in building a city resilient to future crises.
4. **THINK BIGGER:** Covid-19 has broken the belief that big change can't be done. The scale of our ambition; the breadth of our imagination; our commitment to collaborate and our willingness to embrace change must match the challenge of achieving net zero carbon emissions.
5. **BE BOLDER:** Use our voice as the capital of Scotland, to set the pace for climate action ahead of COP26; recognise the moral limits of markets and lead the debate on delivering a sustainable future.

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