

Earth Day – The Edinburgh Climate Compact

Edinburgh Climate Commission would like more organisations to sign up to the Edinburgh Climate Compact, at any time, but particularly today, on Earth Day.

The Compact is a promise made by all signatories to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to help Edinburgh reach its 2030 target of net zero carbon. It was established by Edinburgh Climate Commission.

There are now 10 signatories to the agreement including some significant employers in the capital: Changeworks, City of Edinburgh Council, Edinburgh Airport, Edinburgh Festival Fringe, Natwest Group, NHS Lothian, Robertson Group, Shepherd and Wedderburn, SP Energy Networks and the University of Edinburgh.

The Climate Compact commits signatories to 16 actions which will lead to clear change within their business practices, including:

- Publicising what action each signatory is currently taking to address climate change. This includes the disclosure of current emission levels and publishing plans for how they plan to reduce carbon emissions.
- Committing to retrofitting owned buildings and decarbonising operations to become more energy efficient and sustainable.
- Prioritising active and sustainable travel in their

workforce and investing in a switch to zero-emissions company owned vehicles.

- Providing training for staff to develop their awareness and understanding of climate change and changes in their behaviour which could lead to a reduction in emissions.

Commissioner Clare Foster, who led the Climate Compact workstream for the Climate Commission, said: “The Edinburgh Climate Compact represents a significant step forward on the path to a new normal of sustainable business practice in a thriving green city.

“With COP26 set to take place in Scotland later this year, there never has been a better time to take stock of what kind of city we want to be, both for ourselves now and as a legacy for generations to come.

“It has been hugely encouraging to see this level of collaboration between different sectors and organisations of this size in Scotland when reducing emissions. I hope this in turn encourages other businesses and organisations to show their support and sign up to the Compact and help make a collective difference to Edinburgh’s emissions.

The Edinburgh Climate Commission will continue to provide oversight and direction to the Climate Compact.

Changeworks Chief Executive, Teresa Bray said: “Cutting carbon is at the heart of what Changeworks has done for over 30 years, and key to this is leading by example. We are always looking for new ways to reduce our own carbon footprint and look forward to working with the Edinburgh Climate Commission in the lead up to COP26 and beyond.”

Edinburgh Airport Chief Executive, Gordon Dewar said: “We all have a responsibility to protect our climate and whether we are acting as an individual, as a business or as a collective of organisations, the goal is to become as sustainable as possible and promote Edinburgh’s proactive approach to others.

“Emissions are just one part of the wider sustainability goal and by working together to reduce them, we can work together to preserve the fantastic city that we call home. We are proud to be part of the Edinburgh Climate Compact and the airport’s forthcoming sustainability strategy will further cement our commitment to improvement and change.”

Shepherd and Wedderburn Managing Partner, Andrew Blain, said: “We are proud to have been one of the first signatories to the Edinburgh Climate Compact, which we hope will promote radical action on climate change across the Scottish capital and provide a model for effective public and private sector collaboration that others can follow.

“Shepherd and Wedderburn is committed to supporting a green recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic, and to achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. We look forward to playing our part and working with the other Compact City Climate Champions to effect change and help Edinburgh achieve its net zero ambitions.”

SP Energy Networks, Chief Operating Officer Guy Jefferson, said: “Our power networks are an important enabler when it comes to Net Zero. We’re already investing £7bn to increase capacity on our electricity network and ensure it is ready to accommodate the added demands of electric vehicles and decarbonised heating, therefore facilitating a safe, sustainable, low carbon energy system for the benefit of current and future generations alike.

“There is a real opportunity for businesses to lead by example and demonstrate how we’re making the transition to a cleaner and greener future a reality. That’s why we’re phasing out fossil fuels by electrifying our own commercial fleet and taking steps to manage our waste more efficiently both in the City of Edinburgh and across Central Scotland. We know that even the smallest changes can make a big difference if we all pull in the same direction.

“We’re delighted to join the Edinburgh Climate Compact. Net Zero is the prism through which we take our business decisions, and that has been a profound change. It’s a key reason for us becoming a Principal Partner of the COP26 global climate change conference being held in Scotland later this year. By working together, we can deliver the cleaner, greener and better future we all want, quicker.”