

Council present draft plan for 2030 Climate Strategy

In all areas of council business there is a common thread woven through many policies, that they are all designed to achieve net zero carbon in the capital by 2030. The council declared a climate emergency in 2019, and their policies adopted since then have reflected that.

Warm words expressed over recent years on reducing emissions and addressing climate change are now to be accompanied by a definite plan for reducing emissions which is on the agenda for approval by the council's [Policy and Sustainability Committee](#) next week.

This plan will include a framework of action required on the part of the council, citizens and businesses in the city and responds to recent work by the Edinburgh Climate Commission. One of the asks is that everyone in the city, particularly small and medium sized businesses, should sign up to the [Edinburgh Climate Compact](#) which the Commission drafted and which will commit individual organisations to transition to net zero. The plan will also dovetail in with all other council policies such as the City Mobility Plan and the 2030 City Plan.

The six main principles of the draft plan are:

- Ensuring a Just Transition to net zero which focuses on fair work and tackling poverty and inequality in Edinburgh.
- Preventing future emissions and adapting Edinburgh to the unavoidable impacts of climate change.
- Creating 20-minute neighbourhoods where every day needs and services can be met locally.
- Improving the energy efficiency of Edinburgh's buildings helping to reduce citywide emissions and energy demand as well as operational and maintenance costs.
- Ensuring Edinburgh's energy infrastructure can support an increase in demand to the city's electricity supply, whilst also assessing the suitability of new green energy sources.
- Working with Scottish Government to create the right conditions and support for citizens and businesses to make the practical changes they need to the way they live and work to become more sustainable.

After the draft plan is approved, a twelve week consultation will begin on 14 June 2021, seeking views from individuals and organisations in the city about the plan and also the action which can be taken.

Council Leader, Adam McVey, said that the best signpost of what Edinburgh will look like in 2030 is on George Street. The plans drafted for an active travel space at the heart of the city which is people centred and has fewer cars are a taste of what is to come.

The main areas where action is needed is improvement in air quality, protection of our green spaces, priority given to active travel measures including investment in walking and cycling routes connecting local services and amenities, and the creation of warm good quality homes. The new strategy document will respond to the demands of the [City Vision](#) in

which citizens concluded they wanted Edinburgh to be Thriving, Welcoming, Pioneering and Fair.

The council is keen that communication to residents is at the forefront of the plan working and they will run a series of campaigns on sustainability and working with young people to ensure change from COP26 in November.

The council hopes that by developing the plan this year that citizens in Edinburgh will be better informed as well as involved in taking some positive action. Cllr McVey mentioned the events which Edinburgh World Heritage has held online, citing these as a good example of ways of educating everyone.

Some of the specifics

The council has an Active Travel plan and the active travel network will be given priority as one of the ways to reduce emissions – and more cost effective than supporting electric charging points until more work is done by the energy providers.

Ensuring 20-minute neighbourhoods support the aims of reducing emissions and using local energy

A Climate Delivery Group will be established comprising Chief Executives in the city developing collective action and a framework of net zero carbon projects which can be invested in.

The council will continue to lobby The Scottish Government about the introduction of the Workplace Parking Levy. Read more about what that is [here](#).

There will be two net zero pilot areas in the city, as yet to be determined, and hopefully using external funding.

There is to be a new net zero development at Granton Waterfront with annexed coastal park, where some of the plan

will be put into action.

The council is working towards creating [Low Emission Zones](#) in the city.

The Local Plan which will be finalised later this year will ensure that any new developments will be decarbonised as far as possible, and that development will take place on brownfield sites first ahead of any in the green belt. This will ensure that new homes can use public transport already in place.

Electric vehicle charging hubs will be created for public service vehicles which will also be available to residents at key times and in key locations

Last mile delivery for freight and goods is being investigated. This is the use of smaller vehicles bringing goods from central hubs in the outskirts of the city, right down to cargo bikes, hand carts and trolleys.

Retrofitting council homes and public buildings to reduce energy demand and tackle fuel poverty. The council has a programme under consideration which will take a whole house retrofit approach, ensuring that the heating, ventilation and carbon footprint of council homes produce as low carbon emissions as possible.

Devising a heat and energy masterplan for the whole city by next year in partnership with SP Energy Networks. So-called district heating will be investigated and put in place where possible, with help and legislation from The Scottish Government.



Cllr Adam McVey Leader of The City of Edinburgh Council ©2021
The Edinburgh Reporter

Cllr McVey said: “In the year that Scotland hosts COP26, the world’s eyes will be on Scotland, and on Edinburgh as its

capital and we want to ensure this leaves a legacy of action to address the climate emergency.

“This strategy will help our businesses, public sector and organisations and residents across our communities reduce or remove their carbon footprint.

“Importantly it also lays out how will come together as a city to collaborate on action at the scale and pace we need to get to net zero by 2030. This includes our strategic partnership with SP Energy Networks which will ensure investment in the city’s grid has maximum benefit for our infrastructure plans and for businesses and residents alike.

“It’s only by working together as Team Edinburgh and with partners beyond that we can achieve the green future we need.

“This strategy aims to create the right conditions to unlock the opportunities that climate action presents, creating jobs and a more sustainable economy while we preserve our amazing Capital City for future generations.”



Depute Leader of The City of Edinburgh Council Councillor Cammy Day. Photo: Martin P. McAdam www.martinmccadam.com

Depute Leader of The City of Edinburgh Council, Cllr Cammy Day said: “Research shows that we could get over 60% of the way to net zero with actions that pay for themselves within seven to twelve years. And while we don’t have all the answers today, we will be relentless as a city in our pursuit of a better greener net zero future for this city and its people.

“It is great to see that organisations across the city have their own sustainability plans and programmes of activity that are reducing the city’s emissions and that Edinburgh’s communities and citizens, and especially our young people, have a strong track record of climate action.

“But we must all go further and faster – and we can only do

that through a joined-up collective effort.

“I encourage everyone in the city to take part in the consultation and to have their say in the proposals. Every positive action we take now will have a 10 times greater positive impact than if we waited to take these actions in 2030.”



Bridie Ashrowan CEO of EVOC

Bridie Ashrowan, Chief Executive of Edinburgh Voluntary Organisations Council (EVOC) said: “At EVOC, Edinburgh Voluntary Organisations Council, we welcome the publication of City of Edinburgh Council’s Draft 2030 Climate Strategy, not only a key milestone in Edinburgh’s journey to net zero, by 2030, while also a commitment to supporting the development of thriving local communities across the city.

“The a recognition that every citizen, community, community or third sector organisation, and company, have a role to play in achieving Edinburgh’s ambitious climate goals is hugely important.

“We welcome the opportunity for the voluntary and community sector to collaborate in the development and delivery of the strategy as well as empowering the people and communities they support to get involved, and champion where its citizens are already taking positive action.

“We hope that the goals of the strategy will connect with other landmark initiatives, such as the actions and cultural change outlined in the Edinburgh Poverty Commission’s report, working to end poverty by 2030, while also enabling the developments in green skills and jobs, that are part of a recovery with wellbeing of people and nature at the heart of it.”

Following the twelve week consultation there will be a finalised strategy adopted later in the year to which a cost

analysis will be attached.