

Transport Convener to step down later this month

After his election to Westminster the Transport and Environment Convener, Cllr Scott Arthur has intimated his resignation as Convener to the Chief Executive of the council, Paul Lawrence.

Cllr Arthur was appointed Transport Convener in May 2022 and says he is genuinely sorry to be leaving the role which only comes about after consideration of his new role as MP for Edinburgh South West. He was also employed at Heriot-Watt University but has taken an unpaid career break from the position as Chair of Urban Water Management for the parliamentary term. He remains in place as an external examiner at University College London and University of Bolton until 30 September this year, according to the Register of Members' Financial Interests.

The Transport and Environment Committee (TEC) last met on Thursday, which will be the Convener's last meeting in charge of roads and refuse collection. The Labour group will we understand announce the successor at the next full council meeting.

Council Leader, Cammy Day, said: "I'd like to thank Cllr Arthur for the time in which he's led TEC, both as an interim Convener and as the permanent convener, until the fantastic news of him being elected as the Member of Parliament for South West.

“Scott has led us through challenging times in transport and environment, delivering more safer streets, more active travel, pushing for better air quality in the city, and pushing ahead with a vision to extend trams to the north and south of the city and much, much more.

“I am really pleased to see him being elected to the UK Parliament. And of course, he’ll be missed in the committee. I think transport environment members will be sad to see him go as well.

“I think he convened that with in a very professional and friendly manner throughout his time as convener and we look forward to seeing him delivering for the people of Edinburgh South West.”

Cllr Arthur told The Edinburgh Reporter : “I have quite enjoyed being Transport and Environment Committee Convener over the last couple of years, and I actually will miss it. That’s something that I never thought I would say.

“Edinburgh faces huge challenges. It’s a congested city. It’s growing at an absolutely incredible rate, and we also have to hit our net zero targets. So working with our transport system to both deal with the problems we have today, and also try to think about the future has been incredibly rewarding for me.

“I have particularly enjoyed speaking to people in community groups right across the city including community councils to hear their feedback. I have had constructive discussions about the options to find the best way forward, and found that incredibly rewarding.

“I get a lot of comments from people online and it is a shame you can’t have that more detailed conversation with people to say “you may not like what the council is doing but what are the alternatives?” This is particularly true in our investment in public transport that we need to make.

"The timing of me leaving isn't ideal. In the last couple of years we've been launching projects while also seeing fantastic projects like City Centre West to East Link (CCWEL), Trams to Newhaven through to completion. It feels like we're at that tipping point between projects which I inherited from my predecessor, and actually making a difference in terms of our own agenda.

"Some of those things I inherited have been incredibly positive like CCWEL, Trams to Newhaven and the Low Emission Zone, but there have been other things which were more difficult to deal with. This includes not least the state of our roads and footpaths. But after a couple of years of investment I hope we are starting to see things improve.

"I would have liked to see this through to the end of the council term in 2027, but we have delivered the pavement parking ban in this past two years. What a fantastic change that has made to our city. It's made a much more equal city, and it also means that people right across the UK are looking to us for leadership in that issue. I'm so proud of that. And we achieved that as part of a committee where we had unanimous backing for the plan.

"I think the Transport and Environment Committee now is a place where we focus on what we agree on rather than what we disagree on. I don't think it has always been that way in the past. I hope my successor learns from the mistakes I have made.

"I also hope that he or she is able to take forward that kind of politics on the Transport and Environment Committee – where it's a safe place for people to disagree and also where there are real opportunities for people to work together on what can be incredibly difficult issues. And I wish that person all the best. I will be watching occasionally on the webcast."



Dr Scott Arthur MP. © 2024 Martin McAdam



Dr Scott Arthur MP at Downing Street PHOTO courtesy of Dr Arthur



Cllr Scott Arthur making his acceptance speech at the Edinburgh count PHOTO ©2024 The Edinburgh Reporter



Edinburgh South West candidate Sue Webber of the Scottish Conservatives looking on as Scottish Labour rival Scott Arthur gives his victory speech.



Spokes meeting with Cllr Scott Arthur and Laura Laker journalist



Launch of CCWEL Picture Alan Simpson



Transport Convener Scott Arthur and Council Leader Cammy Day announced the date for Trams to Newhaven to open to passengers
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29/09/2022 Picture Duncan McGlynn



andidate Launch of 2022 Edinburgh Labour Manifesto PHOTO ©2022
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