

Many thank for all that were able to attend the Connect with Climate session on the 29th June 2021,
“Raising Ambition- A tale of Two regions”

We had a number of questions that the panel were not able to answer on the day due to time, so we have captured these below, along with a panel members personal response to these.

We hope to see you at future Connect with Climate Change sessions in the lead up to COP26.

All recordings of past events and details of upcoming events can be found [here](#)

Questions

1. Is there a plan to make Glasgow a more bike-friendly city?

Gavin Slater responded- *Yes, through our Climate Plan, we have committed to growing the existing cycle lane provision in the city with a view to improving connectivity and safety for cyclists.*

Jen Roberts response: *In addition to the particular plans that Gavin mentions, I'd add that there are various activities underfoot and underwheel already to make Glasgow more cycle-friendly. Cycle infrastructure activities include as the Spaces for People pop-up cycle lanes part of the pandemic response as well as cycle ways like the nearly completed South City Way and Sauchiehall Street, and the expansion of the Glasgow's Nextbike cycle hire. Reducing vehicle numbers will make Glasgow more cycle-friendly, too, and there are plans to reduce vehicle numbers in the City and to reduce reliance on car journeys, too, like the vision for 'twenty-minute neighbourhoods' and Liveable Neighbourhoods. Finally, the Low Emission Zone will mean that people cycling in the City Centre will not be breathing in lots of exhaust pollutants.*

2. How do you engage the residents of Glasgow who are perhaps not aware of or knowledgeable about how they can contribute?

Gavin Slater responded - *We have recently launched the new [Sustainable Glasgow website](#). Through this website we aim to help people understand the work the partnership is doing and how it might impact upon their lives and how they might get involved. We also have plans to get out into communities and work with those communities to build local projects that can help fight climate change and deliver local benefit.*

3. Re: GCC achievements - has the investment required new funding, or have you re-purposed existing funding? How did you win the battle for finance for all the great work you've been doing?

Gavin Slater responded - *The work that we have done to date has come about through a variety of different funding methods, some from the council's own capital investment, some through national and internal grants, and others through partnership working. The investment required to reach net-zero carbon requires new ways of thinking in terms of financing and valuing investment, thus we are working to deliver a Green New Deal for Glasgow that will look to address the current funding shortfall.*

4. Gavin, please can you expand on how the SDG framework is supporting action and policy integration across GCC?

Gavin Slater responded - *By utilising the SDGs across various policies and strategies, we can identify how they are interconnected, and begin to look at more holistic approaches to designing solutions, moving away from potential conflicts or unforeseen issues in solution design.*

5. Great presentation from Gavin, so much going on in Glasgow. I didn't catch every slide, I'm keen to have a copy of your presentation Gavin.

Response- *These are now available on this webpage for you to download*

6. Are there plans to implement reduced parking charges, or reintroduce the free parking for EVs? On street parking is very expensive for a full day, and incentivising EV use in such a way will send a strong message, and not everyone has access to environmentally friendly public transport.

Jen Roberts responded: *We need to reduce vehicle numbers and de-incentivise private vehicle ownership and use, and so I don't think that free EV parking is a sustainable or fair option. EV's are not available/affordable for everyone (i.e. most EVs are currently owned by higher income groups), present that same road safety issues as any other vehicles, similar noise/microplastic footprints etc, and so reduced or free EV parking would not be fair. Making car users pay more and reducing costs of public transport and active travel would be fairer here, so that all users are considered. In fact, perhaps the on street EV charging parking points are not particularly needed (as Neil presented in the case of Orkney) and so any on street parking space could be instead be repurposed for active travel and public transport.*

Gavin Slater responded - *There are no plans to re-introduce free parking for EV. The free parking was put in place to help stimulate EV uptake, as was the free power supply. This too will change with tariff's being brought in. This is a necessary step to fund the infrastructure put in place and continue its growth moving forward.*

7. For Neil: have you shared your knowledge and practical experience with other similar communities- both islands and remote communities

Neil Kermoder responded- *We have tried, but we also need and plan to do more. As an example we anticipate that some of the model of the ReFLEX project will be applicable elsewhere; indeed it has been partly designed the project to be replicated elsewhere (www.reflexorkney.co.uk) OREF has also learned from the way some of the publicly funded EV chargers were put in. We were pretty appalled by the poor planning and lack of detail, so we wrote [a guide](#) on placement and installation which we distributed to every local authority in the UK. We want to refresh it with input from others with experience.*

8. Neil & Gavin: what work is being done to decarbonise public transport? What are the challenges? To meet net zero, we need to reduce the reliance on private vehicles even if they are EV's

Neil Kermoder responded - Orkney Islands Council just failed to attract any interest in providing a decarbonised bus service and Stagecoach have been re-appointed. The Council have written into the contract opportunities to change the fleet if vehicles become available.

We have helped put in a [Co-wheels](#) car club with EVs in the county and several islands have had EVs taken on by their Development Trusts to provide 'on demand' transport – effectively a community run taxi service.

The public ferries are very long in the tooth and we are pressing to try and get the replacement ferries to be zero carbon. We have two projects underway to seek to put hydrogen onto the ferries (the hydrogen having been made from locally generated electricity). There is so much more to do with this, including convincing the Maritime and Coastguard Agency on the need for 21st century fuels.

Gavin Slater responded - Through the bus service improvement partnership, the council is working with bus operators to improve the service they provide, including the introduction of a fleet of electric buses, with charging infrastructure being put in place through Scottish Power grant funding. Electric buses need very large electrical connections to provide the power.

The Glasgow Climate Plan includes a commitment to consider free public transport as part of our solutions to climate change, and this will be undertaken. There is no doubt that public transport in Glasgow can be improved, but to do so will take a lot of careful planning and due diligence to come up with the best solution.

Ellie Harrison responded - There is a lot of work to be done in Glasgow to deliver a world-class, fully integrated and affordable public transport network that we need to give people a real, reliable sustainable alternative to car travel. It is vital that we begin this work now and complete it before 2030, as public transport is a far more inclusive and energy efficient way of moving people around (not everyone can afford an EV and there's not room in a city like Glasgow to park them all! Not to mention all the emissions involved in building the new cars). To deliver this world-class network, it is essential that SPT (working with GCC) seize the new powers available in the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 to re-regulate the bus network, and to set-up a new publicly-owned bus company for Greater Glasgow so that we can plan the routes to connect seamlessly with our fixed transport infrastructure (Subway, rail and hopefully soon also the new Metro), finally deliver integrated smart ticketing and cut the cost of fares (a fare on First Glasgow is £2.50, on regulated Transport for London buses it's £1.55). Please see further details on the [Get Glasgow Moving website](#) and join the campaign.

9. Gavin + Neil: have you / how have you changed plans and priorities according to the needs of communities/publics?

Neil Kermoder responded - Yes, but often change is constrained by the funding regime for the change. We need to ensure that funding for innovation allows plans to be flexed as the path that innovation needs to take becomes clear

Gavin Slater responded - Public consultation is an important part of policy development and our policies do change as a result. Unfortunately, some changes are very complex and difficult to achieve, even though they may seem like a straightforward idea. What we need to improve is

how we communicate what we can & cannot change and why, then work together to co-create workable solutions.

10. Ken: can people (publics, other stakeholders) come and see the retrofit tenements - to know what they look and feel like?

Ken Gibb responded - The site is presently under construction and is currently scheduled to be completed by November when it will be let to tenants from Southside Housing Association. Depending on timing it may be possible to see the properties but that is a decision for project partners. We plan to hold several stakeholder events sharing lessons and disseminating our evaluation. This will include a substantive video of the project that we are planning, as well as community events around COP26.

11. With housing continuing to be built how is the planning process or the net zero targets influence how these are built- heat, EV preparedness, climate adaptation, etc? Are we still creating future problems in current projects?

Gavin Slater responded - *Glasgow has very high standards for new builds, more advanced than building regs in some cases, and these require certain amounts of renewables, suds, adaptations to climate, integrations into local heat networks where viable, etc. That said, we will continue to push the envelope through the planning process to ensure any new build or retrofit is meeting the exacting standards needed to be compliant with our net-zero carbon vision.*

Ken Gibb responded – my focus is on retrofit of the existing housing stock (which dominates the total - and will continue to do so). Most of the new build focus is on raising building standards across all tenures, and encouraging, led by higher grants and other funding mechanisms, improved environmental quality/energy efficiency for new social housing. At the same time, there are developer led examples of pipeline and onsite private new build with high levels of environmental quality (though clearly not all developers are pushing this ahead at the same pace). The Scottish Government's Housing to 2040 route map sees the delivery of higher building standards as a key way to drive this but it will be to an extent reflected in higher build costs (and higher rents for social tenants).

12. The planning system was is one of the few times government has decision-making leverage over renewable energy developments, new housing stocks and some existing housing. How can we make the Climate Emergency a more significant material consideration in planning decision-making?

Neil Kermode responded *Orkney is about to begin the drafting of the next Local Plan and we will be intending to make sure this is done in the shadow of the declared Climate Emergency and the range of Net Zero ambitions and drivers.*

Ken Gibb responded – I think the planning function is important but it is only one of several stakeholders or parties to both new build and retrofit housing that need to be aligned collectively, both at strategic and critically at site or operational levels, in order to move at pace and scale. This should not be assumed but needs to be constructed, practiced and monitored. I suspect that for retrofit of flats and larger scale works in particular, specific solutions do not scale well because of specific site idiosyncrasies and will take time and effort – so building good

practice with leadership and buy-in will be important to the local community, heritage/conservation, multi-level governance, existing property interests, etc. but there will often be non-trivial transactions costs.

Gavin Slater responded - see my response to question 11.

13. For Gavin - how do you measure success and how frequently towards your 2030 target?

Gavin Slater responded - *We report annually on CO2 emissions with data provided by the Department of Business, Environment, and Industrial Strategy. This report goes to our Environment, Sustainability, and Carbon Reduction Committee. This report is accompanied by narrative descriptions of the work underway to support further emissions reductions. With the new Climate Plan, given the sheer scale of the work required to be undertaken, we are implementing new governance into the council to ensure that all aspects of the council's work are contributing to our net-zero carbon target. Future reports to our committee's will be much more detailed on an action by action basis.*

14. By means of wind, tidal and wave energy generator systems, investigating for better efficiency or constructing as more current projects as possible should be the priority? Both are crucial aspects but is there enough support and time to improve these systems to their best potential?

Neil Kermode responded— *I agree we need to be more efficient, but we also want to make the projects more durable.*

Do we have time? Yes. The time to improve the machines is a function of how often we choose to repeat their construction. Products get better the more of them that are made. If we only built one car per year then we would not be as good in 10 years as we would be if we built 1000 cars a year for 10 years. So the time to improve is malleable and a function of effort (which itself is a function of vision and commitment)

I would also argue that if we want there to be a new sustainable industry, delivering clean green energy to the grid, based on 'post transition' jobs and in peripheral communities that can turn into an export market then we really don't have much choice. If of course we don't want any of these things then we can do something else, but personally I believe this is such an opportunity for the UK that it would be reckless to turn our back on this just as we have found how to make it work.

We have also seen the danger of too narrow energy planning with the centralised systems failing to spot the opportunities of roof top solar despite calls for 2 decades to be ready for it and we have failed to make the most of our original lead in wind energy. We had centralised energy policies on 'the dash for gas', fracking and nuclear all run into the sand. We also had central policies turn off funding for wind. marine and heat only now to realise that these decisions have cost our economy dear. We do need a diversity of supply to deal with the coming challenges.

15. How does Glasgow CC plan to protect the most vulnerable in your climate strategy - these are the people who usually least contribute to the climate emergency?

Gavin Slater responded - *A Just Transition is absolutely core to the Glasgow Climate Plan. We will not undertake any measures that further exacerbate issues of poverty or further distance the gap between those that have and those that don't. We are about to commence a Just Transition*

Commission for Glasgow. This will help us further analyse how we tackle this issue with the input of a variety of stakeholders, ensuring we create a prosperous and inclusive net zero future for every Glaswegian.

16. Great presentation Gavin. Where can I find out more about Sustainable Glasgow?

Gavin Slater responded - Thank you very much. Please visit our website at www.sustainableglasgow.org.uk

17. What hasn't worked? What's been the biggest failure so far in your view and what have you learnt from it?

Jen Roberts responded: One of the things that has caused long term damage is the consumer-orientated framing around climate action. Framing climate action around individual choices has effectively pedalled the continued use of the information deficit model of understanding, whereby if only people knew more or had better understanding about climate change they would make (sometimes difficult, expensive, disruptive) changes to their lives and life choices, i.e. effectively putting climate change mitigation into the hands of the consumer. While 'consumer-led' choices are important, people make choices in response to their environment, and many do not feel agency to make choices, and as such, those 'choices' are not available to everyone. Instead, we should have taken collective responsibility much *much* earlier to make changes to our built environment (including energy, transport), markets, business models, and so on, to create an environment in which sustainable choices – i.e. that are better for climate, public health, community resilience and so on – that are fairer for all - are also perceived to bring the most benefit (including being the cheapest and/or most convenient). The same goes for enabling community-led initiatives. If that collective shift was taken much earlier, we'd be much further along than we are currently in terms of climate action and sustainability. By ignoring the importance of such environmental change, we are left with the message that individuals and communities are not doing enough. This, in turn, continues to push the concept that the public need to *know more*, rather than being enabled to *do more* (through systemic change) or *influence more* (by being involved more) in the net zero transition.