



Green Group of Councillors Report To Members November 2013

Here's the final Green councillors report of 2013 on our priority areas. Climate change is an area Green councillors work on through our energy and transport priorities. Scientists have linked the severity and timing of the Philippines typhoon with climate change. The Council is working with Mercy Corps on a typhoon Haiyan appeal. You can donate at www.mercycorps.org.uk

Capital jobs

In Bruntsfield, a new [community greengrocer](#), chaired by Melanie Main, launched its first share issue on 21 November. Economy Spokesperson, Gavin Corbett, took part in the launch of the Edinburgh Social Enterprise Strategy and has welcomed the potential for Edinburgh to develop an [ethical finance hub](#).

Energy

Gavin Corbett has continued to champion the case for the massive [Fountainbridge](#) brewery site to be an exemplar of sustainable urban development and the final masterplanning session saw plans for district heating confirmed as viable. Greens have also been pressing for greater urgency in [schools](#) energy investment

A report on the potential for a Council Energy Services Company (ESCo) finally made it to the Sustainability Working Group this week – something that Green councillors won formal approval for from the Council over two years ago! As we expected it highlighted the savings to be made on bills and climate-changing pollution and significantly the potential to supplement dwindling council budgets, so Greens will again be pushing for an Edinburgh ESCo.

Transport



Nigel Bagshaw has called for an end to hand-wringing on the problem of [traffic congestion](#), highlighting the absurdity of costly schemes to promote free city centre parking. At the Sustainability Working Group, Greens raised the issue of how planning policies particularly on parking can undermine sustainable transport goals - the working group will now hold a session looking into planning and sustainability.

Better Neighbourhoods & stronger communities

Our representative on Licensing Board, Chas Booth, has been [leading calls](#) to back health professionals' advice on limiting the number of new alcohol licences for those communities already beset by alcohol-related problems.

At full Council last week Green convenor Steve Burgess challenged the Council Leader over the failure of the Coalition to challenge the UK Government on the bedroom tax. So far the Coalition has resisted the Green proposal to redesignate bedrooms in Council properties to defeat the bedroom tax and remove the possibility of eviction hanging over thousands of city residents.

Opening up Edinburgh – Participation

As one of the members of COSLA's Commission on Strengthening Local Democracy, Maggie Chapman has been working hard to ensure participative processes and structures are central to the discussions of the Commission. Just because people do not or cannot engage meaningfully in our current political structures does not mean that we should not look to develop truly local and participative alternatives for the benefit of communities across Scotland.

At Full council in October Greens argued for political governance arrangements that make the council more transparent and open including retaining the petitions committee, retaining policy development sub-committees where external stakeholders can be heard and proposing that Education committee has two parent representatives one each for primary and secondary schools – which sadly was rejected.

Webcasting of council meetings, originally proposed by Green councillors, is going to be extended to cover the majority of committee meetings allowing residents to see what is being done in their name.

Planning spokesperson Nigel Bagshaw was withering in his [reaction](#) to complaints by developer, Barratts, that members of the public using twitter during a planning meeting lay behind refusal of one of its planning applications.



Around the Wards

In **Fountainbridge-Craiglockhart**, Gavin Corbett has been working with local residents in the [Allan Park](#) area to challenge plans for a bungalow to be knocked down for a new road, opening up the prospect of yet more development at the already compromised green spaces of Meggetland.

After nearly 6 months of a very well organised campaign, supported by all the **Leith Walk** councillors, it was great when the proposed development of the former Broughton High School, situated next to Broughton Primary School, was refused planning permission. Maggie Chapman will continue to work with local parents to ensure that the expansion needs of the primary school are met in the best possible way.

In **Southside-Newington**, Steve Burgess took part in the Dumbiedykes estate Quality of Life Working Group, supporting residents wish to keep Dumbiedykes as a priority for South Central Neighbourhood Partnership perhaps with the focus on reducing isolation of people in the community.