**Just Transition Commission minutes: June 2022**

Minutes from the fourth meeting of the Just Transition Commission on 23-24 June 2022.

**Attendees and apologies**

Commission attendees

In person:

Jim Skea (Chair)

Richard Hardy (Prospect)

Nick Robins (Grantham Research Institute, LSE)

Ronnie Quinn (NECCUS)

Ameena Camps (Zero Waste Scotland)

Lang Banks (WWF)

Katie Gallogly-Swan (UN Conference on Trade and Development)

Satwat Rehman (One Parent Families Scotland)

Rachel McEwan (SSE)

Remote:

Ann Pettifor (Economist, Policy Research in Macroeconomics)

Secretariat attendees:

Elliot Ross

Ann-Marie Meikle

Shona Ann Kinnear

Guests for agenda:

Adam Armour-Florence, West Dunbartonshire Council

John McKenna, West Dunbartonshire Council

Dave Pearson, Star Renewable Energy

Jim Thompson, Vital Energi

Dave Monteith, Vital Energi

Stephen Good, Built Environment-Sustainable Transformation (BE-ST)

Emma Church, Built Environment-Sustainable Transformation (BE-ST)

Chris Morgan, John Gilbert Architects

Guest for agenda remote:

Ross Armstrong, Warmworks

Apologies

Ray Riddoch (Harlaw)

Elaine Dougall (Unite/STUC)

Mark Reed (SRUC)

Colette Cohen (Net Zero Technology Centre)

Jake Molloy (RMT)

Rajiv Joshi (Bridging Ventures)

Photographer:

Chris Watt

**Items and actions**

**Visit to the Queens Quay Energy Centre, Clydebank**

On 23 June, Commissioners visited the Queens Quay Energy Centre which involved a tour of the facilities followed by discussion with West Dunbartonshire Council, Star Renewable Energy and Vital Energi, the developers and managers of the facility.

The Commissioners were briefed on the technical aspects and benefits of the district heat network along with the wider use of heat pumps for consumers and industry.

Challenges in the sector were discussed, including problems arising due to the vast building types in place across the Scottish estate and the need for multiple bespoke solutions, along with significant issues around the high cost of purchasing electricity from the grid to run the network.

There was discussion around the scale required to connect towns and cities, which in most cases is not viable at present.

The commission posed questions around investment options and explored possible finance mechanisms.

**Initial report – development and structure**

Commissioners met on the afternoon of 23 June to discuss development of the initial report.

Members agreed that the report would be delivered as an initial report.

The structure and content of the introduction section within the initial report was discussed and agreed.

**Welcome from the Chair**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting taking place at Built Environment-Sustainable Transformation (BE-ST) on 24 June and gave an overview of the agenda, followed by introductions of those in attendance.

**Heat and buildings - information gathering session**

Members heard presentations from Built Environment-Sustainable Transformation, John Gilbert Architects and Warmworks focused on the various benefits and associated challenges in delivery of the green heat agenda. This was followed by a Q&A session.

Members highlighted that whilst there is a lot of good work ongoing, the scale of what is required is falling short across the sector for housing and other buildings.

There was discussion on “who pays” for retrofit work, particularly those ineligible for Warmworks support at present due to benefit criteria. It was suggested government should look at other countries for solutions, such as Germany and Italy who both operate effective incentive schemes.

Discussion about pace and scale of the sector ensued, along with recognition that a culture change within the sector is required. Training programmes need to be developed to allow people to be re-skilled across the sector and at present there is not enough people ready in place to do this at scale.

Issues surrounding the energy market were discussed including a requirement for increased dialogue between the Scottish and UK governments in order to help alleviate barriers. The UK energy costed market is based on place/region and this creates an unjust society. There was agreement that regulation changes are required in the supply chain for energy and heat incentives.

**Closed discussion session**

Commissioners shared reflections from the visit to the Queens Quay Energy Centre the previous day. Members expressed concern around the ability to replicate the technology elsewhere at scale given the barriers in place around the energy market and lack of access to fair prices.

In regards to the building sector and heat, members noted that sustainable solutions with high quality skilled jobs are needed across the sector, which in turn will bring social benefits.

Members discussed and agreed the structure and content of the Commission’s upcoming report due for publication in July. The report will focus on key priority sectors along with cross-cutting themes, setting out strategic priorities and recommendations for government to achieve a just transition. The recovery from the pandemic and the cost of living crisis will also be addressed in detail throughout. It is expected that the recommendations and key points from the report will inform the Scottish Government’s upcoming Programme for Government.

Working groups were responsible for drafting each section of the report with a working group lead assigned to coordinate the work. Each working group lead presented their key findings to the group and comments were invited from other commissioners. Outputs from the discussion informed the final version of the report which is to be published in July.

**Meeting conclusion**

Members discussed plans for the next meeting which is likely to take place on Lewis in October. The secretariat will progress with making the meeting arrangements.

Action 1: Working group leads to produce and share finalised draft sections of the interim report with Secretariat.

Action 2: Secretariat to re-draft allocated sections of the report.

Action 3: Secretariat to arrange a meeting with all Commissioners to discuss and agree the final draft of the report prior to publication.

Action 4: Secretariat to commence arrangements for Meeting 5.