

# CROSS PARTY GROUP IN THE SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT ON CONSTRUCTION

SCOTTISH PARLIAMENT,  
EDINBURGH, EH99 1SP

2.30pm Friday 11<sup>th</sup> September  
Virtual Meeting held via Zoom

## Meeting Note

### 1. Welcome

Monica Lennon (ML) welcome everyone to the second virtual meeting of the Cross-Party Group (CPG) on Construction.

Apologies were noted from Sandra White MSP (SW) and Alexander Burnett MSP (AB).

ML noted that since the CPG's previous meeting in May, the industry's re-start plan had progressed from a soft start on 10<sup>th</sup> June and that a draft recovery plan for the construction had been published in August. ML noted some statistics:

- Up to the end of July, in Scotland, 73% of all eligible employments in construction have been furloughed.
- This compares to 60% across the UK as a whole and 58% in England.
- For the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme, Scotland has the lowest proportion of claims (at 26%) from those working in Construction in every country and region of the UK.
- These statistics providing an insight into the employment structure of our industry in Scotland.

ML praised employers and employees across the construction industry for their hard work in adjusting to the new normal. ML noted feedback via the Federation of Master Builders: more time is being spent now on planning tasks; with frontline workers typically deployed in smaller groups than usual and trades working in sequence rather than side by side.

ML noted that there may well be long term gains for the industry from maintaining these new ways of working. ML cautioned that the high demands on the staff involved in managing or re-planning sites and projects, may have adverse impacts on wellbeing for some.

### 2. Matters Arising

The notes were approved from the meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> May on 'The Covid-19 Crisis and the Construction Industry'.

### 3. The Infrastructure Commission for Scotland

ML introduced today's topic of infrastructure. The Infrastructure Commission for Scotland was established by Scottish Government to provide independent, informed advice on the nation's vision, ambition and priorities to create a 30-year infrastructure strategy to meet Scotland's future economic growth and societal needs.

ML welcomed our three speakers.

- Sara Thiam, CEO, Scottish Council for Development and Industry and Infrastructure Commission for Scotland Commissioner.
- Tony Rose, Director of the Secretariat from the Infrastructure Commission for Scotland.
- Stephen Slessor, Morrison Construction.

Sara & Tony delivered a joint presentation on the work of and recommendations from the infrastructure commission for Scotland. The presentation is attached separately, some key points:

- Eight priority areas were identified in the key findings report. Namely: leadership, place, making the most of existing assets, heat and transport, regulation, digital & technology, the role of the public, independent long-term advice.
- Achieving an inclusive net zero carbon economy is still key outcome.
- Place based infrastructure needs will be important, with the impact of Covid-19 reinforcing 'work, place and live.'
- The 'How' from the recommendations will be more delivery focused.
- Delivering a thriving construction sector is a key focus in phase 2 of the report. A construction accord to be established involving Scottish Government, (SGV) industry and public sector bodies.
- SGV responding to Phase 1 as part of IIP in September and will respond to Phase 2 shortly thereafter.

Stephen Slessor's presentation was based on a contractor's perspective on the work that is already being undertaken to move to a net zero position. Stephen focused on Morrison Construction's experience of electric and hybrid excavators. Stephen's presentation is attached separately, some key points:

- The electric excavators are 0% emissions from the point of use. With zero performance losses reported.
- The excavators are five times quieter than a diesel equivalent, with a 17% reduction in operating costs.
- Challenges remain in implementation. The electric excavators are three times the capital cost of a diesel equivalent. Only smaller excavators are suitable with larger

excavators needing hydrogen fuel cells.

- Morrison Construction have also just embarked on a project which can monitor their carbon emissions in real time using data generated by satellites.

ML thanked our three speakers before inviting questions via the chat function on Zoom.

A question and answer session followed with discussion on whether clients were mature enough to make the necessary investment given the higher capital cost of electric excavators. Stephen Good (SG) from the Construction Scotland Innovation Centre (CSIC) suggested a collaborative approach with multiple parties investing in and then sharing the equipment. SG citing an example from the farming industry.

Graham Simpson MSP noted confusion on whether existing roads could be widened given the recommendations in the key findings report. Hannah Smith from the ICE asked how an outcomes-based approach to infrastructure delivery could be manifested.

TR noted that if a system is created across SGV and regulators which enables collaboration to happen, then pricing and procurement mechanisms can be structured to help achieve net zero. Many agreeing that what is actually valued in procurement outcomes is critically important.

There were questions and discussion on

- What a low or zero carbon heat infrastructure might look like.
- How to embed net zero principles across training and qualifications, especially in apprenticeships
- The importance of green space and the natural environment as infrastructure: using nature-based solutions.

#### **4. Any Other Business**

No points raised.

#### **5. Date of Next Meeting.**

**3pm on Friday 20th November:** this will be the AGM of the CPG on Construction. Gordon Nelson (GN) and ML will confirm if this will be a physical or a virtual meeting nearer the time.

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List of attendees identified during the Zoom meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> September.

**MSP attendees:** Monica Lennon MSP, Graham Simpson MSP

**Non-MSP apologies:** Anne Galbraith SECTT, Lesley McLeod APS, Robert Girvan CITB, William Crow ISE, Chris Pateman EPIC.

## Non-MSP attendees

Forename	Surname	Company/Representing	CPG Members Noted
Sarah	Thiam	SCDI	Presenter
Tony	Rose	Infrastructure Commission	Presenter
Stephen	Slessor	Morrison Construction	Presenter
Barri	Millar		
Stephen	Good	Construction Scotland Innovation Centre	
Hannah	Smith	Institute of Civil Engineers	CPG Member
Grahame	Barn	CECA Scotland	CPG Member
Cara	Hilton	CECA Scotland	CPG Member
Maureen	Douglas	Forster Roofing	
Fiona	Harper	SELECT & SJIB	CPG Member
John	Keenan	CITB	CPG Member
David	Gethin		
Fiona	Hodgson	SNIPEF	CPG Member
Paul	Ingham		
Gordon	Nelson	FMB and CPG Secretary	CPG Member
Colin	Tennant	Historic Environment Scotland	
Len	Bunton	Bunton Consulting	
Steve	Munro		
Elaine	Ellis	Skills Development Scotland	
Andy	Dell		
Marty	Macari		
Hew	Edgar	RICS	CPG Member
Steven	Dillon	Unite the Union	CPG Member
Colin Stephen	Grieve		
Rebecca	Passmore		
Kevin	Yardley		
Tom	Elvin		

**Secretary:** Gordon Nelson

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