



**Note of the Scottish Cities Alliance Leadership Group meeting
Thursday 9th March 2023 – 9.30am – 11.30am**

Attendance:

Cllr Ian Yuill	Co-Leader, Aberdeen City Council
Angela Scott	Chief Executive, Aberdeen City Council
Cllr John Alexander	Leader, Dundee City Council (Chair)
Cllr Cammy Day	Leader, The City of Edinburgh Council
Andrew Caldwell	The City of Edinburgh Council
Christine Downie	The City of Edinburgh Council
Cllr Altany Craik	Fife Council - Dunfermline
Cllr Susan Aitken	Leader, Glasgow City Council
Gavin Slater	Glasgow City Council
Cllr Grant Laing	Leader, Perth & Kinross Council
Thomas Glen	Chief Executive, Perth & Kinross Council
Cllr Chris Kane	Leader, Stirling Council
Carol Beattie	Chief Executive, Stirling Council
Tom Arthur MSP	Minister for Public Finance, Planning and Community Wealth
Stephen White	Head of Community Wealth Building, Scottish Government
Iain McCreaddie	Programme Director, Scottish Cities Alliance

Also in attendance :

Emma Harvey-Smith	Grenn Finance Institute (item 3)
Matt Ferritti	Green Finance Institute (item 3)
Steve Turner	3Ci (item 3)
Hannah Fyfe	Aberdeen (Item 5)
Graham Smith	Glasgow (item 5)
Michelle Hardie	Highland (item 5)
Allan Maguire	Highland (item 5)
Lauren Pascu	Scottish Cities Alliance
Isabel Brennan	Scottish Cities Alliance

Apologies received from:

Greg Colgan	Chief Executive, Dundee City Council
Andrew Kerr	Chief Executive, The City of Edinburgh Council
Cllr David Ross	Leader, Fife Council - Dunfermline
Steve Grimmond	Chief Executive, Fife Council - Dunfermline
Annemarie O'Donnell	Chief Executive, Glasgow City Council
Cllr Raymond Bremner	Leader, Highland Council - Inverness
Kate Lackie	Interim Chief Executive, Highland Council
Colin Cook	Scottish Government

1. Welcome, Introduction & Apologies

The Chair welcomed the group including Tom Arthur MSP, Minister for Public Finance, Planning and Community Wealth to his first Leadership Group meeting. Apologies were noted as detailed above.

2. Note of Previous Meeting (23rd November 2022)

The note of the previous meeting was approved and an update on items not covered elsewhere on the agenda was given as follows:-

Item 2 – Levelling Up – The chair noted that the invitation has been extended to Michael Gove MP to meet with the Leadership Group to discuss feedback on the Levelling Up Agenda approach and how it can best support cities going forward. It was further noted that the Alliance facilitated a peer-to-peer learning session with the UK Government’s City and Local Growth Team in February to assist cities understand what makes a good project and to learn lessons from Scottish city projects successful in receiving levelling up funding in round 1 in Edinburgh (Granton Gas Holder) and Inverness (Zero Carbon Cultural Regeneration).

Item 5 - Update to Alliance Protocols – it was noted that the Protocols will be updated with Dundee City Council in due course to reflect that they now employ the Alliance team and to streamline the budget management functions. As these relate to operational matters, the intention is to bring these forward to a future CEO Group for consideration.

3. Transition to Net Zero

- **Green Finance Institute – Emma Harvey-Smith, Director** - The Chair welcomed the Green Finance Institute to the meeting to speak to the presentation circulated.

The Chair thanked GFI for their presentation and encouraged City Leaders to follow up directly with the GFI following the meeting to discuss financial solutions suitable for their area.

In discussion, Cllr Aitken highlighted that Glasgow is focusing on a large-scale public sector led intervention to fund the retrofit of housing as the city was of the view that during a cost of living crisis it was not appropriate to ask citizens to bear the costs of retrofitting their homes. The GFI noted its experience of working with London to take a large-scale public-sector intervention approach but still felt there was a role for consumer retail options explaining that if they can educate banks to facilitate the conversation with home owners on retrofit it could help make a shift in the absence of public sector funding. Cllr Day asked whether some of GFI’s financial models might support a combined or group purchasing scheme for businesses as this is something that may be of interest in Edinburgh. GFI offered to pick this up with Edinburgh outwith the meeting and keep the Alliance cited on how discussions go.

- **3Ci – Scottish Cities Alliance – 2023-2024 – Steve Turner, Director** – the Chair welcomed Steve Turner from 3Ci to the group who spoke to the paper tabled noting how 3Ci had supported the Alliance on an informal basis over the last year and that they were now seeking the Leadership Group’s approval for moving that relationship onto a more formal basis in 2023-2024 in recognition of how future activity could assist the Alliance partners with shared objectives around net zero pipeline development and increasing patient capital investment into Net Zero projects. As part of the overview it was noted the Scottish Government has confirmed its interest in working with 3Ci to aid the development and route to market of projects which seek private sector investment and has proposed meeting with 3Ci once the UK Government assessment of their business case is complete to discuss how they work with 3Ci and the Alliance to take forward demonstrator activity in Scotland.

In discussion, Cllr Aitken commended the support Glasgow had received from its involvement in 3Ci to date in terms of developing its own understanding of the scale of the challenge, the skills gaps within their local authority and developing its Greenprint portfolio ahead of COP28. Cllr Craik noted that as Dunfermline is the newest city in the Alliance it would welcome an opportunity to speak with 3Ci offline to determine how Fife Council best engage.

The group:-

1. Noted the opportunities 3Ci presents the Alliance to deliver on its own ambitions for accelerating delivery of net zero activity across the Scottish cities as part of its Operational Plan 2022-2026;
2. Agreed that the Alliance should become a formal partner of 3Ci in financial year 2023-2024 and contribute £20,000 from the Cities Investment Fund to 3Ci's budget;
3. Agreed that 3Ci should continue discussions with the Scottish Government and Scottish Cities via the Alliance around how they might work collaboratively to accelerate delivery of activity in Scotland as part of 3Ci's planned programme of work in 2023-24;
4. Agreed that Cllr Susan Aitken, Glasgow will represent the Scottish Cities on the Advisory Board of 3Ci;
5. Agreed that Angela Scott, CEO Aberdeen City Council and Strategic Lead for the Alliance's Net Zero Activity should represent the interests of Scottish cities on the Steering Group as appropriate; and
6. Agreed that the Alliance's Programme Director for the Scottish Cities Alliance, should support both the City Leader attending the Advisory Board and Angela Scott in performing their roles on the Advisory Group and Steering Group and representing the interests all of partners as appropriate.

- **City Centre Recovery Taskforce – Net Zero Local Authorities**

The Programme Director updated the group on the completion of work led by Edinburgh on behalf of the Alliance with the Edinburgh Climate Change Institute to look at how improvements could be made in legislation, policy, finance, coordination and capacity to help accelerate delivery and action of the strategic objectives for net zero city centres in the City Centre Recovery Taskforce report.

The group noted receipt of the finalised report and that ECCI intended to publish the report shortly. It was agreed that Leaders would look to discuss the recommendations of the report with city officers and ask them to share any feedback with the Alliance's Delivery Group when it meets on 9th May. Meanwhile, it was agreed that Edinburgh should lead on progressing discussions on the recommendations with the Scottish Government Net Zero Directorate with a view to finding solutions to the challenges raised and facilitating a future discussion between Leaders and relevant Ministers.

4. Community Wealth Building - Tom Arthur, Minister for Public Finance, Planning and Community Wealth Scottish Government Consultation

Mr Arthur provided an overview of the role Government sees community wealth building playing as part of the National Strategy for Economic Transformation's vision to create a wellbeing economy whereby the wealth generated within a community is retained by the community who are democratically empowered to decide how it is reinvested locally. Mr Arthur noted examples of good work taking place across Scotland and the cities built around the 5 pillar model as well as the current consultation on the proposed Community Wealth Building Legislation which seeks to bring a more strategic lens to the approach, looking at how these existing strands of work can be co-ordinated to effect a fundamental change on the ground and drive outcomes the government wants to see around reducing poverty, increasing opportunity, reducing demand on public services and facilitating the transition to a net zero economy. Mr Arthur advised that the government was conscious that legislation was just part of the picture in terms of delivering a wellbeing economy and that what was needed was to embed Community Wealth Building principles across the public, private and third sector as a whole and not just local authorities.

The Chair thanked Mr Arthur for his helpful overview and encouraged cities to submit their individual views to the consultation noting that the Alliance had already facilitated an early collective opportunity for city CEOs and officers to comment on proposals last August. Reflecting on Mr Arthur's overview and the desire for legislation to be an enabler in supporting local authorities work across their cities and regions, the Chair invited City Leaders to offer constructive feedback on how the proposed legislation might assist them. The following points were raised in discussion:-

- Cities sought clarity around the role and purpose of the legislation and asked that it focuses on empowering local authorities to accelerate what they are already doing at a city and city region level at

scale rather than place additional responsibilities on them. An example of where the legislation might be helpful is clarifying where national support and leadership comes in to support delivery of something at the local level and in what circumstances. An example given was the collapse of a large scale local employer and how local and national leaders might work together to explore the viability of employee ownership models to secure local jobs.

- Cllr Kane noted that Stirling was set to approve a Community Wealth Building plan for the council and that the process of developing it had really helped them understand the opportunity it presented for the city region. Of particular consideration to the council in drafting the plan was assigning resource to help build community capacity to deliver the plan. Ensuring that national public sector institutions have a local presence in the city region is another way in which community capacity to deliver the plan could be secured.
- Cities cited the need to reflect on the inconsistency between current government policies, powers and levers being largely centralised and the desire to facilitate a community led and democratised economy if the shared goal is ultimately to facilitate an acceleration of Community Wealth Building outcomes at the local level.
- Questions were raised by cities about whether procurement legislation was perhaps one of the barriers to supporting local businesses. Mr Arthur noted that the government was aware of progress across local authorities in driving social and environmental outcomes through procurement but recognised that there is variation across them and that government would be open to understanding as part of the consultation where any specific changes to procurement legislation might be helpful.

Mr Arthur thanked the City Leaders for their constructive feedback and reassured them that the Scottish Government's focus was very much on outcomes and ensuring there was alignment across the public sector as a whole to supporting Community Wealth Building. The Chair thanked Mr Arthur for leading the discussion and welcomed him back to a future Leadership Group meeting post-consultation to discuss this important agenda further.

5. Scottish Cities Week – Leaders Feedback

The Chair spoke to the paper tabled by the Programme Director summarising the feedback received across the Alliance partners on the inaugural Scottish Cities Week programme delivered in January 2023. There was universal support across the group for the programme delivered by the Alliance team and a desire to continue to build this event as an annual feature of the Alliance Investment Promotion offering. The feedback summarised in the report tabled was acknowledged as being an accurate reflection of the views of the group and the following additional points were noted in discussion:-

- The Alliance should give consideration to the development of a follow up investment event in Scotland for investors cities are introduced to at a future Scottish Cities Week programme in London to allow relationships established to continue to develop and for investors to visit propositions they are interested in. This being said, a number of cities noted a number of follow up visits and meetings that had or were due to take place in Scotland on the back of the January programme.
- City Leaders were keen to work more closely as a group on the refinement of messaging in the lead up to a future programme to ensure that overall the pitch from the cities collectively was relevant to investors.
- Consideration should be given to the development of an event as part of the programme which allowed the cities to showcase a range of projects at different stages of readiness including projects which are at an earlier stage of development on which cities would welcome the skill set of an investor to shape.

The consensus of the group was that although the intention had originally been to hold the programme in September, January worked well for the Scottish Cities programme as it didn't overlap with other investment events and overall allowed the Alliance to attract the right people in the room. The group confirmed their support for the Alliance developing a programme for January 2024 which responded to the feedback and looked forward to working closely with the team to shape it over the next year.

On a separate note, the group noted that there was perhaps merit in looking at developing activity with wider SDI Hubs and embassies. The Alliance noted that this was something it was looking into developing as part of the investment promotion programme over the next year, perhaps beginning in the first instance as a virtual event with the SDI Hub in Germany.

6. Alliance Business Update

- **Directors Report and Budget Update** – the Programme Director gave an overview of the key points in the Directors Report, and it was agreed that the summary version of the budget will be published on the Alliance website.
- **Annual Report 2022-2023** – it was noted that the intention is to table a draft of the Annual report before the Delivery Group on 9th May and thereafter circulate a final version to Leaders by email for approval. There will be an opportunity to reflect on the content of the report with Leaders as part of summer 1-2-1s with the Programme Director.

7. A.O.B

The chair noted the desire expressed by Leaders during Scottish Cities Week to have more in person meetings of the Leadership Group where it made sense to do so and it was suggested and agreed that the next meeting of the group should be a physical meeting in Dunfermline as the newest city partner.

8. Dates of Future Meetings

- The chair noted that a special meeting of the Leadership Group was likely to take place in the next quarter to allow Leaders to discuss with Ministers the recommendations flowing from the work led by Glasgow and Stirling on the City Centre Recovery Taskforce's workstreams focused on increasing residential capacity in city centres and vacant and derelict land.
- 21st September 2023

The meeting finished at 11.30 am.