

Edinburgh Accessibility Commission – Minutes

Wednesday 19 March 2025, 14:00 – 17:00 – Microsoft Teams Meeting

Attendees

1. Accessibility Commission members

Zara Todd (ZD) Chair; Councillor Stephen Jenkinson ((Vice Chair, City of Edinburgh Council (CEC)); Michael Tornow (Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland); Robin Wickes (Edinburgh Access Panel), Omar Haq (Lothian Centre for Inclusive Living); Michael Moore (The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association Scotland); Olivia Sklenar (Lothian Buses); David Hunter (Living Streets Edinburgh Group); Kirsty Henderson (RNIB); Kevin Wood (Edinburgh Black Cabs Rep); Alan Dudley (Equality and Rights Network); Elizabeth Campbell (HCL Transport); Euan Hamilton (Equality and Rights Network); Jack Bromly (The Scottish Assembly); David French (Spokes Lothian); Matthew Freckelton (Uber UK), Paul Ruffles (Sustrans);

2. Guest attendees

David Wilson (CEC); Julia Sproul (CEC); Lucy Pearson (CEC); Julie Dewar (CEC), Blair Burnett (CEC), Matthew Simpson (CEC), James Allanson (CEC), Lindsay Robertson (CEC).

3. Secretariat

Ruth White (CEC); Rowan Simpson (CEC), Claire Duchart (CEC).

4. Apologies

Gregor Hardie, with Jo Kyrtsi (People First Scotland), Nico Ferguson (Sustrans), Amanda Whitfield (Sight Scotland), Colette Walker (Sight Scotland), Sandy Taylor (National Federation for the Blind), Olivia Sklenar (Lothian Buses), Alan Dudley (Equality and Rights Network), Amy Bailey (The Scottish Assembly), Councillor Kayleigh O'Neill (CEC), Councillor Danny Aston (CEC), Councillor Iain Whyte (CEC), Councillor Kevin Lang (CEC).

Summary of meeting and actions arising

1. Welcome and introductions

Zara Todd welcomed everyone to the meeting and each member introduced themselves.

Members shared any individual access needs relevant to the meeting.

2. Discussion of Indicators – Council update

Rowan Simpson gave a presentation to update on the progress of the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to sit alongside the finalised workplan.

Next publication of metrics is in 2026 so not enough data to look at trends just now.

Reflections – great to hear that a high proportion of disabled people are saying the neighbourhood is good, it would be good to understand whether the neighbourhood is accessible or not as part of this.

On bus stops, it would be good to understand the Commission's understanding of what constitutes good accessibility.

Zara Todd noted that tactile paving at the point where the bus is designated to stop and the other was a suitable amount of space for a wheelchair user to get on and off the bus and enough space to leave the stop. Criteria/rating classes could be set around this.

Pavement Parking – number of penalty charge notices for the KPIs – do you have the number of reports of pavement parking. This would be useful to identify hot spot/problem areas.

Tactile paving used at bus stops is the same used at pedestrian crossings.

3. Update on Council's Inclusive Communications work

Lucy Pearson and Julia Sproul gave an overview and presentation of the Council's Inclusive Communications project, which is part of broader work connected with the review of the Council's Equality and Diversity Framework.

They outlined the Interim Equality Outcomes for 2025/2026.

- The working definition of 'Inclusive Communications':
 - *'Inclusive communication means including as many people as possible in any communication. It means enabling people to understand and express themselves in ways they need to or prefer to through communication channels and in situations that work for them at every stage of a process or pathway (communication journey).'*

The main action over the year ahead is to create a guidance document for Council officers on inclusive communications to standardise communication across the organisation. Further updates will be provided to the Commission as this work progresses.

4. Managing Roadworks – Council Presentation

David Wilson attended to give a presentation on Edinburgh's Roadworks.

Some members noted it was great to have this on the agenda for discussion.

A considerable amount of roadworks are carried out by third parties such as Utility companies. Red Book Guidance isn't

often followed i.e. signs blocking footways and pedestrians, ramps missing etc.

The Commission asked if the Council have the capacity to inspect and enforce all roadworks. Penalty charge notices can and are issued for failures to comply with the Red Book Guidance.

Concerns were raised about Utilities/Telecoms companies ripping up roads/footways and not reinstating them properly or as they should.

If people have queries about when a set of road works are likely to be completed they can be found on the Scottish Road Work register. The Council issues a weekly update of all road works on the network with proposed end dates.

Actions:

- Link to Council's weekly update on road works to be shared with the group
- Link to Scottish Road Work register to be circulated to the group.

5. Planning Design Guidance Consultation

Julie Dewar led on four (4) presentations on the following subjects:

- Edinburgh Design Guidance
- Student Housing Guidance
- Guidance for Householders
- Listed Buildings and Conservation Area Guidance.

Zara Todd thanked all presenters for their presentations and the amount of information that has been given to the Commission today.

Action

- Links to the Council's Consultation Hub for each of the above consultations will be circulated to the group.

6. Responsible Construction

Matthew Simpson gave a presentation on responsible construction.

Impacts of construction include:

- Noise
- Traffic and Traffic Management
- Dust and Debris
- Fumes
- Vibration
- Obstruction and Inconvenience
- Quality and Experience of Townscape
- Trees, soils, water course and other environmental impacts.

The Council is looking at creating a Code of Conduct, there is a draft of this which sets out the Council's expectations and best practice for constructors.

A big part of the Code of Conduct is the impact construction has on roads and footways.

There will be updates / improvements to the information held on the Council Website.

Zara Todd thanked Matthew for his presentation.

7. Discussion on Consultation Asks of the Commission

Lots of Council officers want the Commission's input in various consultations to support understanding of accessibility needs

and make sure opportunities are maximised to improve the city's streets and spaces.

Action

- At the next meeting the group agreed to discuss what consultations should be prioritised for the Commission.

8. Commission Membership

Ruth White to send an email to the Commission to ask for you agreement or disagreement for the following three (3) organisations to join the Commission:

- Network Rail (John Lauder)
- The Yard (Children & Young People)
- Spinal Injuries Scotland

Action

- Ruth White to send email around Commission members seeking views on the three organisations joining the Commission.

9. Any Other Business

Taxicard Scheme is under consultation and review in Edinburgh; stakeholder meeting was held. Zara Todd met with them and raised some issues, advocating for increasing subsidy available online as it hasn't increased since 1992/93. Up to £5 and this doesn't get you very far at all. There may be focus groups set up, sign up closes at the end of the week.

10. Meeting Close

Zara Todd thanked everyone for their time and energy and reminded everyone to email Ruth White with any feedback or suggestions for future topics.

The date for the next meeting will be communicated as soon as possible

