

Edinburgh Accessibility Commission – Minutes

Monday 15 September 2025, 10:00 – 12:00 – Microsoft Teams Meeting

Attendees

1. Accessibility Commission members

Zara Todd (Chair); Councillor Stephen Jenkinson (Vice Chair, City of Edinburgh Council (CEC)); Councillor Kayleigh O'Neill (CEC); Alan Dudley (Equality and Rights Network); Robin Wickes (Edinburgh Access Panel); Olivia Sklenar (Lothian Buses); David Hunter (Living Streets Edinburgh Group); Kirstie Henderson (RNIB); Elizabeth Campbell (HCL Transport); Euan Hamilton (Equality and Rights Network); David French (Spokes Lothian); Paul Ruffles (Sustrans); Olivia Sklenar (Lothian Buses); Nicoletta Prima (Sight Scotland); John Lauder (Network Rail); Amanda Whitfield (Sight Scotland); Eleanor Ryan-Saha (The Yard Scotland).

2. Guest attendees

Robert Armstrong (CEC); Michael Mackenzie (CEC); Sean Gilchrist (CEC).

3. Secretariat

Ruth White (CEC); Simon Boxall (CEC).

4. Apologies

Councillor Kevin Lang (CEC); Councillor Danny Aston (CEC); Councillor Iain Whyte (CEC); Michael Tornow (Mobility and Access Committee for Scotland); Michael Moore (The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association Scotland); Omar Haq (Lothian Centre for Inclusive Living); Gregor Hardie, with Jo Kyrtsi (People First Scotland); Maureen Morrison (Spinal Injuries Scotland); Kevin Wood (Edinburgh Black Cabs Rep); Jack Bromly (The Scottish Assembly); Matthew Freckleton (Uber UK); Nico Ferguson (Sustrans); Colette Walker (Sight Scotland); Sandy Taylor (National Federation for the Blind); Amy Bailey (The Scottish Assembly).

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. Accessible Streets Initiative (EASI) and Action for Better Crossings (ABC) Initiative Update

Michael Mackenzie gave a presentation on an update on initiatives for more accessible streets and safer crossings.

These initiatives include, but are not limited to, upgrading crossings, dropped kerbs, levelling pavements, shortening street crossings and providing more resting spots.

A neighbourhood pilot improvement is intended for Granton, awaiting funding confirmation from Transport Scotland.

Michael Mackenzie answered follow-up questions.

Action:

- Any additional questions can be sent to activetravel@edinburgh.gov.uk
 - Zara asked for any questions include Ruth White in the email.

3. Roads / Pavements Renewals Programme Update

Sean Gilchrist gave a presentation on roads & pavement renewals (reconstruction and resurfacing jobs across the city).

The £3.5 investment toward footway resurfacing/renewal is prioritised based on condition by in-person inspections.

Two budgets for dropped crossings, £160k for ad-hoc dropped crossings annually. Request link below.

Action:

- Request for dropped kerb crossing:
<https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/roads-pavements/request-dropped-kerb-crossing>
- Sean Gilchrist will be asking Sight Scotland and other members of the commission to join meetings with utility companies to highlight the need for contractors to remove cones after work is finished.

4. Update on Council's Bike Hire Scheme

Robert Armstrong gave a presentation on the Edinburgh Cycle Hire Scheme which was awarded on a 2-year contract to Voi starting on 22 August 2025.

The committee asked Robert how the bikes would prevent clutter on the pavement for pedestrians. There will be designated locations for the E-bike users to drop-off at the end of their journey. The 30 initial locations are advertised online.

Safety concerns were raised regarding the increase in volume of e-bikes especially with potential for them to travel at high speeds that can be a challenge for the visually and hearing impaired.

Concerns also included personal safety for commission members and their communities.

Action:

- Robert will be following up with Voi regarding concerns and questions asked by the commission, including:
 - Is there a prediction/forecast on the usage of the E-bikes as there is a safety concern crossing cycle lanes considering an increased volume of travel?

5. Reflections since the Commission began (March 2024)

Feedback given during the meeting included:

- A positive diversity of perspectives in terms of access needs.
- Explore having formal proceedings of decision-making to enhance impact.
- Impact of the commission is unclear.
- Scheduling of meetings using doodle polls or other means to gauge availability.

Action: Completed

- A questionnaire was sent out for feedback will be sent after the meeting. Responses are due by 17 October.

6. Approach to Council Consultations

The commission discussed how members have dealt with consultation requests from Council as individual organisations or as the Commission as a whole. Questions were raised as to how consultations would be decided such as:

- How is it decided when to respond collectively, individually, or both?
- Who decides what consultation requests are responded to?
- Who compiles and coordinates the responses?

- What capacity does the Commission have for consultations?

Mailing list for the Council Consultation activities:

<https://consultationhub.edinburgh.gov.uk/ce/8dc31303/consultation/intro/>

7. Any other business

The commission confirmed a presentation of accessibility on the expansion of the Tram Line would be welcome.

The Commission was shortlisted for two awards at the Scottish Transportation Awards in Glasgow.

Zara Todd has been appointed Chair of the Independent Disability Advisory Panel and encourages other commission members to express interest in joining.

- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/expression-of-interest-to-join-the-independent-disability-advisory-panel>

8. Meeting Close

Zara Todd thanked everyone for their time. Presentations and the feedback questionnaire were sent out following this meeting. The meeting closed at 12:00.