

Cross-Party Group on Towns and Town Centres

Monday 20th September, 11:00-11:30

Minute

Present

MSPs

Neil Bibby MSP (Lab)
Siobhian Brown MSP (SNP)
Stephanie Callaghan (SNP)
Willie Coffey MSP (SNP)
Fiona Hyslop MSP (SNP)
Douglas Lumsden MSP (Con)
Gillian Martin MSP (SNP)
Marie McNair MSP (SNP)
Evelyn Tweed MSP (SNP)

Invited guests

Elaine Bone, Scotland's Towns Partnership
Alison Jones, Scotland's Towns Partnership
Phil Prentice, Scotland's Towns Partnership

Non-MSP Group Members

Apologies

Katy Clarke MSP (Lab)
Meghan Gallacher MSP (Con)

Welcome

Scotland's Towns Partnership (STP) Chief Officer, Phil Prentice, welcomed MSP members, highlighting that this group had always been one of the best attended and positive groups. PP summarised STP's role and purpose as the go-to body for towns and improvement districts. The organisation is a hub for learning, connecting and support; spearheading the Scotland Loves Local campaign and fund; and assisting Scottish Government with policy, currently in the form of developing action

around the recently released Town Centre Action Plan review, 'A New Future for Scotland's Towns'.

Election of Office Bearers

PP invited members to nominate the group Convener. Neil Bibby MSP proposed Siobhian Brown MSP. Gillian Martin MSP seconded the proposal.

Accepting the role of Convener, Siobhian Brown MSP proposed Deputy Conveners, Neil Bibby MSP and Meghan Gallacher MSP. Douglas Lumsden seconded the proposal.

Siobhian Brown MSP proposed Elaine Bone as Secretary and Treasurer. Accepted by Elaine Bone.

CPG Membership

In addition to those present or having submitted apologies, the following MSPs wish to be members:

Claire Baker MSP (Lab)
Sharon Dowey MSP (Con)
Paul McLelland MSP (SNP)
Alex Rowley MSP (Lab)

Alison Jones shared the list of non MSP members. At the suggestion of Willie Coffey MSP, it was agreed to invite the Scottish Licensed Trade Association to join the group.

Confirmation of CPG Name and Purpose

The group name was agreed as 'Towns and Town Centres' and its purpose:

The purpose of the CPG is to analyse policy prescriptions and develop ideas and innovations. This will help Scotland's towns and town centres through the current economic climate to emerge stronger, smarter, cleaner, healthier and greener.

In the public interest, *the group will discuss ways in which Scotland's towns can work towards sustainable economic growth through greater vibrancy and vitality.*

Possible topics for discussion will be:

- Climate and Net Zero (housing, energy, transport, bio diversity, waste, circular economy etc)
- Tourism Culture and Heritage (events, assets - Year of Stories, evening and visitor economy etc)

- A New Future for Scotland's Towns - the findings and recommendations - what next etc
- Community Wealth, Social Enterprise, Communities in ownership and partnership, New Approaches etc
- Towns as 20 Minute Neighbourhoods - planning, architecture, retrofit, digital etc.

Any Other Business

Subject to confirmation of the group's reinstatement, it was agreed to continue with online meetings, held on Wednesday lunchtimes. Forward dates will be shared.