

A local approach to the global climate crisis

Councillors across country in front line of battle to make Scotland climate-ready

On Wednesday 19 June, Councillors from across Scotland met at Glasgow City Chambers to discuss climate adaptation and local government's role in strengthening resilience to climate related risks at the local level. This was in support of Scottish Local Government's longstanding and strong political support for combatting climate change, working towards ambitious emission targets and early action.

Attended by more than 60 Councillors from over half of Scotland's Councils, the session aimed to support members to understand, communicate and lead local responses. It was a key step in bringing together international, UK and Scottish stakeholders to raise the profile of climate adaptation.

The event was part of a series of information sessions for elected members, delivered as part of the EU Urban Agenda Partnership for Climate Adaptation and led by the European body for Local and Regional Governments – the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR). Glasgow City Council is a member of this partnership given its extensive work on climate change, and COSLA supported delivery recognising the need to support local climate change leadership.

Councillors received presentations from the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), UK Climate Change Committee (CCC), Scottish Government, Climate Ready Clyde and ClimateXChange, with Adaptation Scotland providing technical expertise.

The UNDRR is the lead UN agency for the UN Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, which covers climate related disasters such as extreme weather. Given their proximity, local government involvement in the Sendai Framework is part of UN level indicators for the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG11 and SDG13) and hence members heard about UN campaigns and scorecards developed for local government to manage disaster risks.

Delegates received first-hand, the UK CCC assessment on Scotland's progress in adapting to climate change at a national level and also heard from Scottish Government and ClimateXChange who discussed Scotland's national programme and using research to inform policy respectively.

Existing practice was brought to life by Climate Ready Clyde and the leading work to develop a regional Climate Risk and Vulnerability Assessment and embed adaptation into economic development. The Covenant of Mayors was also present to discuss international best practice. The Covenant of Mayors, a movement for local politicians to commit to EU/international climate change targets and be part of an international network for adaptation, is supported by COSLA and has several Scottish Councils as members. Adaptation Scotland rounded off the event by showcasing the 'Adaptation Capability Framework'- a practical resource that Local Authorities can use to drive forward action to adapt.

With the UN Paris Climate Agreement setting out a global goal for adaptation, members were keen to consider how they as local politicians can further support the agreement and maintain the fight against climate change.

Councillor Anna Richardson, City Convener for Sustainability and Carbon Reduction, said: *“Glasgow City Council is part of a growing consensus that we must treat climate change as an emergency that affects us all.*

“There now needs to be a significant accelerated effort to bring about the changes needed to minimise the impact of climate change, particularly on our most vulnerable communities.

“A focus on carbon reduction remains essential, but at the same time we must start to adjust to the new environment that is being created by climate change.

“Issues such as damage to infrastructure and housing, an increased risk of flooding and disruption to business supply chains among many others will quickly become regional and national problems that require collaborative action.

“As local authorities we must work together to find the responses that will help us adapt to a world that is changing dramatically around about us.”

Welcoming the event, COSLA’s Environment and Economy Spokesperson Cllr Steven Heddle also commented:

“Climate trends show that Scotland’s climate is changing with more frequent severe weather events expected and this is projected to continue. Local Authorities are at the frontline of reducing vulnerability in local communities to the various impacts of climate change. Building further capacity and increasing knowledge allows Local Authorities and their elected representatives to play their full part in responding to climate change. That is why COSLA is glad to be supporting this event.

Scottish Local Government is committed to playing its full role in combating climate change and adapting to a more resilient future in collaboration with our partners, stakeholders and local communities.”

Ends

Further Information

- [Glasgow City Council](#)
- [COSLA](#)
- [United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction](#) (UNDRR)
- [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#)
- [UK Climate Change Committee](#) (CCC)
- [Scottish Government](#)
- [Covenant of Mayors](#)
- [Climate Ready Clyde](#)
- [ClimateXChange](#)
- [Adaptation Scotland](#)

- [CEMR](#)
- [EU Urban Agenda](#)
- [UN Paris Climate Agreement](#)