

# REPORTING TO ACCELERATE ACTION ON THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY

## SSN CONFERENCE 2022: REPORT

The SSN Conference - Reporting to Accelerate Action on the Climate Emergency - was held on 25th May 2022, exploring how reporting can help drive progress and prioritise climate action. With over 250 participants in attendance, the half-day, interactive event welcomed industry experts to discuss new reporting requirements on targets, the alignment of resources and spend, and key findings from the 2020/21 summary analysis report.

### Conference Purpose

The Conference explored how public bodies can utilise reporting as a springboard to amplify action and assist in designing their ambitions. It encouraged exploration into challenges of meeting Scotland's climate targets, the importance of upskilling and collaboration, and the need for centralised, consistent approaches. The conference provided an open space for discussion on how to boost and strengthen public sector efforts and encourage the development of a resilient and sustainable future.

### Key Messages

The Conference highlighted the vital need to **collaborate** and **look beyond organisational boundaries** to learn from others' practice and implement efficient steps to action. It highlighted the importance of **upskilling** workforces and **embedding sustainability and climate considerations** throughout all departments within an organisation.

### Opening Statement from John Wincott

John Wincott opened the conference by highlighting that this is a seminal moment to move climate change reporting to be a dynamic tool for driving action. He pointed out that the revised reporting coming into effect this year will focus attention on targets towards zero direct emissions, and reporting of how resources are being aligned to meet those targets. There will be new reporting guidance and an updated template forthcoming from SSN. Reporting is now coming of age and the SSN conference is designed to help inform how we move forward together.



### Sustainable Scotland Network Conference 2022

#SSNConf22



## Ministerial Address

Opening the event, Michael Matheson, Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy and Transport, highlighted the vital role that public bodies play in the delivery of climate action and reaching targets. He emphasised that maintaining momentum is crucial and thanked all public sector bodies for another excellent reporting rate during this period. The Cabinet Secretary was pleased to highlight the sustained downward trend in reported emissions – as highlighted in the 2020/21 Analysis Report – and stated that there will be strengthened reporting requirements that will come into force for the next reporting period, due by the end of November 2022. These include:

- Reporting targets for direct and indirect emissions;
- Reporting on the alignment of spending;
- Publicising your reports;
- Reporting on the 2019 Scottish Climate Change Adaptation Programme.



Michael Matheson explained that considerable challenges lie ahead and that there is a need to bring in more sophisticated approaches to be able to address those in the most efficient and effective way against a backdrop of scarce resources. Over the coming years, public bodies will need to work together and focus on action and delivery, collaborating and sharing, promoting and innovating, and boosting climate resilience. This will all need to be done within the national policy context that sits alongside the reporting legislation, including policy targets for decarbonising public sector buildings, vehicles, and tackling emissions within procurement. The forthcoming Climate Change Plan and Scottish Climate Change Adaptation Programme will set out the costs and benefits of tackling climate change. The challenges of pace, skills and finance remain, and need to be tackled.

***“Public sector leaders and practitioners must be asking the climate and sustainability question over every key decision”.***

Following the address, the Minister welcomed questions from the floor. Key question topics included; the importance of facilitating collaboration across the public sector and learning from each other's practice, the pivotal role that universities and colleges play in upskilling Scotland's workforce, and the funding available.

Michael Matheson outlined the [Scottish Green Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme](#), in which the Scottish Government commits to a minimum of £200 million of capital support to aid the decarbonisation of Scotland's public sector estates. The Minister also emphasised the need to assess how the private sector can play an increasing role in helping to support the transition towards a low carbon future. He discussed the [Green Finance Taskforce](#) and its role in supporting the UK's economic policy for a strong, sustainable future.

The Cabinet Secretary also highlighted the forthcoming Place Standard Tool with a Climate Lens, which will be published in the autumn, as an excellent example of integrating mitigation and adaptation and linking this to issues of just transition and place-based approaches.

***“Our decisions and our actions, over what is now a very short period of time, will determine how habitable our planet is for generations to come”.***

# Plenary Session - Public Sector Leadership and Reporting Priorities

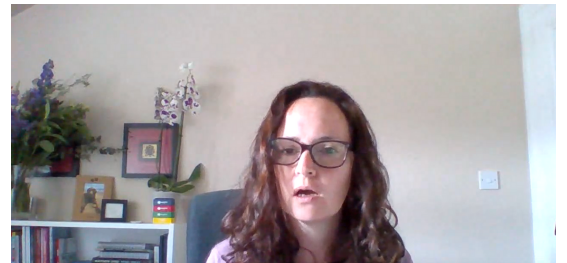
## **Public Sector Leadership**

### Panel Members

- Richard McCallum, *Director of Health Finance and Governance, NHS Scotland*
- Craig Hatton, *Chief Executive, North Ayrshire Council & climate change lead for SOLACE-Scotland*
- Christine Calder, *Academic Development Lead, Dundee & Angus College and Convenor of EAUC-Scotland*

The morning plenary welcomed a panel of public sector leaders to discuss reporting priorities and actions, and answer questions from the floor. Topics covered included; the [Green Skills Agenda](#), targets and funding, healthcare reporting requirements, embedding climate change across organisations, and the role of audits in driving action.

Panellists discussed the importance of upskilling, highlighting the value of individuals taking part in climate action support networks and utilising their knowledge gain to outline the implementation and use of 'green skills' to their teams. There is a need to embed the knowledge across organisations and shift the understanding from only a core group of interested parties to establishing sustainability and climate action as a key consideration across the wider workforce. The panel also expressed the need to explore holistic sustainability benefits and not only focus on carbon, as well as emphasizing that public sector collaboration could be improved to enable all to accelerate climate action.



## **View the Morning Plenary:**

Reporting To Accelerate Action On The Climate Emergency [[LINK](#)]

Delegates were invited to participate in collaborative workshops that investigated key climate action topics. The seminars provided delegates with update on session topics and highlighted material that could be put into the SSN Manual for SSN members to use after the conference.

## Workshop 1

### *New Reporting Requirements & Enhanced Analysis*

**Facilitator:** John Wincott, *SSN Steering Group*

[Recording available here](#)

#### Key topics covered

- Outcomes of enhanced analysis of PBCCD reporting data
- Exploring new reporting requirements
- Discussion surrounding how to improve existing and future systems

## Workshop 2

### *Good Governance for Climate Action*

**Facilitator:** Charlotte Wallace, *Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park*

[Recording available here](#)

#### Key topics covered

- What does Good Governance look like?
- The Public Bodies Duty Report – what is required?
- How else could SSN help with this topic

## Workshop 3

### *Procurement & Reporting*

**Facilitator:** Jo Mitchell, *Scottish Government Procurement Lead*

**Supported by** Maria McGorry, *Scottish Government*

[Recording available here](#)

#### Key topics covered

- Procurement reform
- Climate and procurement forum
- Monitoring and reporting

## Workshop 4

### *Adaptation & Reporting*

**Facilitator:** Iain Thom, *Scottish Government*

[Recording available here](#)

#### Key topics covered

- Adaptation terminology
- Conflict between mitigation and adaptation policy/action as well as co-benefits
- Identifying problems and challenges of adaptation and reporting

## Workshop 5

### *Public Sector Land: Sequestration & Reporting*

**Facilitator:** Mark Williams, *Scottish Water* & Debbie Bassett, *NatureScot*

[Recording available here](#)

#### Key topics covered

- The need for a simple model and guidance to support the public sector in understanding this topic
- Thinking holistically
- Emissions hierarchy

## Workshop 6

### *Net Zero Public Sector Buildings & Reporting*

**Facilitator:** Ross Ramsay, *Scottish Futures Trust*

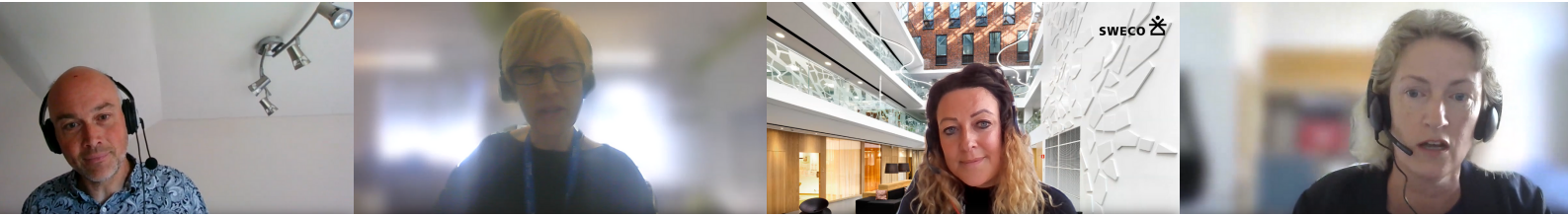
[Recording available here](#)

#### Key topics covered

- Creating a common language and terminology across public bodies that can filter through to reporting.
- The importance of the concept of 'place'



# Plenary 2 - Sharing the Challenge of Tackling Area Wide Emissions



**Chair:** Jamie Brogan, *Head of Climate Partnerships, Edinburgh Climate Change Institute (ECCI)*

## Panel Members

- Ragne Low, *Head of Heat Strategy, Scottish Government*
- Clare Wharmby, *Carbon Innovations Manager, ECCI*
- Becky McLean, *Technical Director - Environment & Sustainability, SWECO*

The second plenary session focussed on public bodies' delivery of area-wide targets and the need to create a collaborative, enabling environment for delivery. Looking at the area-wide issue, the panellists explored the need for more centralised, consistent approaches, tools, and data sets. This would support efficiency and more effective communication between organisations as all would be utilising the same platform. Panellists also referenced insights and recommendations on area-wide emissions contained in the new [Carbon Scenario Tool report by ECCI](#).

Transport and heat were the largest obstacles identified to meeting Scotland's climate targets. There is a need to learn how to most effectively decarbonise heat in buildings and obtain the benefits of decarbonised networks and electricity, other fuels, and innovative solutions. Panellists discussed the benefits of collaboration both within the public sector and beyond, as local authorities cannot reach climate targets on their own.

The [Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategies \(LHEES\)](#) were identified as being fundamental to area-wide emission reduction. The revised methodology and guidance will be presented to stakeholders for a light touch consultation in the near future. The pilot programmes will test and develop new methods for creating LHEES, and identify relevant sources of data. Information on funding opportunities will soon be provided.

The panel also identified opportunities for deeper collaboration and the sharing of analysis. For example, the sharing of consultancy reports on Environmental Impact Assessment could be collated to avoid duplication and improve collective understanding.

The prioritisation of key elements is required to take action in tackling emissions. Priority steps identified include:

- Collaboration and partnerships
- Looking beyond own organisation's boundaries
- Acknowledging the shared and collective benefits of projects and collaborations outside of emission reduction
- Begin projects with the future and sustainability in mind, making informed decisions in terms of what they mean with reaching net zero

## ***A message from SSN Chair, John Wincott***

*The conference was arranged to enable public bodies to accelerate action on climate change in line with the new requirements and guidance from the Scottish Government, and the increasing urgency of the need for action. The Cabinet Secretary set the scene for the conference highlighting the changes that have occurred and the focus that the Government is now placing on reporting as a tool to drive action. In the past it may have been felt that the report was more of a passive indication of what had been done; it has now become a key driver of change and in future will be used to assess precisely how public bodies are planning on achieving the demanding targets to deliver on Scotland's ambitions on climate change.*



*The panellists, contributors, and the delegates in the workshops all delivered on the promise of an exciting, informative, and challenging conference that shifted the dial in reporting ambition. Further guidance will soon be added to the SSN website to assist members in their journey to net zero.*

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## ***Next Steps***

The SSN Secretariat and Steering Group is now working to review the conference and explore opportunities to take forward the various actions, ideas and insights from the event. These will be used to inform the SSN Plan for the rest of this year and beyond. Conference materials will be placed on the SSN website and SSN events and working groups will be used to take many of the conference actions forward. SSN is already working on follow up with many of the workshop leaders, SOLACE Scotland, and various policy leads in the Scottish Government. As a public sector network, SSN would welcome support from any SSN member or conference delegate who'd be keen to work with us to take forward any aspects of the event.

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# Thank you

SSN would like to thank all attendees, speakers, workshop leads, and panellists for their participation in the event and give a special thanks to the NHS events team for their assistance in the creation and smooth running of the conference.

## Useful Resources

### View the Morning Plenary:

Reporting To Accelerate Action On The Climate Emergency [[LINK](#)]

### View the Afternoon Plenary:

Sharing The Challenge of Tackling Area Wide Emissions [[LINK](#)]

Event Programme [[LINK](#)]

## Stay Connected

email - [ssn@ed.ac.uk](mailto:ssn@ed.ac.uk)

twitter - [@SSNscotland](https://twitter.com/SSNscotland)

website - [sustainablesotlandnetwork.org](https://sustainablesotlandnetwork.org)

## Membership

If you would like to find out more about becoming a member, don't hesitate to get in touch at [ssn@ed.ac.uk](mailto:ssn@ed.ac.uk). You can also sign up for our monthly newsletter [here](#).

Thanks for joining the  
Sustainable Scotland Network Conference 2022

Designed with the SSN Steering Group and Partners

