

CROSS PARTY GROUP on ARCHITECTURE and the BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Notes of Meeting *Fabric First: A Green Recovery*

Wednesday 30th September 2020, 6.15pm
Online via Zoom

Present:

Linda	Fabiani	MSP	Convenor
Graham	Simpson	MSP	Depute Convenor
Kevin	Stewart	MSP	
Alex	Burnett	MSP	
Karen	Stevenson	RIAS	Secretariat
Craig	McLaren	RTPI	Treasurer

A list of all delegates is attached [here](#).

Apologies:

Allan	Lundmark	Eildon Enterprise
Ann	Packard	MCICH
Emily	Treacy	Historic Environment Scotland

1.0 Welcome

- 1.1 Linda Fabiani MSP (LF) welcomed delegates to this second meeting of the year for the CPG for Architecture and the Built Environment and the first on-line.
- 1.2 There were no further apologies in addition to those listed above.
- 1.3 LF reminded delegates that this meeting to discuss, *Fabric First: A Green Recovery*, is part of this year's RIAS Convention and welcomed four guests; cutting edge practitioners and researchers in the field of carbon performance in architecture and design.

2.0 Introduction

- 2.1 The meeting focussed on bringing forward a greater understanding of a 'fabric first' approach to building design. The speakers will detail how this approach can inform a green recovery for Scotland and help to reduce capital and operational costs, improve energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions whilst reducing ongoing maintenance costs.
- 2.2 Fabric first involves maximising the performance of the components and materials that

make up the building fabric itself, before considering the use of mechanical or electrical building services systems. Focusing on the building fabric is generally considered to be more sustainable than relying on energy saving products, or renewable technologies, which can be expensive and may or may not be used efficiently by occupants. Integrating energy efficiency into the building envelope can decrease the requirement for occupant interaction with complex controls and new technologies, reducing the reliance on the end user to achieve the desired energy performance of buildings.

3.0 Opening Address - Kevin Stewart MSP, Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning

3.1 LF was pleased to welcomed Kevin Stewart MSP, Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning who would be giving a short address.

3.2 The minister set out that “the pandemic has provided new perspectives on the way in which we live. However, the challenges of our time remain and the climate emergency, inequalities and economic pressures mean that innovation and creative responses are ever more important to deliver a sustainable future.

The green recovery is at the heart of the Programme for Government and the Scottish Government has committed a £1.6 billion investment over the next Parliament to decarbonisation and energy efficiency, helping to create good, green jobs.

Alongside supporting action on the climate emergency, green recovery provides opportunities for innovation to help grow Scotland’s economy in a challenging global market. A £100 million Green Jobs fund will support this innovation over the next five years.

A fabric first approach offers us the opportunity to help ensure that energy use will be affordable and fair and reduce environmental impact.

Effective retrofit of our existing building stock is essential. Scottish Government is investing a total of £97 million to support fuel-poor households this year.

Transforming new build design and delivery is also crucial and research has highlighted the potential benefits of off-site construction and also a need to support new business models to deliver the transformation required.

Scottish Government is now working with a range of partners on the Edinburgh Home Demonstrator Project with the aim of developing new business models to support transformation in working.

The skills, creativity and commitment of all working in Scotland’s built environment will be essential in achieving our aims.”

Linda Fabiani thanked the Minister and introduced the speakers.

4.0 The Speakers

4.1 Chris Morgan, Director, John Gilbert Architects

Chris discussed the findings of the Hab-Lab building performance evaluation work, highlighting the emerging shortcomings of most common retrofit practice in retrofit. This work has underpinned a conviction that a more holistic, ‘whole-house’ approach to retrofit is the only ethical and cost effective way forward for the industry.

4.2 **David Pierpoint, CEO The Retrofit Academy Community Interest Company**
David outlined the challenge of creating a competent retrofit army to deliver 27 million retrofits in less than 30 years. He introduced the work of The Retrofit Academy Centre of Excellence and the roles introduced by PAS 2035 that provide a logical structure for that workforce.

4.3 **Prof. Sandy Halliday Hon FRIAS Hon FRIBA, Principal at Gaia Research (Recent winner in the Top 50 women in Engineering)**
Sandy discussed some fabric first implications around new build using some examples covering materials, internal environment, cost and the holistic broader vision related to energy implications of new build.

4.4 **Duncan Smith, Housing Asset & Energy Strategy Manager at Renfrewshire Council**
Duncan focussed on the reduction in the demand for energy/heat that can be achieved through a fabric first approach and the impact that this will have on tenants both health and income. With Scotland spending £2.5 billion per annum on heating their homes and Government priorities on income equality, poverty, health and fuel poverty this is the perfect time to combine those objectives into one shared programme.

5.0 Discussion and Questions

5.1 Linda Fabiani MSP took questions from attendees (using the Zoom Q&A function) and led a discussion with the panel.

5.2 A full list of questions asked can be found [here](#).

6.0 Concluding Comments

6.1 LF thanked all of the speakers for highlighting the issues, challenges and solutions for maintaining our homes and housing. She thanked the Minister for participating in the discussion and hoped some of these measures could be taken forward.

6.2 Delegates were advised that details with all of the questions would be circulated.

6.3 The next meeting of the CPG would be confirmed in due course and delegates were thanked for joining.

Meeting closed at 7.44pm