

Report

Proposer: Lorna Slater MSP (decided on: 06/20/2022)

Title: Lorna Slater MSP report

Report

1 The past year has been a new challenge for my team and me, as I was first
2 elected to parliament and then made a Scottish Government minister in a short
3 period of time. Each month I write a report for the branch which summarises my
4 work and updates with my office you can find them here:

5 <https://www.edinburghgreens.org.uk/msp-and-councillor-reports/>

6

- **July/ August 2021**

7 Most of the month was spent in cooperation talks with the Scottish Government.
8 We hosted a number of events that were open to party members and have continued
9 to do so in the months that have followed. One of the benefits of being a global
10 movement is that it allowed us to have constructive talks with our friends from
11 the New Zealand Greens and other Green parties from around the world, who were
12 keen to share their experiences of being in government.

13

- **September 2021**

14 I was appointed as Scotland's first ever Minister for Green Skills, Circular
15 Economy and Biodiversity following the historic vote within our party to enter
16 government at the EGM. This month included a lot of meetings with stakeholders
17 across the government and industry that helped me to understand the structures
18 of government and further my understanding of my portfolio.

19 • **October 2021**

20 In my Ministerial capacity I announced a review into incineration, which has
21 since reported back and recommended an end to planning permission for new
22 incinerators in Scotland. I will be responding to the report on behalf of the
23 Scottish Government in the weeks ahead, but it was a very rigorous piece of work
24 and one I was proud to commission.

25 I met with the then Minister for Culture, Europe and International Development,
26 Jenny Gilruth, to discuss how we can improve the accessibility and nature of
27 Holyrood Park. This followed meetings with constituents, car-free campaigners
28 and our fantastic Edinburgh councillors who have been pushing for improvements
29 to be made. This meeting has resulted in a longer engagement with Historic
30 Environment Trust, which I hope to update the branch about in the months ahead.

31 • **November/ December 2021**

32 I was very proud to announce the Scottish Government's plan for transforming
33 gender identity services. This laid out our plans to put trans people at the
34 heart of decisions about their healthcare while reducing waiting times to bring
35 them in line with national standards.

36 Although a positive COVID test meant that I was unable to attend the first week
37 of COP events in person, I did get the chance to visit stalls and exhibitions in
38 the "blue zone". I gave a speech at the WWF event and met people who are working
39 hard to protect animals and their inhabitants around the world.

40 In my role as a Minister, I was delighted to announce a £55 million nature
41 restoration fund to tackle biodiversity loss and rewild our green spaces. I got
42 the opportunity to meet with a lot of interesting people during COP at the Green
43 Hub which the Party organised in Glasgow. While there, I met with fellow Green
44 Ministers from around the world, activists from countries on the front line of
45 Climate Change and so many other amazing people.

46 I also visited Linlithgow and Dunbar to meet with local candidates and discuss
47 their campaigns for the local elections.

48 • **January 2022**

49 I was proud to announce a £12.5 million investment to protect our species,
50 woodlands, rivers and seas. This builds on a £5 million fund that we launched in
51 November and is part of the biggest investment in nature restoration that any
52 Scottish Government has ever made.

53 We committed to funding 54 projects across the country, from cities to towns and
54 villages. This includes support for the Edinburgh & Lothians Greenspace Trust to
55 improve biodiversity in Edinburgh's urban parks and for Edinburgh City Council
56 to build a coastal meadow network.

57 I was also delighted to see the introduction of free bus travel for everyone
58 aged 21 or under, this was a key part of the cooperation agreement that we
59 negotiated with the Scottish Government.

60 • **February 2022**

61 I joined and spoke at protests outside Parliament and the Russian Consulate.
62 Unfortunately the powers of the Scottish Parliament are very limited, but I
63 worked with the Scottish Government as well as my Green MSP colleagues and
64 councillors to call for visa restrictions to be lifted and ensure that Scotland
65 did as much as we could.

66 As part of the Bute House agreement, the Scottish Government published the
67 Gender Recognition Act reform. This will allow self-identification for trans
68 people and will remove some of the bureaucracy and trauma from the existing
69 system.

70 • **March 2022**

71 In my Ministerial role, I launched the Scottish Government's new anti-food waste
72 campaign. This was launched at the Ripple in Restalrig, a community organisation
73 that provides vital services to some of the most deprived communities in our
74 city.

75 I was also very proud to announce the steps that we are taking to ban the
76 destruction of unsold goods and make sure they make it into the hands of those
77 that need them. This will be part of the Circular Economy Bill that I will be
78 taking through Parliament.

79 March also marked six months since we entered government. It was a good time to
80 reflect on what we have achieved in that time. It has been a busy time, with
81 free bus travel for everyone under 22, a record investment in active travel and
82 biodiversity, £145 million for additional teachers and support staff, the
83 doubling of the Scottish child payment, and a ban on many of the worst single-
84 use plastics. I am also hopeful about the longer-term changes we are delivering,
85 including GRA reform and better rights for tenants, including rent controls.

86 **• April/ May/ June 2022**

87 Over the election period I spent time campaigning with target candidates across
88 the region and nationally. It was great to see so many new faces elected as
89 Green councillors in the Lothian region, taking our Edinburgh Councillor group
90 to 10 and the addition of the Scottish Greens first ever councillor in East
91 Lothian Council. We saw growth in West Lothian as well despite falling short in
92 Linlithgow.

93 I was delighted to see so many Young Greens and women elected into our Edinburgh
94 group. I look forward to spending the next 5 years working with them to make the
95 Lothian region fairer and greener. I have already met with some of our new
96 councillors and have plans to meet them all as a group regularly in weeks and
97 months to come.

98 **• Looking ahead**

99 Over the next few months my team and I are going to be working with branches on
100 local projects to push forward the Green agenda and increase recognition of the
101 party within communities. In West Lothian we will be working to clean up
102 Linlithgow Loch. East Lothian we will be campaigning for a nature based flood
103 defence rather than the proposed concrete option and in Edinburgh we will
104 continue our work on Holyrood Park.

105 The months ahead will be very busy for my ministerial portfolio with the
106 conciliation for the Circular Economy Bill, more beaver translocations, the
107 Biodiversity Strategy to be published in the autumn and the further progress
108 towards naming Scotland's next national park. You can keep up to date with my
109 work on social media or in my monthly reports to branches.