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BRIEFING

Climate Action, Just Transition, and Community Wealth Building





About this briefing note

Climate action, just transition, and community wealth building (CWB) are interconnected policy approaches shaping Scotland's equitable path to net zero. With the recent introduction of the [Community Wealth Building \(Scotland\) Bill](#) in March 2025, and the [Climate Change \(Emissions Reduction Targets\) \(Scotland\) Act 2024](#) in November 2024, alongside ongoing national just transition efforts for inclusive, sustainable change, this briefing comes as a timely opportunity to provide guidance for officers on how these policy approaches can be aligned and what this can look like in practice.

The purpose of this briefing is to:

- Identify risks of uncoordinated climate efforts and emphasise the need for integration of the three frameworks to deliver a fair, sustainable future in Scotland.
- Demonstrate how climate action can advance a Just Transition and Community Wealth Building by creating fair work opportunities, supporting local business growth, and empowering communities. This ensures a more inclusive, sustainable, and climate resilient economy.
- Provide key considerations for local authorities to ensure the integration of Community Wealth Building and Just Transition principles into climate mitigation and adaptation interventions.
- Offer a list of useful organisations and resources that support local governments in delivering these frameworks.



Definitions

Climate action: [According to the EU](#), Climate Action refers to efforts taken to combat climate change and its impacts. These efforts involve reducing greenhouse gas emissions (climate mitigation) and/or taking action to prepare for and adjust to both the current effects of climate change and the predicted impacts in the future (climate adaptation).

Community wealth building (CWB): is a people-centred approach to local economic development, which redirects wealth back into the local economy. Through this approach local economies are reorganised, so that wealth is not extracted and sent off to distant shareholders but is held locally and income is recirculated in local communities.

Just transition: According to the [Scottish Government](#), a just transition is both the outcome—a fairer, greener future for all—and the process undertaken in partnership with those impacted by the transition to net zero. It supports a net-zero and climate-resilient economy while delivering fairness and tackling inequality.

Objectives of the three frameworks

Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2024

Mitigation: Reducing greenhouse gas emissions to meet the national five-yearly carbon budgets and the national 2045 target.

Adaptation: Adjusting to the impacts of climate change and deliver SNAP 3.

Acting in the most sustainable way aligned with the National Performance Framework and delivering the National Outcomes and Just Transition.

Community Wealth Building (Scotland) Bill

Developing more local and social enterprises that generate community wealth.

Maximising community benefits through procurement and commissioning, developing good enterprises, fair work and shorter supply chains.

Increasing fair work and developing local labour markets.

Growing the social, ecological, financial and economic value that local communities gain from land/property assets.

Ensuring that **flows of investment** and financial institutions work for local people, communities and business.

National Just Transition Planning Framework

Supporting citizens, communities and place in affected regions.

Jobs, skills and education.

Fair distribution of costs and benefits and addressing inequality.

Support strong, dynamic **business and economy** and high quality employment.

Adaptation and resilience in the economy.

Environmental protection and restoration, respecting planetary boundaries.

Resource efficient, **sustainable decarbonisation**, avoiding carbon 'lock-in'.

Equality and human rights implementation, addressing fuel poverty and child poverty.

Shared priorities



Maximise local economic benefits



Address inequalities and deprivation



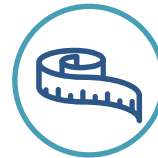
Build local green skills and fair work opportunities



Foster collaborative governance and community leadership



Empower community ownership and control



Measure success

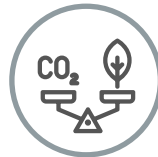
Common topics



Building retrofits and energy efficiency



Renewable energy generation



Carbon offsets and natural capital



Community benefits and ownership



Biodiversity restoration and adaptation



Local supply chains and procurement



Low carbon transport and mobility



Sustainable land use and agriculture



Tackling fuel poverty and inequality



Fair, sustainable, jobs and green skills



What is the issue and why does it matter?

Scotland stands at a pivotal moment to align climate action, economic transformation, and social equity. Recent national policy such as The [National Adaptation Plan 2024-2029](#) highlights the urgency of a just transition that not only tackles climate risks but also delivers better economic and social outcomes for citizens and communities across the country. However, without a coordinated approach that integrates Climate Action, Just Transition, and CWB, Scotland risks losing economic potential, sacrificing jobs, deepening inequalities, and falling short of its climate commitments.

1. Missed economic opportunities

A failure to embed CWB principles in climate adaptation and renewable energy projects could lead to wealth being extracted by overseas suppliers instead of benefiting local communities and businesses.¹ This also means that new green jobs may be created elsewhere rather than within Scottish local economies. For instance, [Scotland's ambition to expand offshore wind](#) capacity to 11 gigawatts (GW) by 2030—enough to power over eight million homes—presents significant economic opportunities. If harnessed strategically, this could support between 10,400 and 54,000 jobs across the supply chain.

However, for these benefits to stay within Scotland, CWB should be actively integrated. The [Glasgow City Region Sustainable Procurement Strategy](#) (2021) illustrates this challenge: since 2015, only 22% of major City Deal contracts went to local small businesses, and less than half of public spending stayed in the region. The [Viking Energy Windfarm](#) in Shetland highlights a missed opportunity, where limited community benefit raised concerns about external profit over local value. Embedding CWB principles into these processes from the start could steer these opportunities and their local economic benefits back to communities.

2. Job loss

Without Just Transition measures, workers in high-carbon industries—such as oil and gas—will struggle to shift into green sectors due to insufficient workforce development and local job creation strategies. This could lead to economic stagnation in affected communities. A clear example of this is the Grangemouth Oil Refinery, which is scheduled to cease operations in the second quarter of 2025. This transition is expected to result in a significant reduction of jobs, from around 500 to just 100, raising serious concerns about economic disruption in the surrounding area ([Just](#)

¹ Community Benefits are voluntary arrangements offered by renewable energy businesses to communities located near developments. [Scottish Government Good Practice Principles](#) promote community benefits of the value equivalent to £5,000 per installed megawatt per annum, index linked for the operational lifetime of the project.

[Transition Commission, 2024](#)). Without proactive planning, such job losses could lead to severe economic hardship, particularly in areas with limited alternative employment opportunities.

3. Increased regional inequalities and threat to equity and rights

A rapid shift to net-zero, without targeted investment in alternative industries and tailored support for affected workers, risks deepening regional economic decline. This could disproportionately impact rural and industrial communities, where job replacement opportunities are scarce, ultimately exacerbating regional disparities and undermining Scotland's commitment to inclusive economic growth and a just transition.

Additionally, an uneven approach would be counter-productive in attempts to reduce poverty, particularly given the context of the 2017 Child Poverty (Scotland) Act and its ambition to end child poverty by 2030. The [Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation](#) highlights that areas such as Inverclyde, North Ayrshire, Glasgow, and parts of the South of Scotland continue to experience persistent economic disadvantage. Without strategic intervention, the transition to net-zero could widen regional inequalities, concentrating wealth and job opportunities in already prosperous areas while leaving vulnerable communities behind.

Integrating Climate Action, Just Transition, and CWB is essential to ensuring a fair and inclusive transition to a sustainable future. A coordinated approach can prevent economic displacement, reduce inequalities, and strengthen local resilience. As Scotland advances towards net-zero, policies can go beyond climate mitigation to foster equitable economic opportunities that empower communities and drive long-term prosperity. By aligning these frameworks, Scotland can achieve a sustainable, just, and locally driven green transition.



Policy context

Scotland has established itself as a leader in climate action, with a legally binding commitment to reach net-zero emissions by 2045 through a series of carbon budgets under the [Climate Change \(Emissions Reduction Targets\) \(Scotland\) Act 2024](#). The proposed budgets have been [described as ‘deliverable’ by the UK’s Climate Change Committee](#), and further details delivery are set to come with the publication of a Climate Change Plan expected in early 2026.

Local authorities play a critical role in this transition, with statutory duties encompassing mitigation, adaptation, and sustainable action. These efforts should be guided by a whole-systems approach that prioritises co-benefits for population health, wellbeing, and equity, while proactively minimising negative unintended consequences and avoiding exacerbating existing inequalities, such as increased energy costs for vulnerable households or potential job displacement in traditional industries. These principles are outlined in the [Consultation on the Draft Statutory Guidance for Public Bodies](#), published on 24 February 2025.

To accelerate Scotland’s transition to net zero, the [Scottish Climate Intelligence Service](#) (SCIS) was launched in 2024. Funded by the Scottish Government and all 32 local authorities through COSLA, SCIS is a capacity-building programme for local government aimed at accelerating the delivery of effective and efficient net zero interventions. The programme combines a national digital platform – [ClimateView](#) – with a standardised area-wide emissions baselines and tailored support programme for all 32 local authorities. SCIS enables planning, monitoring and delivery of climate action at the scale and pace required for achieving area-based target progress, while building capability in skills, knowledge, and influence to ensure that climate impact is a priority embedded in all decision making across service areas.

Central to Scotland’s approach is the principle of a just transition, which ensures that the shift to a net-zero economy is fair and inclusive. The Scottish Government established the [Just Transition Commission](#) to provide independent advice on how to achieve a fair and inclusive transition to a net-zero economy, as well as to support the production of Just Transition plans and monitor [progress towards a just transition](#) to a net-zero economy. The proposed measurement framework helps track how climate action supports fairness, inclusion, and economic resilience.²

2 The Just Transition Commission’s report, “[Measuring and evaluating success in the Scottish Just Transition](#)”, presents a national Theory of Change that identifies eight outcome clusters as key indicators of progress toward a just transition. These clusters define what success looks like across various dimensions, including: avoiding new or deepening existing injustices, reducing spatial and financial inequality, fostering empowerment, strengthening democracy, increasing community ownership and production, supporting jobs and skills for the low-carbon economy, and achieving net zero.

Based on the Commission's recommendations, the government introduced Scotland's [Just Transition Planning Framework](#) in 2021, outlining eight outcomes, consolidated into four themes: jobs, skills and economic opportunities; communities and places; people and equity; and environment, biodiversity and adaptation. The Scottish Government focusses on four sectors for Just Transition plans which have been identified as key to delivering Scotland's ambitious net zero targets. These are energy, transport, land use and agriculture, and built environment and construction. A draft [Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan](#) was published in January 2023, followed by a [draft Just Transition Plan for Transport](#) in February 2025.

The [Green Industrial Strategy](#) complements these sectoral Just Transition plans by identifying key opportunity areas such as wind, hydrogen, and carbon capture, where Scotland has the potential to lead in the global net zero economy. The government is choosing to direct money and supportive policies (like infrastructure, skills development, or planning reforms) toward specific green sectors (like wind, hydrogen, and carbon capture). This targeted support is intended to boost economic activity in different parts of Scotland, especially regions with relevant resources or existing industries. As a result, this growth can help enable or support other local economic efforts, and through community wealth building, maximise their benefit to communities.

To translate these commitments into tangible local benefits, Scotland has embraced [community wealth building](#) (CWB) as a strategic approach to local economic development, aiming to build and retain wealth within local economies. CWB operates through a structured [five-pillar model](#) focusing on generating fair work opportunities, supporting the growth of local businesses through increased local spending, enhancing community ownership of assets, fostering a more diverse economy through social enterprises and cooperatives, and ensuring financial power serves local needs and priorities. A key point of alignment between CWB and climate action is supply chain length: shortening supply chains reduces emissions while supporting local businesses. This approach aims to create a more inclusive economy where people, places, and the environment benefit from sustained economic activity. (To learn more, see [Community Wealth Building briefing note](#)).

Figure 1: The five pillars of community wealth building

Source: Improvement Service, [Community wealth building](#).

Recognising its transformative potential, the [National Strategy for Economic Transformation](#) (2022) identified CWB as a key pillar in Scotland's ambition to build a [wellbeing economy](#). This economic model prioritises resilience, sustainability, equality, and prosperity, ensuring that Scotland's economic growth is fair, green, and inclusive. The [National Planning Framework 4](#) (NPF4), adopted in 2023, further embedded CWB principles into [National Planning Policy 25](#), marking a significant step in integrating CWB into Scotland's broader policy framework. This commitment was reaffirmed in the Scottish Government [Programme for Government 2024-25](#), which set out plans to introduce dedicated CWB legislation.

To inform the legislative framework, the Scottish Government launched a series of CWB pilot projects (2020-2021) across Clackmannanshire, Fife, Glasgow City Region, South of Scotland, and the Western Isles. These initiatives were informed by the pioneering work of North Ayrshire Council and the Ayrshire Regional Growth Deal's Community Wealth Building programme. The lessons learned from these pilots directly shaped the development of the [Community Wealth Building \(Scotland\) Bill](#), introduced on 20 March 2025. This legislation establishes a requirement for local authorities and relevant public bodies to prepare, publish, and implement comprehensive Community Wealth Building action plans, ensuring a structured and accountable approach to local economic transformation. For more details on the Bill, see this [briefing](#).


Scotland's commitment to CWB aligns with several existing policy frameworks that reinforce its principles. The [Fair Work Framework](#) promotes quality employment by ensuring effective worker voice, respect, job security, opportunity, and professional fulfilment. [Sustainable procurement](#) policies mandate public bodies to leverage their

purchasing power to enhance social, environmental, and economic wellbeing, with a particular focus on reducing inequality. Additionally, the [Community Empowerment \(Scotland\) Act 2015](#) strengthens community rights by placing duties on public authorities to facilitate local participation in decision-making. Notably, [Part 5 of the Act](#) provides legal pathways for communities to take ownership of public assets when they can demonstrate public benefit.

The CWB Bill is also aligned with [Scotland's National Outcomes](#), reinforcing commitments to a fair, sustainable, and inclusive economy. By mandating local wealth retention and democratic participation, it strengthens local economies while directly supporting climate action and a just transition.

To support the implementation of CWB across Scotland, the Improvement Service has introduced a [Community Wealth Building Project](#) to help local authorities embed CWB principles into their economic strategies. The project provides secretariat support for the Community Wealth Building Practitioners Network, facilitating knowledge-sharing and collaboration on common challenges. Additionally, it aims to provide a comprehensive and up-to-date overview of CWB implementation while strengthening links between CWB and other policy areas, such as climate adaptation.

As Scotland continues its transition to a net-zero economy, climate action presents a significant opportunity to embed CWB principles more deeply into local governance. By aligning economic, social, and environmental policies, local authorities can leverage CWB to drive place-based economic transformation, ensuring that the benefits of decarbonisation are widely shared and contribute to a more resilient, equitable, and sustainable future.



Aligning climate action, just transition and community wealth building agendas

Scotland's journey to net zero offers an opportunity to strategically align climate action, Just Transition, and CWB into a cohesive local delivery model. When integrated effectively, these frameworks can ensure that climate solutions simultaneously build economic resilience, foster equity, and deliver local benefits. [Research by Future Economy Scotland](#) (2024) maps how each pillar of CWB can support a just transition to net zero. To strengthen this alignment and embed it across policy and practice, the following six interlinked priorities are outlined below.

1. Maximise local economic benefits

Climate action should actively contribute to local wealth creation by ensuring investments circulate within communities rather than being extracted externally. Strategic procurement and local partnerships can amplify economic resilience while advancing decarbonisation goals. Key considerations may include:

- Utilize public sector procurement as a strategic instrument to enforce alignment with climate objectives and emissions reduction targets, while also prioritizing local suppliers to minimize the carbon footprint associated with supply chains.
- Leverage public procurement in renewable energy, retrofitting, and low-carbon infrastructure projects to prioritise local businesses and social enterprises. For example, '[A Roadmap to Decarbonisation](#)' details how a Community Wealth Building approach to retrofitting energy efficiency measures to Registered Social Landlords housing stock in the South could bring significant benefits. The report concludes that by using their influence to develop the retrofit supply chain, registered social landlords in Dumfries & Galloway and the Scottish Borders can create £112million in direct Gross Value Added for the local economy by 2030, and more than 2,200 jobs.
- Provide targeted support for sectors affected by green transition to avoid economic displacement. The planned closure of the [Grangemouth refinery](#) by mid-2025 is a real-time example of the challenges and opportunities of these shifts (see Box 1.)
- Develop action charters, such as renewable energy charter, to formalise commitments to local hiring, supply chains, and community benefits. Examples include the [Ayrshire Community Wealth Building \(CWB\) Anchor Charter](#) and [Highland Council's Social Value Charter](#) (see Box 2).
- Repurpose underused public land and assets for renewable energy projects, ensuring profits are reinvested locally. Examples include the North Ayrshire Council PV (see Box 3).

Box 1**The case of Grangemouth**

In November 2023 it was announced that Grangemouth refinery would be closing.

As Scotland's only oil refinery and a major industrial hub, Grangemouth is responsible for a significant share of the country's industrial emissions and plays a central role in its energy infrastructure. However, the planned closure of the refinery by 2025 has raised urgent concerns about job losses, economic disruption, and social inequality. The [Just Transition Commission](#) highlights Grangemouth as a test case for Scotland's broader transition strategy, emphasizing the need for coordinated action among government, industry, workers, and the local community. Accordingly, '[Grangemouth Industrial Just Transition Plan](#)' was developed which outlines a comprehensive framework to guide the region's shift from fossil fuel dependency to a net-zero industrial future. Key actions already underway include the deployment of a £25 million Just Transition Fund, a targeted skills intervention for workers affected by the refinery closure, and the advancement of Project Willow to identify viable low-carbon projects. The plan also includes the development of a Grangemouth Industrial Cluster Strategy to attract investment, the establishment of a Regulatory Hub, and a Skills Pilot to support workforce transition. Oversight is provided by the Grangemouth Future Industry Board (GFIB), which includes representatives from government, industry, unions, and the community.

Grangemouth represents a critical test case for how a place-based, socially fair approach to industrial decarbonisation can be developed and delivered.

Box 2**Highland Council's Social Value Charter**

The [Social Value Charter](#) sets out the community benefit expectations Highland has for companies wishing to invest in renewables in this area.

The Highlands have rich resources that are ideally suited to encouraging and maximising renewables development. It is important though that local communities benefit from the use of their resources. This is an opportunity to secure inclusive growth and lasting benefits for all Highland communities.

This Charter is designed to set out what the area expects from renewables investment alongside what the public/private/community sector partners, will do to support and enable this contribution. It aims to:

- Embed an approach to community wealth building into Highland

- Maximise economic benefits from natural environment and resources
- Engage and involve relevant stakeholders to understand how to continually improve impact
- Unlock economic opportunities for the area

Their 9-point plan covers: a community fund, strategic fund, housing, supporting development of Highland Investment Plan, shared investment into renewables, skills and training, match funding for local projects, fast-track grid connections and maximising socio-economic prosperity through the planning system. For example, for the latter theme they ask investors to set out how they intend to maximise the socio-economic benefits of their development proposals taking into account the Highland Outcome Improvement Plan, the key investment priorities of the Community Planning Partnerships and the Council's Community Wealth Building Strategy and the National Planning Framework 4, particularly in relation to biodiversity and green skills.

This example illustrates how a local authority policy for community benefits from renewable energy development can align with community wealth building and Just Transition.

Box 3

North Ayrshire Council PV farm



North Ayrshire Council has taken a significant step in its climate change initiatives and Community Wealth Building (CWB) ambitions with the commencement of construction on its first two solar PV farms—believed to be the first local authority-owned solar farms in Scotland. The project, symbolises the Council's commitment to turning dormant land into productive, green infrastructure. This 24.3-hectare solar farm, along with the second site at Shewalton, represents a £12.465 million investment aligned with the Council's Environmental Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy.

These projects are not only key to reducing North Ayrshire's carbon emissions by an estimated 2,700 tonnes of CO₂ annually but also serve as vital CWB assets—generating renewable energy to power over 2,000 homes, while creating local jobs and economic opportunities through a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA). Revenue generated will be reinvested into local services, sustaining community wealth and ensuring that the benefits remain within the region. In partnership with Ameresco, the projects embody the Council's mission to reach net zero by 2030 while enhancing local resilience and empowering the community through sustainable energy infrastructure.

2. Empower community ownership and control:

A just transition requires shifting control of resources to communities, ensuring wealth and decision-making power are democratised. Community-owned energy and land projects can anchor long-term local benefits.³ Key considerations may include:

- **Support and scale community ownership of renewables, land, and infrastructure.** For instance, the [Garth Wind Farm](#), despite being a small, entirely community-run project at just 4.5 MW, generates significant community benefits, demonstrating the positive impact of local control.
- **Redirect profits from green projects to community funds**, as seen in the [Orkney Islands Community Energy Project](#) (see Box 4).
- **Align funding with climate goals and community ownership.** The [Dundee Climate Fund](#) provides an example of supporting community-led climate change projects within local communities (see Box 5).
- **Embed CWB principles within land reform**, as proposed in the [Land Reform \(Scotland\) Bill](#) published in March 2024, to empower rural and island communities to manage assets for local benefit. This [report by Community Land Scotland](#) considers the extent to which different landowner business models align with the principles and objectives of CWB and finds that community ownership delivers the strongest alignment.
- In addition to land and energy assets, financial systems play a crucial role in shaping local resilience and sustainability. Large institutional investors and global banks often contribute to environmental degradation through extractive investment practices. In contrast, locally rooted and democratically accountable financial institutions (such as credit unions, community development finance institutions (CDFIs), and community banks) offer more sustainable and inclusive alternatives. By scaling these institutions and redirecting public sector pension funds away from fossil fuels and towards local green investments, communities can retain wealth, strengthen financial sovereignty, and reduce environmental harm ([Future Economy Scotland](#)).

3 This alignment is further reinforced in the Just Transition Commission's report [A Just Transition for Dumfries and Galloway](#), which emphasises the importance of giving communities a meaningful stake and say in Scotland's expanding forestry efforts. It calls for a new model of community involvement in woodland and forestry management—one that embeds a CWB approach to ensure genuine custodianship of land and equitable benefit-sharing as part of the wider just transition.

Box 4**Orkney Islands Community Energy Project**

The [Orkney Community Wind Farm](#) is a pioneering public energy project led by Orkney Islands Council, designed to generate revenue while addressing the climate emergency. Comprising three onshore wind farms at Quanterness, Hoy, and Farray, the project is set to produce nearly 90MW annually once operational by 2028-29. Fully council-owned and managed, the development will ensure profits—estimated at £5.5 million per year—stay within Orkney to fund local services and community projects, creating a long-term, sustainable income stream.

The project also strengthens the case for a new electricity interconnector to the Scottish mainland, unlocking additional economic benefits of up to £807 million and supporting Orkney's marine and tidal energy sectors. Funded through the Council's Strategic Reserves, the wind farm will deliver community wealth building, distribute community benefit funds, and decarbonise energy production.

Box 5**The Dundee Climate Fund**

[Dundee Climate Fund](#) (DCF) stands as a powerful example of participatory budgeting (PB), where citizens directly influence local spending, leading to more resilient communities and significant on-the-ground impact, while also contributing to Community Wealth Building. The DCF, the first Scottish Local Authority-led green Participatory Budget, has operated over three rounds and demonstrates the importance of continued investment in such initiatives.

Dundee City Council allocated a total of £750,000 to the DCF, demonstrating a substantial financial commitment to community-led climate action. This funding aimed to empower local groups to enact meaningful change, ensuring that financial resources reach the grassroots level where they can have the most impact. In the first round, 12 local projects benefitted from a share of around £385,000. This was followed by a further 10 projects funded in the second round and the third round concluded in March 2025.

An example of a project supported by the fund is Transition Dundee's Gleaning Project which aimed to work with local growers to harvest and distribute surplus or unusable food products through the Dundee Community Food network to projects who need it, through the work of volunteers. This not only reduces food waste and enhances food security, it provides volunteer opportunities which benefit mental and physical well-being. Transition Dundee increased the weight of food surplus collection and redistribution from 54 tonnes to approximately 83.8 tonnes through

the use of an electric van, 4 tonnes of food were saved from waste through gleaning. In total local CO₂e emissions were lowered by reducing food waste through the Gleaning Project and collecting and distributing more food through the Community Fridge and resulted in a reduction of 258 Metric Tonnes of CO₂e.

3. Address inequalities and deprivation

Climate initiatives should actively reduce spatial and socioeconomic disparities and address persistent economic disadvantage. Key considerations may include:

- Research shows that social enterprises and plurally owned businesses are more likely to be run by women, pay real living wage, and hire more ethnic minority employees. They also outperform other business models in social and environmental impact. Therefore, scaling these business models will both tackle inequalities and reduce environmental harm ([Future Economy Scotland](#), 2024).
- Addressing spatial inequalities by targeting green infrastructure investments in deprived areas where transition risks are highest. For example, the [Treehouse building at Muirtown Basin, Inverness](#) is a green infrastructure project which revitalises formerly derelict land and aims to connect the canal to surrounding communities.
- Align climate action with spatial justice, ensuring benefits are shared across rural, urban, and island contexts. For example, [Shetland Community Benefit Fund](#) (SCBF) is a community-led initiative that enables local areas to share in the benefits of commercial renewable energy projects across the islands. Established by Shetland's 18 community councils, SCBF operates as an independent community interest co-operative, responsible for negotiating and managing benefit funding from renewable energy developers.
- Use participatory budgeting such as [Dundee Climate Fund](#) to ensure marginalised groups shape and benefit from climate spending.
- Prioritise those experiencing fuel poverty for housing retrofit measures. For example, Fife council has embedded tackling fuel poverty as one of eight key priorities in its [Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategies](#) (LHEES) delivery plan. They use a [fuel poverty index](#) to pinpoint and prioritise households and neighbourhoods most at risk, then target retrofits accordingly.

4. Build local green skills and fair work opportunities:

A successful green economy should upskill and reskill local workers, including those in industries transitioning away from fossil fuels, while ensuring fair wages, job security, and career growth. By embedding Fair Work principles into climate initiatives, we can create a just transition that leaves no one behind. Key considerations may include:

- Design and deliver targeted training programs that prepare local residents to participate in green projects such as the [Green Skills Traineeship](#) (See Box 6).

- Expand green apprenticeships and reskilling programs for sectors impacted by the shift to net zero.
- Apply [Fair Work standards](#) to climate projects, ensuring living wages and job security.
- Engage young people in climate initiatives, such as urban greening or school-based projects, which can empower them to take part in shaping a sustainable future while addressing intergenerational equity.

Box 6

A Collaborative Traineeship Model



The City of Edinburgh Council, in partnership with The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) and other local authorities, has co-funded a pioneering [Green Skills Traineeship Programme](#). The initiative will recruit 24 young people over three years to support biodiversity enhancement while developing practical skills for the green economy.

The TCV Green Skills Traineeship is a 10-month, paid placement aimed at individuals aged 16–25 who face barriers to employment. Trainees will gain hands-on experience improving urban greenspaces—focusing on habitat connectivity, community access, and environmental stewardship—while building confidence, wellbeing, and pathways to long-term green employment.

The programme is being delivered across the Central Belt of Scotland in collaboration with Falkirk Council, East Dunbartonshire Council, Scottish Canals, and the City of Edinburgh Council. Trainee roles are part-time (Monday to Wednesday) and paid at the real Living Wage.

This initiative exemplifies a joined-up approach to addressing green skills gaps, tackling inequality, and enhancing urban biodiversity, with a focus on quality green infrastructure in areas experiencing socioeconomic disadvantage.

5. Foster collaborative governance and community leadership

Delivering integrated outcomes requires cross-sector collaboration and empowered local leadership. Councils, communities, and businesses all play a role in shaping inclusive climate action. Key considerations may include:

- Internal governance changes:
 - Develop cross-service working groups (or ‘transition teams’), to collaboratively develop actions around CWB and Just Transition.

- o Co-develop policies to ensure climate action aligns with local economic and equity goals.
- o Provide training for officers and elected members on systems thinking, inclusive leadership, and collaborative working across departments.
- o Identify staff within each service area responsible for aligning service delivery with Just Transition and CWB principles.
- External working and partnerships:
 - o Proactively engage with communities to involve marginalised voices in the co-design/co-production of climate strategies
 - o Strengthen cross-sector partnerships between local authorities, businesses, and community groups, and leverage networks like the Community Wealth Building Practitioners Network to share learning.
 - o Build shared plans for climate response with key anchor organisations such as hospitals, colleges, housing providers, businesses and community groups

6. Measure success

To effectively align these three agendas, local authorities can adopt a shared measurement framework that captures the economic, social, and environmental outcomes of climate action. Key considerations include:

- Use frameworks like the Just Transition Commission's [Just Transition Measurement Framework](#) to evaluate fairness and inclusion.
- Benchmark progress using tools such as the [Scottish Climate Intelligence Service](#) digital platform and the [Local Government Benchmarking Framework \(LGBF\)](#).⁴

⁴ LGBF includes key indicators on climate change and economic development, enabling local authorities to track progress and identify areas for improvement.



Useful organisations and resources

[Adaptation Scotland](#) – Provides information on preparing for climate change impacts, supports adaptation planning, and develops networks for collaboration.

[Centre for Alternative Technology](#) – An environmental charity offering webinars and case studies on climate change for individuals, communities, businesses, and government.

[Centre for Local Economic Strategies \(CLES\)](#) - the national organisation for local economies - developing progressive economics for people, planet and place.

[Climate Emergency UK](#) – Provides a checklist and tips for improving climate action plans, helping local authorities align with net-zero goals.

[Climate Outreach](#) – A British charity focused on public engagement with climate change, helping communities understand and act on climate issues.

[ClimateXChange](#) – Scotland’s centre of expertise on climate change, supporting policy development for adaptation and net-zero transition.

[Community Climate Action Hubs](#) – A national network of hubs supporting communities to take forward climate action in their areas.

[Community Energy Scotland](#) – Offers practical and technical support for community energy projects.

[Community Wealth Building Scotland](#) – Provides resources and case studies on implementing Community Wealth Building principles in Scotland.

[EDAS: Community Wealth Building Centre for Excellence](#) - showcases a range of activities and resources designed to help advance Community Wealth Building, offering insights and best practice.

[Energy Saving Trust](#) – Offers advice and funding for energy efficiency projects that can reduce fuel poverty and carbon emissions.

[Local Energy Scotland](#) – Provides free advice and financial support for local energy projects through the CARES scheme.

[Local Government Association \(LGA\)](#) – Supports local councils in addressing climate change, offering briefings on resilient communities and behaviour change.

Local Government Information Unit (LGIU) – Provides resources like research reports and briefings on climate action, community engagement, and economic development.

Poverty Alliance – Works to tackle poverty in Scotland and can provide insights into how climate action can support poverty reduction.

Scottish Climate Intelligence Service (SCIS) – A national initiative designed to empower local authorities in Scotland to effectively address climate change through both a national digital platform and a support service.

Scottish Communities Climate Action Network – Supports community-led action in Scotland to address the climate and nature emergency.

Scottish Community Alliance – Supports community-led initiatives and provides resources on local economic development.

Scottish Government Just Transition Commission – Advises the Scottish Government on how to transition to a net-zero economy in a fair and equitable way, ensuring no one is left behind.

Sustainable Scotland Network (SSN) – Established in 2003 to support Scotland's public sector in meeting its climate change duties. SSN provides resources, training, and guidance, including support for climate change reporting, to help public bodies achieve net zero emissions.

Verture – A Scottish organisation fostering collaboration across sectors to address climate change and build a sustainable society.



Further support and contacts

To find out more, get in touch at info@improvementservice.org.uk

West Lothian Civic Centre
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Aug 2025

*The 'go to' organisation for Local
Government improvement in Scotland*

The logo for Improvement Service, featuring the letters 'is' in a dark blue, lowercase, sans-serif font. The 'i' has a red dot above it, and the 's' has a red dot at the bottom right. Below the 'is' is the word 'improvement' in a dark blue, lowercase, sans-serif font, followed by the word 'service' in a red, lowercase, sans-serif font.
improvement **service**