



No Time to Lose

Final report of Scotland's second
Just Transition Commission 2022-26

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Front cover: Learners in the engineering program at UHI, North, West and Hebrides, Thurso campus

Foreword

There are two questions that will be critical for sustaining the social license for the actions we need to take to tackle the climate and nature crises: Firstly, are people impacted, including those with livelihoods tied to high-emission or unsustainable economic activities, being supported sufficiently to plan and prepare for a transition to more sustainable work? Secondly, are the benefits of a healthy planet and the green economy clear and tangible?

These questions get to the heart of the matter. Answering them isn't easy, but we've heard very clearly over the past four years that people in Scotland believe a faster, fairer way forward is possible. We've heard it in church halls, on ferries crossing between remote islands, on buses in Dundee, at major industrial sites, on vast peat bogs. And we heard it in Edinburgh when we hosted the first national Just Transition Summit, bringing together leaders and expert practitioners from right across the country. There's deep support across our public and private sector for a big step up on this agenda. And through the work of this Commission since 2018, we now have an internationally recognised approach to bringing people together for genuine multistakeholder dialogue on the right way forward.

A just transition requires confronting difficult, complex issues through serious democratic engagement. It was therefore welcome that, at the Just Transition Summit, the First Minister announced the Scottish Government's intention to renew the Commission for the next Parliamentary term. The Commission has sought to provide constructive challenge to the Scottish Government, while recognising the constraints of devolution and the scale of the task, not all of which sits within its control. At this critical moment for our climate, economy and society, leaders at every level must recognise, as the First Minister acknowledged in addressing the Commission, the importance of open and candid discussion about the challenges involved in delivering a just transition and responding effectively to climate change.

The value of this Commission is in the breadth of different backgrounds, perspectives and expertise within our membership. Our members are a remarkable group of people whose ability to work together in a collegiate way is not only a credit to their common ethos of civic responsibility, but proof of how much common ground exists on many of the biggest just transition questions. As co-chairs, we are so grateful for the time and care members have brought to the Commission.

We thank each of the 900+ people who have spoken to us, making time to share your experiences, hopes and insights. Whatever success this Commission may have had in its expert advisory function and in seeking to build consensus is due to these knowledgeable, thoughtful and committed people; people who care deeply about the places they live and work, the Scotland they will hand on to the next generation, and who saw the Commission as someone worth talking to as part of trying to shape that future for the better. We thank you all sincerely, and we hope our work can help to fulfil that promise.

We must also thank the superb researchers who have worked with the Commission to explore a number of critical strategic questions over the past few years, frequently going well above and beyond in showing their commitment to developing our understanding of just transition issues.

Last and certainly not least, a huge thank you to the secretariat -- Elliot, Shona Ann, Lauren, Ann-Marie and Ben -- who have worked tirelessly to support the commission, arranging meetings and visits, providing briefings and drafting reports. Without the dedication and commitment they have shown, the Commission would not have been able to undertake the number of visits and produce the breadth and quality of briefings and reports published.

We picked up the gavel as co-chairs of the Commission in 2023, when our previous chair Prof. Sir Jim Skea stepped down in order to lead the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Scotland's approach to just transition has developed over the past decade through the concerted efforts of many dedicated people. We hope this report does justice to this sustained collective effort. It tells the story of how the Commission has tackled its remit, how our approach has evolved, and the value of robust, independent scrutiny. It is intended to inform the next Government as it embarks on a new phase of Scotland's just transition process. We commend it to you.



Commission Co-Chairs Satwat Rehman and Prof. Dave Reay at Bute House with First Minister John Swinney MSP

Prof. Dave Reay,
Co-Chair,
Just Transition Commission

Satwat Rehman,
Co-Chair,
Just Transition Commission

Introduction

Scotland's Just Transition Commission is a non-statutory public body. We operate independently and combine the functions of expert advice and consensus-building. Our multi-stakeholder membership is drawn from business, industry, trade unions, environmental groups, the third sector and academia.

The Commission's role is to:

- provide independent scrutiny and advice on the development of the Scottish Government's just transition planning
- advise on the optimal approach to monitoring and evaluating just transition delivery
- engage with those most likely to be impacted by the changes already underway
- collaborate productively with other sources of relevant expertise such as the Climate Change Committee, Fair Work Convention and Fuel Poverty Advisory Panel, and
- publish an annual report to reflect on Scotland's progress.



Our core purpose remains the same as it was when the first JTC was established in 2018: to help enable a fair transition to net-zero emissions in Scotland, undertaken in partnership with those impacted by changes.

This report sets out how the Commission has fulfilled its remit and provides our over-arching assessment of Scotland’s progress towards achieving a just transition to a low-carbon economy. It distils key insights and findings arising from the Commission’s information-gathering, scrutiny, research, analysis and deliberation over the course of the past four years.

Recognising the complexity of the policy areas in scope, we have engaged with all levels of government, including the U.K. Government, local authorities and the Scottish Government, which has tasked us with providing it with scrutiny, advice and progress assessments. As this report shows, a just transition will require not only effective co-working and co-ordination across levels of government, but also the active participation of the private sector and civil society.



Local residents discuss Aberdeen's future at a session hosted by the North East of Scotland Climate Action Network (NESCAN) in Tillydrone, Aberdeen.

This report has six key messages:

- 1. Progress has fallen short of what is needed.** Instead of planning for success, we are reacting to crises.
- 2. Deliver anticipatory place-based planning for at-risk sites and regions** and progress sectoral plans. There is no just path to Net Zero through deindustrialisation.
- 3. A just transition is still possible but requires courageous action across sectors.** To maintain the social license for climate action, the Scottish Government must now use all levers at its disposal.
- 4. Investment for the just transition must be mobilised** through financial leadership and market-shaping interventions. This includes incentive structures, conditionalities and community wealth building measures.
- 5. Communities and local authorities need capacity and resource** to keep pace with developments, shape the transition and influence major decisions affecting their area.
- 6. Improve delivery with more meticulous monitoring and evaluation,** applying data effectively in partnerships at local and regional level.

In tackling our remit, the Commission has engaged far and wide across Scotland, meeting with over 900 people and all kinds of organisations, from crofters to global asset managers, oil majors to family-run fishing firms. The Commission is hugely grateful to everyone who has taken the time to share their individual thoughts, reflections and insights with the Commission: you have enhanced our work immeasurably.

In this Commission's [very first report](#), we set out five guiding principles for our work. The first of these was "urgency", noting that "the cost-of-living emergency means that ensuring fairness in the delivery of decarbonisation is more urgent than ever." A central lesson from the work of this Commission is that if we are to make this a just transition for people, we simply cannot afford to waste any time. A reactive, disorderly transition carries greater risk for people than a managed one. Businesses, workers, communities and households need to be able to plan their futures with a level of confidence and clarity.

In 2023, we agreed [a public statement addressing the broad topic of fairness and the approach to Net Zero](#) at UK level:

The strength of a just transition approach is that it offers a structured way of working through the fairness issues associated with policies that reduce our emissions. The aspiration to achieve a just transition must never be used as rhetorical cover for inaction or delay. Bold and innovative planning and delivery to support a just transition will be the key enabler of the kinds of changes that lie ahead, in terms of how we work, move around, heat our homes, the food we eat, and how our land and its resources are shared.

Scotland has built strong foundations for a just transition. The next phase is about translating this into visible, consistent delivery that people can feel in their lives and livelihoods. This report makes clear that our current trajectory in Scotland carries significant risk in terms of the justice implications of how major changes are experienced in our households, work-places, communities, and businesses. Mitigating these risks requires sustained and courageous action. It requires more planning and less reacting from our governments – starting with Scottish Government completing its sector planning phase and moving ahead with ambitious place-based planning and delivery (Chapter 2). But in parallel, it requires real deliverable changes which can be taken immediately across a number of priority areas, including retrofit, skills development, land, transport, and resilience (Chapter 3), along with an increased strategic focus on investment and market shaping financial leadership (Chapter 4), further action to empower communities (Chapter 5), and a delivery-focussed monitoring and evaluation approach (Chapter 6).



The Commission with Dundee City Council's fleet of electric bin lorries

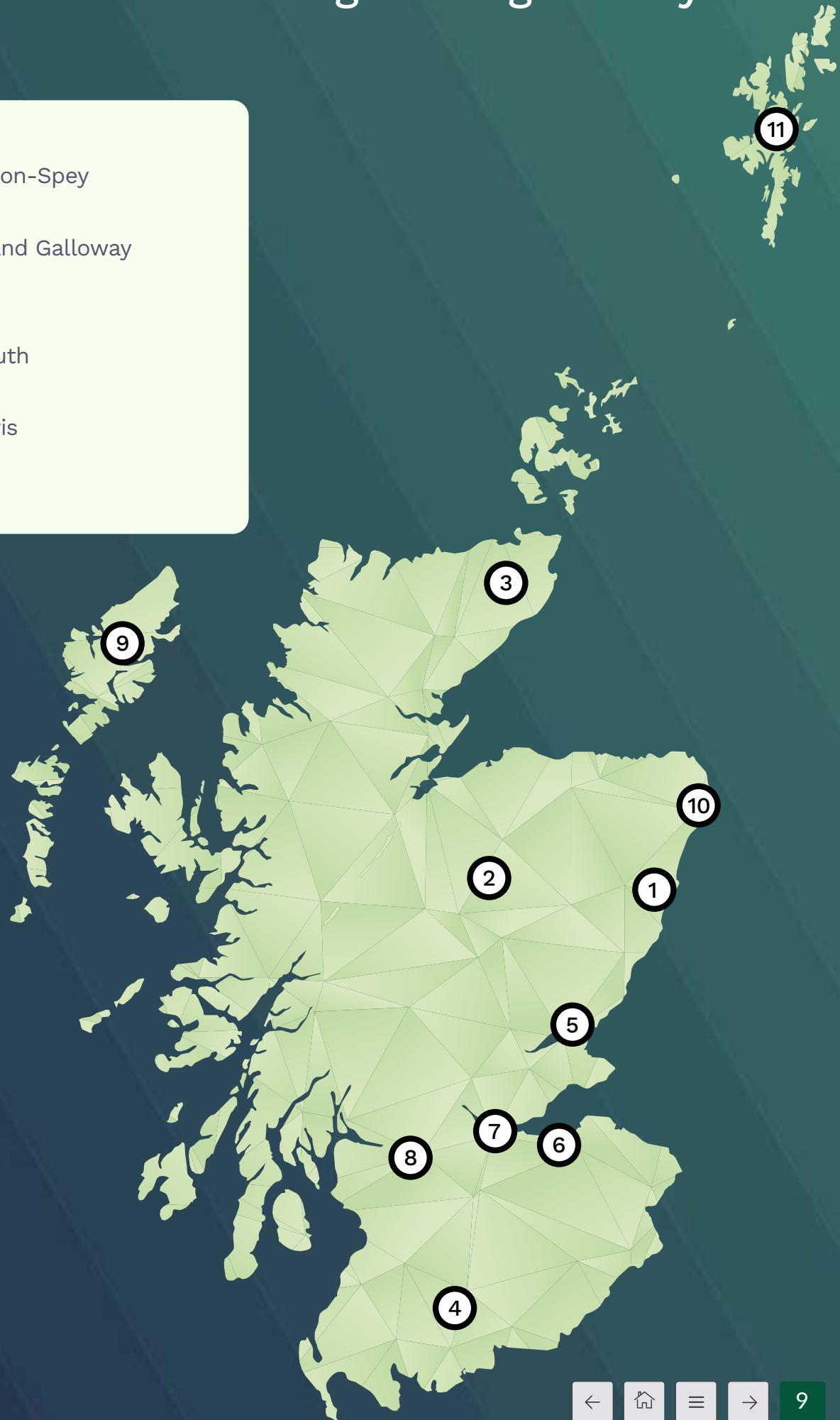
In the international context, COP30 saw an encouraging development with agreement on the new Just Transition Mechanism. The question of implementation will be critical to the Mechanism's success and, as an early adopter of the just transition approach, Scotland has relatively extensive experience of the practical challenges of embedding just transition principles across relevant areas of policy, and an emerging approach to monitoring and evaluation of progress.

This Commission has played a proactive role in facilitating collaboration and knowledge exchange, including by supporting our neighbours in Ireland and Northern Ireland toward establishing their own Just Transition Commissions. Sharing our working as a Commission and the lessons we've learned along the way should help others in developing equivalent bodies for diverse jurisdictions. To that end, we have initiated the development of the International Just Transition Network and are delighted to be co-convenors of the Network during its set-up phase, partnering with Australia's Net Zero Economy Authority. We see this as part of a positive legacy from this Commission.

We have found resounding evidence that people across the country are up for the challenge. In providing advice to the Scottish Government, we hope our work will also serve as a resource for policymakers at all levels of government and for companies, communities, workers and researchers engaged in the collective project of realising a just transition for all.

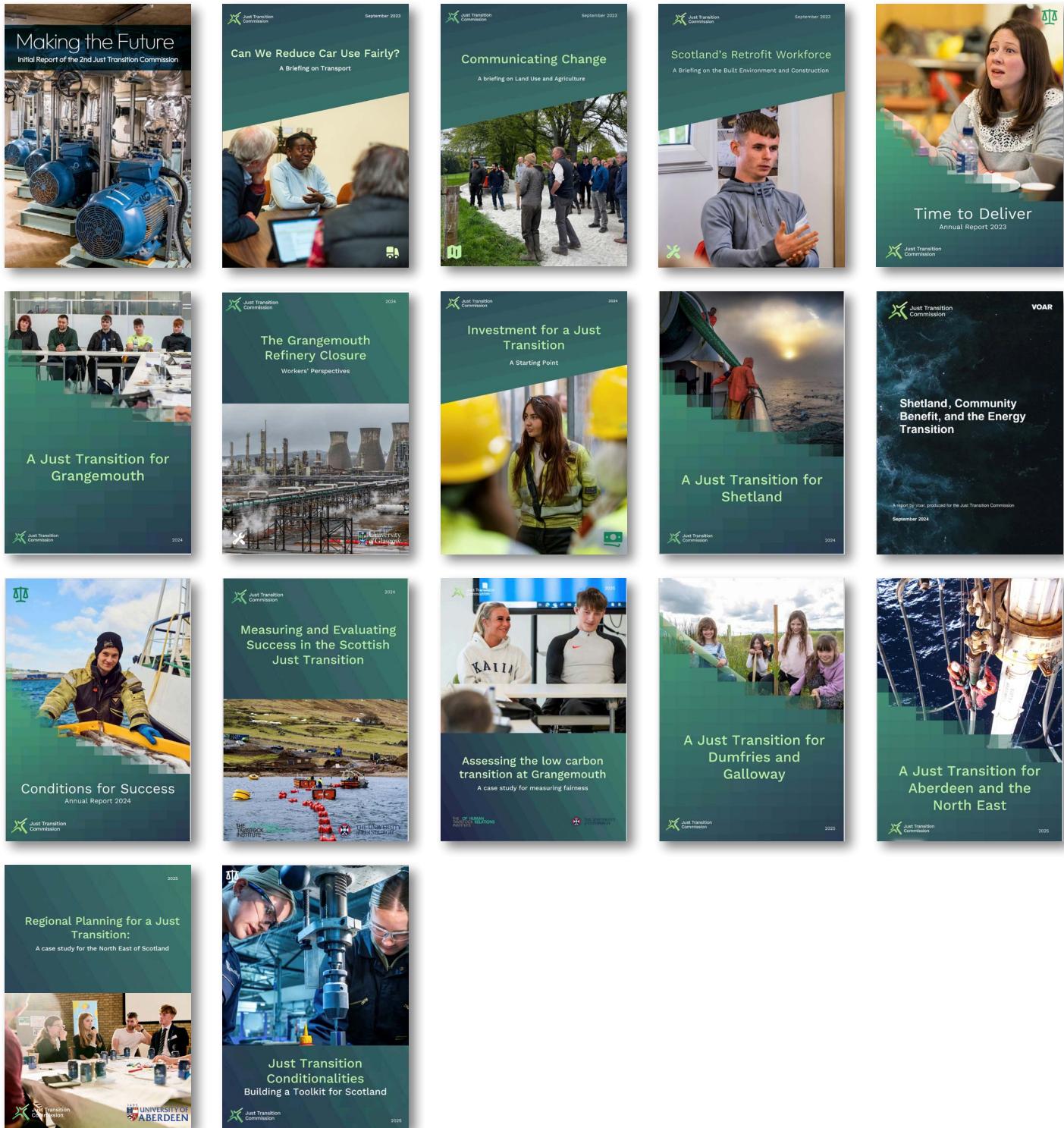
Visits and information gathering activity

1. Aberdeen
2. Grantown-on-Spey
3. Caithness
4. Dumfries and Galloway
5. Dundee,
6. Edinburgh
7. Grangemouth
8. Glasgow
9. Isle of Lewis
10. Peterhead
11. Shetland



Findings and advice

Our 17 major publications comprise an initial report, three sector-focussed policy briefings, a briefing on investment, two annual reports assessing progress, four place-based reports, and six pieces of independent research. You can click through each report cover in order to read it. All our publications, including correspondence and advice on the Scottish Government just transition plans for sectors, can be found [on our website](#).



Key outputs – at a glance

	Engagement with 900+ people and organisations across Scotland.
	Annual assessments of progress.
	Detailed scrutiny and advice on just transition plans for core economic sectors.
	Policy briefings on transport, land use and agriculture, and built environment and construction.
	Place-based reports on just transition challenges and opportunities for Grangemouth, Shetland, Dumfries and Galloway and Aberdeen and the North East.
	Briefing on just transition investment based on multi-stakeholder workshop.
	Six independent research reports on conditionalities, M&E, regional planning, how communities can benefit from renewables, and perspectives of Grangemouth refinery workers.
	Inclusion of just transition indicators in Scotland's new Climate Change Plan.
	Advised on development of Scotland's National Adaptation Plan 2024-29.
	Evidence given to multiple parliamentary committees at both Holyrood and Westminster.
	Just Transition Showcase of 29 projects and initiatives making a positive contribution to a range of just transition challenges.
	Convened Scotland's first national Just Transition Summit in October 2025.
	Practical support to colleagues in Ireland and Northern Ireland establishing their new national Just Transition Commissions.
	Founding co-convenor, alongside Australia's Net Zero Economy Authority, of the International Just Transition Network , to strengthen practical delivery of a just transition through international collaboration.

Chapter 1

Progress Assessment



A drilling crew working in the North Sea



Chapter 1

Progress Assessment

Key message:

Progress has fallen short of what is needed. Instead of planning for success, we are reacting to crises.



Workers installing a new transmission cable from Shetland to mainland Scotland.

Progress assessment

The Commission's remit requires it to reflect annually on Scotland's progress towards a just transition.

In our annual report for 2023, we said: “The current path will not deliver [...] significant further action is urgently needed across a range of core areas to put Scotland on track to deliver a just transition towards net zero, nature restoration and future resilience.”

In our 2024 annual report, we warned that the just transition objective was “at risk of going backwards,” noting the significant shortfall between current policies and plans and what would be required to deliver a just transition, as well as the lack a comprehensive strategy for delivery. The Commission identified “a significant risk of compounding missed opportunities unless rapid progress is now made.”

As the second Just Transition Commission concludes its work, **our assessment is that progress has fallen short of what is needed**. Unless we renew our ambition and redouble our efforts, the enormous opportunity – both for meaningful climate action and for reducing inequality – will be lost.

A just transition to a low carbon, nature positive world means everyone benefits from the advantages of climate action, whilst the costs are minimised and shared fairly. Just Transitions -- across the world -- are starting to get underway, but are so far failing to deliver the depth of the transformation that's required. That lack of progress, at home and abroad, undermines climate action itself, with the greatest injustices arising from dangerous and runaway climate change.

Scotland has two advantages. Firstly, there are heroic just transition initiatives from communities, workplaces and some public authorities that showcase what can be achieved. Secondly, we have broad consensus, and government commitment, that a just transition is desirable and possible. Despite these building blocks, **progress is not good enough**.

For a new Government elected in May 2026, that provides a fantastic opportunity:

- Implement, with renewed vigour the recommendations outlined in the final JTC Report; and
- Prioritise cross department working, and truly make just transition considerations at the heart of government.

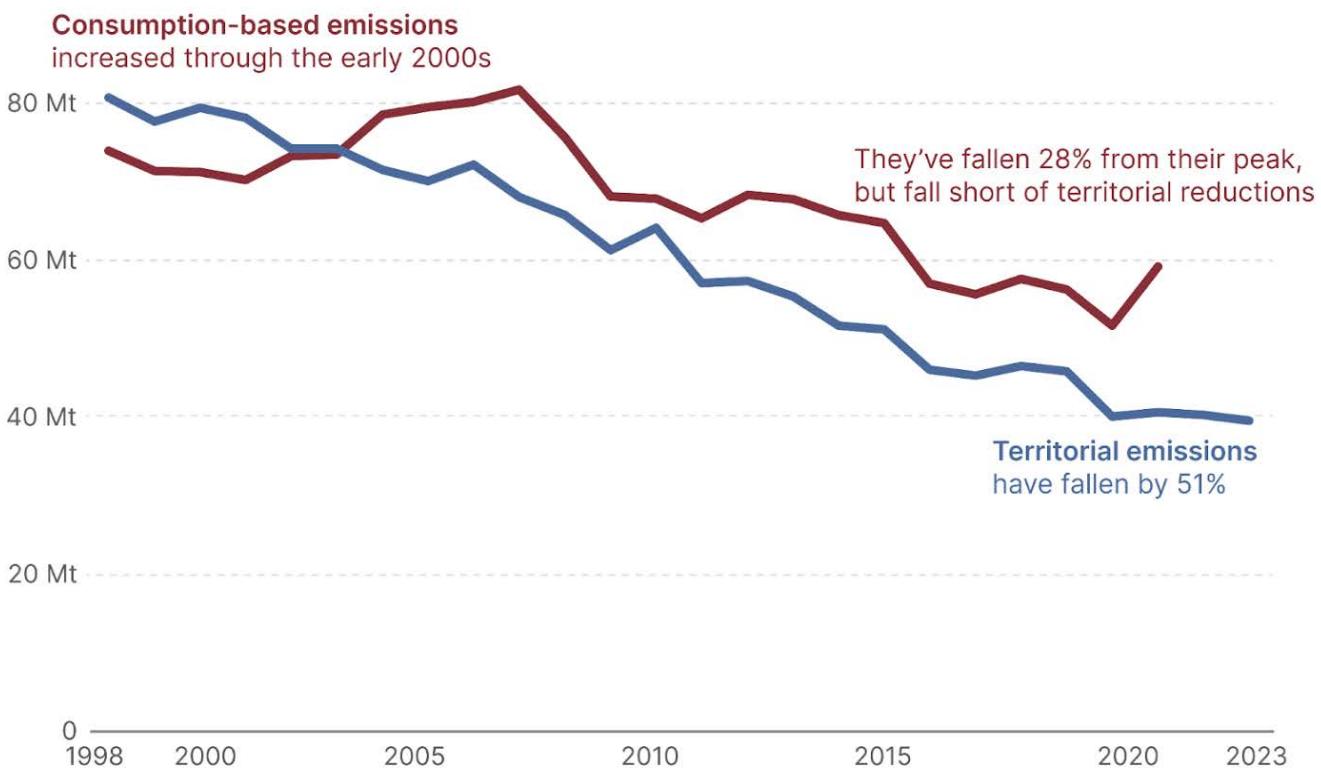
The Commission firmly believes that sophisticated and strategic public policy, with committed ministers and civil servants working alongside the next Commission can make Scotland, the first place in the world to solve the climate-action fairness challenge.

A just transition remains realistic and achievable, but there is no time to lose. **We now need to see significant acceleration** of progress in terms of emissions reductions and the associated planning, investment and delivery that will be required to ensure changes are delivered as fairly as possible. The Climate Change Committee [noted last year](#) that "Scotland will need to resume the pace of emissions reduction that was seen between 2009 and 2016 in order to meet the recommended carbon budgets, with contributions broadening to more sectors across the economy." The last reported figures for Scotland's emissions show just a 0.8 MtCO₂e (1.9%) reduction in 2023 compared to 2022. In the CCC's Balanced Pathway to net zero for Scotland emissions will need to fall by around 2.1 MtCO₂e per year on average between 2025 and 2045. Delivering the new Climate Change Plan in a timely, measurable and robust way will be critical to success, with just transition indicators helping identify areas of risk in how costs and benefits are landing so that action can be taken to address fairness issues.

This section includes charts showing medium-long term trends for a number of critical data points, and is intended to enhance the reader's understanding of the relative scale of just transition challenges. These charts are broadly illustrative of key trends, and are not intended as a comprehensive data overview of just transition progress.

Figure 1: Scotland's territorial and consumption-based emissions

Scotland's territorial emissions have fallen by 51% since 1998, but consumption-based emissions by just 20%. Territorial greenhouse gas emissions (in blue) and consumption-based emissions (in red), measured in million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalents (CO₂eq). Consumption-based emissions account for the carbon embedded in traded goods, providing a more comprehensive view of Scotland's carbon footprint. Part of Scotland's emissions reductions have come from offshoring, which increased through the early 2000s.

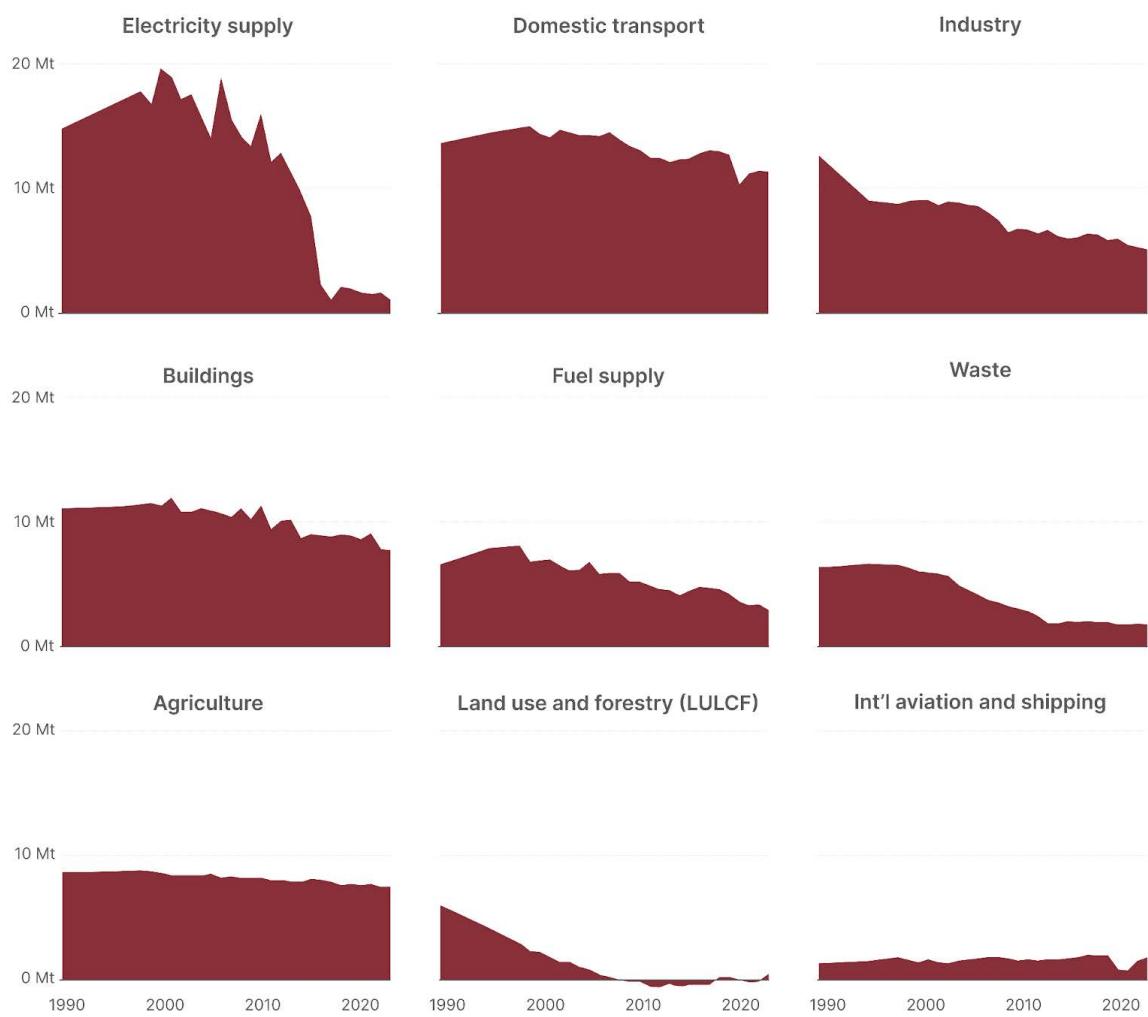


Source: Scottish Government, [Scotland's Carbon Footprint 1998-2021](#) and [Scottish Greenhouse Gas Statistics 2023](#)

Note: Both series include emissions from international aviation and shipping.

Figure 2: Scotland emissions by sector over time

Emissions from electricity generation, industry, fuel supply and waste have fallen substantially in recent decades, but less progress has been made on sectors such as transport and buildings. Each sector's greenhouse gas emissions from 1990 (the baseline year) to 2023, measured in million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalents (MtCO₂e). This is presented based on the government's selected sectoral breakdowns.



Source: Scottish Government, [Scottish Greenhouse Gas Statistics 2023](#)

Note: LULUCF = Land Use, Land-Use Change, and Forestry.

If climate action falters then there is no transition and climate risks for the most vulnerable will increase still further. But unless changes are achieved fairly the public and political mandate to do what is necessary for people and planet will be lost. A central factor in the fraying of the consensus on climate is the sense of distance that many people continue to experience between their jobs, households, businesses and communities and climate policymaking.

We want Scotland to have the most appealing net zero infrastructure projects in Europe, in line with our geographical advantages and the long tradition of enterprise and engineering among our people. **The business case for the large-scale private investment required for our transition now needs to be strengthened by tangible progress in our approach to delivering a just transition.** This will mean high-quality skills and training provision aligned with new and emerging technologies, sustaining our industrial base and the expertise of its workers, and safeguarding the social infrastructure that helps to make major projects attractive. In a time of profound international uncertainty, successful just transition delivery will be a crucial element for reinforcing Scotland's resilience and competitive advantage, now and in the decades ahead.

Markers of progress

During the early phase of the first Commission in 2018, members reflected on how constrained the timeframe felt, and how rapidly significant actions would need to be progressed. In the intervening period, Scotland has certainly developed a stronger analysis, evidence base and understanding of the scope of issues for a just transition approach to confront. Scotland has put in place many of the right building blocks for a just transition and has led the way in bringing people together around a shared approach. As the transition gathers pace, the focus naturally shifts toward delivery — providing clarity for sectors, supporting workforces through change, and giving communities and investors confidence in the long-term direction. A number of positive ongoing initiatives are making steady contributions to the agenda. Examples include:

- the Home Energy Loan scheme
- Warmer Homes Scotland
- the attachment of Fair Work First criteria for public sector grants
- the thriving network of Climate Action Hubs across the country
- the removal of peak fares on Scotrail trains
- Scotland's Third National Adaptation Plan (SNAP3), which provides an excellent basis for further developing the approach to just resilience
- a number of significant green industrial investments such as XLCC at Hunterston and Sumitomo at Nigg
- specific place-based just transition funding, such as the £25 million Just Transition Funding announced for Grangemouth, £75 million funding allocated to the Just Transition Fund for the North East and Moray, and most recently £9 million support announced for Mossmorran.

The draft Climate Change Plan has the potential to be the strongest such plan the Scottish Government has so far produced, if followed up with robust delivery, monitoring and scrutiny.

A reactive rather than strategic approach

Yet, despite these markers of progress, what we are seeing is that instead of planning for success, we are increasingly falling into patterns of delaying delivery and then reacting to crises. Throughout this parliament, and with significant challenges at UK level, we have seen delays to critical policy changes, including the target of reducing car use by 20% by 2030 and of the phase-out date for gas boilers. Critical plans and strategies, including the energy strategy, have not been finalised and accordingly responses to major closures have largely come in the shape of reactive funding following closure announcements to provide a measure of support to workers and communities and attract new commercial operations. As well as making it harder for workers and communities to plan their futures, this reactive approach harms business confidence, with significant knock-on impacts for the resilience of the economy, along with Scotland's overall competitiveness and investment prospects.

Our current trajectory

Macro-economic headwinds and the challenging fiscal picture have made progress on just transition issues more difficult but even more critical. The cost of living crisis Scotland has experienced since the Covid pandemic has been largely driven by high fossil gas prices, with the marginal pricing of energy limiting the positive effect the expansion of renewable supply could otherwise have in reducing fuel poverty and lowering electricity costs for households and industries. Local government budgets have suffered from a decade and a half of severe reductions, and with basic service provision under threat, this has greatly harmed the capacity of local authorities to tackle the longer term challenges associated with the transition for the communities they serve. In Scotland we have seen stagnation in progress over the past decade in reducing both absolute child poverty and inequality, while fuel poverty has sharply increased in the last few years (Figure 4).



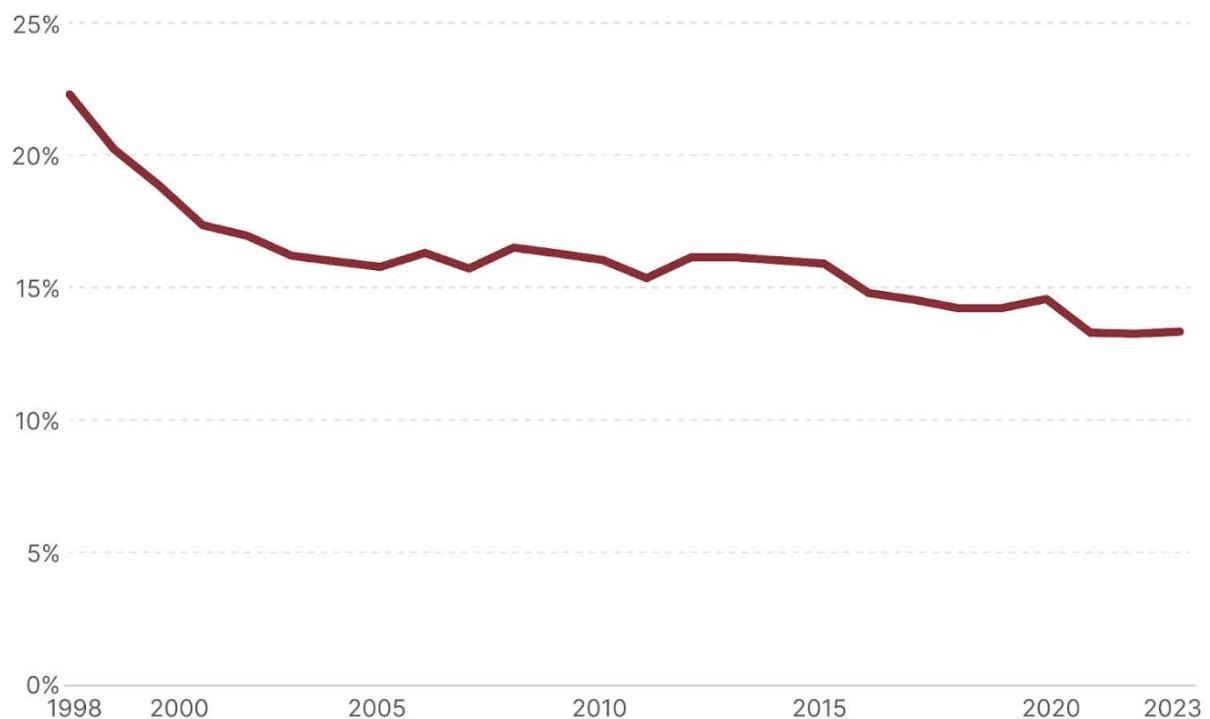
Grangemouth Community Councillor Adam Gillies speaks at a Commission event at Falkirk Stadium following the announcement of the refinery's closure

Our current trajectory exposes us to further repeats of the unplanned-for closures at Grangemouth and Mossmorran, particularly where critical decisions affecting workers, communities and supply chain businesses rest with multinational companies. Without more coherent planning, these forms of closure will continue to threaten Scotland's industrial base. **There is no just path to Net Zero through deindustrialisation.**

Our current path risks an economy with minimal manufacturing, an overreliance on imports, and the further dwindling of the already diminished industrial base (Figure 3) and skilled workforce we need to deliver a prosperous transition.

Figure 3: Scotland's industry as a share of gross value added (GVA)

The role of industry in Scotland's economy continues to decline. Mining and quarrying, manufacturing and electricity, gas and steam as a share of gross value added (GVA) in Scotland, from 1998 to 2023. This has fallen from approximately 22% of GVA in 1998 to 13% in 2023.

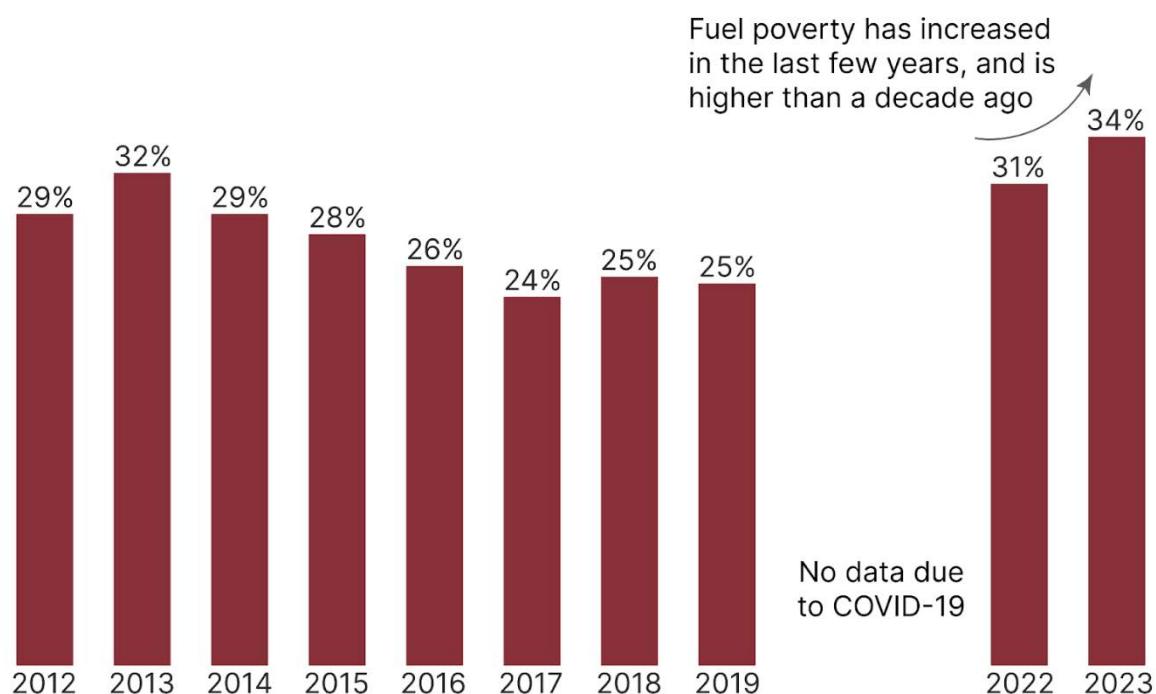


Source: Office for National Statistics, [Regional gross value added \(balanced\) by industry: all ITL regions](#)

A reactive approach risks an unjust transition not only in prominent energy industries, but also in crofting, forestry and fishing, transport and housing too. The current trajectory of a largely market-led transition risks failing households across the country.

Figure 4: Fuel poverty

One-third of households are still living in fuel poverty, and rates are higher than a decade ago. The share of households that have to spend more than 10% of the household's adjusted net income (after housing costs) on fuel to maintain a satisfactory heating regime.

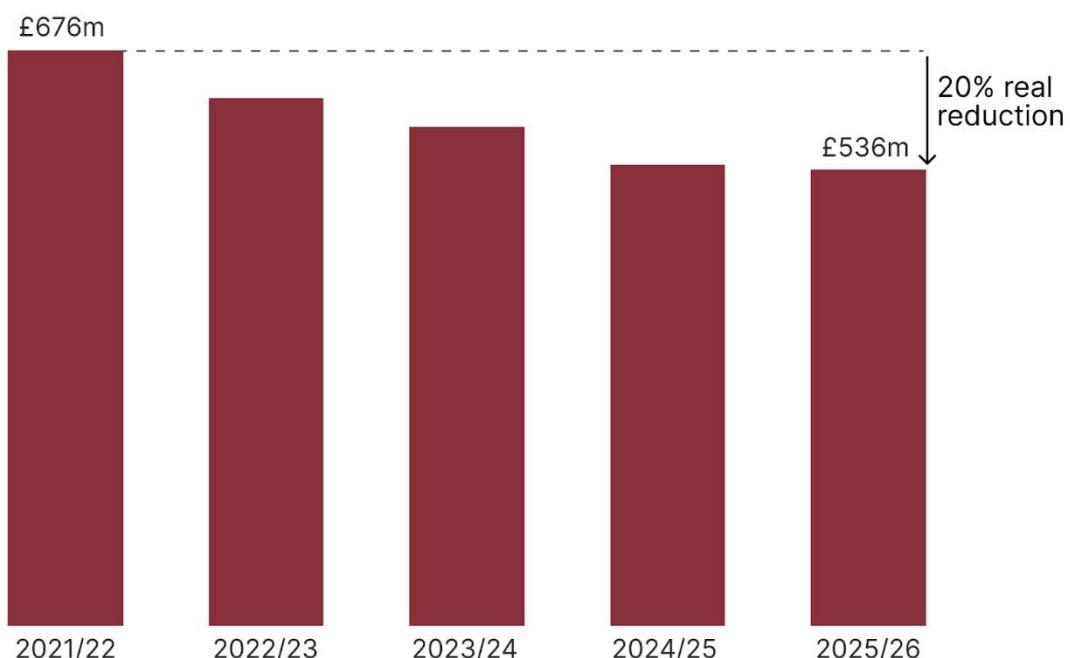


Source: Scottish Government, [Scottish House Condition Survey: 2023 Key Findings](#)

Equally, where we need growth and support, we are seeing cuts in the engine rooms for the just transition. No clearer is this seen than in the college sector, which has suffered significant real terms cuts (Figure 5).

Figure 5: College funding

Colleges provide vital skills and training that are essential for delivering a Just Transition, but funding has declined by 20% in real terms since 2021/22. Total funding for Scottish colleges is shown in real (inflation-adjusted) terms, in 2021 £. While nominal funding figures from Colleges Scotland show only a modest decline of a few per cent, when adjusted for inflation, the drop is approximately 20%.



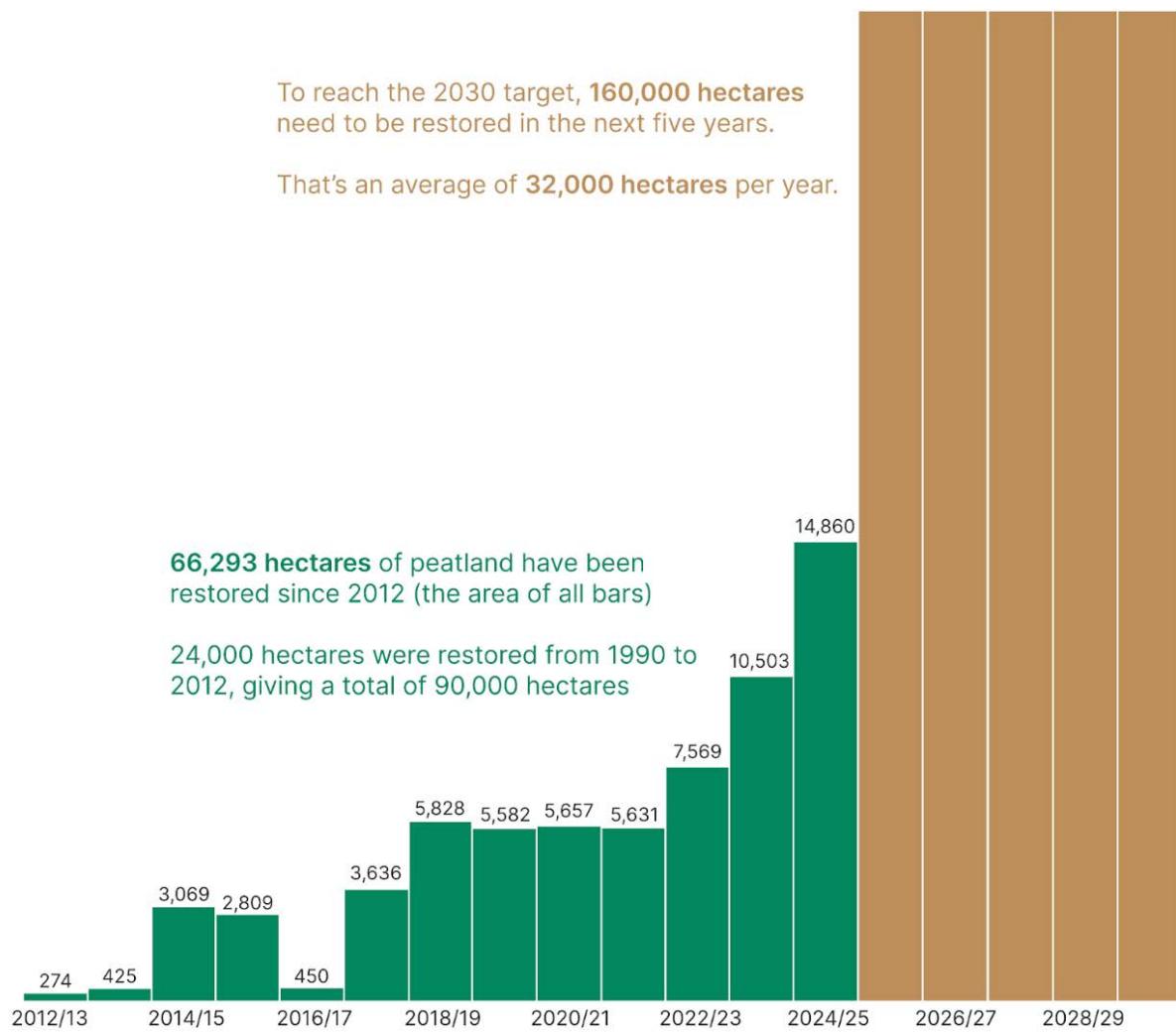
Source: Calculated based on nominal funding data from Colleges Scotland [A Budget to Save Scotland's Colleges](#), using the Consumer Price Index with Housing costs (CPIH) from the [Office for National Statistics](#).

Note: Inflation-adjusted figures are sensitive to the index used; estimates may vary slightly depending on the specific index used.

We have targets that we cannot afford to miss, but which we are on track to miss currently. For example, peatland restoration (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Peatland

To reach its 2030 target, Scotland would need to more than double its annual restoration rate over the next five years. Since 2012, Scotland has restored approximately 66,293 hectares of peatland; the annual rate of restoration is shown in green. The government reports that a total of 90,000 hectares have been restored since 1990. To reach its 2030 target of 250,000 hectares restored, it would need to restore a further 160,000 hectares over the next five years; that's an average of 32,000 hectares per year.



Source: Calculated based on NatureScot, [Peatland ACTION](#) and [Scottish Government targets](#).

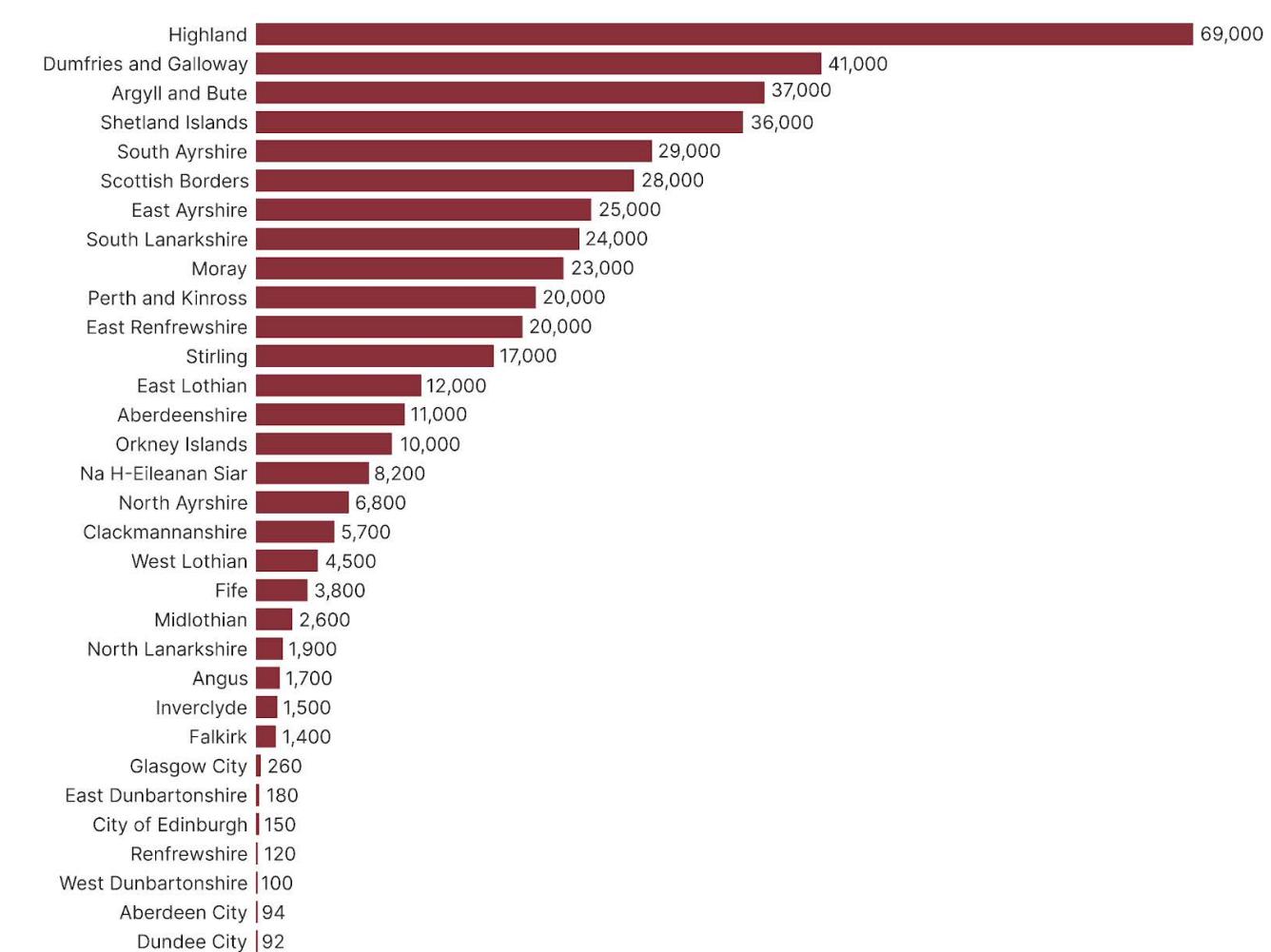
Note: Assumes the 2030 target of 250,000 hectares is based on a baseline of 1990 (or that there was little restoration prior to 1990).

Geography matters fundamentally for the just transition. Changes required for the UK to decarbonise, both positive and negative, are disproportionately landing in Scotland relative to the rest of the UK, and are more concentrated in some regions of Scotland than others. This is evident from the local and regional changes associated with the phase-down of fossil fuels, the high proportion of the workforce employed in the energy sector, and the geographical distribution of renewable generation and transmission infrastructure. Nor is this effect limited to the energy sector: the Climate Change Committee's [Seventh Carbon Budget](#) projects that 39 per cent of the UK's required tree planting up to 2050 will be in Scotland. We have limited confidence that as things currently stand there will be sufficient measures taken to enable the delivery of these changes as fairly as possible.

Figure 7: Renewable energy generation per 1,000 households

Renewable energy generation is highly concentrated in particular local districts.

Renewable energy generation (measured in megawatt-hours, MWh) per 1,000 households in 2024, across Scottish local districts. Highland has a renewable energy concentration 750 times larger than cities with the lowest generation.



Source: UK Department for Energy Security and Net Zero's [Regional Renewable Statistics](#)

Note: Figures are rounded to two significant figures.

Climate change is the biggest risk multiplier for inequality this century. Delays and commitments without delivery severely undermine the credibility of the climate agenda. To put it bluntly, we are now losing people's confidence that a just transition is possible, and at the most critical moment. The **social license for climate action is under threat and needs to be defended** through a step-change from government towards delivery that measurably improves people's lives. This will require a renewed and scaled-up approach to governance, delivery, and the capacity and resource dedicated to achieving a just transition.

The most prominent sectors of our economy as regards the transition are highly fragmented, whether offshore oil and gas, renewables or construction. Land ownership remains highly concentrated in a small number of private hands, and our energy sector is dominated by multinational companies and foreign state-owned enterprises. Given this profoundly challenging context, **government will need to take a significantly more proactive approach, maximising the levers it currently holds, requiring employers to act responsibly around conversion and closure, and empowering local authorities to act.**

A business-as-usual scenario risks building a country where people continue to live in some of Europe's leakiest buildings, and endure high levels of fuel poverty, deepening job insecurity and in-work poverty, and the undermining of efforts to reduce child poverty. It risks worsening rural depopulation at precisely the moment that we need to ensure communities in rural and island areas have the services and support they need to deliver much of the infrastructure and new forms of economic activity that will underpin the transition and its economic up-sides for all of Scotland. It also risks climate-induced weather impacts increasingly taking their toll on the most at-risk communities, with insufficient safety nets in place to ensure just resilience. In addition, the results in terms of community and social cohesion are deeply concerning and chillingly predictable. The anger and division caused by continued disorderly and unmanaged industrial change will critically undermine the broad social license required to realise a resilient, prosperous and low-carbon future for everyone in Scotland.



Participants at Scotland's first national Just Transition Summit, October 2025



Representatives of Tighean Innse Gall, a community-focused housing organisation based in Stornoway, Isle of Lewis, showcase their work at the Just Transition Summit in Edinburgh.

What next?

The practical implementation of a just transition in Scotland has so far emerged most strongly through local initiatives, from the ground up. Communities, businesses and pioneering individuals have developed innovative projects and skilfully applied new technologies to meet local needs. Workers and their representatives, and workers have campaigned to defend and extend their rights to secure incomes, and a meaningful stake and say in how their work is reshaped through the transition. The Commission's showcase of just transition case studies, exhibited in Edinburgh at the first national Just Transition Summit in October 2025, offers inspiration and encouragement that the up-side of the low-carbon transition can still enrich Scotland's people and places. It also includes examples of **large-scale manufacturing projects** that we need to see much more of in Scotland if workers and communities are to benefit from the transition through secure livelihoods. These projects are foundations to build from, especially if government can help create the conditions for such new approaches to deliver for people and planet at scale.

It is time to put people first. Without a just transition, none of us will see the fairer, more prosperous, more resilient future for Scotland that is clearly attainable. For a just transition in Scotland, there is **no time to lose**.

Chapter 2

Just Transition Planning



A Shetland fisherman with his catch



Chapter 2

Just Transition Planning

Key message: Deliver anticipatory place-based planning for at-risk sites and regions and progress sectoral plans. There is no just path to Net Zero through deindustrialisation.

Anticipatory place-based planning

Through its reports on [Grangemouth](#), [Shetland](#), [Dumfries and Galloway](#), and [Aberdeen and the North East](#), the Commission has made the case for targeted place-based action, particularly to address the pressing realities on the ground. Recent lessons from Grangemouth and Mossmorran show a collective failure of government and employers to get ahead of the transition in industrial hotspots with credible anticipatory planning. The Commission has also published [research](#) which has informed our [detailed recommendations](#) around options for just transition planning at regional and site scale.

Instead of planning ahead, government has reacted to closures when they have been announced, in reactive rather than strategic mode. What needs to happen now from Scottish Government and UK Government, working together, is a prioritisation of **anticipatory site and region-based planning for high-emitting sites**. To achieve the most appropriate place-based approach, site-specific and regional plans should set out the scope, core objectives, principles, roles and responsibilities, governance arrangements, and monitoring and evaluation approaches to enable rapid progress in bringing national and local stakeholders together to begin joint planning efforts.

Lessons can be taken from the multi-government response to Grangemouth, including the value of formally convening stakeholders through the Granagemouth Future Industry Board, public-private collaboration, financial support from governments, the crucial role of colleges, conditionalities, strategic site planning and consideration of community voice in jointly developing a plan to bring new jobs and investment at scale to a site, and the approach to monitoring and evaluation. Efforts at Grangemouth, while reactive and imperfect, can nevertheless inform the place-based planning toolkit for other areas of Scotland. These lessons must be applied in a way that does not wait for a crisis, and instead plans for success.

There is a particularly strong consensus around the need for a shift away from reactive and towards strategic, anticipatory planning. The [third annual progress report of the National Strategy for Economic Transformation](#) Delivery Board published in September 2025 states that: “the recommendations of the Just Transition Commission’s latest [report on a Just Transition for Aberdeen and the North-East](#) must be implemented to ensure that the transition to net zero is fair, inclusive, and sustainable.”

Recommendations

 Predict and pre-empt critical risks. Drawing lessons from the Grangemouth refinery closure as well as Mossmorran, Port Talbot and Ratcliffe-on-Soar, our national and local governments must **prioritise anticipatory site and region-based planning and delivery of targeted investment for high-emitting sites as well as detailed plans for supporting those currently working in at-risk roles.**

 **Develop and deliver a credible joint Scottish and UK Government plan for the North Sea workforce.** Currently, workers fear a “cliff edge” transition, and significant redundancies are already underway. The plan must build on the new UK Clean Energy Jobs Plan and include meaningful support through the transition not only for those in operational roles, but also support staff such as catering crews.

Sectoral planning

In 2021, the Scottish Government published its National Just Transition Planning Framework, following recommendations from the first Just Transition Commission. This was intended to provide a consistent and ambitious approach to planning to anticipate the opportunities and disruptions of achieving a sustainable economy, and to avoid major unplanned closures of the kind we have now seen at Grangemouth and Mossmorran.

As part of its response to the recommendations of the first Just Transition Commission, the Scottish Government committed to develop and produce four just transition plans, each focussed on one of Scotland’s highest emitting sectors: Energy, Land Use and Agriculture, Transport, and Built Environment and Construction. A primary aspect of the Commission’s remit is to support the development of these plans, however progress here has been more challenging than anticipated.

A draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan was published in early 2023, and the Commission provided [initial advice](#) and [further advice](#) in April 2023 following in-depth deliberation. In August 2025 the Commission provided [detailed advice](#) in response to the draft Transport Just Transition Plan. A draft Land Use and Agriculture Plan was also produced in 2025 and the Commission has agreed to feed advice into this work iteratively, rather than through written advice at this stage. A just transition discussion paper for Built Environment and Construction was published in early 2023, but a draft plan has not been produced.

The challenges encountered in effectively developing and delivering these plans are an area of deep concern for the Commission, opening up a broader conversation around the most effective way for government to embed a just transition approach across policy areas in a timely way that enables rapid and measurable progress. Greater leadership from government is required to avoid further delay. The uncertainty around the Just Transition sector plans must now be resolved, in a way which accelerates practical delivery at local and regional level, and for critical industrial sites. As part of this our industrial strategy needs to be further developed and enhanced through delivery, responding to the [detailed credible advice](#) other bodies have shared regarding the initial Green Industrial Strategy.

Recommendation

Complete the sectoral planning phase in a way that delivers maximum clarity and impact across sectors, whilst enabling delivery at regional and site scale. Clarify the status of the committed Just Transition sector plans on energy, transport, built environment, and land and agriculture and how the engagement, analysis and policy development work undertaken to date will support delivery. Businesses, workers and public sector bodies (particularly our colleges and local authorities) require clarity, stability and confidence in the medium to long term policy picture to unlock investment, deliver the required infrastructure and help plan for how to transition their activities away from high-emission operations.



Commissioner Lang Banks (WWF Scotland), Claire Mack (Scottish Renewables), Kenny MacInnes (Forth Valley College), Tessa Khan (Uplift) and Richard Hardy (Prospect) discuss jobs and skills at the Just Transition Summit, October 2025.

Case study: Caithness

Theme: regional co-operation anchored by phased and well-planned decommissioning

The Commission visited Caithness in May 2025, with the aim of further developing its understanding of a number of core themes, including decommissioning, how workers are experiencing the transition to renewables, skills and training, and collaboration between stakeholders. The visit included meetings with Focus North, an evening town-hall event with the local community in Wick, and site visits to UHI NWH Thurso Campus, SSE Beatrice Control Room and NRS Dounreay. Further details on the itinerary are provided in Annex F.



Learners at the Environmental Research Institute, UHI NWH Thurso Campus

Insights and findings

Decommissioning

- Dounreay is playing a significant role in anchoring **social infrastructure and community investment** (currently around £1 million annual budget) in the region and thereby sustaining strong social license, alongside employment and supply chain opportunities. As a major funder of community activities and training, their work with Focus North is an exemplar of regional partnership that can deliver well integrated and locally scrutinised pathways for support – this somewhat echoes our findings for Shetland where coordination of disparate community support schemes and funding can allow the impact to be greater than the sum of its parts (as long as that coordination gives fair voice to all stakeholders)
- The case of Dounreay evidences the value of **clear phased timelines as opposed to cliff edge transitions**. The first JTC made recommendations regarding the **duty of employers to plan** around the end of particular forms of activity and the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority provides a concrete example of how such a requirement can enable delivery of socio-economic benefits in a measurable way ahead of closure.

- Dounreay represents a central cog in the economic and employment engine of Caithness and Sutherland. The **conditionality** they have (arising from legal duties in the 2005 Energy Act and the 2012 Public Services (Social Value) Act) on their work in terms of **local economic development and support for training** is a crucial element of this.
- Decommissioning of industrial assets can help **anchor skills development for growth sectors** such as renewables (albeit at slower pace than the wider energy transition) particularly where (as with NRS Dounreay) there is a requirement to build and maintain **a sustainable supply chain**.
- Just as for oil and gas decommissioning in the North Sea, decommissioning and repowering of onshore and offshore wind sites represents **a significant opportunity for domestic job and wealth creation** (albeit over longer time horizons in most cases). Workforce strategies should be developed and incorporated into decommissioning and repowering plans for all sites, including in all forthcoming developments via Scotwind and Contracts for Difference rounds.



An apprentice in the Engineering, Technology and Energy Centre, UHI NWH Thurso Campus

Regional co-ordination and partnership working

- **UHI NWH Thurso is at the forefront of a partnership approach with employers, built on long-standing relationships**, expert practitioners as staff, and proactive development and delivery of learning with employers. Degradation of this (due to funding cuts to Further Education, Higher Education and apprenticeship budgets) risks undermining the local economy and its businesses, especially SMEs where the option for in-house training delivery is more limited.
- In the context of significant transmission network infrastructure development, there is a particular need for local communities to credibly experience the benefits of renewables expansion. Enhancements to the governance of **community benefit funds** to increase consistency and transparency and ensure these help build local capacity strategically to enable community wealth building, rather than ad hoc spending, would help in securing long-term local value and maintaining social license to operate in localities hosting significant new infrastructure.

- Focus North offers a useful example of the value of **regional co-ordination and co-working across key institutions** in creating a process to address major strategic questions collaboratively, an approach that could be further enhanced through greater community involvement.
- The relative success of Focus North and of the role of Dounreay in supporting the local economy, workforce and skills base is not down to luck. It is a result of a legal duty for Dounreay to play an active role in ensuring such enduring success, and in the long and sustained work put into partnership building by the Focus North partners. **Both public and privately owned, large-scale Net Zero-related developments of this kind should in future have the same mandate to deliver a sustainable legacy for the community they operate in.**
- The region is undergoing rapid **growth in renewables**, including the proposed Pentland floating offshore wind farm. With the development of renewable resource from the North of Scotland critical for meeting the UK's carbon budget by 2030, it should be possible to create a meaningful sense of pride within the region in what has the potential to be an internationally significant contribution to decarbonisation.

Strategic challenges for rural areas

- **Social infrastructure is a critical delivery enabler, particularly in rural contexts enduring a housing crisis and cuts to council services.** The quality of social infrastructure, as well as hard infrastructure, will be critical to making major renewables projects deliverable and attractive to investors. A 2024 [report from the Scottish Human Rights Commission](#) details concerning trends in housing and hunger.
- Successful management of the transition's socio-economic dimension and developing a more resilient social infrastructure will be essential for the region to successfully counter **depopulation**, attracting and retaining people to settle in the area.

Chapter 3

Real Delivery



An apprentice with SSE at Peterhead Power Station



Chapter 3

Real Delivery

Key message: A just transition is still possible but requires courageous action across sectors. To maintain the social license for climate action, the Scottish Government must now use all levers at its disposal.

Overview

Over the past five years, progress across sectors has not moved at the pace required. The Commission has explored a wide range of levers for change, not least actions which can be taken in high-emitting sectors. The approach to identifying and applying critical policy levers to create the conditions for just transition delivery is a priority area for further development, whether in terms of enhanced procurement for social value (prioritisation of local content over cost reduction), effective fines for failures to meet local supply chain quotas, licensing standards, land management, social security systems and pensions.

Below is the Commission's assessment of what needs to happen next, to translate the broad aspiration to achieve a just transition into meaningful and measurable delivery. This includes recommendations in critical areas by theme, using case studies drawn from particular places.

Skills

No policy aimed at addressing climate change can succeed without having people in place with the right skills to deliver on it. Across every sector of our economy, the transformation required necessitates **proactive skills and workforce planning**.

The competencies of the workforce in every region of Scotland must align in both time and space with the changing needs of employers; spanning immediate Scotland-wide requirements, such as rapid upskilling of engineers and installers for roll-out of low-carbon heating and building retrofit, through to longer-term and more regionally-specific demands such as building capacity to deliver offshore renewables expansion, green hydrogen and carbon capture, utilisation and storage for industrial clusters, as well as jobs outwith the energy sector in adaptation and resilience, nature restoration, social infrastructure and low-carbon manufacturing.

Without this alignment, sustained progress on climate action will become impossible, both within specific sectors and regions, and for Scotland as a whole. Crucially, the opportunities to improve social equality and economic growth, and so to realise a just transition, will also be lost. In 2020, the Climate Emergency Skills Action Plan (CESAP) set out six priorities for the skills system as we emerged from the Covid-19 pandemic, including "ensuring our skills system makes a central contribution to a Just Transition". However, the CESAP only covered the period 2020-2025.

Recommendations



An updated and enhanced skills strategy for the transition is now acutely needed to allow proactive skills planning and delivery in every region of Scotland as the transformation in workforce needs accelerates. Emphasis should be placed on Scottish Government and its agencies to better inform and support direct collaboration between employers and education providers at local scales, as well as developing an effective way of engaging self-employed workers. Skills development and delivery for the transition must **better engage those who are currently underrepresented in our workforce**, particularly in those sectors seeing the greatest demand but where representation rates for women, ethnic minorities and the disabled remain low.



Colleges should be at the heart of an enhanced skills strategy with their funding made commensurate with the sector's strategic importance nationally.



Apprentices at Forth Valley College discuss their plans for the future.

Case study:

Alan Paul, SSE Beatrice Control Room – skills transfer

Our researcher Riyoko Shibe spoke to Alan Paul, the control room team lead for the Beatrice Offshore Windfarm.

Mr Paul was born and brought up in Wick, Caithness, and works as a Control Room Team Lead in the Beatrice Offshore Wind Farm. He worked offshore for 27 years before transitioning to the renewables industry. He worked for two years in onshore wind before joining SSE's Beatrice Offshore Wind Farm in December 2017, initially as a control room operator, and then promoted to control room team lead.

Though moving into renewables meant taking a significant pay cut, in Alan's eyes this has been, on balance, worthwhile. It has meant an end to the highly stressful three weeks on, three weeks off schedule that was being introduced offshore by the operators. Alan emphasises that:

“Coming to renewables, because it was a local job, it allowed me to live in my own house every night, whereas for the last 27 years I felt like a bit of a lodger. Coming back both to onshore and then coming to Beatrice, I was living at home, so it gave me more of a family life. I could be at home for birthdays and anything that was going on.”

Alan feels he has the skills to transition, from thorough apprenticeships and training programmes in nuclear and the oil and gas industry. Like many from Caithness and nearby areas, he did his apprenticeship in the Dounreay nuclear site. His first year was a general broad-skilled training package, after which he specialised in electrical work which itself included a broad spectrum needed on the highly technical and specialised Dounreay site.

But as Alan reached the end of his apprenticeship in 1988, cuts were made to the fast reactor programme, and he was unable to find permanent work at the site. His training allowed him to move into oil and gas, where he worked as an electrician, and then in maintenance. He also underwent a multi-skilling programme which further strengthened his skillset.

“Coming from oil and gas into renewables, all the skills were already there. Everything that I needed, I had the ability to do.”



Community tree planting at a community site, Glaisters Bridge, Dumfries and Galloway.

Land Use and Agriculture

The agriculture and land use sectors are vital in realising the emission reductions required for net zero. They are also at the sharp end of many of the greatest climate risks and fundamental for establishing the nature positive economy.

Much attention is rightly given to the impacts of the transition on jobs in the energy sector but, while much more dispersed geographically, the implications for the more than 60,000 farmers and crofters across Scotland, as well as associated jobs in the food system supply chain, may be no less seismic.

It is vital therefore that all those who work on the land, and the communities they underpin, are at the forefront of just transition planning and implementation.

A people and place approach is again fundamental here in terms of understanding the opportunities and barriers to realising a just transition – as the Scottish Government make clear in the draft Climate Change Plan: “farmers and crofters know their own land better than anyone else”, with the size, type and context of land management varying hugely from place to place. We therefore welcome the Scottish Government’s recognition of the differing capacities and circumstances of many small producers and crofters compared to large land owners, and the differentiated application of Whole Farm Plan requirements that embodies this nuanced approach.

Significant action is needed on forestry, as the Commission set out in its report on [Dumfries and Galloway](#). The Climate Change Committee [projects](#) 39% of the trees the UK needs to plant between now and 2050 will be in Scotland. A purely market-led approach is highly unlikely to succeed in achieving this rapid rate of expansion in a fair way that addresses climate and nature targets, particularly given our highly concentrated pattern of land ownership. To achieve an equitable sharing of costs and benefits and safeguard social cohesion to support delivery, a new mode of community involvement in woodland and forestry management is needed that embeds a community wealth-building approach.

Recommendations



Communities should have a stake and say as Scotland ramps up tree-planting to ensure proper custodianship of land. Policy opportunities exist and could include the introduction of community woodland grants supplements to increase support for community woodland creation and community woodland management, as well as more robust accountability mechanisms to ensure transparent reporting and oversight of factors such as environmental impact, biodiversity, public access, and the creation of sustainable local jobs through active management practices.



Ensure that forestry grants support native woodland restoration and expansion, including through measures like sustainable herbivore management to support woodland restoration and resilience and increase scrutiny of impact, including cumulative impact, on local landscapes through improved community engagement and consultation.

Nature

The nature crisis is deeply interlinked with the climate crisis, with failure to protect and restore nature representing a fundamental risk to realising a just transition. The increasing frequency and intensity of climate change impacts are further exacerbated by less resilience in nature, leading to worsening impacts of flooding, drought, wildfires, crop losses, disconnection from nature and health inequalities.

Mainstreaming nature into policy making and delivery is critical. This can be driven through legally binding targets, currently in the Natural Environment Bill. Legally binding targets provide a proven mechanism to build in action and accountability across Government, business and society. However, progress is in danger of being overtaken by events: secondary legislation in 2026 is required to set the targets. With cuts to environmental public agencies, and only four years left to meet the overall Global Biodiversity Target to halt biodiversity, this sets an almost impossible task. Much more work is needed, but immediate efforts can look to the planning system to ensure biodiversity enhancements are being appropriately delivered alongside major developments – for instance, peatland restoration.

Recommendation

Secure substantial flows of investment towards biodiversity outcomes by ensuring biodiversity legislation set out in NPF4 is applied consistently, including for large-scale energy infrastructure developments. Consideration should be given to raising the current peatland restoration 1:10 ratio (peat damaged; peat restored) to achieve additional restoration and develop a clear just transition framework to produce a more equitable sharing of the costs of this work.



Apprentices in construction in South Lanarkshire share their experiences with the Commission.

Built environment and construction

The Scottish Government declared a national housing emergency in 2024. The development of a just transition plan for the sector has not progressed during this parliament.

Major action is required to close the gap between Scotland's aspirations for decarbonising our built environment and what is being done in practice. Repeated delays in the delivery of crucial legislation and delivery milestones have negative effects on people's everyday lives in terms of fuel poverty, social inequity, health, mental health and wellbeing, energy efficiency and demand reduction. This is despite the existence of proven technologies in this area to address the problem, including heat networks. We are at risk of another "lost decade" with major justice ramifications.

A systemic approach to the housing emergency in rural Scotland

Our [Dumfries and Galloway report](#) set out that a just transition means tackling the housing crisis. The lack of adequate housing for people in Dumfries and Galloway, as in many other parts of Scotland, will slow progress in reducing emissions and risks stymying the positive potential impact of the economic opportunities brought by the transition in terms of investment, skills and labour required to reconfigure our land use and install and maintain new infrastructure.

Rural communities face unique challenges in addressing the housing crisis. Bringing together innovators across local authorities, housing associations and community trusts, private developers, construction, manufacturing, wider supply chains, design, architecture, finance, procurement, and skills development around clearly aligned objectives will be key if we are to create a clear path toward delivering warmer, more affordable homes, more quickly, for rural communities.

The current fragmented approach to housing delivery is struggling to provide the homes Scotland's citizens need. A more scaled, systemic approach to housing delivery would enable the Scottish Government to increase the number of houses being provided, with houses built more quickly, to higher sustainability standards, and more affordably. This would deliver just transition benefits through the creation of high-quality, green, local jobs.

New sustainable and affordable housing will need to be built away from high risk zones such as floodplains, and in locations with access to services, public transport, car sharing and green spaces.

Retrofitting our existing buildings

The Commission's report on [Retrofit Workforce](#) showed the importance of aggregating demand on housing and retrofit. This would require a strategic change so that policy, regulation and procurement prioritise the use of local supply chains and sustainable materials to lock in economic, environmental and social value as we decarbonise our built environment and develop a housing strategy that enables new forms of economic activity to be delivered, including in rural areas, by applying just transition conditionalities to public procurement. It also means progressing a difficult conversation about who pays for decarbonisation of our built environment.

Recommendations



Provide transformational leadership and ensure clear policy objectives for building up Scotland's retrofit workforce are in place, focussed on maximising this economic opportunity for every region of Scotland. This includes ensuring options to finance retrofit and heat decarbonisation at scale are progressed and that public procurement ensures adequate weight is given to social value and moves beyond the “cheapest wins” approach.



Deliver on the intention set out in the Green Industrial Strategy to explore the **greater adoption of modern methods of construction for housing delivery**. By collaborating across the housing system to aggregate demand, this sets the conditions to unlock value in delivery. The use of Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) — such as offsite manufacturing — to build high-quality affordable homes faster, with less waste, lower cost, lower carbon and less time on site, can empower communities to shape housing that meets local needs and supports just transition outcomes.



Commissioner Stephen Good, CEO of Built Environment - Smarter Transformation, discusses the retrofit of social housing in Coatbridge with Steven Thomson (Scotland's Rural College) and Katie Swan-Nelson (UN Conference on Trade and Development).

Case study: City of Edinburgh

Theme: Council's Mixed Tenure Improvement Service – energy efficiency for hard-to-treat homes



Murrayburn Park, Edinburgh – before and after

Background

The City of Edinburgh Council's Mixed Tenure Improvement Service was established in 2020. As a major multi-year energy efficiency project, the MTIS restores and repairs blocks of flats (comprising of mixed private and council ownership) across many of the most deprived parts of Edinburgh. Owners in these blocks – the council, private owner-occupiers, landlords – have shared responsibility for maintenance of common areas of the building (stairs, roofs, external walls). After an initial pilot in Wester Hailes in 2021, a major MTIS project has started in Lochend and Restalrig, with other projects in Magdalene, Bingham and the Christians. The Council reported over 17,000 low-rise council owned homes covered within the MTIS scope, with just under 6,000 homes having undergone energy efficiency works since 2015. Under the MTIS, 3,500 properties have been completed, including 2,300 council owned and 1,160 privately owned homes). It is believed to be the largest local authority-led insulation project in Scotland.

In progressing much-needed energy efficiency and repair works for ageing homes, the MTIS navigates a patchwork of mixed tenures in residential buildings (common across Scotland and a legacy of historic right to buy policies). As part of the Council carrying out its duties to maintain its housing stock, the Service identifies mixed tenure blocks requiring repair, organises surveys and estimates, communicates proposals to owners, schedules votes among owners on proposed works, and then – subject to a majority vote – proceeds with repairs. Through its implementation, MTIS highlights numerous delivery challenges for retrofitting operations, which pose wider questions for local and national government to ensure these are implemented with communities, at the pace and scale required, and the role government can play in delivering such measures as fairly as possible.

Challenges

Central to the challenge of scalable retrofit – at municipal as well as national scale – is cost. When MTIS proposals are agreed by the majority of owners in the building, private owners must then contribute for their share of the costs (with the Council paying for their respective share). Requiring private owners to contribute their share is a point of difference from how other councils in Scotland deliver similar services. The scheme includes support to help owners identify and access separate grant support available to them.

There has been some local challenge to the distribution of MTIS costs and how these are met. The Lochend Branch of Living Rent, a tenants' union, has questioned whether the costs of these changes are being shared equitably and campaigned for changes to the scheme, highlighting the affordability challenges of MTIS repairs in a report prepared for the Commission. Living Rent's analysis identifies concerns that MTIS costs can create significant financial burden and emotional stress on some residents, and cites instances where private owners received MTIS costs reportedly stretching into the £10,000s (after grant support had been awarded). Living Rent report that such large sums, and difficulties in communication with the council and contractors, created real challenges for some residents. Living Rent report owners have been left with difficult choices: either to incur significant debt to pay for repairs or else sell their home and leave the community (sometimes this meant facing scenarios of negative equity on their home, or landlords evicting tenants).

Despite a continuing difference of opinion between the Council and Living Rent on the overall MTIS funding approach, the Council has responded to concerns Living Rent has raised through a number of actions, including:

- increasing engagement with communities where required, including establishing drop-in sessions for residents every six weeks with surveyors, construction managers, and case officers.
- policy amendments to provide additional support on costs. This includes amendments to debt recovery terms to make payment plans more affordable, or else reducing interest rates on payment plans arranged with the Council to 0% for owner occupiers, or else extending Tenanted Acquisition Policy to include private rented properties sold back to Council from landlords. At a time when the national challenge of retrofit at scale is in sharp focus and with public finances under significant pressure, Edinburgh has successfully delivered significant repairs to thousands of its housing stock. In the absence of a substantially revised funding environment, large-scale retrofit operations in Scotland will likely continue to be delivered among real constraints, with authorities managing associated risks and trade-offs.

Next steps

In the pursuit of maximising equitable outcomes within these constraints, projects such as the MTIS could benefit from enhanced monitoring and evaluation (M&E) approaches. M&E can enable services to more comprehensively assess and communicate the benefits delivered, costs incurred, and fairness implications, building greater trust to enable delivery. For MTIS as for other area-based energy efficiency projects, developing the approach beyond headline metrics (completed works, complaints, voting patterns) and into more comprehensive tracking of wider outcomes (e.g. carbon savings, fuel poverty reductions, impacts on bills, health impacts, air quality impacts, resident experience, and other fairness indicators) could help capture the full balance of costs and benefits delivered, whilst also informing further delivery improvements to best support the most vulnerable or counteract unintended consequences (e.g. entrenching inequality).

At a national level, there are questions about whether projects like MTIS may be better supported with greater certainty through multi-year funding from the “Scottish Government’s Energy Efficient Scotland: Area Based Schemes” fund. Equally, there are questions about whether further work could explore options for more detailed standards for delivering fabric improvements as part of the just transition. This could offer greater guidance to local partners on embedding equitable practices whilst handling some of the inevitable delivery trade-offs around public and private finance, pace of delivery, local decision-making, community engagement, and monitoring. Standards may also help to ensure these services in Scotland are designed to maximise the wider retrofit economic opportunity, ensuring repairs are driving local job creation and skills development. More broadly, the delivery constraints highlighted by the MTIS reinforce the need for innovative action from both Scottish and UK Governments to support households in hard-to-treat housing with limited access to credit. The Scottish Government’s Heat in Buildings legislation and proposals from the Green Heat Finance Taskforce have the potential to help unlock large-scale retrofit and delivery energy efficiency measures and emissions reductions in a fairer way.

Adaptation and Just Resilience

As the First Minister made clear at the Just Transition Summit in October 2025, enhancing adaptation and resilience are fundamental to realising a just transition, both in Scotland and globally. As climate change intensifies its impacts will increasingly put those who are already vulnerable and marginalised in our society at an even greater risk. Delivering “Just Resilience” for everyone in Scotland requires proactive, well-informed and, crucially, well-coordinated leadership across all levels of government. Scotland’s Third National Adaptation Plan (SNAP3) provides an excellent basis for this, having highlighted the huge risk multiplier for inequality that climate change represents in every region and sector.

This threat to just resilience is especially acute in the housing sector, with threats from flooding, subsidence, damp and extreme weather all **increasing**. Insurance can be a lifeline to **greater resilience**, and the existing FloodRe scheme is an example of how governments can support such adaptation where the market might otherwise abandon those who are most at risk. However, the FloodRe scheme only covers homes completed before 2009 (missing around 300,000 newer homes in Scotland), is set to end in 2039 and, by definition, only applies to flooding. With higher home insurance premiums (**a >60% increase over the past decade**) and climate impacts intensifying further, there is now a pressing need to better understand the implications for inequality and any actions required.

Recommendations



The Scottish Government should **assess how insurance coverage and non-renewal rates are changing** spatially, and how this overlaps with indices of multiple deprivation and changing climate risks.



Any future Just Transition Commission should **have adaptation and resilience made explicit within its remit**; enabling improved scrutiny and advice on just resilience as a core element of realising a just transition for everyone in Scotland.

Transport

The Commission’s 2023 briefing [Can We Reduce Car Use Fairly?](#) was intended to support the fairest possible delivery of the commitment in the Scottish Government’s Climate Change Plan update in 2020 to reduce car kilometres by 20 percent by 2030 (against a 2019 baseline). This target was dropped in April 2025, however the briefing’s key messages remain applicable.

The Commission welcomes the removal of peak fares on ScotRail trains as a significant positive development in making public transport cheaper.

In June 2025 the Commission published a [statement](#) on the proposed closure of Alexander Dennis Ltd’s sites at Falkirk and Larbert. Subsequently, workers at the firm were supported with a £4 million furlough scheme from the Scottish Government to run for 26 weeks, allowing the sites to remain open.

The Commission underlined the important role of domestic manufacturing “in achieving a just transition in Scotland, as we invest in improving our public transport”.

Following review of the draft Just Transition Plan for transport, the Commission published **detailed advice** to support the further development of policy to ensure emissions for the sector are reduced as fairly as possible. The advice calls for greater clarity around the major actions that will be taken to decarbonise Scotland’s transport sector, how these will be sequenced, and how just transition principles will be applied to ensure changes are delivered through an equitable sharing of costs and benefits, with the just transition lens adding value by providing additional detail on the question of “who pays?” The Commission also called for more integration between transport and other policy areas, including housing, energy demand and distribution, depopulation, the built environment and construction, regional economic development and adaptation and resilience.

The draft Just Transition Plan for transport is heavily reliant on the rapid expansion of electric vehicles (EV) uptake, however further consideration needs to be given to how this change can be delivered as fairly as possible. There is a clear risk that public investment to support emissions reductions will disproportionately benefit wealthier households and undermine the credibility of the broader approach.



There is currently a focus on increasing the affordability of EVs in general. However, even good EV policy can be regressive if it mainly subsidises new car buyers with driveways. A targeted approach is needed to widen access to EVs across all income levels and thus ensure the market maintains momentum over the next decade. This needs to involve identifying segments of the population and places that require targeted assistance.

For instance:

- Those who are most ‘transport vulnerable’ and most impacted by rising fossil fuel costs – i.e. those who own a car, live in rural areas on the lowest income deciles or those who undertake high mileage for relatively low paid work regardless of where they live).
- Those without the ability to charge off road at home.

Scotland is currently the only part of the UK offering financial support in the form of an interest free loan for consumers to purchase electric vehicles. However, this could be more targeted or tiered by income, and supported by more detailed evaluation of the uptake of this scheme (i.e. who has benefited).

We expect that, based on the Scottish Government’s own analysis, reductions in road use will be needed and are concerned that a strategy that is reliant on EV expansion risks locking-in the pattern of car dependency and erosion of public transport patronage and service provision. The Commission’s view is that the delivery strategy will need to include greater reductions in urban areas to allow for rural communities to remain connected, and car use reductions will need to be delivered earlier as heavy goods vehicles inflate the sector’s emissions and are harder to treat.

Recommendations



Develop a clear plan for jobs and skills in the transport sector. This will need new and additional interventions (e.g. conditionalities) which ensure Scotland's low-carbon transport system – including buses, rail, ferries – creates and retains high value jobs in domestic manufacturing and supply chains. The plan should also develop credible transition pathways for workers, including a well-sequenced package of training and reskilling for roles within and outwith the sector (e.g. electrification and digital infrastructure).



Develop a practical strategy to deliver a **high quality bus network that connects guaranteed minimum services for communities into the regional and national public transport network.** We have heard from communities around the country about the effects of cuts to bus services in worsening transport poverty, inequality and social isolation, and limiting economic opportunities. A co-ordinated plan is needed to restore and enhance service provision, improve standards in information-sharing, ensure fair pricing and ticketing, safety on board and accessibility, and foster greater democratisation of bus services so that communities are better served. This should build on the extensive published work on this topic, including the [Fair Fares Review](#), and add value by explaining how the positive priority objectives set out in this work will be delivered.



Make EV uptake fairer to avoid a scenario where the transition mainly benefits wealthier households with driveways. By implementing more targeted assistance for low-to-middle income households, Scotland can build on its current approach (interest free loans for consumers) by developing an equivalent to France's social leasing scheme. This scheme offers low-to-middle-income households affordable, subsidized monthly rentals for electric cars, typically for 3+ years, with low or no upfront costs. The leases can be tiered by income and proof can be also used to tie these leases to long commutes (>15 miles).



High emitters should pay more to tackle carbon inequality from both ends. This means requiring those responsible for the highest emissions pay a proportionately larger amount for the costs of the transition, including through aviation and use of luxury high-emitting vehicles. The current draft plan for a just transition in transport helpfully identifies carbon inequality as a core problem for the sector. In translating this into strategic delivery, it should further develop the Scottish Transport Planning and Appraisal Guidance (STAG) so as to clearly define what thresholds of affordability, accessibility and safety will guide strategic interventions, investment and monitoring.

Government mainstreaming

Our [Annual Report for 2023](#) included the following key message:

Scotland's just transition requires a genuine whole-of-government approach to delivery. The delivery of just transition requires policy development and delivery right across government, with devolved competencies exercised to their fullest extent. To achieve the rapid progress required, an emerging lesson from the Scottish approach is that it cannot be of primary concern only to those policymakers with a focus on climate issues but must be integrated as a core consideration across all directorates and portfolios. Transformative leadership is now required to drive this change.

Effectively mainstreaming relevant policy considerations are an ongoing challenge for cross-cutting policy agendas. Different tools can be used in policymaking to ensure this – for example, using standardised impact assessments or else including set responsibilities within ministerial portfolios and directorates.

Recommendation



Establish clear and consistent mechanisms to ensure that just transition is appropriately mainstreamed across the Scottish Government. New mechanisms now need to be developed to ensure robust application of just transition principles across portfolios, including, for example, establishing a just transition responsibility within the remit of each Scottish Government Director General.



Rachel McEwen, SSE's Chief Sustainability Officer, speaks to INEOS and Petroineos leadership at their headquarters in Grangemouth.

Chapter 4

Investment



Chapter 4

Investment

Key message: **Investment for the just transition must be mobilised** through financial leadership and market-shaping interventions. This includes incentive structures, conditionalities and community wealth building measures.

Overview

The Commission has considered investment as a critical cross-cutting theme throughout its work. To support work on an initial briefing paper, [Investment for a Just Transition: A Starting Point](#), the Commission convened decision-makers from the worlds of finance, policy, labour and civil society, groups that rarely meet in the same room.

Quality of investment is as important as achieving any quantum target. Government has a decisive role to play, and at present the current market-led approach will not deliver the quantity or quality of investment required. Government must ensure that Scotland is competitive and can mobilise public and private finance. Scotland, like the UK as a whole, has a structural problem with very low investment rates relative to the rest of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). This is made worse with rising capital costs, slow-moving planning, investor caution, and insufficient focus on social infrastructure. Government also has a role in ensuring policy conditions which can not only enable huge potential investment upsides at home, but can also help maximise the equitable distribution of costs and benefits.

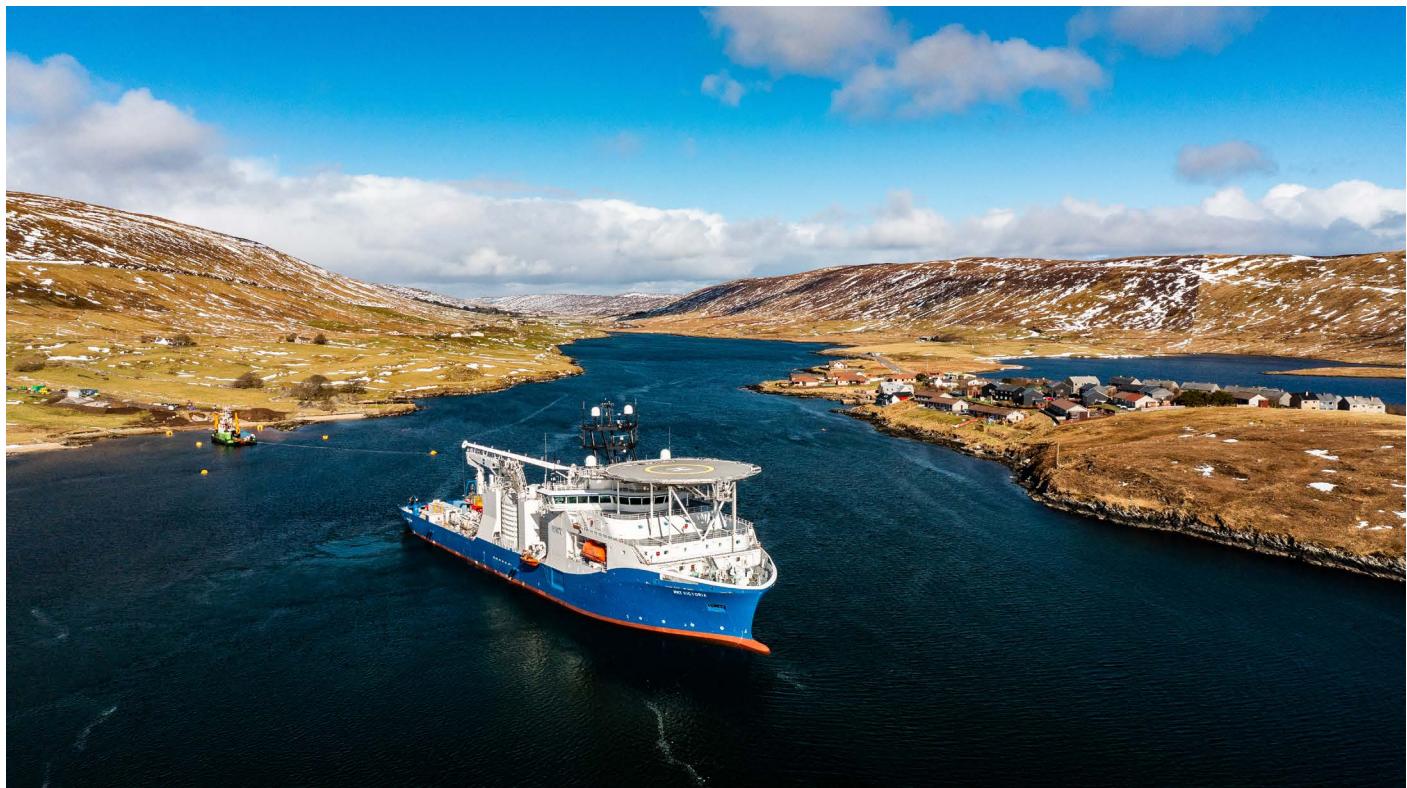
To practically apply a just transition approach to investment, Government must look across its significant breadth of levers and be prepared to take a more proactive and innovative role in supporting and shaping the market. This includes doubling down on areas already showing early signs of success and pressing on with implementation in areas where innovative models have already been developed. It also includes being prepared to more coherently marry efforts to attract both public and private investment with mechanisms that will secure long-term social and economic value that benefits communities and workers. In doing this, government must be clear-eyed about the challenges around securing high quality investment – not least the hard truth (raised during the Commission's expert engagement) that “international finance doesn’t care about place.”

Market-shaping

To shift towards greater market-shaping and put just transition into practice on investment, government can look more closely at the scaling up the following streams of activity.

- **Plugged in and purposeful incentive structures** to encourage behaviour change in the market, including mechanisms to mobilise private finance, enhanced just transition conditionalities attached to government support, and new financing models on hard-to-treat issues, for example deploying targeted loans and social leasing schemes to accelerate EV uptake.
- **Ambitious community wealth building measures**, such as equity stakes, profit-sharing mechanisms and municipal ownership of economic activity.
- **Re-adjusted and rationalised roles**, recognising the contributions of different actors in the Scottish investment landscape and pulling levers where they can add most value. For example, the role of all the public development banks operating in Scotland in supporting public goods (e.g. adaptation infrastructure or peatland and habitat restoration) which are sub-commercial in character and much more difficult for the private sector to invest in at scale.

Making progress on these will help to ensure Government's approach to investment is underpinned by the coherent, front-footed, and scalable financial leadership that the present moment requires. Such progress can be taken forward through structures such as the National Strategy for Economic Transformation or Green Industrial Strategy.



An SSE Transmission vessel prepares to pull an HDVC cable to carry electricity from Shetland to mainland Scotland.

A critical focus for this work is expanding our green industrial manufacturing. Scotland's industrial base is an essential source of future economic prosperity and energy security. Scotland needs investment at pace and scale to create the much-needed new factories and thousands of new jobs in emerging supply chains like wind and alternative fuels. There can be no just transition without a significant reindustrialisation effort which increases homegrown production and reduces reliance on importation. Crucially, government must combine front-footed financial leadership to boost competitiveness and mobilise finance with equally positive leadership to ensure major industrial investments are underpinned with the right conditions to ensure they share the benefits with workers and communities.

In recent years, UK and Scottish Governments, enterprise agencies, and development banks have helped to enable some major green manufacturing investment, including [Sumitomo at Port of Nigg](#), [XLCC at Hunterston](#), and [MiAlgae at Grangemouth](#). But further major investments in new industry is desperately needed in Scotland – at a faster pace and greater scale. As part of the shift to greater market shaping, more needs to be done to learn lessons behind these initial gains (the combinations of levers used, relevant place-based strengths, the community wealth building conditions that are or are not in place) and identify actions to maximise effectiveness of the collective effort to attract major green industrial investment.

Public investment vehicles such as Scottish National Investment Bank (SNIB), GB Energy, the National Wealth Fund, and the British Business Bank have great potential to make a positive impact in delivering a just transition. One priority is to develop their approach to supporting shared and community ownership of renewables and other assets to expand community wealth building. These institutions also need to adapt their approach to deliver on key strategic elements of the transition that are currently sub-commercial in nature but which are known to be necessary both for emissions reductions and the equitable sharing of costs and benefits, including peatland and nature restoration, as well as smaller-scale projects that have significant social, local economic and environmental up-side. Scottish experience in the just transition puts it in a position to not only further deepen the work of the SNIB, but also shape the policies of all development banks so they maximise just transition outcomes in Scotland and beyond.

Equally, more needs to be done to ensure private finance actors integrate just transition principles as core to their climate action. Scottish firms like SSE have been at the vanguard with one of the world's first [just transition strategies](#) focussing on both the phase-out of fossil fuels and the scale-up of clean energy. Now, the social dimension needs to be embedded in Scotland's new Transition Finance alliance which brings together 40 institutions. This means banks, investors and companies incorporating social commitment into their transition plans, ensuring the tools at their disposal are aligned and allocating the capital to deliver.

Recommendations

 **Bring forward new market-shaping solutions to increase the quantity and quality of investment across Scotland.** This should include going further to identify devolved levers to boost competitiveness and mobilise finance, identifying opportunities to coherently attach just transition conditionalities to public funding, and pursuing ambitious community wealth building measures to ensure benefits of investment are shared as equitably as possible. Begin this work with a focus on market-shaping solutions to rapidly scale up Scotland's green supply chain and manufacturing capacity, learning lessons from recent major industrial investments, and identifying critical levers to be best leveraged to maximise benefits to people across Scotland.



Provide transformational leadership by **setting and sticking to clear dates for the phasing out of high emitting systems and technologies and clear targets for nature restoration. This will help unlock private investment** by providing certainty to industry and financial institutions around the sequencing of market changes..



Address the investment gap in long-lasting public goods that are sub-commercial in nature, which are harder for the private sector to invest in, such as community energy and nature restoration. The Scottish Government should help to co-ordinate efforts among relevant organisations such as the Scottish National Investment Bank and Social Investment Scotland, to improve access to finance and a common resource of technical and legal expertise to facilitate smaller-scale projects and initiatives in addition to large developments. This could include further evolving the SNIB's approach now that it is established, or tasking another body with this role.



Ensure the Just Transition Fund is fully capitalised with the necessary trajectory to meet the £500 million commitment, and deployed with **robust just transition conditionalities and multi-year funding** to increase effectiveness and ambition.



Work to connect the drive for place-based investments by pension funds and other financial institutions with Scotland's just transition, Here, SNIB can usefully fulfil the just transition commitment in its mandate by developing market-shaping frameworks (for example, with the new Transition Finance Scotland alliance), and using its capital base to further champion companies with business models that accelerate just transition outcomes.

Case study: Sumitomo Electric

Theme: driving strategic investment and capturing social value

Sumitomo Electric's new £350m factory at Port of Nigg, north of Inverness, will provide a state-of-the-art manufacturing facility for high-end electricity transmission cables. This will support an emerging offshore wind supply chain, giving a boost to the Highland economy and Scotland's wider industrial base. With the factory providing direct employment of approximately 190 jobs (and wider supply chain employment impact estimated at 330 jobs), the location in the Moray Firth, with its deep-water port access, represents a compelling strategic position for subsea cable manufacturing, allowing the largest cable laying vessels easy access for loading activities.

The viability of the Sumitomo investment has been enabled through a combination of support from public institutions working in partnership with industry. This includes £24.5 million subsidy from the Scottish Government, awarded via Highlands and Islands Enterprise. It also includes wider industrial policy, and collaboration between Holyrood and Westminster governments. The Sumitomo factory will be constructed on designated tax site land in the Inverness and Cromarty Firth Green Freeport. Situating on a Green Freeport tax site will mean the business will have access, subject to qualifying criteria, to a mix of devolved and reserved tax incentives, provided jointly by UK Government and Scottish Government. This includes relief from Non-Domestic Rates, Land and Buildings Transaction Tax, and Employer National Insurance Contributions.

Driving inclusive benefit for the economy and communities appears to be a key aspiration of the Sumitomo investment. To support delivery of these benefits, Sumitomo are signed up to a variety of Green Freeport conditions, including making contributions to a local skills fund and adhering to the Inverness and Cromarty Firth Fair Work Charter, ensuring their commitment to fair work practices, such as payment of real living wage and ensuring effective voice.

Overall, the Sumitomo investment represents an important case study for just transition in the context of Scotland's industrial future. It carries potential for strategic learning for policymakers, not only as an example where Scotland landed major industrial investment, with policy lessons on how this was achieved through an interplay of devolved and reserved government levers (funding and fiscal). But also going forward, there is much for policymakers to monitor and evaluate about the overall impact of the investment once the factory is operational. Will it deliver the level of benefit expected and a return on public investment? And how effective will the overall public sector effort – not just in terms of the initial funding package, but particularly the conditionalities placed on the business going forward – have been in driving both the desired levels of economic and social value in tandem?

Case study: XLCC

Theme: the experiences of apprentices in major renewables manufacturing

XLCC is an independent British company founded in 2020 to address the critical infrastructure needs of the global energy transition. Its mission is to engineer, manufacture, install, and maintain high-voltage direct current (HVDC) cables. This includes building a world-class subsea cable manufacturing facility in Hunterston, in North Ayrshire, along with the necessary marine and project management capabilities. XLCC is backed by public and private capital—including the Scottish National Investment Bank, National Wealth Fund, and private investors. In addition, XLCC has received grants from Scottish Enterprise, reflecting its strategic focus on sustainable economic growth in Scotland. The company also benefits from Scotland's skills development programmes, which support workforce training critical to the success of XLCC's factory and commercial operations.

The project will seek to deliver economic regeneration, along with skills and educational uplift, community empowerment, environment gains, whilst enhancing national strategy capability. However, behind the big investment are real-life stories and researchers on behalf of the Commission spoke with Sebastian 24, and Adam 20, two of the first six apprentices brought on by XLCC in 2023, about their training to become certified HVDC jointers.

Both Sebastian and Adam are motivated by XLCC's investment into their employees. They are trusted with advanced kit and in their first year were given the opportunity to travel to Germany to train for two months with professionals for live tests. Sebastian emphasises that: "We're using high-end, expensive equipment. You wouldn't get that anywhere else." Access to the best quality equipment – and trust to utilise this – makes them feel valued.

Though neither have heard of the term 'just transition', through XLCC, both Sebastian and Adam are learning what they value in good and just employment. Both underline fairness and worker voice as key components of what they look for in a job, as well as access to good training, equipment, PPE and other health and safety protections. Both feel they had the skills to move into other industries, giving the example of the tight tolerances they are trained to in cable cutting, which requires incredibly precise measurements. This exemplifies the high standards they have been trained to that go beyond that required by other workplaces.

To both Adam and Sebastian, XLCC stands out because the work itself is exciting, highly specialised and interesting. Hands-on-work is complemented by knowledge of theory, creativity and problem solving. It is also the bigger vision that appeals. Sebastian reflects that, "it's clear the world needs to transition to green energy". He feels that at XLCC they are learning important skills that will be useful in the future. In Adam's words, "Younger me wouldn't have thought I'd be part of a big project that would affect the world."

Conditionalities for social value

In October 2025, the Commission published [research](#) to inform advice regarding the use of conditionalities on access to public support and finance to help achieve a just transition. Our work on this topic is intended to support **delivery of tangible and clearly measurable gains in a constrained fiscal context** through measures that stand to deliver significant up-side, whether in the form of more security for workers, environmental protection and resilience measures, enhanced community wealth building and an expanded domestic supply chain for sustainable industries.

The report supports an enhanced understanding of the conditionality options that could be applied to the Grangemouth Just Transition Fund. It investigates proposals including commitments such as ensuring fair work for employees, and some level of community investment, profit-sharing mechanisms and equity stakes. It also assesses the current approach to conditionalities in Scotland, how this could be enhanced, and reviews risks and issues. A toolkit of options is presented that relates to the context of industrial closure, decarbonisation and job losses, and the question of how best to redeploy existing skills. Though primarily related to Grangemouth, the findings are also applicable to the wider economic development of Scotland and the UK as we continue the transition to a low carbon economy, and present practical options for building on positive work embedding fair work principles in the Scottish Government's grants process and the jobs prioritisation scheme at Grangemouth announced at the Just Transition Summit for projects receiving public sector funding.



Commissioners at Queens Quay Energy Centre, Clydebank, in the shadow of the Titan Crane, once the largest crane of its kind in the world.

In preparing the report and sharing its findings, the Commission noted a **remarkably high level of consensus** on the need for an enhanced approach to just transition conditionalities, including from private, public and third sector institutions. It is now for the Scottish Government to work with local authorities to draw on this work as well as other good practice in terms of frameworks for social value, to lead the development of a more sophisticated and impactful approach to conditionalities aligned with just transition principles.

Recommendation

Apply just transition conditionalities to support a coherent and systematic application of market-shaping conditions attached to Scottish Government levers (grants, tax incentives, loans, leasing and other mechanisms set out in the Commission's research report on the topic). This innovation enjoys a remarkable degree of consensus support across stakeholder groups including business and industry.

New financial models

As part of market shaping, government must prioritise new financial models to across a host of hard-to-treat issues to secure a just transition. At some stage, this could include new levies and resource-raising mechanisms to finance just transition activities. In some cases, our policy community has developed a range of plausible approaches and interventions – for example, the proposals and recommendations made by the Green Heat Finance Taskforce (see [Part 1](#) and [Part 2](#)). In other cases, more policy development is needed to develop viable financial models supported by complementary policy – for example, retrofit, modal shift in transport, uptake of electric vehicles, nature restoration and peatland restoration. These all stand to be core aspects of a renewed Scottish economy, which can secure the futures of our young people as well as those moving out of high-emission work and work associated with high biodiversity loss. **We now need key decision-makers to lead the change** across sectors to ensure we make the most of the transition and its huge potential upside.

Recommendation

 Prioritise development of **new financing models across a host of hard-to-treat issues** to deliver equitable outcomes, including across low-carbon heating (e.g. Green Heat Finance Taskforce), retrofit, modal shift in transport, uptake of electric vehicles (see page 45), nature restoration (e.g. the Ecosystem Restoration Code) and peatland restoration. This can build on the growing work in the impact investment community to direct capital to deliver climate and justice outcomes.



Chapter 5

Communities, People and Place

Young tree planters at Glaisters Bridge, Dumfriesshire



Chapter 5

Communities, People and Place

Key message: Communities and local authorities need capacity and resource to keep pace with developments, shape the transition and influence major decisions affecting their area.

How are Scotland's communities experiencing the climate transition? This chapter gives an overview of the Commission's evolving approach to its engagement work, and principal findings and recommendations for how to ensure our people and places benefit from new developments.

Engagement: from a sectoral focus to a people-and-place-based approach

The Commission's remit requires that we provide scrutiny and advice on the development of just transition plans, which during this parliament have been primarily sectoral in nature. Accordingly, the Commission's early engagements followed a sectoral focus on Energy, Transport, Land Use and Agriculture and the Built Environment and Construction.

At the end of 2023, the Commission reflected on the work undertaken during the first two years of the Commission's work and agreed to move to a people-and-place-based approach, so as to better develop our understanding of how different systems overlap in distinct local and regional contexts, and the connections between different sectors as these are shaping the lives and livelihoods of communities across the country. The Commission determined that the first place-based report would be on Grangemouth and, soon after, this focus was given even greater urgency with the news that Petroineos was to close the oil refinery, which it ultimately did in April 2025. Over the following two years, the Commission produced a series of reports considering the critical strategic issues relating to the climate and nature transition facing people in [Grangemouth, Shetland, Dumfries and Galloway, Aberdeen and the North East](#).

During this term, we have heard directly from the following groups, among others:

- offshore energy workers (oil and gas, renewables)
- Grangemouth refinery workers
- tenant livestock farmers
- fishers
- peatland restorers
- foresters
- community forestry groups
- community development groups

- crofters and farmers
- landowners and land managers
- construction businesses
- builders
- architects
- social tenants
- social landlords
- FE College curriculum leads
- FE College students
- apprentices across a wide range of traditional and emerging roles
- transport users
- community energy operators
- large commercial energy companies and utilities
- local authority leads for climate and economy
- private financial institutions.

There is significant scope for any successor Commission to build on this engagement. This could include more adaptation stakeholders (local emergency planning committees, flood management groups, people at risk of flooding, fire managers, wildlife groups, biodiversity specialists), more waste management stakeholders (local authority waste managers), people facing food insecurity, or retail workers. The Commission would also benefit from more detailed engagement to understand the perspectives of infrastructure providers and planners, including land use planners, built environment/housing developers, those involved in delivering digitisation, transport infrastructure providers and engineering consultants, environmental consultants, resilience planning, social infrastructure providers, and small and medium enterprises.



A community engagement session with the North East Scotland Climate Action Network (NESCAN) in Tillydrone, Aberdeen.

Community wealth building

Across the country, the Commission found that **communities do not currently have the capacity or resource to keep pace with developments**. As we set out in our report on Dumfries and Galloway:

action is required to enhance the capacity and resource of communities to play an active role in shaping changes associated with the climate and nature transition for their locality, such as energy projects and tree planting. There is a consistent asymmetry in capacity between developers and communities which requires to be addressed strategically. A new model for the funding of community development trusts and community-led anchor organisations would be a big step forward. An objective of regional just transition plans... should be to identify where communities require support in order to take part in decision-making, share knowledge and benefit from local developments, and how this support should be delivered.

As transition activities intensify the '**spatial squeeze**' in the marine environment and on land, trade-offs must be managed on the basis of a robust and credible evidence base, particularly as regards the environmental impact of relevant activities, as part of a concerted effort to rebuild trust among all stakeholders, whether fishers, environmentalists and renewable energy developers in marine areas, or foresters and farmers.

Recommendations



To accelerate new community wealth building measures, **a community right to shared ownership of renewable energy developments should be established**, enabled by new measures to (1) enhance the capacity of local authorities and communities to take advantage of renewable developments (for example through centralised provision of legal and technical support), and (2) unlock access to finance for local authorities and communities, and (3) reserving grid access for community energy projects. Mandating community benefits and shared ownership are reserved matters, but the Scottish Government can lead on the issue by developing a clear strategy for success as the area of the UK with the most extensive experience of onshore wind.



Encourage the U.K. Government to mandate community benefit, whether from energy, forestry or other economic activity. This should include putting in place stronger and more consistent governance arrangements as well as clear steps to assess and mitigate the risk of a "postcode lottery" effect, which poses a risk to equity and regional cohesion since the costs and benefits accruing from the climate transition are not distributed evenly in geographical terms. Community benefit funds should be deployed strategically to support the principal goal of building up capacity for community wealth building success and thriving communities across Scotland.

Case study: Point and Sandwick Trust

Theme: Community ownership far outstrips community benefit



The Commission visits Point and Sandwick Trust, Isle of Lewis

Point and Sandwick Trust (PST) was set up in 2005 and generates profit from community owned energy to invest back into community projects and organisations. The 9 MW wind farm, located on the Isle of Lewis, has been operational since 2016 and the organisation also has planning consent for a 25 MW battery, with a grid connection date of 2027. In the nine years since building the three-turbine wind farm, PST has gift-aided £10 million to local projects and organisations. One of the primary aims of PST is to democratise the production of local green energy and to use the net revenue for social, environmental and cultural regeneration in the community.

To date, the wind farm has contributed £10 million into the local community over nine years of operation. This is a greater contribution than the £9 million paid in the community benefit over the same period by the 539 MW Whitelee wind farm, the largest such project in the UK – fifty times bigger in size than the wind farm operated by PST. In using its funding for the community, the wind farm has produced a range of community impact including creation of an Energy Support Scheme for those in fuel poverty, a quarter of a million native trees planted by crofters in their townships, support for the islands only dedicated hospice, electrolyser and fuel cell equipment for Lewis Castle College (UHI) to support training for hydrogen technicians, restoration of a Victorian watermill, and other initiatives benefitting across the Western Isles.

Point and Sandwick Trust highlight the potential for policy changes to enable community energy to develop at greater scale. The Trust points out that currently no part of an estimated 1,500 MW of wind capacity built on Scottish Government's land holdings via Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS) is community owned. However, there is the possibility of movement in the right direction, as a new Scottish Government pilot scheme announced in October 2025 will give community groups opportunity to lease one of 10 publicly-owned FLS windfarm sites as they approach repowering, starting from 2032.

Social infrastructure

The Commission's people-and-place work demonstrates that participation, equality, and delivery capacity are inseparable: without resilient social infrastructure, communities' ability to engage with and benefit from transition is significantly constrained.

A just transition cannot be delivered through changes to energy systems, land use, or industry alone. It depends fundamentally on the strength, availability, and quality of social infrastructure — particularly care, health, education, housing, and related community services — that sustain people, places, and local economies through periods of change. Social infrastructure needs to be considered strategically as a critical delivery enabler for a just transition in Scotland.



A delicious community lunch every Tuesday on North Yell, part of the work of the North Yell Development Council

In its 2022 [report](#), the Just Transition Commission identified social infrastructure as a core enabling condition of a just transition, rather than a secondary or downstream consideration. Investment in these sectors was framed not only as essential to wellbeing and equality, but also as a necessary foundation for economic transition, workforce participation, and place-based resilience.

Evidence gathered through the Commission's people-and-place work reinforces this conclusion. Across industrial, rural, island, and urban contexts, participants consistently highlighted that:

- communities cannot attract or retain workers for transition-critical sectors where care, health, education, housing, and transport services are under strain;
- demographic change, including ageing populations and outward migration of younger people, is closely linked to the availability and quality of local services; and
- declining or unstable funding models for social infrastructure weaken community resilience precisely when adaptation and transition demands are increasing.

These issues are particularly acute in places experiencing rapid economic change, whether driven by new investment, industrial restructuring, or anticipated decline in established sectors. In this context, social infrastructure should be understood as productive infrastructure: it enables labour market participation, supports skills development, underpins community confidence, and strengthens the social licence required for transition policies to succeed.

The transition to net zero is already reshaping local economies, populations, and labour markets. Emerging forms of economic activity — including major infrastructure projects and new industrial developments — can place significant pressure on housing, health, education, and care services, particularly where large numbers of workers are expected to relocate or where new settlements are required.

At the same time, the anticipated phase-down and closure of high-emitting activities, including oil and gas, present a different but equally significant challenge. In areas such as the North East and at other critical sites, including Grangemouth, communities face economic shocks driven primarily by volatile commodity markets and the commercial decisions of private companies, rather than by coordinated public planning. These dynamics have direct implications for demand on social infrastructure and for the capacity of services to support people through periods of uncertainty and change. Without early and coordinated action, pressures on social infrastructure risk undermining both fairness and effectiveness in the transition, exacerbating existing inequalities and weakening community resilience.

The quality of jobs in social infrastructure, a very significant part of our labour market, will be of critical importance in achieving a just transition. A higher level of pay and conditions will support workers and communities through secure livelihoods, and also play an enhanced role in labour absorption as people transition within and across other sectors, as some new and emerging forms of economic activity take time to establish, potentially over decades. Social infrastructure sectors therefore need to be considered within wider skills planning.

Based on its earlier recommendations and subsequent place-based evidence, the Commission considers that a credible just transition for Scotland requires social infrastructure to be treated as a strategic consideration within transition planning and delivery, particularly in areas experiencing significant economic or demographic change. We note the encouraging inclusion of a priority action within [SSE's revised just transition strategy](#) to: "Measure direct investment in social infrastructure including, for example, investment by SSEN Transmission in housing." We encourage other organisations, both public and private sector, to integrate social infrastructure as a standard strategic component of just transition planning.

Recommendation

Building on its 2022 recommendation, the Commission reiterates that government should:

- **quantify, map, and assess critical pressure points on social infrastructure arising from the transition and ensure place-based transition plans explicitly address social infrastructure capacity and resilience.** This will include considering the impact of both emerging forms of economic activity and anticipated phase-downs and closures, particularly in rural, island, and industrial transition areas, and setting out how identified risks and pressures will be addressed over time. Planning should enable early action to ensure that care, health (physical and mental), education, housing, and related services are able to support communities experiencing economic change, particularly in areas such as the North East and Grangemouth, where employment trajectories are currently shaped by volatile commodity markets and private sector decision-making rather than coordinated public planning.



"AberdeenYoungPeople" from folder; caption "School pupils from the North East share their perspectives with the Commission in Tillydrone, Aberdeen."

Just Transition Summit

In October 2025, the Commission convened Scotland's first Just Transition Summit at Dynamic Earth in Edinburgh, with the aim of helping to establish common ground on how a low-carbon economy can be built most fairly.

Senior leaders from politics, industry, trade unions and environmental groups attended. All Members of the Scottish Parliament were invited along with representatives of all 32 local authorities, every chamber of commerce and every Scottish college. First Minister John Swinney MSP, UK Energy Minister Michael Shanks MP and the Chair of the UK Climate Change Committee, Nigel Topping, gave keynote speeches.

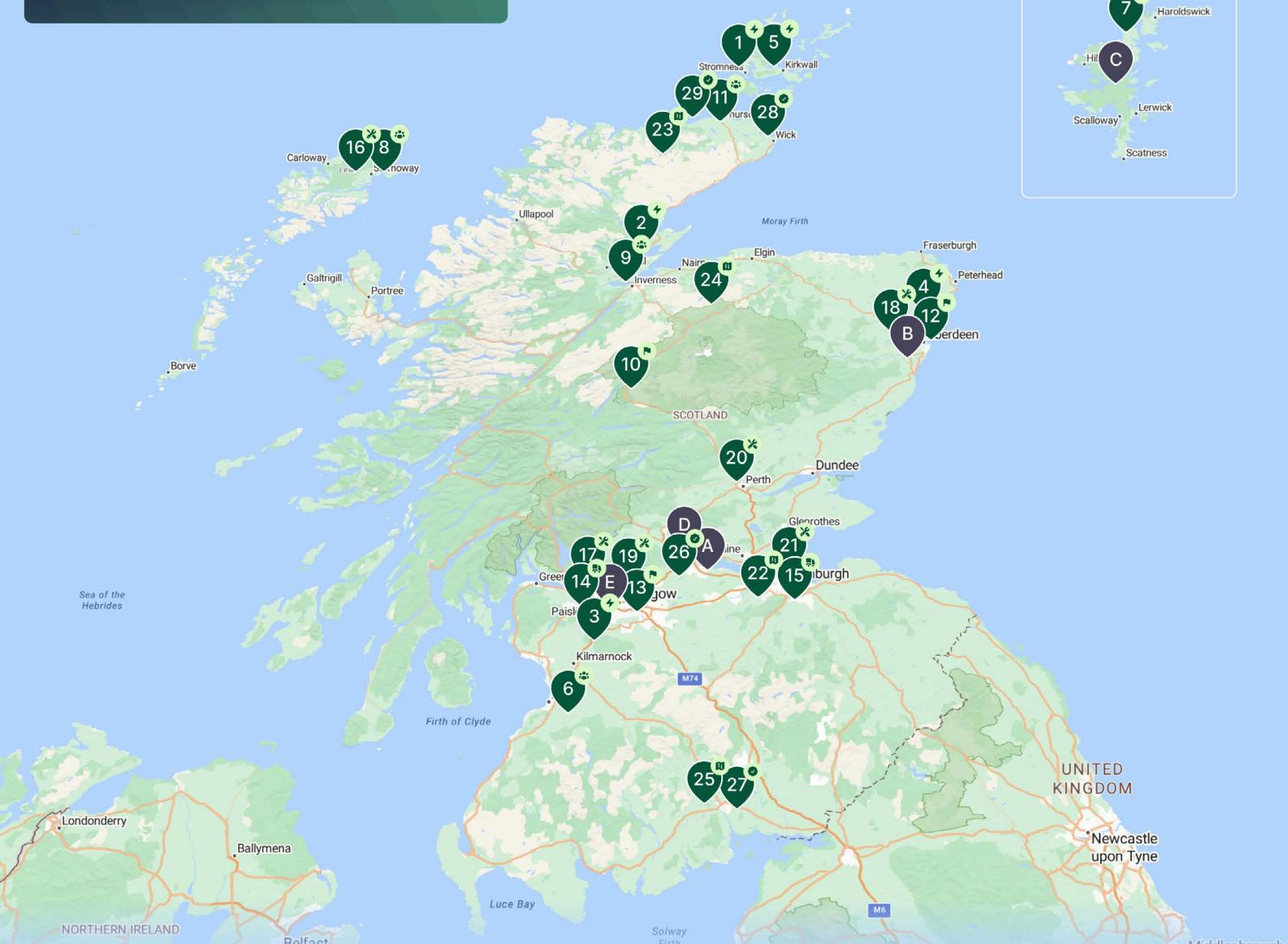
First Minister John Swinney confirmed at the Summit that “the Scottish Government’s intention will be to renew the Commission for the next Parliamentary term”.

“A just transition is not only crucial to tackling the climate emergency. It is vital to our economy. It is a social mission. And it is a moral obligation. It is not an optional extra. Or a “nice to do.” It is a foundation of progress – building public trust, protecting communities, and creating opportunities for growth within our society.”

First Minister John Swinney

The event was anchored around a [showcase of projects featured on the Commission’s website](#) of innovative and impactful projects and initiatives making a positive contribution across a wide range of just transition challenges. Over 200 leaders from industry, community organisations, trade unions, environmental groups, third sector, and national and local government took part in panel sessions covering (1) Jobs and Skills, (2) Investment, and (3) People and Place.

Each session was chaired by a member of the Commission, and the lively discussions during each session have informed this final report’s progress assessment and recommendations.



Sectors

⚡ Energy

- 1 European Marine Energy Centre
- 2 Sumitomo Electric
- 3 XLCC
- 4 Aberdeen Community Energy Donside Hydro
- 5 Orkney Community Wind Farm

📍 Community Investment

- 6 Ayrshire Growth Deal
- 7 North Yell Development Council
- 8 Point and Sandwick Trust
- 9 Highlands Social Value Charter

🌐 Regional Coordination

- 10 Scottish Climate Intelligence Service
- 11 Focus North
- 12 NESCAN – Just Transition Communities Project
- 13 Climate Ready Clyde
- 14 Clyde Metro Project
- 15 Ember

🛠️ Built Environment, Construction & Heating

- 16 Tighean Innse Gall (TIG)
- 17 Queens Quay District Heating
- 18 NESFIT
- 19 Loco Homes Retrofit CIC
- 20 SSEN Housing Strategy
- 21 Warmworks

📋 Land use & Agriculture

- 22 MiAlgae
- 23 Flow Country Green Finance Initiative
- 24 Cairngorms 2030
- 25 South of Scotland Regional Land Use Partnership

🎯 Skills

- 26 Forth Valley College – G-STEP and Skills Transition Centre
- 27 Dumfries and Galloway College
- 28 SSE Beatrice workforce transfer
- 29 University of the Highlands and Islands – Thurso Campus

JTC Research

- A Measuring and Evaluating Success in the Scottish Just Transition & Assessing the low carbon transition at Grangemouth
A case study for measuring fairness Tavistock Institute and University of Edinburgh
- B Regional Planning for a Just Transition
A case study for the North East of Scotland - Just Transition Lab, University of Aberdeen
- C Shetland, Community Benefit, and the Energy Transition, Voar, Shetland
- D Grangemouth Oil Refinery: Workers' Perspectives- University of Glasgow
- E Just Transition Conditionalities
Building a Toolkit for Scotland, Riyoko Shibe internship research placement to the Just Transition Commission

Young people's panel

Among the highlights of the Summit was the contribution from the Commission's young people's advisory panel. Nine young advisors (from Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire and Shetland) formed a panel and presented findings from preparatory research at the Summit. This included challenges to policymakers on travel, employment, education, communities, and mental health. The young people shared a clear message to government on the importance of reducing levels of climate anxiety and increasing support for younger people in navigating the transition in the future.



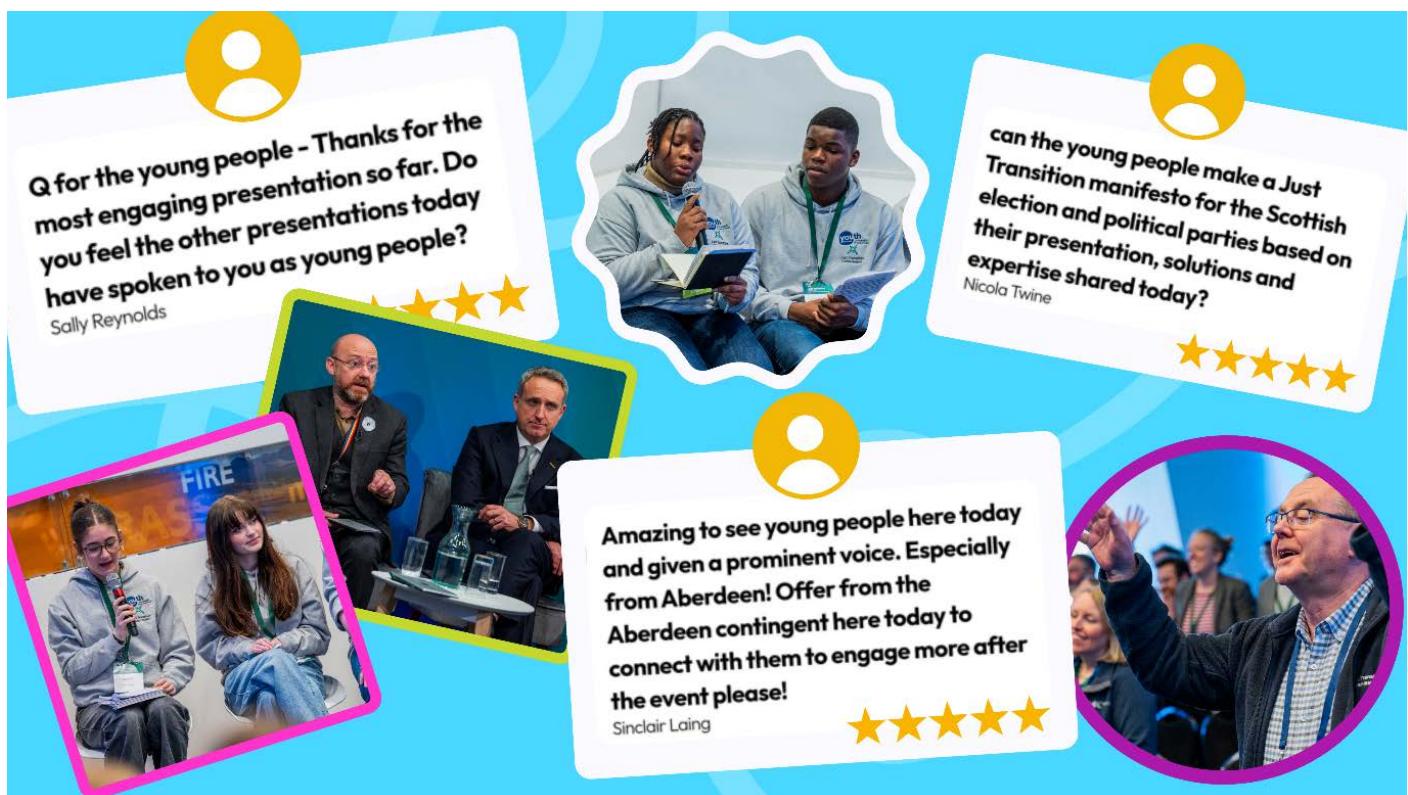
An illustration capturing reflections by young people preparing for the national Just Transition Summit

Questions were put to a panel of representatives from Holyrood parties: Cabinet Secretary for Climate Action and Energy Gillian Martin MSP (SNP), Sarah Boyack MSP (Labour), Patrick Harvie MSP (Scottish Greens) and Alex Cole-Hamilton MSP (Liberal Democrats). Douglas Lumsden MSP (Scottish Conservatives) was called away to parliamentary business as the summit session began later than scheduled.

Questions addressed the following topics:

- **Travel** – what will the government do to ensure islanders aren't isolated if there are changes to buses, planes and ferries?
- **Unemployment** – does the government plan to be more lenient on workers or families affected by the transition when it comes to applying benefits? If so, what will this look like? If not, why? Does the government plan to support the retraining and upskilling of workers affected by the transition? How will places like Aberdeen make money?
- **Education and skills** – how will the curriculum in schools change to support young people to prepare for careers in green energy sectors?
- **Mental health** – how will the government improve access to mental health support, specifically for young people in affected areas?
- **Families and communities** – will the government support small, family-run businesses to survive the transition alongside large corporate retailers?

The Commission is grateful for the contribution of the panel, and the work of Youth Scotland in facilitating their participation. Full details of this work and its findings can be found in Annex E.



Comments and suggestions submitted by Just Transition Summit participants via the event app during the young people's panel.



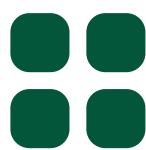
Participants at Scotland's first national Just Transition Summit, October 2025

Chapter 6

Monitoring and Evaluation



A basket of food prepared by local producers as part of the Galloway Food Hub project



Chapter 6

Monitoring and Evaluation

Key message: Improve delivery with more meticulous monitoring and evaluation, applying data effectively in partnerships at local and regional level.

Overview

This Commission is tasked with advising on how the Scottish Government can best monitor and evaluate Scotland's progress towards a just transition. The Commission has produced a number of contributions ahead of this final report. Early into its second term, the Commission established key principles for M&E, including use of quantitative and qualitative analysis, providing transparent and regular public reporting, and ensuring timely access to insights which enable identification of risk and targeted responses.

The Commission has since deepened its advice from principles towards more practical recommendations based on two in-depth research reports looking at [a national-level](#) approach and how this can be adapted to enhance delivery [at local and regional scale](#). The first track of this approach focuses on enabling meaningful just transition M&E to begin as early as possible through provision of useful, though imperfect, core national indicators. These would be established as quickly as possible based on available data, routinely collected, and reported publicly. A medium term second track of activity would pursue a 'gold standard' M&E framework, more capable of grasping different sector or regional complexities and more able to causally link data between interventions and impact.

The Commission engaged in detail with work to develop the Monitoring and Evaluation framework included in the [just transition plan for Grangemouth](#).

National just transition indicators and the Climate Change Plan

At the end of 2024, the Commission made a number of recommendations on M&E drawing on findings from [this research](#). Alongside recommending greater coherence and more clearly defined roles and responsibilities, the Commission also recommended that Scottish Government establish just transition targets up to 2045, and commence public reporting of just transition performance metrics through an annual dashboard.

As we near the end of its term, the Commission recognises the progress made within Scottish Government, particularly in terms of both the inclusion of new fairness indicators in the Climate Change Plan and the expected finalisation of an initial set of national just transition indicators. The inclusion of fairness indicators in the Climate Change Plan is a big step forward for embedding just transition principles in policymaking, and the draft plan has the potential to be the strongest Climate Change Plan the Scottish Government has so far produced.

Public reporting of these initial core national just transition indicators (along with any associated review and refresh processes) will be another step forward in implementing the ‘two-speed’ approach to M&E which the Commission has commended.



A Shetland fishing boat, Resilient, at dawn.

Next steps: A data-driven, place-based approach to delivery

At the Just Transition Summit in October 2025, the Chair of the Climate Change Committee Nigel Topping highlighted the value of the work the Commission has done on M&E, noting he hoped the next Commission “can **continue to lead not just the UK but the world in how to track just transition.**”

The next step is to put M&E to work as a tool, not just for Scottish Government to measure itself against, but also as a strategic resource which can enable more connected partnership working and surgical delivery at local and regional level. This is not a minor piece of work, and will require an increased level of ambition and resource behind the Scottish Government’s just transition M&E approach.

As the Commission set out in its [Conditions for Success Annual Report](#), the data architecture as it stands remains ill-equipped to support effective just transition delivery and partnership-working between institutions. As we seek to better embed just transition, practical steps need to be taken to build out a measurement infrastructure beneath national indicators. The goal should be to deliver additive M&E products which empower government and others to be more capable of identifying risks early, more able to bring influential partners together around evidence, more able to get feedback on interventions,

and more able to make causal links between the lived realities of people, the actions taken on the ground, and the national just transition outcomes. Given that transition impacts are experienced at local scale and are generally measured and assessed most meaningfully at local and regional scale, there are clear limitations on how much the Scottish Government can hope to achieve by working through this challenge in isolation. Partnerships are crucial.

Therefore, in deepening the M&E approach further, one opportunity would be identifying **how M&E can best support any new phase of regional or place-based just transition planning** in practical terms. Drawing lessons directly from the M&E work of the Grangemouth Future Industries Board, M&E frameworks focussed on particular sites or hotspots can better connect just transition responses to data, evidence, and into practical delivery. Such tools could provide valuable insights (outlooks on jobs, sectors, skills, as well as performance of local programmes) as well as a shared and credible source of truth to facilitate effective planning and responses between critical institutions (government, local authorities, colleges, business, third sector).

To support the credibility and further development of this approach, it will be important to embed on a permanent basis an independent scrutiny function to support robust evaluation, challenge and improvement.

Recommendations

 Publish a **national just transition monitoring and evaluation framework** with core indicators, with a commitment to publicly reporting annually, along with a set out process for reviewing and enhancing indicators. This should be accompanied by the establishment of clear response mechanisms, for example, a formal requirement for ministers to report on an annual basis to parliament using just transition indicators, and set out the government's planned response to areas of concern.

 **Put this framework into action at a local and regional scale** through a new programme of work in which, as at Grangemouth via the Future Industries Board, Scottish Government leads and co-ordinates planning and delivery by bringing together local authorities, public bodies, third sector, business and industry.

This could begin by prioritising 'hotspot' areas such as Mossmorran, Sullom Voe/ Shetland, Aberdeen and the North East and Dumfries and Galloway. Regional and site plans must be a critical vehicle for establishing roles and responsibilities, as well as capturing metrics and indicators to assess performance, which in combination will provide a far clearer picture of progress at the national scale to inform the further development of just transition strategy and delivery.

 **Embed independent scrutiny.** There is clear scope for a future Just Transition Commission or equivalent body established on a permanent basis to add value to Scotland's medium-long term just transition process, combining multistakeholder engagement and consensus-building with subject expertise and analytic capacity to deliver robust, independent monitoring, evaluation and development of the overall approach to just transition planning and delivery.

Just Transition Commission Members 2021-2026

Co-Chairs



Professor Dave Reay

Prof Dave Reay is Chair in Carbon Management & Education at the University of Edinburgh. He is an advisor on climate action for a range of governmental and non-governmental organisations across Scotland and the UK. Dave has worked on climate change for over 30 years, with much of his research focussing on climate change mitigation in land use and agriculture. He is especially active in efforts to enhance the provision and accessibility of climate education. Dave chaired the Climate Emergency Skills Action Plan (CESAP) steering group in Scotland, the UK Climate Change Committee's workforce & skills expert advisory group, and was part of the Green Jobs Taskforce for the UK government. Previous to joining the Just Transition Commission he was executive director of the Edinburgh Climate Change Institute (ECCI) and policy director of Scotland's Centre of Expertise on Climate Change ('ClimateXChange').



Satwat Rehman

Satwat Rehman is the Chief Executive of One Parent Families Scotland (OPFS). OPFS is the leading charity working with single parent families in Scotland providing expert advice, practical support and campaigning with parents to make their voices heard to change the systems, policies and attitudes that disadvantage single parent families. She has more than 30 years' experience in the voluntary and public sector in Scotland and England, working in the fields of equalities, education, employability, economic development/regeneration and early years and childcare. Since joining OPFS in 2011, Satwat has been a member of several commissions and advisory groups including the First Minister's National Advisory Council on Women and Girls and the Scottish Government's Social Renewal Advisory Board. She is on the boards of Wellbeing Economy Alliance Scotland and Child Poverty Action Group (UK).

Commissioners



Jillian Anable

Jillian Anable is Professor of Transport and Energy at the Institute for Transport Studies, University of Leeds having previously spent many years at the University of Aberdeen. She leads programmes of research in the UK Energy Research Centre (UKERC) and the Centre for Research on Energy Demand Solutions (CREDS), focussing on the potential for whole system (demand- and supply-side) solutions to reduce carbon, local emissions and energy from transport. She has influenced thinking on how to meaningfully segment society design and communicate targeted interventions that are both equitable and effective. She has authored or co-authored over 100 academic peer-reviewed journal articles and reports with projects mainly funded by UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), the Energy Technologies Institute, the UK Department for Transport, Scottish Government and the European Union. She has sat on a number of advisory boards and strategy panels for UK Government Departments, National Research Councils and NGOs, including the UK Electric Vehicles and Energy Taskforce, Chair to the Research and Evidence Group for the Scottish National Transport Strategy (NTS) Review and NTS Delivery Board member.



Lang Banks

Lang Banks is one of Scotland's leading environmentalists. He has worked for global conservation organisation WWF for over a decade and has been integral in their work addressing issues relating to climate change, clean energy, and marine protection. Lang was appointed Director of WWF Scotland in 2013. Since 2019, he has also held the position of Deputy Executive Director Advocacy and Campaigns at WWF-UK. A biologist by study, his interest in the natural world stems from childhood and has led to him becoming an influential and dedicated environmentalist. Lang served as a member of the original Just Transition Commission, between 2019 and 2021. In a voluntary capacity, Lang is Chair of Edinburgh Napier Students' Association and a Trustee with People's Postcode Lottery. Lang regularly Tweets and blogs about these and other subjects.



Ameena Camps

Ameena Camps has experience in energy, climate change mitigation, research and local development working across a variety of sectors such as the third sector, academia, and local government. Community energy and equity have been a strong focus in more recent years, including through the development, delivery and operation of a community-owned wind farm in the Isle of North Uist: UistWind. Ameena is currently a Research Analyst at Zero Waste Scotland and Secretary for UistWind.



Stephen Good

Stephen Good is CEO of Built Environment – Smarter Transformation (BE-ST) – Scotland's national innovation centre for construction and the built environment. Stephen has been CEO since its inception in 2014 and has led the growth of the organisation from a business plan idea to Scotland's national innovation asset and the innovation cluster lead organisation for the built environment. BE-ST operates Scotland's National Retrofit Centre from its Innovation Campus and has a mission to accelerate the built environment's just transition to net zero. An Architect to training, Stephen's career has spanned architecture, construction, manufacturing, sustainability consultancy and now focuses on innovation, system change, and driving transformation. Stephen actively supports wider transformation across the built environment by contributing to a number of government and industry led boards, working groups, and fora.



Richard Hardy

Richard Hardy is the National Secretary for Scotland and Ireland at the trade union Prospect, representing members in Government, Energy, Defence, Nuclear, Creative, Technology, Science and Heritage Sectors. He is a member of the STUC's General Council, and has worked on Scottish Government stakeholder bodies including the Longannet Taskforce, the Sustainable Renewal Advisory Group and the Tourism Taskforce. He was a Commissioner on the first Just Transition Commission. Richard is an experienced Senior Trade Union Official having been a full time officer or lay activist for over 30 years, working across a variety of employment sectors. He was previously a Negotiations Officer with Prospect/IPMS for over 16 years in the NW, Midlands and London. Richard has been based in the Edinburgh office since 2014, becoming the National Secretary in 2016. Prior to joining Prospect, Richard worked in Government IT.



Deborah Long

Deborah is Chief Officer at Scottish Environment LINK, the network for environmental non-governmental organisations in Scotland, whose aim is to be a strong coherent voice in pursuit of a sustainable Scotland. With a PhD in Palaeoecology, Deborah makes connections between specialists and policy makers, prehistory and today. She brings the long eye of history and the distance of the horizon to bear on policy development, focussing on using policy to build resilience of Scotland, especially its habitats and species, and to build a future for Scotland's nature and Scotland's people.

Deborah has extensive senior leadership experience in natural and cultural heritage in Scotland. Between 2016 and 2019, she led a multi-partner international consortium working with citizens, climate and soil scientists and policy makers across Europe. She is a Fellow of the Royal Scottish Geographical Society and an active board member of a number of charities in Scotland, who work on conservation, environmental rights and third-sector leadership.



Louisa Macdonell

Louisa Macdonell is the Scotland Director for Business in the Community (BITC) focussing on helping business champion social mobility, environmental responsibility, and community regeneration across Scotland.

Louisa is Entrepreneur-in Residence at the University of Edinburgh Business School, trustee on the board of Social Investment Scotland, the responsible finance provider, and sits on the advisory board of Interface, which connects academics to business to stimulate innovation.



Rachel McEwen

Rachel McEwen is a climate advocate and social justice campaigner. She has been a member of Scotland's Just Transition Commission since it was formed in early 2019 and as SSE's Chief Sustainability Officer between 2013 and 2025, Rachel engaged extensively with shareholders and stakeholders on strategies and actions the company must take to deliver fairness as it continued its transition to net zero. As a result, SSE became the first company in the world to publish a Just Transition Strategy outlining 20 principles to support people and communities in the decarbonisation journey and latterly published a Just Transition: From Principles to Action report. SSE was assessed in the World Benchmarking Alliance Just Transition report in November 2021 as being the most developed high emitting company in the word according to its Just Transition indicators. She is currently a member of Royal London Asset Management's sustainability advisory committee and chairs WWF Scotland's leadership council. She has a first degree in Applied Economics and a Masters in International Political Thought.



Jake Molloy

Jake Molloy worked offshore in the oil and gas sector for 17-years before being elected as the General Secretary of the independent oil workers union OILC in 1997. After merging with RMT in 2008 he became the RMT Regional Organiser with responsibility for all offshore energy activity which included engaging and organising workers across the offshore energy sectors of maritime, oil and gas, and renewables. He stood down from his Regional Organiser post in May 2023 but remains an active member of the RMT Offshore Energy Branch. Jake has participated in a number of industry forums including Oil Spill Prevention Recovery Advisory Group (OSPRAG) dealing with the impact of the Deepwater Horizon environmental disaster, the Helicopter Safety Steering Group (HSSG) looking at helicopter safety in the sector after a number of fatal accidents, the Step Change Leadership Group which engages workers in offshore health, safety and environmental matters, and more recently the Scottish Government (SG) Energy Jobs Task Force, the SG Strategic Leadership Group and the UK Government North Sea Transition group.



Ann Pettifor

Ann Pettifor is an economist and Director of Policy Research in Macroeconomics (PRIME). She is the author of *The Case for The Green New Deal* (Verso, 2019). In 2008 she jointly co-authored the original *The Green New Deal* (New Economics Foundation), later taken up by Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Senator Markey in the US Congress. She chairs the energy company A-Deus which aims to become the lowest cost, low-carbon electricity provider in Nigeria, a populous country with less than 5 GW grid capacity.



Hannah Ritchie

Hannah Ritchie is Deputy Editor at Our World in Data, a senior researcher in the Programme for Global Development at the University of Oxford, and an honorary fellow at the University of Edinburgh. She holds a BSc in Environmental Geoscience, MSc in Carbon Management, and PhD, all from the University of Edinburgh. Her first book – *Not the End of the World* – takes an optimistic, data-driven look at the world's environmental problems and how to solve them.



Nick Robins

Nick Robins is Senior Director for Finance and the Private Sector at the World Resources Institute, and founder of the Just Transition Finance Lab at the London School of Economics and Political Science.



Stephen Smellie

Stephen Smellie is a member of the public service union UNISON's National Executive Council and has been active in developing his union's policies on climate and Just Transition. He is a member of the STUC/FOES Just Transition Partnership. He has been employed in local government since 1982 working in community development and social work.



Katie Swan-Nelson

Katie Swan-Nelson works on climate and development strategies at United Nations Trade and Development (UNCTAD). Prior to joining the UN, Katie held various positions in academia and civil society, including at Oxfam, ActionAid and Boston University's Global Development Policy Centre. Katie holds degrees from Harvard University and SOAS University of London, where she respectively won the Hoopes Prize for exceptional research and the Development Studies Postgraduate Prize.



Steven Thomson

Steven is a reader in agricultural economics and policy at Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) where he has worked for over 30 years providing insights on agriculture, land use and the rural economy. He is embedded in the ongoing agricultural and land use policy reform process, providing analytical support and conceptual insights on opportunities to evolve agricultural support away from the EU's Common Agricultural Policy to something more tailored for Scotland. His research contributes to the evidence base on the potential opportunities, challenges and consequences (e.g. food production, rural economy, socio-cultural aspects) in achieving the climate change and nature restoration targets for the agriculture and land use sectors across the length and breadth of Scotland. Steven sits on our Academic Advisory Panel that supports the Agricultural Reform Implementation Oversight Board and previously provided academic support for Brian Pack's Doing Better Initiative to Reduce Red Tape for Farmers and Rural Land Managers, and was a member of the independent Farming for 1.5 Degrees inquiry panel, the Hill, Upland and Crofting Group and the Suckler Beef Climate Group Programme Board. He maintains close links to the industry through stakeholder and industry engagement, support of Scotland's Farm Advisory Service particularly through his SEFARI Gateway knowledge broker role.

Other contributory members of the Commission over this parliamentary term have included Prof. Sir Jim Skea (JTC Chair, 2018-2023, now Chair, UN-IPCC), Colette Cohen, Elaine Dougall, Rajiv Joshi, Ronnie Quinn, Mark Reed, Ray Riddoch and Hannah Smith.

Secretariat



Elliot Ross

Elliot Ross is the Commission's Executive Director and has led its secretariat since 2021. Previously he led communications and engagement work for Scotland's Climate Assembly and the Citizens' Assembly of Scotland. Formerly a journalist, Elliot's writing has appeared in leading publications including The Guardian, Al Jazeera English, The Atlantic, Washington Post and The Nation. He holds advanced degrees from Columbia and Cambridge.

Lauren Begbie

Lauren Begbie is the Commission's Head of Engagement and has been a member of the Secretariat since 2022. She has been in the Civil Service for 10 years and served on the first Just Transition Commission Secretariat. Lauren has a degree in Environmental Geography from the University of Stirling. (Lauren commenced maternity leave in October 2025.)

Ben Jones

Ben Jones has been in the Civil Service for 7 years and joined the Just Transition Commission Secretariat in October 2025 to cover as Head of Engagement in Lauren's absence. Prior to joining the team, he worked in a variety of policy roles including economy, migration, and social security.

Shona Ann Kinnear

Shona Ann Kinnear is the Commission's Head of Operations and has been a member of the Civil Service for 24 years. She joined the Secretariat in 2022 after transferring to the Scottish Government from the UK Government. Shona Ann has a background in human resources, workforce planning, business operations and business management.

Annex A

The Just Transition in Action: A Showcase

By Riyoko Shibe, University of Glasgow

Twenty-nine case studies have been selected for showcase by the Just Transition Commission. You can explore the showcase [using the interactive map on our website](#). The aim has been to identify bright spots within the just transition landscape across Scotland, from Dumfries and Galloway to Shetland. The showcase is not intended to be exhaustive, but reflects some of the work the Commission has done in engaging with people and projects around the country over the past several years, hearing from innovative people about initiatives and projects that are working well and have a direct connection with the just transition.

In June 2025, a questionnaire was sent to each prospective project and initiative, ensuring a distribution across sectors and regions. The questionnaire asked projects and initiatives to reflect on and consider their alignment with core just transition principles, with the Scottish Government's National Just Transition Outcomes used as a guide. They were asked to reflect on their alignment with core just transition principles, with the Scottish Government's National Just Transition Outcomes used as a guide. Prospective projects were also asked to consider their contribution to Scotland, the local area in which they are situated, and their relationship to a wider story of industrial heritage. Scotland was a major industrial centre of the 20th century, and many projects shaping the just transition are situated in sites of previous industry, such as West Dunbartonshire Council's [Queens Quay Energy Centre](#) in Clydebank. Queens Quay was formerly the John Brown Shipyard established in 1871 and closed in 2001, with the project regenerating this former industrial area.

The projects do not necessarily constitute a gold standard but instead provide examples and case studies of meaningful, positive contributions being made across a range of just transition challenges. All projects were given room to identify and reflect on limitations they face in terms of maximising impact and scaling up/replicability, as well as highlight potential areas for improvement. In some cases, structural factors served as limitations to expansion and scaling, such as in local colleges and community-owned energy initiatives. A just transition will not be achieved by individuals or single projects but is instead driven as an ecosystem of action, and facilitated by consistent, targeted government support, policy and investment.

Featured organisations were each asked to supply information regarding working conditions including alignment with Scottish Government Fair Work First criteria, if they have gone beyond Fair Work First by incorporating broader values on fair work, and for larger organisations, whether a union recognition agreement is in place. This did not apply to co-operatives structures and membership-based initiatives, though all projects and initiatives were given room to provide any detail on fair work practices deemed relevant.

The Just Transition Commission is grateful for the time and patience of each featured project and initiative which has taken the time to complete thorough responses to the questionnaires and engage with monthly correspondence and follow-ups. With resource constraints highlighted as a common constraint, particularly amongst council-run projects and volunteer-led community initiatives, the value of time is not lost on the Commission. It is hoped that the Commission will continue to expand the showcase in the years ahead, to continue to show how the just transition is being delivered across Scotland by committed, innovative and resourceful people on the ground, and to help learn lessons and scale up what works.

Two projects were selected for further in-depth case studies which sought to give a stronger sense of the human experience of a just transition, with interviews conducted with the researcher which emphasise the importance of investment into apprenticeships and skills. Adam and Sebastian, two young apprentices employed by [XLCC](#), shared their experiences of working with XLCC and illuminated what just, fair employment looked like to them, and the thrill of learning specialised 'green' skills. Alan Paul, control room lead in SSE's [Beatrice Wind Farm](#), shared how his employment history in oil and gas granted him a thorough skillset that allowed him to smoothly transition into the renewable sector. His story also underlines the importance of retaining local employment as a primary component of the just transition.

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Annex B

Lessons Learned and the Next Commission



Participants at Scotland's first national Just Transition Summit, October 2025

In October 2025, the Scottish Government announced its intention to renew the Just Transition Commission for a third iteration in the next parliamentary term. The remit of this next Commission is to be determined.

During late 2025 the Commission undertook a lessons learned exercise to capture learnings in terms of policy impact, culture and operations. This identified a number of opportunities to build on the strengths of the current commission model, while adding several additional areas of potential focus to help maximise the Commission's impact and contribution. These include the following.

Continuing to:

- **provide independent scrutiny and challenge** – by continuing to hold government to account on its overall delivery on the just transition.
- **build social consensus** – by modelling multistakeholder dialogue via membership of representatives of environmental groups, industry, and unions.
- **focus on place** – by supporting the evolution of Scottish Government's place-based approach to just transition – including anticipatory planning for hotspots, and the development of further monitoring and evaluation approaches;
- **engage widely** – by amplifying the lived experience of people impacted by the transition, including workers, businesses, consumers, communities. In future this could potentially link to a role in providing **independent evaluation** of monitoring work.

Increasing the focus on:

- **adaptation and resilience** – supporting the government approach to applying just transition principles to resilience and adaptation policy.
- **international collaboration** – fostering links and sharing best practice with international peer bodies focussed on just transition.
- **mainstreaming just transition across government**, beyond the portfolio of any single directorate.
- **'deep dives' of expert advice** – building on the Commission's work on just transition conditionalities as well as monitoring and evaluation, undertake more targeted analysis and expert advice into policy priorities, enabling the Commission's to provide advice in more depth.
- **links to Scottish Parliament** – establishing formalised ways of working between the Commission and Parliament (including with MSPs and relevant Committees).
- **international collaboration and exchange** – sharing learnings among peer bodies internationally to pool resources and develop a community of practice.
- **embedding the Commission long-term** – removing the Commission's appointment from political cycles and strengthening the Commission's capacity to tackle critical long-term issues.

Annex C

Young People's Participation: Background and Reflections

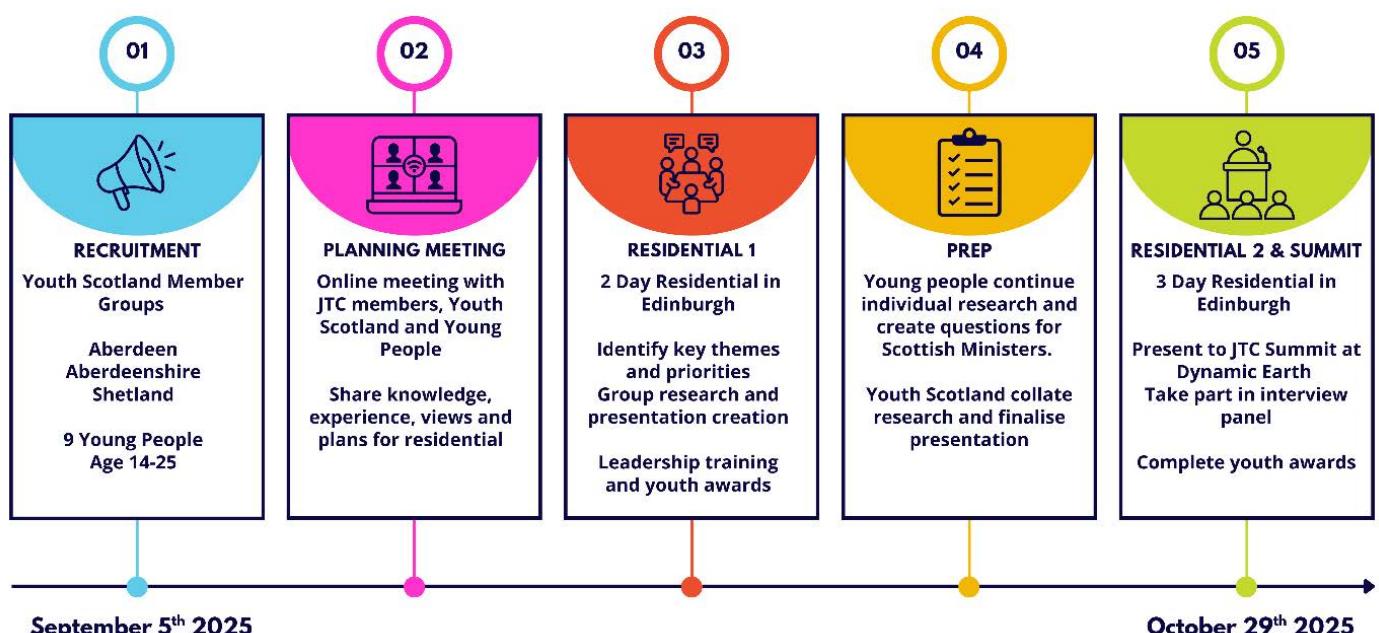
Background

Youth Scotland recruited a diverse cohort of young people whose lived experience could effectively inform decision-makers on how a just transition can deliver a fairer future whilst protecting the environment.

Article 12 of the UNCRC (now embedded in Scots Law) states that children and young people have the right to be listened to and taken seriously; when adults are making decisions that affect children they should ask them what they think, adults should take account of children's views when making the decisions and children should be supported to give their views in a way that is best for them. To ensure their rights were upheld, Youth Scotland and the Just Transition Commission supported the young advisors panel to identify their key concerns, share their hopes for the future and influence the decisions of policymakers in Scotland.

Following UNCRC Article 12 and the basic principles of youth participation, the young people identified to be part of the cohort were involved in Youth Scotland's iLead training, making sure they were equipped with the tools and confidence they needed to take on the challenge. Each young advisor who participated worked towards a Dynamic Youth Award that will translate their involvement in the project into SCQF-accredited points.

JTC YOUNG ADVISORS PANEL - ENGAGEMENT TIMELINE



Preparation

Nine young advisors (five from Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire and four from Shetland) were recruited and joined us online for an introductory session where they met with Just Transition Commissioners Satwat Rehman and Richard Hardy. The commissioners provided an overview of the commission's history, their current work and their aspirations.

The young advisors bonded immediately upon arriving at a residential session in Edinburgh. There was a tangible atmosphere of shared passion and commitment. During their stay in Edinburgh, the young people shared their views and discussed real life experiences of how the transition to Net-Zero was already impacting their local communities.

Throughout the discussions and activities, the young people continued to build their confidence and leadership skills. They were asked to identify the five transition-related concerns that mattered the most to them and then work collaboratively to agree on shared priorities. During this process, they demonstrated a high level of maturity and showed clear development in their ability to persuade, negotiate and reach compromise.

Working hard in groups based on their key themes, the young people completed research, shared their views and created presentations to share with the group. We were also joined by illustrator Cassandra Harrison who transformed the young people's ideas into beautiful illustrations.

Presentation to the Just Transition Summit

On 29 October, the Young Advisors took the stage at the Just Transition Summit 2025 at Dynamic Earth in Edinburgh. They presented in front of a room full of leaders with a truly admirable confidence and their voices were heard loud and clear.

Travel

Young people in more rural areas, especially islanders, rely on transport for their day-to-day lives, and within the context of a just transition, those needs should be considered.

- What will the government do to ensure islanders aren't isolated if there are changes to buses, planes and ferries?

Unemployment

Young people highlighted that the government needs to support workers, their families and their communities in order to make the transition truly just.

- Does the government plan to be more lenient on workers or families affected by the transition when it comes to applying benefits? If so, what will this look like? If not, why?
- Does the government plan to support the retraining and upskilling of workers affected by the transition?
- How will places like Aberdeen make money?

Education and skills

Young people's main concern was that the educational needs of communities will be met, ensuring people can access information and are aware of the benefits of a Net Zero economy.

- How will the curriculum in schools change to support young people to prepare for careers in green energy sectors?

Mental health

Young people are facing job insecurity, financial insecurity and climate anxiety, and mental health services are already struggling to help those who need it. Young people demanded better mental health support.

- How will the government improve access to mental health support, specifically for young people in affected areas?

Families and communities

Young people brought to the stage the importance of role models. They look up to those in their families and communities and described how their future ambitions will change as the jobs of their elders change.

Young people raised their concerns on how the change to a green economy could shape their ambitions and the need for government to ensure a just transition is in place for young people's elders so young people's futures are not limited and they can keep following the steps of those who came before them.

- Will the government support small, family-run businesses to survive the transition alongside large corporate retailers?

Reflections

Following the Summit, the young advisors were keen to share some of their working to demonstrate the preparation that went into their presentation. This includes drafts of their speeches, research, mind maps and notes. The young people also shared reflections on their experience, providing an insight into the skills they developed and the impact that taking part has had on their personal development. A number of slides recording preparatory work, insights and reflections are included below.

- I would like to talk about the safety nets that should be put into place to protect workers who will be affected by these changes.
- One solution to this is by retrofitting and repurposing old sites into new developments. I lived in a town called Ebbw Vale in South Wales from when I was born until I was 16 and the town used to be home to Europe's largest steelworks.
- However, since the 1980s the former site has been massively overhauled and redeveloped for a wide variety of different purposes including schools and a college, a leisure centre, a hospital, green spaces including a wetland nature reserve and a new train station to extend the rail link into Cardiff. These have helped breathe new life into what could've easily become one of the UK's most deprived areas otherwise.
- I believe a similar strategy could be implemented to sites across Scotland and there's also the opportunity to retrain affected workers to help repurpose these sites – after all, they'll know them better than anyone else.

Unemployment



“I feel like I personally developed my public speaking skills as well as my ability to work in a group, especially with people I hadn't met prior.”

“I am not currently volunteering for anything climate change related but if I ever have an opportunity to again I will as it is a topic I am passionate about.”



Education - Notes

The transition demands fundamental and rapid change to the Scottish education system, requiring curriculum reform, new qualifications, and flexible learning approaches.

Curriculum & Skills

Curriculum reform must embed green skills while managing implementation challenges within an already-changing education system. Regional initiatives like UHI Moray demonstrate how targeted investment creates workforce alignment.

Youth Empowerment

Young people must gain confidence, skills, and clear career pathways into green sectors while receiving mental health support addressing climate anxiety.

Professional engagement and STEM outreach will help to build this foundation.

Community Justice

Place-based plans ensure workers and communities benefit from the transition rather than bearing unfair costs. This approach prevents repeating past deindustrialization mistakes, fulfilling Scotland's commitment that no one is left behind.

Presentation Summit - My Part

Hello again distinguished MSPs,

Many of you may be parents or guardians to young people or will have young people in your life.

And as young people, we tend to grow up imitating what we see from our family members and the community around us, viewing them as role models.

Having family members in the oil sector inspires us to follow in their footsteps as a tradition or just because we enjoy doing it. This draws down to my key point...

When green energy is implemented, family members must retrain to get jobs, which means changing young people's ambition.

This could limit growth for young people with the changes occurring within our communities and families'.

Families and Communities

Preparatory notes and reflections from young people who led a discussion with representatives of Holyrood parties at the Just Transition Summit, October 2025

Annex D

Visit to Caithness May 2025

This section describes the Commission’s visit to Caithness in May 2025, its final ‘people-and-place’ visit. Insights and findings are distilled in the main body of the report.

Focus North

In advance of the Commission’s visit to Caithness and Sutherland, the Commission met with representatives from [Focus North](#) and Councillor Raymond Bremner, leader of Highland Council. Focus North is a collaboration between public, private and academic partners in Caithness and north Sutherland which aims to “generate economic growth and lead the low-carbon economy”. Members include Highlands and Islands Enterprise, the Scottish Government, Highland Council, Skills Development Scotland, Nuclear Restoration Services (Dounreay), Nuclear Decommissioning Authority, North Highland Chamber of Commerce and the University of the Highlands and Islands. The Commission received detailed briefings on the region’s economic activity, population projections, major social and economic trends, opportunities and challenges.

UHI North, West, and Hebrides, Thurso Campus

The Commission were hosted at UHI’s Thurso Campus and heard presentations from the campus’ leadership, including the Environmental Research Institute and Engineering program. The Commission then toured the campus facilities, including the engineering workshop in the Engineering, Technology and Energy Centre, and met with learners and apprentices. There are plans for a new low-carbon and innovation centre that could provide a platform for net zero related training, business and employment pathways. The college is at capacity in terms of apprentices with many of these receiving uplifts and additional funding from employers.

Beatrice Offshore Windfarm

The Commission met with representatives from SSE Renewables at Beatrice Control Room in Wick. Commissioners had a tour of the facilities and spoke to Beatrice staff who have transitioned from oil and gas sector and Dounreay. Reflections by Alan Paul, Control Room Team Leader, are featured as a standalone case study in this report and on the Commission’s [website](#).

Community town hall

The Commission held an open “town hall” event at the Pulteney Centre, Wick, for members of the local community to discuss the challenges ahead for achieving a just transition for the area. Participants shared their experiences of living and working in the area, and reflected on what they see as critical issues for the region in relation to the transition to a low-carbon economy.

NRS Dounreay

The Commission visited the nuclear decommissioning project at Dounreay, previously the centre of the UK’s fast reactor research and development, and learned about the history of the site and how ongoing decommissioning work is sustaining a phased transition in a way that supports socio-economic development across the region, including anchoring skills development and training applicable to growth sectors such as renewables as well as for traditional industries. Dounreay employs over 1,350 people directly and generates approximately 17% of the GDP of the north Highlands annually.

The Vulcan Naval Reactor Test Establishment is situated next to NRS Dounreay, operated by Rolls-Royce on behalf of the Ministry of Defence (MoD), and currently supports a further 300 highly skilled nuclear jobs. It is planned to transfer to NRS in 2027 at the earliest.

The Commission also met trade union representatives where discussion focussed on the process of planning around decommissioning timelines, how workers are being supported and lessons that could be applicable to the wider transition away from fossil fuels.

Annex E

Publishing and Communications

A [full archive of the publications of both Commissions](#) since 2018 can be found on our website.

Recognising the large number of standalone reports and briefings in the Commission's work plan, the secretariat undertook a cost-saving approach by up-skilling our Head of Operations so as to in-house the vast majority of our publications. This included training in design, accessibility and web content management. Over the course of the remit, this has brought a significant cost saving relative to regular use of external contractors.

The secretariat has also in-housed all communications and public relations functions. The work of the Commission has featured prominently across Scottish and UK news media, including print, digital and broadcast coverage of our major publications. Commissioners have contributed significantly to raising the profile of the Commission's findings and of just transition issues more broadly, including by making themselves available for media interviews, and writing opinion and commentary in national and regional media outlets. The archive of the Commission's written communications work can be found [here](#).



Transport expert Jillian Anable speaks to STV News at a charging station for electric vehicles in Broughty Ferry, Dundee.



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