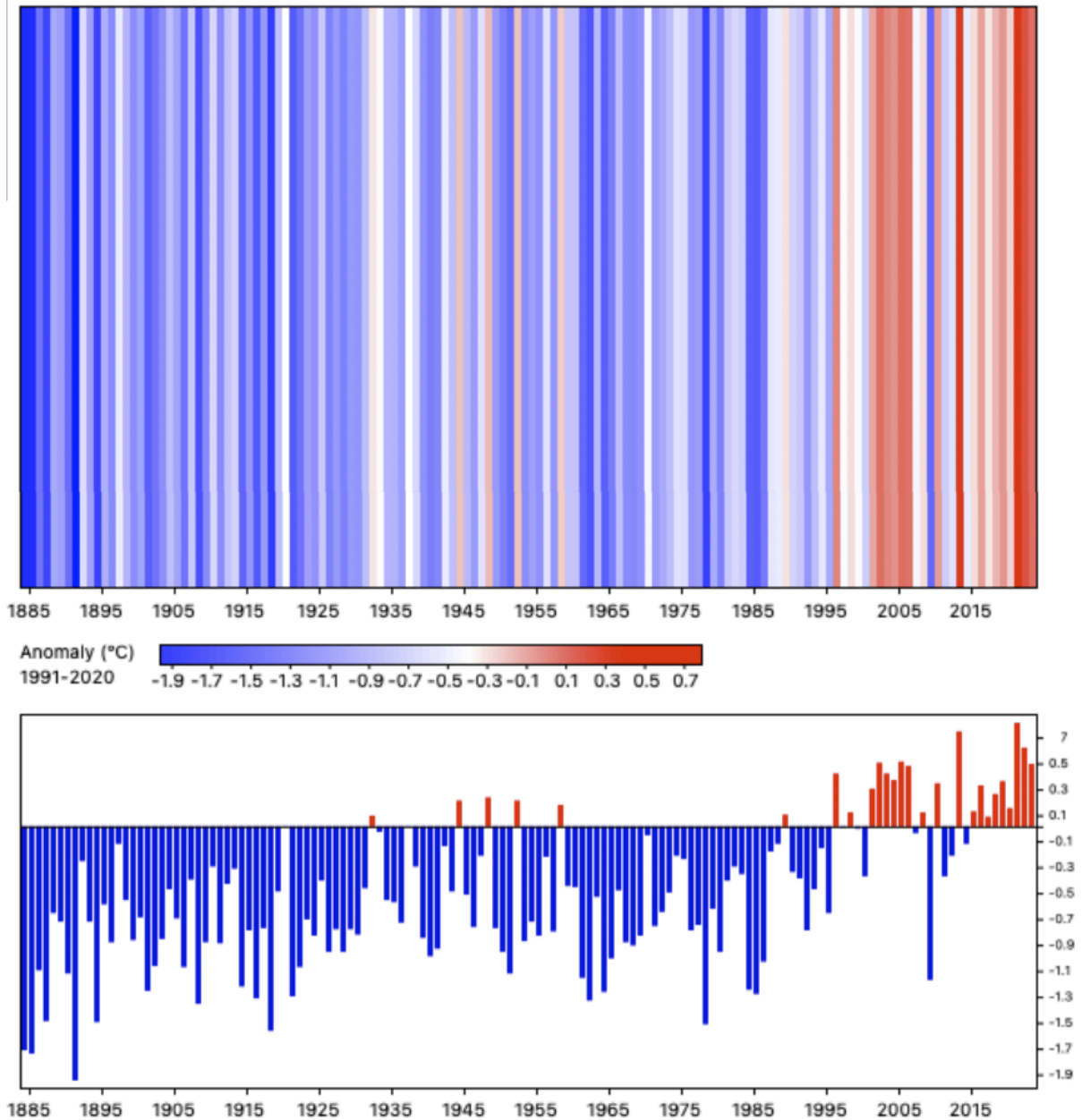


Time for Action

Policies for a greener, fairer, healthier Scotland

Scotland: average annual temperature anomaly 1884-2024 (°C)



February 2025

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Climate policies for a greener, fairer, healthier Scotland

Scotland is failing to deliver climate action at speed and scale and has had to abandon legal emission reduction targets for 2030 and 2040. The target to reach net-zero emissions by 2045 remains, but will require action on a scale not seen to date. Our analysis below shows we are far off track.

A new Climate Change Plan covering the period up to 2040 will not be agreed until the spring of 2026 but we cannot simply wait for that plan to act to reduce climate emissions. Immediate action is needed to deliver existing and new policies. New commitments are also needed in party manifestoes ahead of the Scottish elections in 2026.

Summarised below and then described in detail are policies which have already been announced but need to be accelerated – from the 2020 **Climate Change Plan Update** and the **18th April 2024 policy package**, and a set of 8 **new policies to make a difference** covering key sectors, that Stop Climate Chaos Scotland calls on parties to include in manifestoes.

Social and economic benefits of acting on climate change

These policies will not just reduce carbon emissions. Delivered correctly, climate policies can improve public health, reduce NHS costs, create new jobs and new industries, improve energy and food security, and help reduce poverty and inequality.¹

Insulating people's homes and installing low-carbon heating systems sustains or creates energy jobs, much needed as part of the Just Transition out of fossil fuels. It reduces heating bills, reducing poverty and stimulating spending in the local economy. It also makes homes healthier to live in, reducing NHS costs and improving children's performance at school. And it directly reduces emissions from one of the largest sectors of emissions.

A low-carbon agriculture system would improve food security, encourage people to eat healthier diets, reduce food waste and secure rural jobs and farming businesses.

These policies would also ensure Scotland goes some way towards playing its fair part towards global efforts to minimise temperature rises.

¹ Co-benefits of climate change mitigation in the UK: What issues are the UK public concerned about and how can action on climate change help to address them?, Grantham Institute, 2019, <https://www.imperial.ac.uk/media/imperial-college/grantham-institute/public/publications/briefing-papers/Co-benefits-of-climate-change-mitigation-in-the-UK.pdf>

Priorities from the Climate Change Plan

20% car-km reduction by 2030 – while this represents a strong target to address emissions from the largest sector of net emissions, only weak measures have been proposed so far and there are just five years until the deadline.

Heat in Buildings Bill – the introduction of this promised Bill is running late but a good Bill could create the frameworks needed to accelerate the transition to greater energy efficiency and the replacement of fossil-fueled heating systems with zero-carbon systems, thereby reducing emissions, improving health and creating jobs.

Peatland restoration – annual peatland restoration rates are increasing but are only half the target rate of restoring 20,000 hectares a year. Action is needed to ensure a strong pipeline of projects, the required skills development for the expanding workforce, and the policy and financial certainty needed by landowners who wish to take part.

Priorities from the Scottish Government's 18th April 2024 policy package

A new package of measures was announced by the Scottish Government on the 18th April 2024 to demonstrate “the seriousness with which this government treats the climate and nature crisis.” However, progress to deliver these has been slow and [SCCS' initial analysis](#) showed these were largely existing commitments. Policies which are particularly important to deliver include:

A national integrated ticketing system for public transport – promised for more than a decade, it is time to actually make it happen

The development of high level principles of air departure tax – the long-delayed Air Departure Tax could be a tool to tax highly-polluting private jet flights and to introduce a frequent flyer levy to help reduce demand (see below)

The development of measures to switch from internal combustion engine to zero emission vans and other vehicles – essential if we are to decarbonise transport

Changes to the Whole Farm Plan – vital to make more efficient use of resources and reduce climate emissions from agriculture

A Just Transition Plan for Mossmorran – working with the operators, workers and communities to ensure there is a smooth transition from fossil fuel jobs to green jobs

New policies to make a difference

Taken together, the above measures are important, but will be insufficient. Therefore, the following new policies should be immediately actioned and included in the new Climate Change Plan, or failing that within election manifestoes for the 2026 Scottish Election:

Food, farming and land use

Cut the carbon impact of food production – set a target of halving the carbon emissions associated with the Scottish groceries basket, a target which has been adopted by major retailers, thereby reducing the large quantity of emissions that come from our current food system including how we produce food, moving to more sustainable diets and reducing food waste

Set up a Carbon Emissions Land Tax – incentives for large landowners to manage land, particularly peatlands, in ways which maximise the carbon locked into the land and minimise the emissions from that land

Circular Economy

Introduce carbon and material footprint targets – reducing our global impact from the use of energy and materials, not just the impact in Scotland.

Ban the destruction of unsold goods – helping charities and social enterprises by diverting perfectly useable unsold stock from destruction

Energy and electricity

Set an end date for fossil fuel production and use – tackle the main cause of climate change and help drive the Just Transition to a zero-carbon economy

Decarbonise Scotland's homes through a strong regulatory framework including mandatory standards and fair funding models – improve people's health, lower bills and create jobs by transforming Scotland's inefficient, high-carbon homes, ensuring those on low-incomes are fully protected from the costs.

Transport

Make bus travel free for all – reduce emissions, increase access to leisure and employment and help tackle poverty and inequality by making clean buses the best choice for many journeys

Introduce a fair Private Jet Tax and then reduce wider aviation demand – make those choosing the most climate-wrecking modes of private transport pay for their damage, and then tackle growing emissions from aviation by targeting frequent flyers

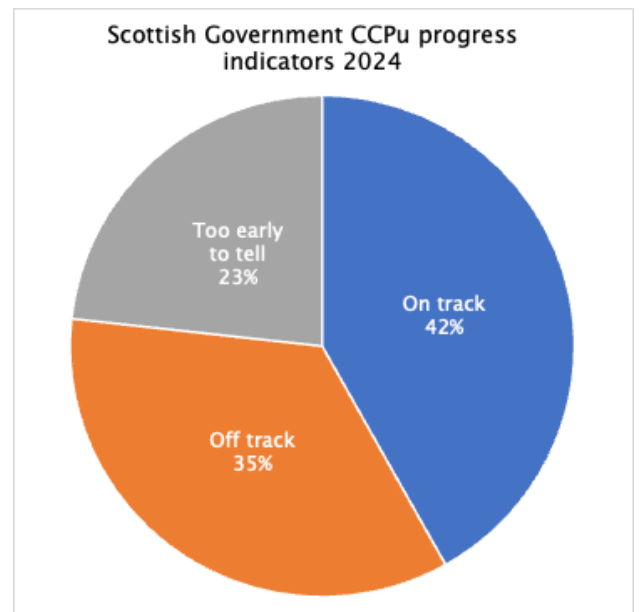
Introduction

2024 was the warmest year planet Earth has ever experienced and despite 32 years of international climate negotiations, global greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise. Droughts, wildfires, floods and storms have become more extreme and increasingly frequent. They have caused millions of excess deaths and are making life a misery for tens of millions of people. Without significant action, this deep injustice will worsen.

Scotland has previously been a leader on the international climate stage with ambitious emission reduction targets and a relatively strong commitment to climate justice.

There has been good progress in some areas, particularly in transforming our electricity system, and we did meet our 42% reduction target for 2020 – initially criticised by some as unachievable. Community action on climate change – the school strikers, the Climate Café movement and the networks of groups across Scotland running practical climate change projects – has been inspiring.

But, having missed 9 of our 13 annual targets since 2009, Scottish Ministers have scrapped our targets for 2030 and 2040.



The Climate Change Plan Update (CCPu) published in 2020 spells out the policies which were *supposed* to deliver on Scotland’s climate targets between 2018 and 2032.² The government’s own monitoring shows that less than half of the progress indicators for the CCPu are on track.³

Yet Scotland remains legally committed to achieving net-zero emissions by 2045. Getting on track towards this target requires significant action to reduce emission in the next decade, rather than leaving the biggest challenges to the 2030s and 2040s.

It is vital to create the next Climate Change Plan (2026–2040) with a set of ambitious, credible and quantified policies in all areas. However, this plan is unlikely to be finalised until the spring of 2026. We cannot afford to wait to act on the climate emergency, but

² Securing a green recovery on a path to net zero: climate change plan 2018–2032 - update, Scottish Government, 2020, <https://www.gov.scot/publications/securing-green-recovery-path-net-zero-update-climate-change-plan-20182032/>

³ Climate Change Plan Monitoring Report 2024, Scottish Government, May 2024, <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/progress-report/2024/05/climate-change-monitoring-report-2024/documents/climate-change-monitoring-report-2024/climate-change-monitoring-report-2024/govscot%3Adocument/climate-change-monitoring-report-2024.pdf>

X	% new homes built with a calculated space heating demand of not more than 20 kWh/m ² /yr
?	Number of existing domestic properties using low and zero - greenhouse gas emissions heating (LZDEH) systems
?	Services sector fossil fuel heat consumption
?	% of non-electrical heat consumption met from renewable sources
Transport	
X	% reduction in car kilometres
X	% of single track kilometres electrified
?	% of new HGV registrations that are ULEV
?	% reduction in emissions from scheduled flights within Scotland
Industry	
X	Industrial energy productivity (£m GVA per GWh)
X	Industrial emissions intensity (tCO ₂ e per £m GVA)
Waste	
X	Total amount of landfilled waste (tonnes)
X	Number of closed landfill sites with exploratory landfill gas - capture/ flaring
X	Household and non-household food waste reduced (tonnes)
LULUCF⁴	
X	Hectares of woodland created per year
X	Hectares of peatland restored per year

⁴ LULUCF = Land use, land-use change and forestry

?	Woodland ecological condition
?	Annual volume (in millions of cubic metres) of Scottish produced sawn wood and panel boards used in construction
Agriculture	
?	Nitrogen use efficiency for crop production
?	Precision application of manure and slurry

All of these listed policies need urgent attention, but those which could make a particularly big difference to Scotland's emissions include:

20% car-km reduction by 2030

The transport sector is Scotland's largest net contributor to climate emissions and car traffic makes up more than 60% of the total emissions from road transport, so the commitment to reduce car-km driven by 20% by 2030 was very welcome when it was announced in 2020. Delivering on this target would not only reduce carbon emissions, it would also make towns and cities safer and more pleasant places to be, help increase the reliability of bus services, reduce congestion and improve local air quality.

However, traffic levels have pretty much returned to their pre-pandemic levels. Audit Scotland recently concluded that the Scottish Government has made minimal progress on this target, with road traffic increasing and public transport use decreasing over the last five years.⁵ They blame a lack of leadership.

A draft route map to meet the 20% target was consulted on in 2022.⁶ It was not well received, Friends of the Earth Scotland called it a "rehash of existing policies."⁷ A final version was promised for autumn 2024, but has still not appeared. A crucial 'car demand management plan' is not due until some time in 2025 - five years after the target was first set and only five years before it needs to be delivered.

Heat in Buildings Bill

⁵ Minimal progress on reducing traffic, Audit Scotland, January 2025, <https://audit.scot/news/minimal-progress-on-reducing-car-use>

⁶ A route map to achieve a 20 per cent reduction in car kilometres by 2030 - Reducing car use for a healthier, fairer, and greener Scotland, Transport Scotland, 2022, <https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/a-route-map-to-achieve-a-20-per-cent-reduction-in-car-kilometres-by-2030/>

⁷ Scottish Government route map for reducing car use lack any new measures, FoE Scotland, 2022, <https://foe.scot/press-release/scottish-government-route-map-for-reducing-car-use-lack-any-new-measures/>

Lots of energy is wasted by heating and lighting inefficient buildings, and much of Scotland's gas usage is for building heating. 20% of our climate emissions are due to energy use in buildings. Several key indicators on building energy efficiency are off track or not yet showing progress. The Scottish Government consulted on a Heat in Buildings Bill in 2024 – and the Climate Change Committee described the proposals as “bold”⁸ – but introduction of the Bill is running late. A good Bill could create the frameworks to accelerate the transition to greater energy efficiency and the replacement of fossil-fueled heating systems with zero-carbon systems.

Peatland restoration

Annual peatland restoration rates are increasing but are only half the target rate of restoring 20,000 hectares a year. Action is needed to ensure a strong pipeline of projects, skills development for the expanding workforce that is needed, and policy and financial certainty for land owners who wish to take part. The Carbon Emissions Land Tax outlined below would go a long way to incentivising land owners to make sure peatlands are protected and restored and would also create an income stream to help fund this work. More also needs to be done to lock up carbon, including increasing tree planting rates.

The Scottish Government's policy package from 18th April 2024

On the 18th April 2024, as it announced plans to re-open Scotland's climate legislation to axe the 2030 emission reduction target, along with annual targets, the Scottish Government announced a package of 19 policies related to climate change.⁹ The Cabinet Secretary said it should leave “no doubt about the seriousness with which the Government treats the climate and nature crises and about our readiness to act to deliver.”¹⁰

In December 2024, in an answer to a Parliamentary Question from Scottish Labour MSP Monica Lennon, the Scottish Government reported the progress noted in the table below.¹¹ As it clearly demonstrates, progress since April has been less than impressive, with little or no progress on 10 out of 14 policies.




⁸ Progress in reducing emissions in Scotland – 2023 Report to Parliament, CCC, March 2024, <https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/progress-in-reducing-emissions-in-scotland-2023-report-to-parliament/>

⁹ Climate change action: policy package, Scottish Government, April 2024, <https://www.gov.scot/publications/climate-change-action-policy-package/> and SCCS' analysis from May 2024 <https://www.stopclimatechaos.scot/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/SCCS-analysis-of-April-18th-policy-announcements.pdf>



¹⁰ Climate Change Committee Scotland report - next steps: Net Zero Secretary statement - 18 April 2024, Scottish Government, <https://www.gov.scot/publications/climate-change-committee-scotland-report-next-steps/>



¹¹ Parliamentary Answer, December 2024, <https://www.parliament.scot/chamber-and-committees/questions-and-answers/question?ref=S6W-31373>



Key to ratings in the table, measuring progress since the April announcement of the policies: ✓ - some or good progress ? - unknown progress ✗ - slow, little or no progress.



Measure	Scottish Government progress update	SCCS rating
A route map to 20% reduction in car kilometres	<p>The draft route map to achieving a 20% reduction in car use was published in 2022 and was followed by a period of engagement and consultation. Analysis and consideration of the consultation responses are shaping the updated route map which will be published in due course.</p> <p>The route map is co-produced with CoSLA, in recognition of the joint commitment to a just transition to reducing car use, and we are continuing to work closely with local and regional partners to update the route map and will publish it on completion of that engagement.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p>Three years since the poorly received draft there is still no final plan, promised for Autumn 2024 in April 2024, time is running very short for action on the 2030 target</p>
A route map for the delivery of 24,000 additional charge points by 2030	<p>Scotland now has over 6,000 public charge points and has achieved the delivery of 6,000 public charge points two years ahead of the 2026 target date. In late 2024 we will publish a draft Implementation Plan identifying the key actions to be taken to deliver our Vision for public EV charging. This draft Implementation Plan is being developed with the key stakeholders who share responsibility for delivering public EV charging across Scotland and will include a route map for delivering approximately 24,000 additional public charge points by 2030.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p>The Implementation Plan was published for consultation in mid-December 2024¹²</p>
The development of measures to switch from internal combustion engine (ICE) to zero emission	<p>In January 2024, Scotland introduced the Vehicle Emissions Trading Schemes (VETS) legislation, alongside England and Wales, extending to UK-wide from January 2025. VETS will deliver 411 MTCO₂e of savings between 2024-2050 across the UK by increasing the</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p>Lack of specific plans to deliver the</p>




¹² Draft Electric Vehicle Public Charging Network Implementation Plan, Transport Scotland, December 2024, <https://www.transport.gov.scot/consultation/electric-vehicle-public-charging-network-implementation-plan/>

<p>vans and other vehicles</p>	<p>sale of ZEVs as a proportion of overall annual sales to 80% cars and 70% vans by 2030) as well as reducing emissions on non-ZEVs.</p> <p>Since 2011, support has been provided for the purchase of ZEV cars and vans equating to £39 million in interest free loans which has helped businesses purchase 1,382 ZEVs, alongside grants provided through the LEZ Support fund.</p>	<p>switch to zero emissions vehicles. UK Government has reverted to the original date of 2030 to end the sales of petrol and diesel cars but the Scottish Government commitment is still 2035, having previously been 2030.</p>
<p>The development of a national integrated ticketing system for public transport</p>	<p>Consideration for a new national integrated ticketing system for Scotland was detailed in the 2024 Smart Delivery Strategy, aligning with wider work to advance the future of public transport in Scotland. In 2025 consideration for this system will be undertaken, including the technical, financial and legislative impact.</p> <p>We have begun commencing the smart-ticketing measures from the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019, establishing the National Smart Ticketing Advisory Board in 2023. The board comprises operators, transport authorities, users, and technical experts, to provide independent advice to Scottish Ministers on the future of smart-ticketing, including a technological standard, in line with their published August 2024 workplan.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p>First promised over 10 years ago and many years of talking have produced little obvious real world results.</p> <p>Focussing on affordability and accessibility should be a higher priority.</p>
<p>The Strategic Transport Projects Review Infrastructure Investment Plan</p>	<p>Development of the second Strategic Transport Projects Review (STPR2) Delivery Plan is underway. This takes account of the current financial climate and is examining existing schemes across all modes in addition to the longer term STPR2 recommendations.</p> <p>The latest Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) forecasts, following the UK Government</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p>The review was published in 2022¹³ but there is as yet no Delivery Plan.</p>

	<p>Autumn Budget Statement, show an improved medium term outlook for capital. The Scottish Government will continue to consider its longer-term infrastructure plans after we receive clarity from the UK Government over our multi-year capital funding envelope in the Spring.</p>	
<p>The development of high level principles of air departure tax (ADT)</p>	<p>The Scottish Government will set out the high-level principles of Air Departure Tax in due course, following which we will work towards implementation as soon as is practicable.</p> <p>However, this first requires a solution to the Highlands and Islands exemption, and we are working with the UK Government to achieve this.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p>The Highlands and Islands exemption has supposedly been the reason for inaction since the power to create ADT was granted in 2016</p>
<p>The changes to the Whole Farm Plan</p>	<p>The foundations of the Whole Farm Plan have been co-developed with industry and rural partners and will go live in 2025. As part of our commitment to enhanced conditionality, in 2025, in return for their basic payment, all farmers and crofters will need to have in place two from the following five baselines: Animal Health and Welfare Plan, Biodiversity Audit, Carbon Audit, Integrated Pest Management Plan or Soil Analysis.</p> <p>All farmers and crofters will be required to have a proportionate carbon audit in place by 2028 at the latest as part of the Whole Farm Plan.</p> <p>From 2028 farmers and crofters will be required to produce a nutrient management plan (NMP) to complement their soil analysis. We therefore recommend as part of the current Whole Farm Plan guidance that once a business has received their soil analysis, they use this information to create a nutrient management plan. We will continue to work</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p>On track but farmers will actually have to change practices as a result of Whole Farm Plans if there is to be a significant impact on carbon emissions</p>

	with our industry and rural partners to co-develop the Whole Farm Plan.	
A pilot scheme regarding methane suppressing feed for livestock	<p>The Cabinet Secretary for Wellbeing Economy, Net Zero and Energy announced several new measures aimed at accelerating Scotland’s journey to net zero, including a pilot scheme with some Scottish farms to establish future appropriate uptake of methane suppressing feed products.</p> <p>There has been significant development in this area in recent years and it is taking time to develop the details of a pilot which could explore options for recognising appropriate use of these products and other practices which can reduce greenhouse gas emissions on farms. Further information on the timetable of a pilot project will be shared as soon as possible.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p>The announcement mentioned here is from the 18th April package itself, so it cannot be called progress since the 18th April. A Parliamentary Answer at the end of November 2024 said a timetable would be shared ASAP but this has not appeared.</p> <p>Methane-reducing feed is not likely to be the silver bullet the industry would like to think, so other measures will be needed alongside this to make an impact.</p>
The establishment of regional land use partnerships	The Scottish Government is working with the NorthWest 2045 (Highlands), South of Scotland (Dumfries and Galloway and Scottish Borders), Cairngorms National Park and Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Regional Land Use Partnerships (RLUPs) to transition from a pilot to a formal initiative. We remain committed to the long-term delivery of RLUPs, however, taking into account wider fiscal pressures and subject to lessons learned from the ongoing transition, the phased rollout of new partnerships will begin in financial year 2026-27 at the earliest.	<p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p>This is an existing commitment with no obvious progress since the April 2024 announcement.</p>

<p>A pilot on partial re-wetting projects</p>	<p>With partial rewetting, the water table in peatlands or peaty soils is held deeper underground than with full rewetting or restoration. In theory, this delivers a carbon benefit but also allows certain types of agriculture that may be limited by full rewetting to continue.</p> <p>The Peatland Science and Technical Advisory Group have advised there may be some potential in lowland grassland systems and at the edges of some raised bogs where the use of 'leaky dams' may have a part to play in finer control of water table depth. However, significant areas of lowland agricultural peats are difficult to identify and map.</p> <p>We have commissioned scientists at the James Hutton Institute to advise on the distribution of grassland on peat and on the relationship between water table depth and carbon emissions in peat grassland systems. When complete, this will inform on-going work in government considering options for incorporating peatland protection, management and restoration within the new four-tier agricultural support framework.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p>At an early stage and potentially a distraction from accelerating peatland restoration</p>
<p>The development of a national scheme to incentivise investment in the venison supply chain</p>	<p>The Scottish Government is committed to reducing high deer numbers in order to help us to achieve our biodiversity and carbon objectives. Three deer management incentives pilot schemes led by NatureScot and the Cairngorms National Park Authority launched this autumn to incentivise deer managers to increase deer culls in specific parts of Scotland.</p> <p>These pilot schemes have been implemented this year in different parts of Scotland to test different approaches to incentives and to better understand the barriers to deer management.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p>An existing commitment. Uptake in the three pilot areas was initially low but is now picking up.</p>

	<p>While these pilots do not constitute a single national scheme, we will use the findings from them to inform decisions on future incentive schemes.</p>	
<p>The exploration of a carbon land tax</p>	<p>The Scottish Government is committed to considering options for a carbon land tax, to further incentivise peatland restoration and afforestation.</p> <p>Any potential new measures must be rigorously assessed and based on strong evidence to ensure they serve their objective and avoid unintended consequences.</p> <p>The Scottish Government will work with the Scottish Land Commission to consult with a range of stakeholders and to develop the evidence necessary to identify and assess options for a carbon land tax.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p>The promised summer 2024 consultation did not happen. Introducing this kind of tax is one of the key policies we recommend below.</p>
<p>The publication of analysis of how non-domestic rates can support energy efficiency and clean heating systems</p>	<p>The Scottish Government welcomes the work of the independent Green Heat Finance Taskforce and looks forward to receiving its Part 2 report shortly. Following publication of its Part 2 report, the Scottish Government will formally respond to the Taskforce, setting out the actions we will take, in partnership with others, on recommendations from both Taskforce reports.</p> <p>Our response will be informed by the New Deal for Business sub-group on Non-Domestic Rates (NDR) which will, alongside other matters, consider how non-domestic rates levers support Scotland’s transition to net zero.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p>Existing commitment, deadline of end 2024 for the publication of a plan missed</p>
<p>A Just Transition Plan for Mossmorran</p>	<p>The Scottish Government has committed to the development of a just transition plan for Mossmorran following completion of the just transition plan for Grangemouth in 2025. As with the Grangemouth just transition plan, this</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"></p> <p>A consultation on a draft Grangemouth</p>

	<p>work will be co-designed with key stakeholders including industry, the workforce and the community. The Scottish Government is actively engaging with relevant stakeholders as part of the scoping phase of this programme of work.</p>	<p>just transition plan¹⁴ closed. Related to the Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan, originally supposed to be published in 2021, a draft was consulted on in January 2023 and the final version has been 'imminent' almost ever since.</p>
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The Section 36 report

On the 5th September 2024, the Scottish Government published a report required by Section 36 of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009.¹⁵ This is supposed to spell out how the Scottish Government intends to reduce emissions by an additional 4.2 MtCO₂e to make up for the failure to meet climate targets in 2021 and 2022. In reality, it contains no new policies but simply asserts, without any attempt at quantification, that the measures in the 18th April 2024 policy package and other initiatives already underway will result in delivering the required 4.2 MtCO₂e reduction.

Eight new policies to make a difference

Being forced to scrap Scotland's 2030 emission reduction target should have provided the Scottish Government with a major wake-up call, but it is clear that the required acceleration of climate action has not yet materialised.

While the new policies outlined below should therefore be included in the new Climate Change Plan covering 2026–2040, with delivery starting from the outset, there is nothing

¹⁴ Grangemouth Industrial Just Transition Plan - Supporting a fair transition for Scotland's core manufacturing cluster, Scottish Government, November 2024, <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/strategy-plan/2024/11/grangemouth-industrial-transition-plan-supporting-fair-transition-scotlands-core-manufacturing-cluster-draft-consultation/documents/grangemouth-industrial-transition-plan-supporting-fair-transition-scotlands-core-manufacturing-cluster-draft-consultation/grangemouth-industrial-transition-plan-supporting-fair-transition-scotlands-core-manufacturing-cluster-draft-consultation/govscot%3Adocument/grangemouth-industrial-transition-plan-supporting-fair-transition-scotlands-core-manufacturing-cluster-draft-consultation.pdf>

¹⁵ Report on proposals and policies to reduce greenhouse gas emissions scottish climate change adaptation following annual targets for 2021 programme: progress report 2023 and 2022 not being met, Scottish Government, September 2024, <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/progress-report/2024/09/report-proposals-policies-reduce-greenhouse-gas-emissions-following-annual-targets-2021-2022-not-being-met/documents/report-proposals-policies-reduce-greenhouse-gas-emissions-following-annual-targets-2021-2022-not-being-met/report-proposals-policies-reduce-greenhouse-gas-emissions-following-annual-targets-2021-2022-not-being-met/govscot%3Adocument/report-proposals-policies-reduce-greenhouse-gas-emissions-following-annual-targets-2021-2022-not-being-met.pdf>

to stop the Scottish Government making a start on them right now. Failing that they could be adopted by Scotland's next government after the 2026 election. To ensure this backstop is in place, SCCS encourages every party to include them in their manifestoes.

These policies are about delivering immediate reductions in emissions but they also lock in systems and behaviours which will continue to reduce emissions and benefits to people's lives for decades to come. They cover action in areas of high emissions - agriculture, land use, the circular economy, energy and transport.

This selection of policies has been chosen not only to reduce Scotland's climate emissions but also to address issues of social justice, including fuel and food poverty as well as rural inequalities, and with a view to increasing overall individual and societal wellbeing.

There are many other areas, from locking up carbon in our marine environment to maximising our contribution to international climate justice, that we have not been able to include here. There are over a hundred other policies collected together in [SCCS' Climate Manifesto](#). Scottish Environment LINK¹⁶ also promote policies which are good for both nature and the climate, and Scotland's International Development Alliance¹⁷ have many climate-related policies focused on international development.

Food, farming and land use

The food system accounts for between 20 and 30% of Scotland's greenhouse gas emissions. The food we import also generates significant emissions in other countries, while at the same time we export high-carbon foods such as beef and lamb.

We need to reduce both consumption and production emissions from the food system to deliver net zero, while ensuring this does not increase costs for low-income households.

Emissions from land use are all about what is happening to the land of Scotland. Some of the land of Scotland is absorbing carbon, some of it is releasing it on a grand scale. The net figure is very deceptive and land use is actually the largest gross source of emissions - greater even than the transport sector. So acting to reduce these emissions, particularly by restoring our damaged peatlands, is vital.

Cut the carbon impact of food production

The Scottish Government should set a target of halving the carbon emissions associated with the Scottish groceries basket, a target which has been adopted by

¹⁶ Scottish Environment LINK home page, <https://www.scotlink.org/>

¹⁷ Scotland's International Development Alliance home page, <https://intdevalliance.scot/>

major retailers.¹⁸ Delivering on this requires co-ordinated policy and funding in three areas: shift to more sustainable diets with lower meat consumption; shift to climate- and nature-friendly farming methods and reductions of food waste across the supply chain.

Acting to reduce emissions from food production will also secure farm businesses and rural jobs, reduce waste and help people eat more healthily.

Sustainable diets – the Scottish Government should include messaging about sustainable diets in its climate communications, and encourage trusted messengers in communities to do the same. Both national and local governments and the NHS should mandate menus which prioritise low-carbon food not just in the food they provide directly to the public but also in events they sponsor or licence, such as the Commonwealth Games, festivals, conferences and so on. The Scottish Government should work with the UK government to develop a preferential VAT rate for low-carbon meals, while Councils should also consider discretionary rate relief for low-carbon food outlets. Consumption of high welfare and sustainable seafood should be supported.

Farm funding – currently, less than 10% of public funding given to the industry pays for farming methods that support nature and tackle climate change.

The Scottish Government must reform how it supports farming and fishing financially and use its support regime as a mechanism to drive down emissions and improve biodiversity. This means working with the supply chain to provide co-ordinated assistance to deliver a just transition.

Public funds should be focused on helping small farms and farms furthest from market signals to adopt new practices and invest in new systems, including using powers on capping and tapering payments in the Agriculture and Rural Communities (Scotland) Act 2024 to maximise the cost effectiveness of public spending. The largest landowners should no longer expect to get the largest payments simply because of the scale of the land they own/manage. A date should be set for halving nitrogen loss and waste in line with the Colombo Declaration. At least 10% of land should be farmed organically by 2030 and 20% by 2035, reducing nitrogen use and enhancing biodiversity

Research innovation and support for adoption of new practices is essential – including agroforestry, microbiome-driven breeding to reduce methane emissions, and intercropping of cereals and legumes. Scotland should also develop a thriving glasshouse sector, integrated with renewable energy generation and storage, and explore opportunities for producing feed and food in novel ways.¹⁹

¹⁸ What's in store for the planet: the impact of UK shopping baskets on climate & nature - 2024, WWF-UK, December 2024, <https://www.wwf.org.uk/sites/default/files/2024-12/whats-in-store-for-the-planet-report-2024.pdf>

¹⁹ Solein home page, 2024, <https://www.solein.com/>

Food waste – a target was set in 2013 to reduce food waste in Scotland by one third by 2025. Little investment was made in achieving that target and no progress has been made, except in the retail sector which has driven down waste considerably. UN Sustainable Development Goal 12 calls for a reduction of 50% by 2030. Co-ordinated action is needed to address food waste, with local authorities well placed to reduce catering waste (through for example Environmental Health Officers failing establishments which are not reporting and reducing waste) and by undertaking local campaigns to reduce household food waste.

The Scottish Government should establish a five-year challenge fund on food waste for local authorities to bid into. The ‘love food, hate waste’ campaign is long past its sell-by date and campaigns like this are ineffective in the absence of other measures.

For further information:

Farm for Scotland’s Future, Scottish Environment LINK,

<https://farmforscotlandsfuture.scot>

Farming for a World Richer in Nature, RSPB, 2022,

<https://community.rspb.org.uk/ourwork/b/scotland/posts/farming-for-a-world-richer-in-nature>

Farm for Scotland’s Future campaign page, Scottish Environment LINK, 2024,

<https://farmforscotlandsfuture.scot/>

Farming for net zero: transitioning Scottish agriculture, WWF Scotland, January 2024,

<https://www.wwf.org.uk/sites/default/files/2024-09/WWF-Soil-Association-Net-Zero-Farming-Full-Report.pdf>

WWF’s Plant-Based Diets web resource, <https://planetbaseddiets.panda.org/>

Set up a Carbon Emissions Land Tax

A well-designed Carbon Emissions Land Tax would accelerate progress towards maximising the carbon locked into soils and vegetation on large landholdings. It could be particularly important to drive the protection and restoration of peatlands. With highly concentrated levels of land ownership in Scotland, the measure would have the additional benefit of taxing a major source of wealth inequality.

The Scottish Government expressed an interest and promised to consult on the idea in the summer of 2024. This did not happen.

Scotland’s land could be sequestering millions of tonnes of carbon a year more than it does at present. Despite incentives such as woodland and peatland restoration grants, our land is failing to deliver its immense potential to become a major carbon sink. By attaching a payment (a tax) to land management choices that negatively impact nature and climate, a Carbon Emissions Land Tax would incentivise large landowners, with holdings over 1,000 hectares, to take more seriously their responsibilities to support national and international climate targets.

As well as locking away more carbon, the tax could lead to the creation of a range of technical, professional and manual jobs, particularly in Scotland's most sparsely populated areas. It would also contribute to nature protection by shifting land use away from damaging practices such as muirburn and overgrazing, which in turn would allow nature and biodiversity to flourish alongside restored peatlands and expanded woodlands.

The tax could assist the delivery of a Just Transition by generating many millions of pounds for hard-pressed rural councils, which in turn could be used to help fund climate-related projects, such as extensions of concessionary public transport; home insulation for social housing; community renewable start-ups; community woodland projects; and organic local food production and distribution.

A Carbon Emissions Land Tax would be administered and collected by local councils, under devolved powers. It would only require enabling legislation by the Scottish Parliament to give councils the powers to introduce the tax at a local level.

The impact of the tax would take time to translate into carbon savings, but academic studies and Scottish Government research suggests that the areas of land that would be targeted by this tax have the potential to sequester, at a conservative estimate, upwards of 6 million tonnes of CO₂e annually by 2040 (around 15% of Scotland's current annual emissions).

For further information:

It's time for a Carbon Emissions Land Tax, John Muir Trust, 2024,

www.johnmuirtrust.org/celt

Circular Economy

Although much of the methane that used to just escape from landfill sites is now captured and used for heat or to make electricity, we are burning an increasing amount of waste in incinerators, much of it fossil-fuel-derived plastic. It is no coincidence that our recycling rates are stagnating.

Including our demand for goods from overseas, our total climate footprint, or consumption emissions, only reduced by about 33% between 1998 and 2020, and our total carbon footprint is about 20% larger than our territorial emissions.²⁰ The net effect is that Scotland is offshoring our territorial emissions.

A report from Zero Waste Scotland found:²¹

²⁰ Scotland's Carbon Footprint: 1998-2019, Scottish Government, 2023, <https://www.gov.scot/news/scotlands-carbon-footprint-1998-2019/>

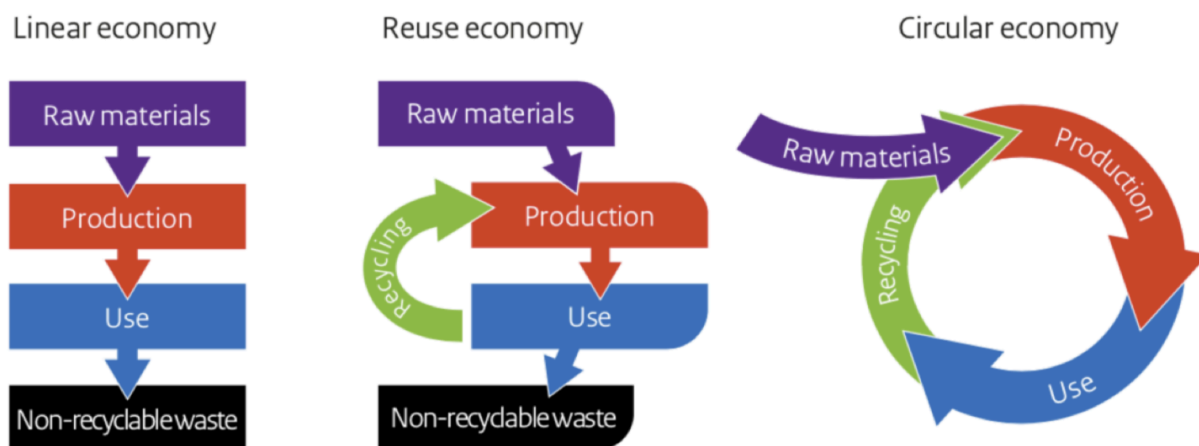
²¹ The Circularity Gap Report, Zero Waste Scotland, 2023, <https://www.zerowastescotland.org.uk/resources/circularity-gap-report>

- only 1.3% of the resources Scotland uses are cycled back into the economy, with over 98% of Scotland's material use coming from virgin resources
- Scotland's per capita material footprint is 21.7 tonnes, nearly double the global average of 11.9 tonnes.
- high consumption and extraction of materials tie into a similarly large consumption-based carbon footprint of 75MtCO₂e.

This means that consumption in Scotland is unsustainably high. This is, in part, due to the quantity of things we buy – but also due to the way we operate as a society.

What is a Circular Economy ?

Around four-fifths of Scotland's carbon footprint comes from the products and materials we use and, as well as impacting our climate, the extraction and processing of raw materials is one of the key drivers of biodiversity loss. A more circular economy (as opposed to a 'take, make, use, discard' linear economy), aims to optimise the use of materials, for example by sharing products, and making products that last a long time and are easy to repair and re-use. Such a circular economy is based on the principles of designing out waste and pollution, keeping products and materials in use, and regenerating natural systems. It offers, therefore, an approach to contribute to reducing emissions from waste and consumption.



A Circular Economy keeps valuable materials in use repeatedly and for as long as possible.

The new Circular Economy Act could make a substantial difference but much of the detail, including targets, will be in the Circular Economy Strategy, a draft of which is expected this spring.

Introduce carbon and material footprint targets

The Scottish Government should introduce statutory, science-based carbon and material footprint targets, reported on annually, to significantly reduce Scotland's consumption-based emissions, and use the Circular Economy strategy and future Climate Change Plans to detail the measures it will take to achieve them.

In Scotland, we use more than twice the sustainable limit for key materials but the impact of this consumption on people and the environment is often hidden. Emissions from imported products and services make up a substantial share of Scotland's carbon footprint, and this share is likely to grow as Scotland's domestic emissions fall.

While Scottish Ministers have been required to report occasionally on emissions attributable to Scottish consumption of goods and services since 2010, no specific targets to reduce these emissions currently exist.

By focusing more on production and re-processing of resources in Scotland, this policy would have benefits for nature protection and restoration, as well as for local community wealth and health.

In Scotland, we consumed over 100 million tonnes of materials in 2018 alone²² and globally, material consumption exceeded sustainable limits decades ago.²³ Only by accounting for our global impact, can Scotland play its part in a truly sustainable future. When the Scottish Government consulted on the Circular Economy Bill in 2022, 86% of responders supported consumption reduction targets.²⁴

Targets should be set in the secondary legislation flowing from the Circular Economy (Scotland) Act 2024,¹⁶ with a requirement on Ministers to report to Parliament on progress towards targets annually, as is required for domestic carbon emissions under our climate change legislation. The targets should cover all of Scotland's material use, not just wasted material. Along with carbon consumption reduction targets, these would complement Scotland's 5-year carbon budgets, once set, and the 2045 emission reduction target.

As a minimum, new consumption-based targets should align with the domestic emissions carbon budgets, when these are set.

- The overall aim of Scotland's circular economy should be to reduce material consumption to sustainable levels in a just and fair way as fast as possible and by 2045 at the latest.
- Carbon-based consumption targets – Scotland should adopt a greenhouse gas emissions-based target to reduce Scotland's carbon footprint to net zero by 2045, with an interim target to reduce Scotland's carbon footprint by 75% by 2030 based

²² Material Flow Accounts, Zero Waste Scotland, March 2023, <https://www.zerowastescotland.org.uk/resources/material-flow-accounts-mfa>

²³ National responsibility for ecological breakdown: a fair share assessment of resource use 1970-2017, Hickel et al., 2022, [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanplh/article/PIIS2542-5196\(22\)00044-4/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lanplh/article/PIIS2542-5196(22)00044-4/fulltext)

²⁴ Delivering Scotland's circular economy: Proposed Circular Economy Bill - Consultation analysis, Scottish Government, 2022, <https://www.gov.scot/publications/delivering-scotlands-circular-economy-proposed-circular-economy-bill-consultation-analysis/>

on 1998 levels. This target is the minimum which the science tells us must be achieved by Scotland if we are to stay within the 1.5°C goal of the Paris Agreement.

- Material-based consumption targets – Scotland should adopt a materials-based target to reduce Scotland’s material consumption by 57% (8 tonnes per person) by 2045, with an interim target to reduce material consumption by 30% (13 tonnes per person) by 2030 based on 2017 levels.

For further information:

The case for consumption-based targets, FoE Scotland, 2022,

<https://foe.scot/resource/the-case-for-consumption-based-targets/>

Communities and transition mineral mining in Scotland, FoE Scotland, January 2025,

<https://foe.scot/resource/communities-and-transition-mineral-mining-in-scotland/>

Financing Climate Justice,

https://www.stopclimatechaos.scot/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/FinancingClimateJustice_Report_ONLINE.pdf

Response to the circular economy bill consultation, FoE Scotland, 2022,

<https://foe.scot/resource/response-to-the-circular-economy-bill-consultation/>

Ban the destruction of unsold goods

The Circular Economy (Scotland) Act 2024²⁵ gives ministers the power to legislate to ban or restrict the destruction of unsold consumer goods, although food is specifically excluded.

Ensuring that products are not wasted not only saves material resources and reduces climate emissions, it can also provide goods to charities and social enterprises which they can use directly or sell to generate income.

There should be clear measures and enforcement in place to prevent the destruction of unsold or returned products. There should also be steps to ensure that the principles of the waste hierarchy are followed – reuse (or in this case use for the first time) should be prioritised over recycling, for example.

The commitment in the Circular Economy Act could be strengthened by also including a ban on supermarkets destroying unsold food, as implemented in France in 2016.

For further information:

Policy Paper for Scotland Circular Economy Bill, Circular Communities Scotland, May 2022,

<https://www.circularcommunities.scot/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Scotlands-Circular-Economy-Bill-Policy-Paper.pdf>

²⁵ Circular Economy (Scotland) Act 2024,

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2024/13/enacted#:~:text=2024%20asp%2013,-The%20Bill%20for&text=An%20Act%20of%20the%20Scottish.waste%3B%20and%20for%20connected%20purposes.>

Energy and electricity

The energy sector produces the fossil fuels that are driving climate change but it is also the sector which can provide the energy efficiency and renewable energy solutions which will power our homes and businesses, provide zero-carbon transport and decarbonise farming. An urgent priority is to accelerate the transition from fossil fuels to renewable electricity in every application that we can. Indeed, without clean power we cannot clean up heating, business and transport.

Because we have shut two coal-fired power stations and massively expanded renewable energy production, emissions from the energy sector fell 77% between 1990 and 2021.²⁶ Electricity now accounts for about a fifth of our energy use, and this proportion will grow as we electrify heating systems and transport.

The energy debate in Scotland is confused. We have huge potential for more power from renewables of all sorts, and still a huge mountain to climb in making our buildings warm and efficient. However, instead of concentrating on these twin priorities, vested interests continue to promote new nuclear power, a new gas-fired power station at Peterhead, including an unproven carbon capture and storage system, and further investment in North Sea oil and gas.

The current Scottish Energy Strategy was published at the end of 2017.²⁷ The 2020 CCPu promised a new strategy in 2021. A draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan was eventually published for consultation at the start of 2023.²⁸ The final version has been promised several times but, more than two years later, has yet to appear.

Vigorously pursuing energy efficiency and renewable energy would see us phase out fossil fuels, make energy cheaper for all and help create the green energy jobs that we need for the Just Transition out of the oil industry, including in rural and island communities, and help address concerns over energy security within a more volatile world.

Supporting the expansion of community-owned renewable energy would help ensure a social mandate for renewables and deliver substantial benefits for local economies and thriving communities.

²⁶ from figures in Scottish Greenhouse Gas Statistics 2021, Scottish Government, 2023, <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/statistics/2023/06/scottish-greenhouse-gas-statistics-2021/documents/scottish-greenhouse-gas-statistics-2021/scottish-greenhouse-gas-statistics-2021/govscot%3Adocument/scottish-greenhouse-gas-statistics-2021.pdf>

²⁷ Scottish Energy Strategy - the future of energy in Scotland, Scottish Government, 2017, <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/strategy-plan/2017/12/scottish-energy-strategy-future-energy-scotland-9781788515276/documents/00529523-pdf/00529523-pdf/govscot%3Adocument/00529523.pdf>

²⁸ Draft Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan, Scottish Government, January 2023, <https://www.gov.scot/publications/draft-energy-strategy-transition-plan/>

Set an end date for fossil fuel production and use

Research by the Tyndall Centre²⁹ found that fossil fuel extraction in producer countries, including the UK, would need to be phased out by 2031 for there to be a two-thirds chance of staying below a 1.5°C global temperature rise.

The Scottish Government should adopt an unequivocal policy position against the granting of any licences and consents for new oil and gas exploration or extraction, and put a plan in place to deliver the most rapid and fair end possible for fossil fuel production in Scotland. While powers over offshore fossil fuel extraction remain reserved, taking this position can exert influence at the UK level and show leadership beyond. Scotland should not gamble on carbon capture and storage technologies delivering what the hype promises. The certainty provided by a firm end date would help people, local authorities and businesses plan for the future, and inject an urgency and focus into planning for new jobs and new industries as part of the Just Transition.

The Scottish Government must use the many devolved powers at its disposal to shift energy generation and energy consumption to as close to fully renewable as possible within the same timeframe.

The Scottish Government should immediately start planning for a credible managed wind down as part of a Just Transition, with trade unions and communities fully involved in the process and agreeing timescales. With the participation of workers and communities, the Scottish Government must take an interventionist approach to ensure a Just Transition, utilising all the powers at their disposal to prioritise the creation of decent jobs in renewables and energy efficiency, and put in place strong safeguards for impacted workers transferring from oil and gas jobs to the renewables industry and other work. Just Transition interventions should be targeted at the places that need them most and strong co-ordination with the UK Government will be necessary.

Community ownership is an important part of this just energy transition. To be just, we cannot replace unfair ownership in fossil fuels with similarly skewed ownership of clean energy. The Scottish Government should develop a roadmap for increasing the portion of energy infrastructure in community ownership. This should include policies like giving communities a right to buy out private renewables installations when the time comes that they need repowering and funding Community Development Officers to support communities to negotiate shared ownership opportunities with private developers.

The Scottish Government should also maintain its policy ban on all forms of onshore unconventional oil and gas production, including fracking.

For further information:

²⁹ Phaseout Pathways for Fossil Fuel Production, Tyndall Centre, 2022, <https://research.manchester.ac.uk/en/publications/phaseout-pathways-for-fossil-fuel-production-within-paris-compliance>

SCCS briefing: A managed wind down of North Sea oil & gas production in line with a Just Transition, October 2022,

<https://www.stopclimatechaos.scot/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/SCCS-briefing-a-managed-wind-down-of-North-Sea-oil-and-gas-production-in-line-with-a-Just-Transition.pdf>

Community-led heat projects: a toolkit for heat networks, Dept of Energy and Climate Change, 2016,

https://www.vonne.org.uk/sites/default/files/files/resources/Community_Heat_Networks_Toolkit_Final_2.1.pdf

Decarbonise Scotland's homes through a strong regulatory framework including mandatory standards and fair funding models

Heating homes accounts for 15% of Scotland's annual greenhouse gas emissions. The Heat in Buildings Strategy has set a target of over 1 million homes heated with zero emissions heat by 2030. It is clear the voluntary approach will not drive the pace and scale necessary to meet this target. An important part of making change for buildings is the Heat in Buildings Bill promised in the CCPu.

As well as helping address fuel poverty, insulating homes and switching to zero-carbon heating systems will make people's homes healthier, thereby reducing costs to the NHS, protect householders from volatile international gas prices, and create thousands of good jobs right across Scotland, supporting the Just Transition.³⁰ Action on energy efficiency will also reduce demand on networks at peak times thereby reducing infrastructure requirements (and costs and wider environmental impacts).

The Scottish Government consulted on proposals for a Heat in Buildings Bill in 2024 including setting minimum standards of energy efficiency for all homes and the phasing out of fossil fuel boilers. These proposals have been directly praised in the CCC's 2023 report to Parliament, which called for them to be delivered "promptly and effectively."³¹ However, the introduction of the Bill is running late.

A good Bill could create the frameworks needed to accelerate the transition to greater energy efficiency and the replacement of fossil-fueled heating systems with zero-carbon systems.

Clear standards are essential so homeowners and landlords know what they need to do and by when, and what help will be available. By setting clear regulatory standards, the Scottish Government will provide foresight to supply chains, enabling them to scale up.

³⁰ Research for the Existing Homes Alliance estimated 16,200-21,600 jobs could be sustained in insulating homes and changing heating systems in Home Retrofit & the Green Recovery, EHA, 2021, <https://existinghomesalliancescotland.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/EHA-Green-Recovery-Report-Final.pdf>

³¹ Progress in reducing emissions in Scotland - 2023 Report to Parliament, Committee on Climate Change, 2024, <https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Progress-in-reducing-emissions-in-Scotland-2023-Report-to-Parliament.pdf> p10

Regulations are also the best way to secure the private investment that is crucial to meeting the considerable capital cost of decarbonising homes. Public funding will still be required, however, to help households afford the changes and ensure a Just Transition. Therefore the need is for a framework of regulations to drive investment coupled with an increase in Scottish Government funding to support fuel poor households with fully funded installations and partial grant support to others.

The regulatory framework should include:

- an 'efficient and renewables heat ready' energy efficiency standard for existing homes and non-domestic buildings, including a minimum energy efficiency standard, with all homes required to meet this standard by 2033
- zero-emissions heat regulations for homes and non-domestic buildings, requiring the replacement of oil and gas boilers to start from 2028
- a phased approach for flats and tenements
- changes to the fabric of individual buildings and housing estates to promote sustainable travel by residents – bike storage, car club provision, less or no space for garaging, etc
- incentives to encourage council- and community-led renewable power and heating projects^{32,33}

In addition, a fair funding model must be developed to fairly distribute the costs of transitioning from oil and gas heating systems to clean heat sources. To be just, this must include full grant support to protect low-income households.³⁴

For further information:

Delivering net zero for Scotland's buildings: Heat in Buildings Bill A response to the Scottish Government consultation by Stop Climate Chaos Scotland March 2024, <https://www.stopclimatechaos.scot/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/Delivering-net-zero-for-Scotlands-buildings-Heat-in-Buildings-Bill-response-from-SCCS-.pdf>

Affordable Warmth – next steps for clean heat in scotland, WWF Scotland, 2023, <https://www.wwf.org.uk/sites/default/files/2023-02/WWF-Affordable-Warmth-Scotland.pdf>

Affordable Warmth Report, WWF Scotland, 2023, <https://www.wwf.org.uk/sites/default/files/2023-02/affordable-warmth-report-policy-a-nnex.pdf>

Existing Homes Alliance home page, <https://existinghomesalliancescotland.co.uk/>

Our Climate: Our Homes, STUC, 2021, <https://www.stuc.org.uk/resources/our-homes-briefing.pdf>

³² Our Climate: Our Home, STUC, 2021, <https://www.stuc.org.uk/resources/our-homes-briefing.pdf>

³³ A Fair Energy Deal for Scottish Communities, Community Energy Scotland, April 2024, <https://communityenergyscotland.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Fair-Energy-Deal-Full-Paper.pdf>

³⁴ Scotland's net zero future at risk without funding boost for clean heat, finds report, IPPR, February 2024, <https://www.ippr.org/media-office/scotlands-net-zero-future-at-risk-without-funding-boost-for-clean-heat-finds-report>

The fastest and simplest way out of the energy crisis: Zero emissions homes and the critical role of standards in the owner – occupied sector, Existing Homes Alliance, 2023, <https://existinghomesalliancescotland.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/EHA-Briefing-Role-of-Regulation-short-version-Feb23-Final.pdf>

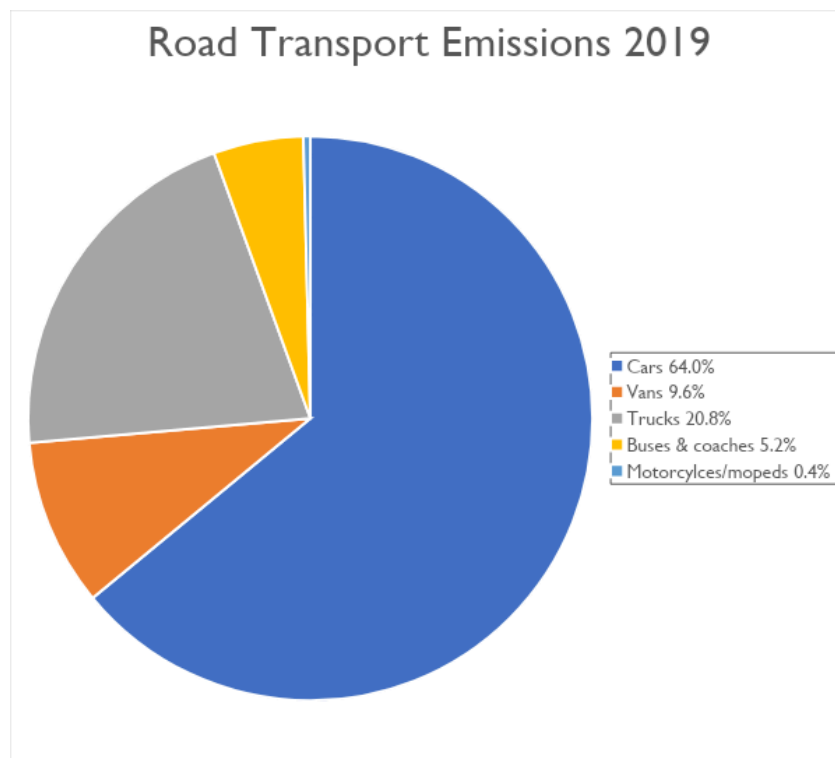
Rural Homes Just Transition Package, Existing Homes Alliance, 2022, <https://existinghomesalliancescotland.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Rural-Homes-Just-Transition-Package.pdf>

Transport

Transport is Scotland's largest net contributor to climate emissions. Emissions from the sector fell 12% between 1990 and 2022, with a significant dip during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our current transport system imposes a range of external costs on society: environmental – climate change, air and noise pollution, damage to wildlife; social – community severance, poor health due to physical inactivity, illness and injury, serious injury and death due to road traffic accidents, and economic – congestion, road repair costs and health costs. These impacts are not felt equally, with the poorest communities experiencing them the most.

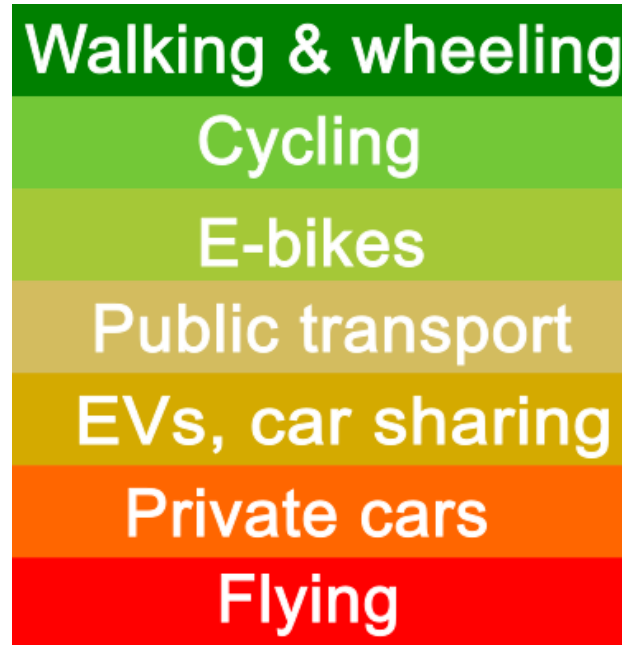
Road transport also imposes costs on society through congestion (approx £700m in 2019), crashes (~£900m in 2019) and building car-based infrastructure.



Transport climate emissions in Scotland by vehicle type in 2019 – 64% is from cars.

There is a lot more to do to promote walking, wheeling and cycling. Along with more people switching from the car to public transport, these modes of travel are vital in delivering the 2030 car-km reduction target.

Decisions on transport should be based on the sustainable transport hierarchy, with the best options at the top:



The Scottish Government is doing a lot to promote electric vehicles. They are clearly a part of the solution, but still create congestion and air pollution (from tyre and brake dust), continue car-based planning and do nothing to contribute to the Scottish Government commitment to reducing car-km by 20% by 2030.

Make bus travel free for all

The Scottish Government should make buses free for all across Scotland. Any attempt to meet our climate change goals must involve bold action to reduce private car use and a drastic shift in journeys to public transport. Over seventy-five percent of public transport journeys are made by bus, and buses are an especially vital form of travel for those living in low-income areas. Bold action in this area would make a large contribution to delivering on the commitment to reduce car-km by 20% by 2030.

A key prerequisite for success would be to make sure of a quality service for the user, with the frequency and comprehensive coverage of the system maintained and improved, alongside policies to discourage car use. Glasgow City Council proposed in

March 2024 that they were considering a pilot scheme which would see 1,000 people given free travel by bus and subway within the city for a nine-week period.³⁵

As well as reducing emissions by reducing car trips, this policy will help to tackle poverty and inequality, including by helping people more easily access leisure and employment, and help address isolation and loneliness.³⁶ Reducing car traffic also reduces congestion, which boosts local economies, improves air quality and makes bus travel even more attractive. A report for Friends of the Earth Scotland found that major investment in public transport to help meet the 20% car-km reduction target could almost double the number of direct jobs in the sector and support around 35,000 direct and indirect jobs in manufacturing and infrastructure over a 12 year period.³⁷

Currently there is a gender divide in transport because of the division of household labour and caring responsibilities, with men more likely to have access to a car but women more likely to have to make multi-destination journeys. A reformed bus network should enable a diversity of journeys, including care-related trips which are disproportionately taken by women using buses.

Over 100 cities, more than half of them in Europe, have made their public transport free and all public transport has been free in the (small) country of Luxembourg since early 2020. Behavioural research confirms the effectiveness of free public transport in changing habits.³⁸

In Scotland, in the first year of the concessionary bus travel scheme being extended to under 22s, over 50 million journeys were made by young people.³⁹ It is clear that when cost is removed as a barrier, people use public transport and this consideration should be central in changing behaviour regarding transport.

Public funds are already paying for more than half of every bus ticket in Scotland. 63% of bus operator revenues in Scotland in 2022/23 came from public funding through concessionary travel reimbursement, grants or supported services.⁴⁰

The total investment needed to cover all operator revenue, at just over £745m would be an increase of £275m on the existing spend of £470m a year. By comparison the Scottish Government budget line for motorways and trunk roads is over £850m. Public

³⁵ Free Public Transport Study - development of a free public transport pilot for the City of Glasgow, Glasgow City Council, March 2024, https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/media/10603/20240320-GCC-Free-Public-Transport-Study-Summary-Report-v2-0/pdf/20240320_GCC_Free_Public_Transport_Study_Summary_Report_v2.0.pdf?m=1711017670980

³⁶ Free public transportation: Why we need it, and examples from Korean and European cities, Sustainability Mobility, 2021, <https://sustainablemobility.iclei.org/free-public-transportation/>

³⁷ On the Move, FoE Scotland, 2023, <https://foe.scot/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/On-the-Move-Report.pdf>

³⁸ The effects of a financial incentive on motives and intentions to commute to work with public transport in the short and long term, Journal of Environmental Psychology, 2021, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0272494421001717>

³⁹ Over 50 million free journeys made by under 22s, Transport Scotland, 2023, <https://www.transport.gov.scot/news/over-50-million-free-journeys-made-by-under-22s/>

⁴⁰ Scottish Transport Statistics 2023, Transport Scotland, 2024, . <https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/scottish-transport-statistics-2023/178>

ownership of public transport operators would significantly improve the economics of supporting free bus travel. Public ownership is needed to enable affordable, accessible fully-integrated public transport planned and coordinated to meet the communities' needs, using the franchising powers in the Transport Act 2019. These powers need to be simplified and supported, as is happening with the new Buses Services Bill in England.

As a minimum first step, the Scottish Government could financially support free bus trials in two Scottish cities, as recommended by the Just Transition Commission in 2021,⁴¹ and extend free bus travel across Scotland to people on low incomes, 22–24-year-olds and unpaid carers.⁴² The one-year regional bus fare cap trial agreed as part of the 2025/26 Scottish Budget will provide some useful data.⁴³

An obvious loophole to close is that the National Concessionary Travel Schemes (NCTS) exclude most Community Transport services, which serve more than 802,000 people every year, leaving many of the 2.3 million Scots eligible for free bus travel with a 'bus pass in name only.' Over 180 community-owned, local and non-profit operators plug gaps in our bus network with demand responsive transport, which offers a lifeline for many urban, rural and island communities, as well as for many older people and disabled people. However, these services are not part of the NCTS, leaving passengers and operators out of pocket. The Scottish Government should expand eligibility for NCTS reimbursement to services provided by Community Transport operators.

The next step beyond free bus travel is to make all public transport in Scotland free, combined with a measure like congestion zones or broader road user charging to create a 'carrot and stick' approach to shaping people's transport choices. In the recent trial of scrapping peak fares on ScotRail more than half the new train passengers normally drove a car for their journey.⁴⁴ Beginning with bus travel we can help to lift people out of poverty and address our huge travel carbon footprint.

For further information:

Public Transport, Private Profit – The Human Cost of Privatizing Buses in the United Kingdom, Center for Human Rights & Global Justice, NYU, 2021, <https://chrgj.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Report-Public-Transport-Private-Profit.pdf>

⁴¹ Just Transition Commission: A national mission for a fairer, greener Scotland, 2021, <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/advice-and-guidance/2021/03/transition-commission-national-mission-fairer-greener-scotland/documents/transition-commission-national-mission-fairer-greener-scotland/transition-commission-national-mission-fairer-greener-scotland/govscot%3Adocument/transition-commission-national-mission-fairer-greener-scotland.pdf>

⁴² Everyone Aboard! Campaign page, Poverty Alliance, 2024, <https://www.povertyalliance.org/campaigns-projects/everyone-aboard/>

⁴³ Budget: Scottish Greens secure action on climate, transport costs and child poverty, Scottish Green Party, January 2025, <https://greens.scot/news/budget-scottish-greens-secure-action-on-climate-transport-costs-and-child-poverty>

⁴⁴ ScotRail Peak Fares Removal Pilot - Final Evaluation Report, Transport Scotland, August 2024, <https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/scotrail-peak-fares-removal-pilot-final-evaluation-report-august-2024/summary/>

Bus cuts across Scotland, Get Glasgow Moving, February 2023,

<https://www.getglasgowmoving.org/news/buscuts/>

Towards Gender Inclusive and Sustainable Transport Systems, Womens' Budget Group, 2021,

<https://wbg.org.uk/analysis/uk-policy-briefings/towards-gender-inclusive-and-sustainabletransport-systems/>

Residents of Luxembourg celebrate three years of free public transport, EU Urban Mobility Observatory, 2023,

https://urban-mobility-observatory.transport.ec.europa.eu/news-events/news/residents-luxembourg-celebrate-three-years-free-public-transport-2023-04-11_en

Glaswegians call for free public transport, FoE Scotland, 2021,

<https://foe.scot/press-release/glaswegians-call-for-free-public-transport/>

Introduce a fair Private Jet Tax and then reduce wider aviation demand

This policy involves operationalising the Air Departure Tax (ADT), with a fair Private Jet Tax embedded from the start, as a climate just first step towards a robust aviation demand management strategy, including a Frequent Flyer Levy.

Aviation is a significant source of emissions, with 21.4 million air passengers at Scottish airports in 2022⁴⁵ – up from 9.9 million in 1990.⁴⁶ It is three years since the Climate Change Committee said a demand management framework should be in place by the mid-2020s to “annually assess and, if required, control” emissions.⁴⁷ The Scottish Government accepts that aviation emissions must be reduced, and that ADT “could and should make a contribution” to achieving this.⁴⁸ However, Transport Scotland’s Aviation Statement⁴⁹ fails to consider the need for demand management or reduction and focuses on new technologies without any recognition of the deliverability risks.⁵⁰

The Air Departure Tax (Scotland) Act 2017⁵¹ provides wide powers for the Scottish Government to apply a tax on passengers on flights leaving Scotland’s airports. However, it has yet to be operationalised. The Scottish Government should urgently

⁴⁵ Scottish Transport Statistics 2023, Transport Scotland, Chapter 8 – Air Transport, Transport Scotland, 2024, <https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/scottish-transport-statistics-2023/chapter-8-air-transport/>. The number of passengers is below the peak of 29.4 million in 2018, with a sharp fall due to the pandemic-related travel restrictions. However, passengers have ‘bounced back’ since.

⁴⁶ Scottish Transport Statistics 2023, Transport Scotland, Table 8.1, 27 March 2024, <https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/scottish-transport-statistics-2023/>

⁴⁷ Progress in reducing emissions in Scotland – 2021 Report to Parliament, Climate Change Committee, 2021, <https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/progress-reducing-emissions-in-scotland-2021-report-to-parliament/>

⁴⁸ Climate change action: policy package, Scottish Government, 18 April 2024, <https://www.gov.scot/publications/climate-change-action-policy-package/>

⁴⁹ Aviation Statement and Key Priorities, Transport Scotland, 24 July 2024, <https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/aviation-statement/>

⁵⁰ The Scottish Government’s Aviation Statement and policy: A review by Stop Climate Chaos Scotland, August 2024, https://www.stopclimatechaos.scot/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/The-Scottish-Governments-Aviation-Statement-and-policy_-A-review-by-Stop-Climate-Chaos-Scotland-August-2024.pdf

⁵¹ Air Departure Tax (Scotland) Act 2017, legislation.gov.uk (accessed 12 December 2024): <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2017/2>

work with the UK Government to ensure the continuation of the exemption for passengers travelling from the Highlands and Islands, which it says has delayed the launch of ADT.

In operationalising ADT, a fair first step would be to embed a Private Jet Tax. This could be done almost immediately. Estimates suggest that private jets are 5 to 14 times more polluting per passenger than commercial flights⁵² and that the private jets of 23 of the world's richest billionaires produce, on average, more carbon emissions in just over a day than the average person in Scotland does in a whole year.⁵³ With nearly 13,000 recorded private flights involving Scotland's airports in 2023,⁵⁴ a tax on high-polluting, luxury private jets would strongly align with climate justice and the polluter pays principle.

While limiting or banning private jets would be entirely reasonable, a Private Jet Tax would incentivise a reduction in their use while raising vital new revenues to fund climate action. At launch, ADT should set the planned 'special' rate – or a specific new rate for private jets – at a significantly increased rate, with no exemptions.⁵⁵ The rate should be set at a much higher rate than the modest 50% increase in the Higher rate announced by the UK Government,⁵⁶ with analysis suggesting a meaningful rate would raise tens of millions of pounds extra for climate action each year.⁵⁷

The Scottish Government should also publish a full aviation demand management framework, including the Frequent Flyer Levy called for by Scotland's Climate Assembly⁵⁸ and others.⁵⁹ This should target passengers who fly multiple times per year, without increasing taxes on those who fly infrequently, such as for annual family holidays. To be climate just, the Levy should start with those who fly most frequently, with the threshold reducing over time.

While fully considering any distributional impacts, other options to cut aviation demand should also be considered, including: a ban or ADT surcharge on short-haul flights, if

⁵² Private jets: can the super rich supercharge zero-emission aviation? Transport & Environment, 2021, https://www.transportenvironment.org/articles/private-jets-can-the-super-rich-supercharge-zero-emission-aviation/?gad_source=1&qclid=Cj0KCCQjwwae1BhC_ARIsAK4JfrxkZmWrL-t1q_bnVUZDtpT8pad0Y7rzTNhw_2Njs0InFRtbRuXLxgAaAmciFALw_wcB

⁵³ Billionaires' private jets emit more carbon pollution in just over one day than average Scot does in a year, Oxfam Scotland, 28 October 2024, <https://oxfamapps.org/scotland/2024/10/28/billionaires-private-jets-emit-more-carbon-pollution-in-just-over-one-day-than-average-scot-does-in-a-year/>

⁵⁴ Cleared for Take-off, A Private Jet Tax for Scotland, Oxfam Scotland, September 2024, <https://oxfamapps.org/scotland/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Cleared-for-Take-Off-Oxfam-Scotland-Discussion-Paper-1.pdf>

⁵⁵ Ibid

⁵⁶ Changes to Air Passenger Duty rates from 1 April 2026, Gov.uk, 30 October 2024: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/changes-to-air-passenger-duty-rates-from-1-april-2026#:~:text=Rates%20will%20increase%20by%20the.rounded%20to%20the%20nearest%20penny.>

⁵⁷ Cleared for Take-off, A Private Jet Tax for Scotland, Oxfam Scotland, September 2024: <https://oxfamapps.org/scotland/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Cleared-for-Take-Off-Oxfam-Scotland-Discussion-Paper-1.pdf>

⁵⁸ Scotland's Climate Assembly Recommendations for Action, June 2021, <https://webarchive.nrscotland.gov.uk/20220321134004/https://www.climateassembly.scot/full-report>

⁵⁹ See, for instance, <https://neweconomics.org/2021/07/a-frequent-flyer-levy> or <https://stay-grounded.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/progressive-ticket-tax-frequent-flyer-levy.pdf>

cleaner travel options exist; using Non-Domestic Rates to incentivise businesses to fly less, particularly short-haul; and using planning rules to place restrictions on airports.

For further information:

Cleared for Take-off, A Private Jet Tax for Scotland, Oxfam Scotland, September 2024, <https://oxfamapps.org/scotland/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Cleared-for-Take-Off-Oxfam-Scotland-Discussion-Paper-1.pdf>

The Scottish Government's Aviation Statement and policy: A review by Stop Climate Chaos Scotland, August 2024, <https://www.stopclimatechaos.scot/wp-content/uploads/2024/08/The-Scottish-Governments-Aviation-Statement-and-policy-A-review-by-Stop-Climate-Chaos-Scotland-August-2024.pdf>

We need higher taxes on private jets and superyachts, here's why, Oxfam, September 2024, <https://www.oxfam.org.uk/oxfam-in-action/oxfam-blog/we-need-higher-taxes-on-private-jets-and-superyachts/>

Payment overdue - Fair ways to make polluters across the UK pay for climate justice, Oxfam, September 2023, <https://oxfamilibrary.openrepository.com/bitstream/handle/10546/621539/bp-payment-overdue-fair-ways-to-make-UK-polluters-pay-180923-en.pdf?sequence=1>

Funding climate action, including through tax justice

From floods in China and Brazil to the droughts in Zambia and record storms in the Americas, 2024 clearly demonstrated the impacts of climate change, with the total bill in the hundreds of billions.⁶⁰ A new report from the international Institute and Faculty of Actuaries found that the global economy could shrink by half before 2100.⁶¹

The Scottish Government estimates that climate change is already costing our economy billions of pounds.⁶² This could rise to tens of billions by the 2080s if we do not act to reduce emissions. The Scottish Government has frequently espoused the concept of preventative spend - investing today to avoid much higher costs in the future. Climate change is perhaps the most obvious area to apply this principle.

⁶⁰ Counting the Cost 2024 - a year of climate breakdown, Christian Aid, 2024, <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/sites/default/files/2024-12/counting-the-cost-2024.pdf>

⁶¹ Global economy could face 50% loss in GDP between 2070 and 2090 from climate shocks, say actuaries, Guardian, January 2025, <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2025/jan/16/economic-growth-could-fall-50-over-20-years-from-climate-shocks-say-actuaries>

⁶² The Scottish National Adaptation Plan 2024 - 2029, September 2024, <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/strategy-plan/2024/09/scottish-national-adaptation-plan-2024-2029-2/documents/scottish-national-adaptation-plan-2024-2029/scottish-national-adaptation-plan-2024-2029/govscot%3Adocument/scottish-national-adaptation-plan-2024-2029.pdf> uses a top-down approach from work for the Climate Change Committee to say that the impacts of climate change already cost the Scottish economy billions of pounds a year.

As recommended in the 2022 SCCS Financing Climate Justice report,⁶³ progressive use of general taxation should be the primary means to raise significant additional money to invest in climate action and reduce inequalities. This approach should reflect the ‘polluter pays’ principle, with evidence showing that, on average, those with higher incomes and wealth have higher emissions. In 2020, Oxfam estimated that the wealthiest 1% of people in the UK each emitted 11 times the carbon emissions of someone in the poorest half of the population.⁶⁴

Separate analysis in Scotland shows the average carbon footprint of the richest 5% of households in Scotland is 4.1 times greater than the poorest 5% of households. This analysis emphasises the disproportionate climate impact richer people have through their lifestyle choices, including through frequent flying.⁶⁵ Targeting higher incomes and wealth would not only be a means of making polluters pay but, given these individuals also have the greatest capacity to pay, it would also promote social justice.

Investing in climate solutions can bring savings. For instance, insulating people’s homes not only creates jobs, it makes those homes healthier, reducing cost to the NHS and improving children’s educational performance; free bus travel increases access to the jobs’ market; applying the polluter pays principle makes sure those causing the biggest problem are paying the most to fix it and climate-friendly farming would improve people’s diets, and help protect and restore nature.

As argued by the Tax Justice Scotland campaign,⁶⁶ which SCCS supports, our local and devolved tax systems must play a much bigger role, alongside fairer UK and global tax systems, to support the response to the climate crisis. This includes enabling greater public investment in climate action, by fairly raising significantly more revenues, as well as using taxation to incentivise behavioural change. Fiscal policy should complement regulatory interventions to incentivise and compel greener behaviours.

To address climate change we need changes in almost everything we do and all of this needs to be done in the context of delivering a Just Transition – making changes in ways which are fair to communities and workers, and across the income distribution, as we become a zero-carbon society.

For further information:

⁶³ Financing Climate Justice - fiscal measures for climate action in a time of crisis, Stop Climate Chaos Scotland, 2022, https://www.stopclimatechaos.scot/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/FinancingClimateJustice_Report_ONLINE.pdf

⁶⁴ Richest 1% globally emit as much planet-heating pollution as two-thirds of humanity put together, Oxfam, November 2023, <https://oxfamapps.org/scotland/2023/11/20/richest-1-globally-emit-as-much-planet-heating-pollution-as-two-thirds-of-humanity-put-together/> & Wealthiest Brits have a carbon footprint 11 times that of someone in the poorest half of society, Oxfam, 2020, <https://www.oxfam.org.uk/media/press-releases/wealthiest-brits-have-a-carbon-footprint-11-times-that-of-someone-in-the-poorest-half-of-society/>

⁶⁵ Measuring Carbon Inequality in Scotland, Future Economy Scotland, 2023, <https://www.futureeconomy.scot/publications/59-measuring-carbon-inequality-in-scotland>

⁶⁶ Tax Justice Scotland home page, <https://taxjustice.scot/>

Choosing a Fairer future for all: A Vision for Tax Transformation in Scotland, November 2024,

<https://taxjustice.scot/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/TaxJusticeScotland-Report-Digital-Nov24.pdf>

Financing Climate Justice - fiscal measures for climate action in a time of crisis, Stop Climate Chaos Scotland, 2022,

https://www.stopclimatechaos.scot/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/FinancingClimateJustice_Report_ONLINE.pdf

Conclusions

The global climate emergency gets worse every year and Scotland is off track to meet its 2045 net-zero climate target. This report presents major existing policies that the Scottish Government needs to do much more to deliver on and new policies which could make immediate and long-term carbon savings.

Delivering on these policies in the right way would also boost the economy, create jobs, improve health outcomes and reduce inequality.

These policies should certainly go into the new Climate Change Plan, they could also feature in manifestoes for next year's Scottish Election, but there is no reason that they could not start delivering much sooner.

Time for Action: Policies for a greener, healthier, fairer Scotland

This collection of policies for immediate action was created with input from Stop Climate Chaos Scotland's members and associated environmental, development and civil society groups.

Stop Climate Chaos Scotland (SCCS) is Scotland's climate coalition, bringing together over 70 civil society organisations campaigning together on climate change. Our membership is diverse and includes national and community organisations working on:

- Climate justice
- Environment and nature
- Gender and social justice
- Faith and belief
- International development
- Worker and human rights
- Health and inequality

Together, we represent hundreds of thousands of people across Scotland and stand in solidarity with communities most affected by climate impacts around the world. We collaborate with our members to build strong public support for faster climate action. We use this support to encourage decision-makers to put in place fair, effective policies to reduce emissions.

Our shared goal is for Scotland and the UK to take full responsibility for the past and present climate damage we have caused, leading to action that quickly lowers our emissions and moves away from our reliance on fossil fuels in a way that is fair and beneficial to everyone.

Our governments must also provide meaningful support to help the most affected communities adapt and recover from climate impacts, in Scotland and globally.





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Cover image: Scotland's climate stripes created by the author using the methodology created by Prof Ed Hawkins at Reading University from Met Office data.