

A woman in a dark puffer jacket and boots stands on a rocky outcrop, holding a baby wrapped in a grey blanket and wearing a brown hat. They are looking out over a vast landscape featuring a calm lake in the foreground, a forested hillside in the middle ground, and several large, snow-capped mountains under a clear blue sky. The scene is bathed in the warm light of late afternoon or early morning.

Net Zero Nation

Public Engagement Strategy
for Climate Change



**Net Zero
Scotland**
Scottish
Government

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Ministerial Foreword



We have committed to becoming a net zero nation by 2045. Expert advice has been clear that over 60% of the measures needed for Scotland to reach net zero will require some level of change in the way society operates. It is therefore vital that everyone in our society understands the nature and scale of the climate emergency and has the opportunity to participate and shape decisions about our national approach to tackling it.

I would like to thank everyone who participated in the consultation to develop our Net Zero Nation: Public Engagement Strategy for Climate Change. Your views have been extremely valuable in ensuring that this is a strategy that works for everyone across Scotland. The fantastic response and engagement we've had shows that there is a real appetite for our public engagement approach on climate change.

Our efforts to both mitigate and adapt to climate change will fundamentally change the way we live. Some of this won't be easy, but these changes are required and are already happening. They will result in positive outcomes for people, such as health and wellbeing benefits from active travel and reduced pollution, cost savings from energy efficiency, and also place-based benefits, such as creating more resilient communities that are cleaner, less congested, and more accessible.

Recognising the need to take citizens with us on the journey to net zero, in 2020 we established an independent Citizens' Assembly on Climate Change. The Assembly brought together a representative group of around 100 people who together provided public recommendations on Scotland's approach to climate change, which will be used to influence policy decisions. This shows our commitment to the participative approach set out in this strategy and our commitment to the principles of being an Open Government.

This year the eyes of the world will be on Scotland, with the United Nations Climate Change Conference – COP26 – being held in Glasgow in November. It is critical that this summit is inclusive and the discussions and outcomes put people, communities and a just transition at their centre.

I want people to come to Glasgow and receive a warm Scottish welcome. I also want the people of Scotland to engage with this opportunity to play our part in creating the conditions for a successful summit by showcasing the breadth of climate action and leadership across Scotland, setting examples for others to follow. It is also crucial that COP26

delivers a positive legacy for the people of Scotland, increasing awareness of our targets and the collective effort required, and inspiring greater action to help achieve net zero.

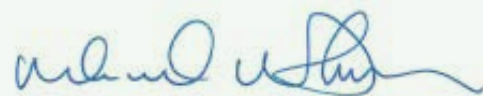
We know that public support is crucial in order to successfully achieve the transformational societal change required to reach net zero. We also know that the government cannot be the only communicator on climate change issues. This strategy is therefore aimed at climate change communicators – or ‘trusted messengers’ – who can more effectively engage people in their sphere of influence.

This document sets out how we will continue to work with these messengers over the next five years to deliver a green recovery from the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic whilst moving towards our net zero targets. By making changes in partnership, I’m confident we can build a fairer and more sustainable society together.

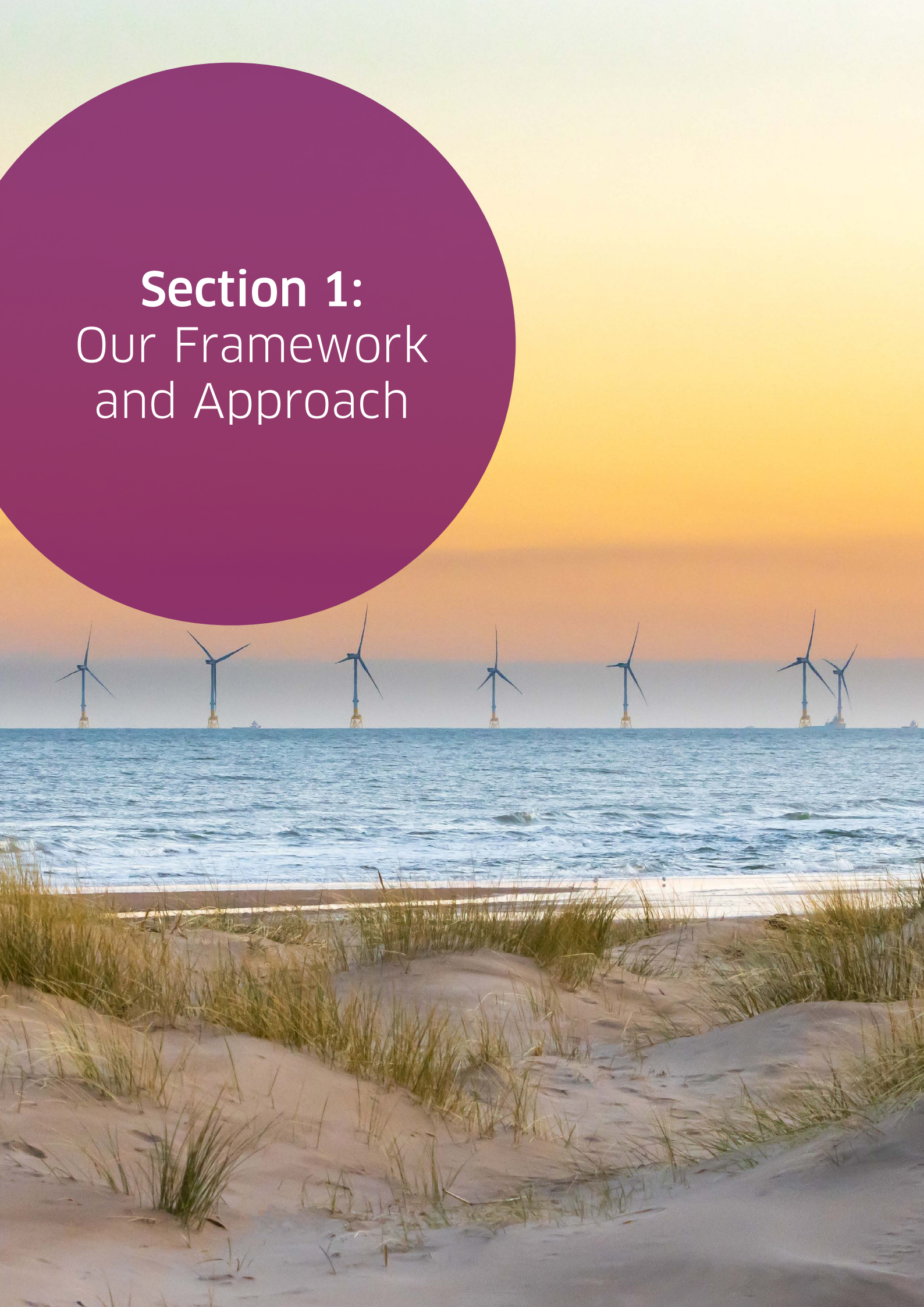
The scale of the challenges we have faced over the last 18 months have been unprecedented in recent times. It has also been a period where we have appreciated what makes Scotland special: our people, our communities, and our values. We have come together as a society to meet the challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic – to safeguard our communities, save jobs, and save lives. Throughout all of this, we have maintained our commitment to climate change. The context which we are working in has changed, but our commitment to our end goal of becoming a net zero nation by 2045 has never wavered.

Our climate change ambitions are at the heart of our green recovery from the pandemic as we respond to the twin crises of the climate emergency and nature loss. Put simply, a green recovery is one that captures the opportunities for our just transition to net zero – which means creating green jobs, developing sustainable skills and nurturing wellbeing. The update to the 2018 Climate Change Plan, published in December 2020, sets out our policies and proposals to meet our future emissions reduction targets, and is a key strategic document in our green recovery from the pandemic.

During the pandemic, we have seen every aspect of our lives change, from how we work, how we travel, to how we communicate with one another. Although this has been incredibly difficult for many people, it has also shown us all that it’s possible to do things differently, to re-imagine how our society and economy works. Our continued response to climate change and our journey towards becoming a net zero nation must be a truly national endeavour and one in which everyone in Scotland has a role to play and is enabled to get involved. This includes governments, organisations, businesses, communities, and individuals all coming together to play our part. We look forward to continuing to work with you all closely over the next five years.



Michael Matheson
Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero,
Energy and Transport

A photograph of an offshore wind farm at sunset. The sky is a gradient of orange and yellow, transitioning into a blue sea. In the foreground, there is a sandy beach with clumps of tall, dry grass. A large purple circle is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the text.

Section 1: Our Framework and Approach

Our Framework for Engagement

Our Vision

Everyone in Scotland recognises the implications of the global climate emergency, fully understands and contributes to Scotland’s response, and embraces their role in the transition to a net zero and climate ready Scotland.

Strategic Objectives

Understand

Communicating Climate Change

People are aware of the action that all of Scotland is taking to tackle climate change and understand how it relates to their lives

Participate

Enabling Participation in Policy Design

People actively participate in shaping just, fair and inclusive policies that promote mitigation of and adaptation to climate change

Act

Encouraging Action

Taking action on climate change is normalised and encouraged in households, communities and places across Scotland

Actions

- Develop and implement our public communications approach to ensure people understand Scotland’s climate ambitions and the policies that will be required to reach them
- Collaborate with key delivery organisations to ensure information reaches key audiences, including through initiatives such as Climate Week
- Working with Adaptation Scotland and others to continue to provide consistent messaging that makes clear the impact of climate change locally, nationally and globally
- Build on Scotland’s Climate Assembly to develop further deliberative approaches
- Continue to facilitate meaningful climate engagement and conversations with people and audiences not currently engaged on the topic
- Ensure those affected by our transition and climate impacts are engaged in the design and delivery of key policies
- Develop our approach to ensuring key climate change policies exhibit the principles of Open Government through meaningful consultation and participation
- Develop a new approach to ensuring a genuine role in policy processes for young people
- Continue to champion and fund community-led climate action
- Support trusted messengers to promote climate literacy
- Embed climate change within formal education
- Use marketing and communications activity to ensure that households understand the changes needed to help Scotland get to net zero
- Utilise the potential of the arts, creativity and heritage to inspire and empower culture change
- Work with partners to help people make connections to nature and biodiversity
- Promote a place-based approach to behaviour change

Guiding Principles

- Our approach will be **inclusive** and accessible to all
- Our approach will **put people first** and place people at the heart of all that we do
- We will listen to and engage with experts to ensure an **evidence-based** approach
- Climate justice and a **just** transition will be embedded within our approach
- We will continue to encourage a **participative** society with two-way dialogue on climate change
- We will take a **positive** approach that outlines a vision for climate action that promotes the many benefits
- We will be **open and transparent** to make sure people can see and understand our actions

Introduction

About this strategy

Transforming Scotland into a net zero nation by 2045 presents an opportunity to re-imagine the nation we live in¹. Whilst there is no denying the significant challenge and urgency we face in addressing the global climate emergency, it brings with it a chance to create a better, fairer, and more inclusive society for everyone: a society in which individuals and communities across Scotland are actively involved in making the decisions that affect them.

Widespread participation and engagement are essential if we are to successfully limit the effects of climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, preparing for the impacts that are already locked in, and harnessing the opportunities to innovate during the net zero transition. By putting people at the heart of everything we do, we aim to enable and empower everyone in Scotland to be a part of shaping our transition in a just and fair way, building a shared vision for the societal transformation needed to become a net zero and climate resilient nation.

In this Public Engagement Strategy, we set out our overarching framework for engaging the people of Scotland in this challenge over the next five years. We outline the actions the Scottish Government is taking to raise awareness and understanding, enable participation in decision making, and encourage all sectors of society to act on climate change. This strategy will serve as a guiding framework for the design and implementation of public engagement on climate change across all parts of government, to ensure our engagement activities are coordinated, coherent and consistent.

We recognise that the government are not, should not, and cannot be, the only ones who engage with the public on these issues. In delivering the strategy we will continue to collaborate with trusted messengers across Scotland. The main audience for this strategy is therefore trusted messengers – individuals and organisations working to engage the public, from small local groups up to stakeholders delivering national campaigns. We also welcome and encourage engagement with the strategy from other audiences and we have provided a glossary of key terms (see Annex D) to help make this document more accessible to those with less knowledge and experience of climate change.

The specific focus of this strategy is on educating, engaging participation and encouraging action on climate change. We believe that building widespread public awareness, understanding, and motivation to act on climate change is essential for achieving our climate goals. However, we know that this alone is not enough. Public engagement must be supported by policies and programmes that facilitate the required reconfiguration of societies, institutions and infrastructure to create an enabling environment for net zero lifestyles. In our update to the 2018 Climate Change Plan (see box below), we set out the concrete actions the Scottish Government is taking to put us on a pathway to meet our emissions reduction targets. It also sets out the roles that private and public sectors will have to take on to enable us to achieve our climate ambitions.

Throughout the strategy we consider the roles of both climate change mitigation and adaptation. We are already seeing warming in Scotland,

with more extreme weather events and rising sea levels and as a nation we must mitigate further changes and adapt to those already locked in. Given, at the time of publishing, we are at a critical juncture for mitigating climate change, the emphasis is therefore on actions towards achieving net zero. However, this strategy will continue to build public understanding of climate risks and our strategies for reducing vulnerability to them and building resilience to ensure the nation is climate ready.

A draft version of this Public Engagement Strategy was published for consultation in December 2020. Consultees were asked 19 questions relating to key aspects of the draft strategy's approach, including its vision, principles and objectives, as well as sections relating to the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26), the green recovery from Coronavirus (COVID-19) and monitoring and evaluation. In total, from the consultation's launch to its close at the end of March 2021, 178 responses were received – 138 from organisations and 40 from individuals. These responses were then analysed between April and June 2021 and the report was published². The consultation exercise has allowed us to reflect the views of people and organisations integral to delivering the national endeavour required, including the public, private and non-government organisations as well as communities and individuals. The findings of the exercise have informed the development of this strategy. We are also publishing the strategy in alternative formats, such as large print, Easy Read, and British Sign Language, to enhance its accessibility.

Update to the 2018 Climate Change Plan

In 2020, we published an update to the 2018 Climate Change Plan to account for the new targets set out within the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 (as amended by the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019), which includes our commitment to reaching net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045. The Plan update also reflects that the 2019 Act enshrined our commitment to a just transition into law, ensuring everyone can access the opportunities of the transition and no one is left behind.

The Plan update sets out our strategic direction, containing the policies and proposals that will put us on a pathway to meet our emissions reduction targets. Collectively these policies will require societal changes, impacting how we travel, heat our homes and how we consume goods and services.

Open, transparent, and participatory approaches to policy development and government decision making with people, places and business are at the heart of our approach. The Public Engagement Strategy is a key part of the Scottish Government's approach to delivering upon the ambition of the updated Climate Change Plan. A broad approach to public engagement will be required in order to include people and communities in the national effort required to reach our climate change goals.

The wider context

Since 2009, there has been a legislative requirement to publish a public engagement strategy for climate change. It has been eight years since our previous strategy, *Low Carbon Scotland: A Behaviours Framework*, was published. In that time much has changed, most recently due to the impact of COVID-19, which has altered all of our lives in many ways, and with the spotlight being firmly placed on Scotland ahead of the UN Climate Change Conference being hosted in Glasgow in November 2021.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound effect on our health, our way of life, and on the society and economy. It has starkly demonstrated how important it is to be prepared for system-wide stressors and shocks such as those which are likely to occur in future due to climate change. The consequences of this crisis will undoubtedly be felt for years to come, and it is therefore extremely important that we look ahead and ensure that we deliver an economic and social recovery that changes our country for the better.

The restrictions necessary to control the virus have been extremely challenging for most people. In some cases, however, we have also seen glimmers of what life could be like in a low carbon society – and the benefits that can come from this – as some people made a shift towards lower carbon behaviours. We have seen, for example, increased walking and cycling³, more people enjoying time in nature⁴, the adoption of more sustainable practices such as repairing clothes rather than buying new ones⁵, and a reduction in food

waste as households chose to cook more meals at home⁶.

The Scottish Government has been clear in its commitment to delivering a green recovery from COVID-19 that prioritises economic, social, and environmental wellbeing, and responds to the twin crises of climate change and nature loss. Our vision for Scotland is to create a wellbeing economy⁷ – that is, a society that is thriving across economic, social and environmental dimensions, and that delivers sustainable and inclusive growth for Scotland's people and places. The 10 year National Strategy for Economic Transformation will utilise the expertise of business, trade unions and economists to deliver a focused plan of actions and projects to help transform our economy and help us reach net zero.

We are already taking action to ensure that our recovery delivers on these aims over the current parliamentary session, for example: our £2 billion Low Carbon Fund; our investment of £1.6 billion in heat and energy efficiency in our homes and buildings; establishing a £62 million Energy Transition Fund to support oil and gas diversification; delivering a £100 million Green Jobs Fund; providing £60 million for industrial decarbonisation; committing £500 million for transformational active travel infrastructure; and providing significant employment and training opportunities for young people through our Youth Guarantee, particularly in rural areas to help to ensure that our young people have the necessary skills and training to work in sectors which support our green recovery.



A couple wheeling and cycling together. Walking, wheeling, and cycling are at the top of Scotland's sustainable transport hierarchy.

Realising the full potential of this investment in a green recovery depends upon widespread public support and buy-in. A just transition to a net zero nation and a wellbeing economy requires a societal transformation as much as technological transformation. This Public Engagement Strategy lays out the approach we are taking to engage people and communities in our green recovery, to ensure they not only deliver a greener Scotland but also a fairer and more equal society.

We are publishing this strategy as Scotland prepares for COP26. This international spotlight on Glasgow provides us with a unique opportunity to raise awareness and engage the people of Scotland in climate change. It is also our chance to demonstrate Scotland's leadership in public engagement to international audiences. The approach we set out in this strategy has been honed through our experience of engaging with the public on climate change for over a decade. This experience has given us valuable insights which we can share with organisations and governments across the world and highlight the crucial role of public engagement in addressing the climate emergency.

Our Revised Approach to Engagement

Public engagement has always been a core component of our response to climate change, however, this new strategy signals a raising of our ambition to reflect our recognition of the vital role of public engagement in facilitating the societal transformation to a net zero nation.

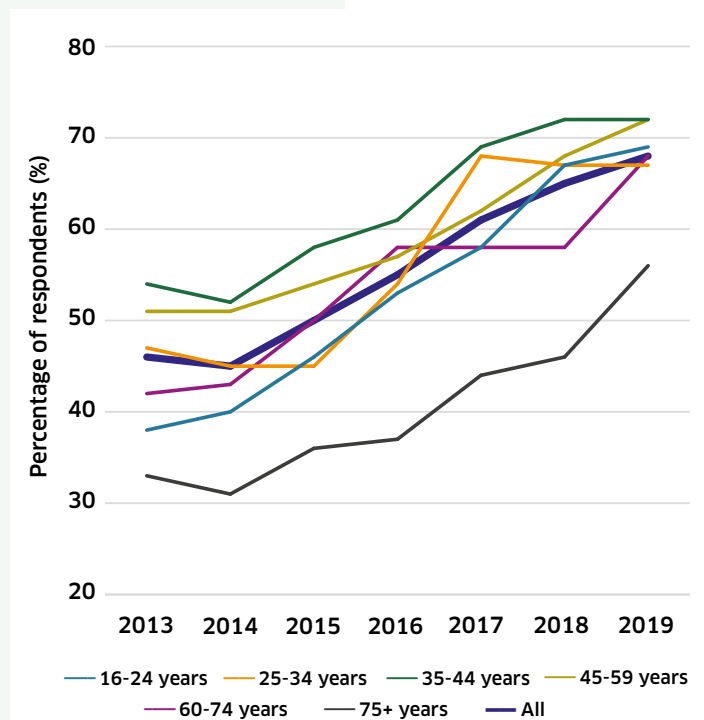
Our emissions reductions targets are greater now than they've ever been. These ambitious targets demand ambitious action across society, including changes to how we heat our buildings, how we travel, and how we use our land. The Climate Change Committee (CCC) has estimated that over 60% of the measures needed to reach net zero emissions will require some degree of behavioural or societal change⁸. It is clearer than ever that we all have a part to play in this national endeavour, as members of households, communities, businesses, and local and national governments. This includes our roles as consumers, but also as employees and employers, influencers and investors, volunteers and voters⁹. Achieving our climate targets fundamentally depends upon the involvement and support of the people of Scotland in all aspects of their lives.

We have seen a significant increase in the level of concern about climate change since our previous public engagement strategy was published in 2013. The most recent results from the Scottish Household Survey show that 68% of adults in Scotland agree that climate change is an immediate and urgent problem, up from 46% in 2013¹⁰.

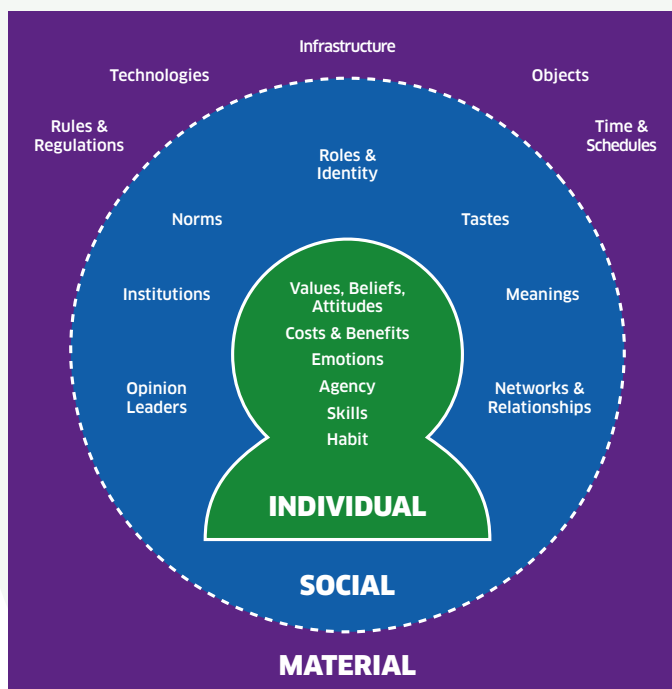
For the first time, the majority of every age group view climate change as an immediate and urgent problem, as shown in Graph 1. The largest increase is amongst 16-24 year olds, increasing from 38% in 2013 to 69% in 2019.

However, this large increase in concern has not been matched by evidence of a comparative increase in people taking action to tackle climate change¹¹. This suggests the need for a revised approach that better reflects the role of public engagement in facilitating the societal shift to net zero.

Graph 1: Percentage of adults perceiving climate change as an immediate and urgent problem by age over time (Scottish Household Survey, 2013-2019)



Our 2013 public engagement strategy – Low Carbon Scotland: A Behaviours Framework – had a strong focus on behaviour change. The central message of the strategy was to encourage action from individuals and households in 10 Key Behaviour Areas (KBAs). It also introduced the ISM (Individual, Social, Material) tool¹². This tool helps policy-makers and practitioners consider the wide spectrum of factors that shape people’s behaviours when designing and delivering policy to influence behaviour.



The individual, social, and material factors which influence behaviour

With this new strategy, we are setting out a more holistic, systemic approach to public engagement with the aim of building a strong social mandate for the society-wide, long-term changes needed to transition Scotland to a net zero nation. This approach recognises that, whilst behaviour change at the individual and household level is a key element of the transition to net zero (see Annex A), we

cannot rely on nudging people towards one or two key low carbon behaviours. Achieving net zero requires a more fundamental shift in the way we live our lives, including changes to underlying social and cultural norms, so that low carbon behaviour becomes part of the fabric of our society and people have the information and access they need to take advantage of new infrastructure and technology as it becomes available.

Our approach to public engagement therefore focuses on connecting people with what is happening in the transition to net zero. We aim to promote meaningful engagement with people’s values, identities, and concerns to facilitate a society-wide response to the climate emergency. This includes effectively communicating climate change to increase awareness and understanding of how Scotland, collectively, is addressing the climate emergency and the implications for individuals and communities. It also means providing processes and forums through which people can participate in policy development, to ensure there are opportunities to help shape the actions we take so the transition is fair and just for everyone. Finally, it also includes normalising net zero lifestyles within our places and communities, shifting aspirations and expectations towards a ‘new normal’.

We know that our lives are shaped not only by individual and social factors, but also by the material environment around us. Infrastructural, economic, and institutional factors can constrain and dictate the options available to people. Therefore, this Public Engagement Strategy is one part of a wider programme of action on climate

change by the Scottish Government that addresses these structural factors. This includes the policies and programmes set out in the update to the 2018 Climate Change Plan, Scotland’s Second Climate Change Adaptation Programme, the draft Heat in Buildings Strategy and the National Transport Strategy, as well as the ongoing programme of work to deliver a just transition.

The strategy’s vision directly contributes towards Scotland’s National Performance Framework¹³ which sets the overall purpose and vision for Scotland and tracks progress using a set of national outcomes. In particular, the strategy promotes the type of society where people value, enjoy, protect and enhance our environment, and where communities are inclusive, empowered, resilient, and safe.

The strategy has also been designed in line with the Participation Framework, which is a fundamental element of Scotland’s Open Government approach. It recognises the important role that people (individuals, communities, civil society organisations, professional stakeholders, and experts) have in bringing different types of knowledge and experiences to address the challenges faced by government¹⁴. This Public Engagement Strategy sets out how we will facilitate widespread participation in addressing the climate emergency.

Our New Approach



Our Strategic Objectives

We have three strategic objectives:

Understand: People are aware of the action that all of Scotland is taking to tackle climate change and understand how it relates to their lives.

Participate: People actively participate in shaping just, fair and inclusive policies that promote mitigation of and adaptation to climate change.

Act: Taking action on climate change is normalised and encouraged in households, communities and places across Scotland.

These objectives guide our approach and apply to our engagement on a green recovery and wider engagement on climate change. This includes our just transition to a net zero society. These objectives are based on significant engagement with the public and experts in climate change engagement. In 2019, participants in the Big Climate Conversation called for a more just and systemic policy approach with participation, awareness raising, and education all highlighted as important elements of action on climate change¹⁵.



Father and daughter exploring ruins from an old Iron Age fortress made from stacked stones, Isle of Lewis, Outer Hebrides.

Objective 1 – Understand

Our approach to tackling climate change and ensuring a green recovery has people and fairness at its heart. In order to achieve the national effort needed to transform our economy and society we need to bring people with us. We must communicate our approach and the changes that are coming in an engaging and relevant way which caters to every audience.

In Scotland we are proud of the world-leading approach we are taking to tackle climate change, but we understand the need to improve how we communicate it to individuals and communities. We recognise there are many local, regional and national organisations that are often the most effective communicators and trusted messengers. They are able to reach the different groups, communities or sectors within their sphere of influence, particularly those who are less engaged or have a certain distrust of government messaging. We will therefore work closely with these trusted messengers in order to reach all parts of Scottish society.

We are committed to ensuring that:

People are aware of the action that all of Scotland is taking to tackle climate change and understand how it relates to their lives.

Our updated Climate Change Plan sets the policies and proposals to meet future emissions reduction targets, as well as demonstrating how we will deliver a green recovery in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Plan update has implications for all corners of Scottish society.

Given its importance, it is crucial that we as a government communicate these policies positively and effectively, without using jargon or technical language, so that people and communities understand what it will mean for them. We will communicate using a range of communication channels, including both traditional (printed media, out-of-home, radio) and digital (website, social media) forms of communication to ensure that messaging is accessible for all, particularly those least engaged.

Objective 2 – Participate

Actions to mitigate and adapt to climate change will be transformational across all of society, affecting how we all live our lives on a daily basis. Given these policies will be so far-reaching, it is vital that constructive dialogue with people and communities is at the heart of developing climate policy, including in our green recovery from COVID-19.

We are committed to ensuring that:

People actively participate in shaping just, fair and inclusive policies that promote mitigation of and adaptation to climate change

The Scottish Government is committed to being an Open Government where citizens are co-designing the policies which affect their lives both now and in the future. This extends to our approach to climate policy.

We are building on our experience of developing public climate conversations. We established Scotland's Climate Assembly. We will develop this approach further by delivering an innovative, comprehensive and consistent approach to participation in climate change policymaking.

Objective 3 – Act

Public concern about climate change and the environment has steadily risen over the past decade. In 2019, levels of concern rose to new levels following increased media coverage of the need for urgent international action in light of the IPCC’s special report on 1.5°C global warming¹⁶. These concerns were reinforced with the publication of the IPCC’s 2021 working group report which warned of the ‘imminent risk’ of hitting 1.5°C global warming¹⁷.

The transformation required to reach net zero is fundamentally a social one. The CCC calculate that over 60% of changes required to reach net zero will be, at least in part, behavioural or societal. Whilst we have seen concern and public attitudes increasing over recent years, we have not seen the same changes in individual behaviours.

We are committed to ensuring that:

Taking action on climate change is normalised and encouraged in households, communities and places across Scotland

In order to make these changes, and mainstream low carbon lifestyles, we will need to create the necessary conditions for action to be taken. This will include ‘material’ changes including legislation and infrastructure, many of which are included within the update to the 2018 Climate Change Plan. Crucially, it will also require shifting of social norms and increased ‘climate literacy’ across the population. Increasing our levels of knowledge about climate change (‘climate literacy’) will ensure people know why they are being asked to change certain behaviours. Generating positive social norms will provide a facilitating environment for change.


Change often starts at a local level where the people and places we interact with are critical factors in how we live our lives. Community action can also be a major driver in bringing about positive change with wide-ranging co-benefits. Section 2 of this strategy provides

some case study examples of how community action is helping to normalise climate action.

In order to achieve the emissions reduction aspects of this strategic objective, we will need to engage with all corners of society, using trusted messengers to reach different audiences in new and innovative ways. We also need to draw more attention to the need for climate change adaptation and resilience, building greater public understanding of climate risks facing Scotland in an increasingly changing world.

Within this document we set out the steps we will take at the national level to progress these objectives. In the next section we also outline our principles for public engagement to reflect the approach we wish to take, building on learning from leading research in climate change engagement.

Principles for our Public Engagement



The following principles will be embedded throughout the public engagement activity included within this strategy.

Positive

We are committed to creating an uplifting vision which people can relate to, understand, and be motivated to achieve. Our green recovery from COVID-19 and our transition to a net zero nation and wellbeing economy bring numerous opportunities with potential benefits to our health, wellbeing, and local communities. It is important that our public engagement

includes a renewed focus on these opportunities and benefits. People can make a real difference and our engagement must highlight this¹⁸.

The actions required to combat and adapt to climate change can create a better, and fairer, society for everyone. For example, using active travel (walking, wheeling or cycling) where possible can lead to positive health and wellbeing benefits. Reducing food waste by only buying what you need to eat, and eating greener or growing your own food where possible can save money while improving your diet.

Putting People First

Decarbonising our nation will cause significant disruption to people's lives. As we transition to net zero, it is therefore crucial that we understand and respond to people's concerns, have an inclusive decision making process, and put people in Scotland at the forefront of everything that we do. A net zero nation is not possible without the support and contribution of our people. Communities are not bystanders in the transition but key players in making it a success.

Participative

Conversations around climate change are essential to encourage positive social norms and dispel negative misconceptions¹⁹. We are reassured by discussing these issues with those around us, listening to others, knowing that climate change is a shared concern and that our combined actions are making a difference²⁰. This type of two-way engagement is required for all of society, including those that will be most affected by the transition to net zero.

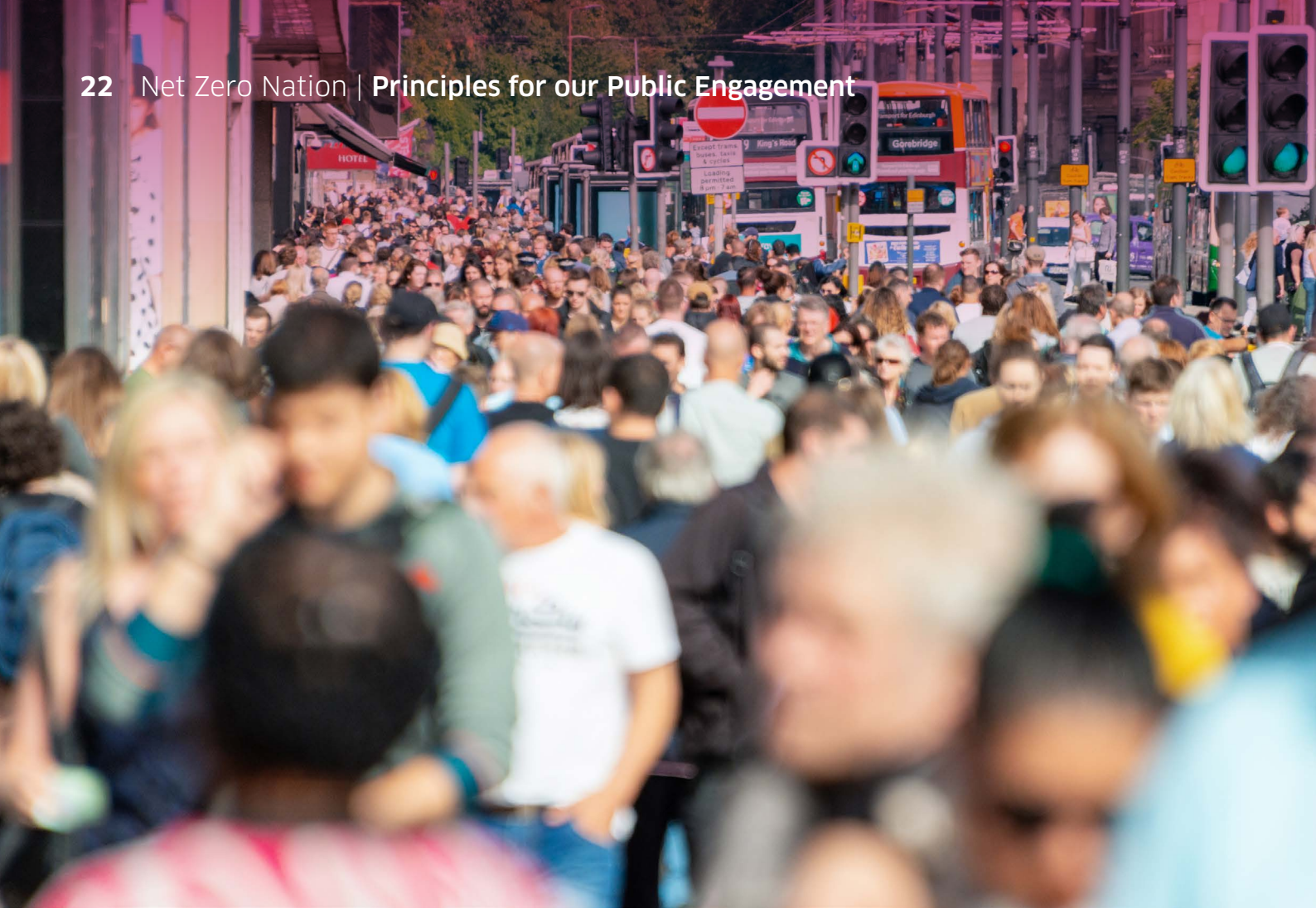
Just

Climate justice and a commitment to a just transition to net zero are integral to the Scottish Government's approach to both mitigating and adapting to climate change. It is important to understand which communities and sectors are most likely to be affected by the transition to net zero and actively engage with them²¹. We are undertaking research to further understand the perception and the impact of climate change on different population groups in Scotland.

This will inform how we shape our engagement. Working with affected communities to design and deliver our transition to net zero will ensure we tackle climate change in a way that is fair, and that reflects their circumstances and experiences.

Just transition

A just transition is both the outcome – a fairer, greener future for all – and the process that must be undertaken in partnership with those impacted by the transition to net zero. Just transition is how we get to a net zero and climate resilient economy by 2045, in a way that delivers fairness and tackles inequality and injustice.



Busy Princes Street in Edinburgh. Engaging on climate change needs to be inclusive and accessible to all.

Inclusive

Scotland is a nation of incredible diversity. It is important that this diversity is reflected in our transition to a net zero society and that we reach all sections of Scottish society, giving everyone an equal say in their future. Our engagement approach will therefore be inclusive and accessible to all. This includes communication that is accessible to people with different levels of 'climate literacy'. We also commit to publishing key communications in accessible formats, wherever possible, to ensure inclusivity across Scotland's population.

Evidence-Based

An evidence-based approach is important for delivering real and lasting social transformation. We will draw on a wide range of research and expertise to support development and delivery of policy. Sources of evidence will include published and commissioned research, as well as direct collaboration with academics, experts, and national and international institutes. We will communicate the findings of research we commission so that all members of the public can engage with the latest developments. By working in collaboration with experts, duplication can be avoided, gaps in research identified, and the evidence base expanded.

Open & Transparent

The Scottish Government is committed to being an Open Government with these values placed at the heart of our National Performance Framework and our Participation Framework. We will be open and transparent in our approach to climate change, to make sure people can see and understand our actions and performance. We will publish progress against our targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions so that people can understand how far we have come and how far is still to go on the route to becoming a net zero nation.

Section 2: Our Activities and Initiatives




This section sets out activities and initiatives that will contribute to meeting the strategy’s three strategic objectives. Some of these are already underway and will be continued, while some will involve new activity.

The activities and initiatives are organised according to the five categories of participation in the Public Participation Spectrum²²: Inform; Consult; Involve; Collaborate; Empower. The International Association for Public Participation identify these as the five key roles that the public can play in any participation process. This model has also been adapted to form the basis of the Scottish Government’s Participation Framework, which guides good practice in participation across government.

Icons are used throughout this section to clearly illustrate where activities align with our objectives. These icons are:

Objective 1: Understand	Objective 2: Participate	Objective 3: Act
		

Case study examples are provided throughout to illustrate activities, denoted by . A more detailed visualisation of how the activities and initiatives relate to the three strategic objectives is shown in the Theory of Change diagram at Annex B.

Inform

Our approach and principles relating to climate change communications are to reach all of Scotland – through the use of trusted messengers and a variety of communication channels – to be positive in our messaging, to ensure messages are evidence-based, and to make messages easy to engage with, by being accessible and avoiding jargon and technical language where possible.

Public Awareness Campaigns

Carefully designed, evidence-based public awareness campaigns can help highlight the relevance of climate change to people in Scotland and play a role in encouraging action. Marketing activity has an important role to play in raising awareness amongst individuals and

organisations of the scale of change needed to tackle climate change, the policies being developed by the Scottish Government to respond to climate change at home and overseas, and the role of government, organisations and individuals in getting Scotland to net zero.

Whilst climate change is largely embedded in the public consciousness, new and compelling narratives are required to create a sense of urgency, agency and buy-in for the changes ahead. Building climate change narratives that resonate with a diverse range of values and concerns is critical for the long-term goal of deepening public engagement.

National campaigns also play an important role in highlighting and normalising sustainable behaviours. Providing information about the lifestyles

changes we need to make can help increase uptake. We know it is vital that people see their individual actions within the context of the bigger picture: if individuals and organisations feel they're tackling this alone, it is easy to lose heart. It is important that we showcase the work done by government and other organisations across Scotland to tackle climate change to help to build belief in the importance of individual action in supporting the transition.

In 2021, we launched a new national marketing campaign – *Let's do Net Zero* (see case study below), to inform people about the climate emergency, the need for action and what Scotland is doing in response. This is an opportunity to raise climate change to the top of the agenda, showcasing the progress Scotland has

already made on tackling climate change while reinforcing the message that significant work is still to be done.

We are planning to run similar campaigns on a regular basis. We are evaluating campaign activity to understand its reach and impact, and will apply learning to future marketing activity. We also commit to including children and young people in future marketing research to ensure their voices are heard.

Our engagement principles are embedded in this activity, particularly in ensuring information is accessible and positive, and that we work with others to ensure messaging is coherent. We know that not everyone in Scotland has the same views and beliefs.

Let's do Net Zero



The *Let's do Net Zero* national marketing campaign was launched in June 2021, to inform people about the climate emergency, help them understand the need for action, and what Scotland is doing in response. Spanning across three different phases, the campaign was shown across television, radio, out-of-home media, print media, social media and other digital forms.

The first phase of content – the Climate Emergency – aimed to raise awareness of the climate emergency amongst the Scottish public and the consequences of inaction. The second phase – Scotland is Taking Action – showcased the range of actions that the Scottish Government is taking to tackle the climate emergency and promoted the need for collective action across all aspects of society. The third and final phase will take place in October 2021, ahead of COP26, and will combine the elements of the previous phases that have been most engaged with.

Developing the marketing campaign has been a cross-government effort, drawing on areas such as transport, waste, energy and food and drink. The campaign content is rooted in evidence. In developing the activity we drew on credible existing research and carried out a series of focus groups to test concepts.

Net Zero Nation Website

During Scotland's Climate Week in 2020 we launched the first stage of our new communications approach, the [Net Zero Nation](#) website. This website provides an accessible and interactive tool for public engagement on climate change over the coming years. It is a 'one stop shop' for individuals, communities, businesses and organisations looking for information about what they can do to tackle the climate emergency in all aspects of their lives, with detailed information on various climate actions and the available support for carrying them out. It also provides information on upcoming events. The website hosts all government produced resources for climate change, including toolkits to hold climate conversations with friends, family, neighbours or staff, and support materials for organisations to get involved in events such as Climate Week.



Key imagery from our Let's do Net Zero campaign. Net Zero Nation hosts all government produced resources for climate change.

Communicating Climate Impacts

The Adaptation Scotland programme²³ is funded by the Scottish Government to support capacity building and action on adaptation and resilience in the public sector, businesses and communities across Scotland. The programme supports the development and expansion of place-based initiatives which drive effective adaptation action across cities, regions, islands and localities, aligned with the interests and needs of communities.

Adaptation Scotland's resources, such as a summary of key future climate projections for Scotland and the Climate Ready Places tool, helps to provide communities and the public (as well as organisations) with the information they need to engage with, and plan for, the impacts of climate change.

The programme also supports public bodies to develop adaptation capabilities that enable them to take adaptation action at the right time and in an effective way through their award-winning Adaptation Capability Framework²⁴.

As well as working with Adaptation Scotland, we also routinely carry out research projects to examine the impacts of climate change in Scotland and how they affect different population groups, and measure public awareness of climate risk. We will use the research findings to inform how best to engage those groups at risk of climate impacts.



A bus shelter decorated in support of COP26, Unst, Shetland Islands.

Ensuring Accessibility

We will communicate through a variety of channels to reach different audiences in ways that are most appropriate and engaging for them. These include both traditional channels, such as print media, radio, out-of-home advertisements, and digital channels, including email, websites, social media. Our partnership with trusted messengers, both within geographical and non-place-based communities, will ensure that we extend our communications reach into those who are least engaged.

Recent research shows that awareness of climate change terms is low across Scotland's population. A survey of over 1,000 Scots found that, while almost half (48%) of people have heard of the climate emergency, familiarity with net zero (38%), the green recovery (28%), planetary health (13%) and a just transition (3%) were much lower²⁵.

Given the current low level of climate knowledge, we know it is important for our communication to be accessible and easily understood. We will avoid using technical language and jargon. Where possible, we will also ensure our key communications are available in accessible formats, such as large print, Easy Read and British Sign Language.

Promoting Positive Messaging

We recognise that climate distress (see case study below) is a reality for many people in Scotland. It is important to consider this in our engagement activity and counteract it where possible through the use of positive and realistic messaging. We will demonstrate how individual action is part of the bigger picture and contributing to positive societal change, which will maintain hope among the public. We recognise that this alone will not prevent climate distress, and we will also use our communications channels to help support those experiencing climate distress and point them towards relevant resources.



Climate Distress

As people learn about and face up to the risks and impacts of climate change, they are likely to experience feelings such as worry, fear or anxiety, as well as other emotions such as sadness, anger, shame or guilt. It is also common to feel mixed emotions, such as both hopeful and worried.

These feelings are understood by climate psychologists to be appropriate responses – they are a sign that a person is in touch with the severity of the climate emergency.

Such emotional responses are also common. For example, one study found around a third (34%) of adults and almost half (45%) of 16-24 year olds felt anxious about the environmental crisis²⁶, and another study with 8-16 year olds found that almost three quarters (73%) were worried about the state of the planet²⁷.

Although these emotions can be considered to be both appropriate and common, they can be distressing and difficult to experience. This can lead people to feel overwhelmed or numb, to want to avoid thinking about climate change, and to push the emotions away or suppress them. However, difficult emotions can be managed in a healthy way that motivates positive action and helps build psychological resilience. This is important because chronic emotional stress and suppression of emotions over the long-term can have negative impacts on health and wellbeing and can undermine people's capacity to get to grips with the climate emergency.

Update to the 2018 Climate Change Plan

Our updated Climate Change Plan includes over 200 policies and proposals aiming to reduce Scotland's greenhouse gas emissions up to 2032. Many of these will impact directly upon the daily lives of the Scottish public, and some will seek to engage members of the public, for example, through consultations or pilots. In many cases, the success of these policies hinges on effective engagement with the public.

In transport, for example, commitments to reduce car kilometres and increase public transport use depends, along with ensuring increased access to infrastructure, on communicating a strong case to the public. Equally, the

success of some buildings policies is dependent on increasing people's awareness of the options available to them to improve energy efficiency and move towards zero emissions heating systems, while supporting them to make well informed choices that are most appropriate for them.

We are now focusing on implementing the updated Plan, and in doing so we will seek to embed public engagement on climate change across all parts of the Scottish Government. As we look ahead to our next full Climate Change Plan, we will ensure that the public is kept aware of upcoming policies both by communicating directly and by working with delivery partners in the public, private and third sectors.

Consult

Enhanced Consultation

Openness is a core value of the Scottish Government's National Performance Framework. The Scottish Government is committed to being an Open Government and is a member of the international Open Government Partnership. An Open Government is one which values openness, accountability, transparency, and involving people.

Improving the way people are able to participate in policymaking is one of the core commitments of our Open Government Action Plan. Our updated Climate Change Plan reflects our commitment to Open Government, containing numerous commitments to consult with the people who will be affected by changes in policy. Work towards meeting this commitment includes the development of a 'Participation Framework'.

We will ensure that this framework guides the approach taken to climate change policy development.

Just Transition

Achieving our shared vision for a just transition, whereby actions taken to reach net zero improve our wellbeing as a nation, is a long-term mission. We have embedded the principle of just transition in our climate change legislation.

The Just Transition Commission was established by Scottish Ministers to advise on how just transition principles could be applied to climate change action in

Scotland. The independent commission has already engaged extensively with industry and with communities across Scotland.

We accept all of the recommendations related to public dialogue and participation and we will continue to work with the Commission to progress these and embed them within our approach. This includes a commitment to carry out more engagement activities with groups identified by the Commission which are most likely to be impacted by the transition.

The Commission placed great emphasis on participation and involvement and this is already reflected in our approach to policymaking. The transition to net zero will affect our day-to-day lives in all sorts of ways and we are committed to ensuring that people, places, and communities are empowered to play a decisive role in shaping these changes.

The Commission also stressed the importance of planning. In response, we have set out our approach in a National Just Transition Planning Framework. The principles of co-design and co-delivery are central. We will be coordinating the development of key transition plans and each will be co-designed and co-delivered with those who stand to be most significantly impacted by the transition to net zero.

We will ensure that those most affected by our transition to net zero are actively engaged in the policies affecting them.

Involve

Scotland's Climate Assembly

Scotland's Climate Assembly has been a crucial part of involving citizens in our transition to net zero and of our commitment to Open Government. The independent Assembly brought together over 100 individuals, representative of the Scottish population, to learn about, discuss, and make recommendations on 'how should Scotland change to tackle the climate emergency in an effective and

fair way?'. The recommendations were published by the Assembly in June 2021, and will require a comprehensive and cross-government response in line with the requirements of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act.

We will ensure that the lessons learned from Scotland's Climate Assembly and the Citizens' Assembly of Scotland are applied to future deliberative approaches to public engagement across climate change and environmental policy.

Scotland's Climate Assembly and Children's Parliament



A commitment to establish Scotland's Climate Assembly was included within the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2019. Over 100 people were recruited, representative of the Scottish population, and deliberated on evidence from over 100 expert speakers. They met virtually between November 2020 and March 2021 to respond to the question: 'How should Scotland change to tackle the climate emergency in an effective and fair way?'. They laid their full report²⁸, containing 81 recommendations, in the Scottish Parliament on 23 June 2021. By law, the Scottish Government have six months to respond to their recommendations.

Scotland's Climate Assembly Members were aged 16 and over, so the Children's Parliament were invited to support the participation and engagement of younger children across Scotland, to ensure their views, experiences, and ideas informed the discussions and recommendations. During Assembly meetings the views and insights from the young investigators were shared with the Assembly members through video contributions. A smaller group of adult Assembly members also met with the child investigators to discuss the recommendations being drafted. The children's Calls to Action are fully integrated with the adults' Recommendations in the Assembly's report. Children's participation in Scotland's Climate Assembly has been a unique and significant realisation of children's right to participate in decision making processes, at a historic moment in time as children's human rights outlined in the UNCRC becomes part of Scots Law. They took a hope-based, solution-focused approach underpinned by a commitment to upholding and further realising children's human rights, with the support of climate distress experts²⁹, to ensure children felt valued, supported and empowered in this process.

Climate Engagements and Conversations

Engaging in conversations about climate change as part of our daily lives plays a vital role in creating the social change required across the country. Conversations with friends, family, colleagues, and in your local community are vitally important to broaden climate knowledge beyond the 'bubbles' of engaged groups. The Scottish Government has led the way in developing and promoting climate conversations³⁰ as a means to share views and improve climate literacy, culminating in the Big Climate Conversation in 2019.

We will continue to develop and promote climate engagements and conversations throughout Scotland in a variety of formats including with increased use of digital approaches. We will provide resources, such as toolkits with key messaging, definitions and examples of positive behaviours, to facilitate climate conversations and events across the nation, and we will signpost to funding for these types of events where available. All resources will be hosted on our Net Zero Nation website.

We will continue to develop and facilitate meaningful climate engagements and conversations at both regional and national level as a part of our green recovery from COVID-19 and beyond.

Facilitating Participation from Children and Young People

2019 was a landmark year for youth engagement in climate change, as young people across the world stepped up and demanded climate action to protect their futures. In March 2021, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill was unanimously passed by the Scottish Parliament, signalling a revolution in children's rights in Scotland. When the Bill receives royal assent, it will deliver a proactive culture of everyday accountability for children's rights across public services in Scotland. The Bill will ensure that public authorities take proactive steps to ensure the protection of children's rights in their decision making and service delivery.

We are already seeing progress in this important area. Scotland's Climate Assembly included a parallel children's process (see case study above) alongside their deliberations and the Scottish Government has developed enhanced youth engagement opportunities for ahead of, during, and following COP26.

We will continue to look for opportunities to ensure that our young people have a voice in our future and can influence policy design.

2050 Climate Group



There has been a significant increase in recent years of those aged 16 to 24 viewing climate change as an urgent problem (up from 38% in 2013 to 69% in 2019). Decisions made today will shape the climate for our young people. So it is not only right that we hear the voice of their generation, it is important that they are able to actively participate and hold governments to account.

One of Scotland's pioneering organisations in this field is the 2050 Climate Group. This organisation began as a joint project between Young Scot and the 2020 Climate Group to develop young leaders, or '2050 Ambassadors', in Scotland. This group of young leaders then became the 2050 Climate Group, which aims to engage, educate and empower young people in Scotland to lead transformational change towards a low carbon Scotland.

Since 2014, the Scottish Government has supported the 2050 Climate Group to deliver climate leadership training to over 500 young people (aged 18 to 30), providing them with the skills, knowledge, networks, and opportunities they need to lead action on climate change. Actively engaged to ensure that young people's views on climate change are taken into account during policy development, they sit on the Scottish Government's Just Transition Commission. The Group regularly provides information on consultation, raises awareness of climate change developments amongst Scotland's young people, and has provided evidence to the Scottish Parliament's committees, including most recently on the updated Climate Change Plan.

COP26 engagement and legacy

The 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26), an international summit held in Glasgow, represents a critical moment in the global fight against climate change. Tackling the climate emergency and setting the world on course for net zero emissions within a generation will require a truly global response which has equity and fairness at its heart. To reflect the importance of both public engagement and ensuring people are at the heart of climate policy, we have identified "people" as one of our two key themes for COP26, alongside "just transition".

It is crucial that COP26 delivers a positive legacy for the people of Scotland and the world. In line with this Public Engagement Strategy, we aim to use the opportunity presented by COP26 to: increase awareness of the domestic and international action we are taking to tackle climate change; inspire greater action to support our national endeavour towards net zero; and ensure that people are left with a positive impression of our country, people, culture, nature, and heritage, including our commitments to social justice, just transition and a wellbeing economy.

We are committed to delivering an inclusive summit that engages sectors and communities in Scotland and beyond. COP26 being held in Scotland provides opportunities to engage the Scottish public before, during and after the summit.

We will do this, for example, through initiatives like Climate Week with a focus on COP26; encouraging people and organisations to make climate action commitments for the two weeks of the summit and beyond; and working to create

a COP26 legacy. We are also engaging with key messengers in the education, cultural and sporting sectors to use the profile of COP26 to promote the benefits of climate action with their audiences.

During the summit, we have partnered with the Glasgow Science Centre to deliver 'Our World, Our Impact' (see case study below). This is a mainly virtual programme focused on the following six themes: environmental science; energy; transport and travel; food; our green futures; and climate justice.

Our World, Our Impact



Glasgow Science Centre has been working in partnership with the Scottish Government to engage the Scottish public on COP26 and the science of our changing climate through the programme 'Our World, Our Impact'. The programme makes climate science relevant to everyday life, through interactive online events, Q&A sessions with climate researchers, activities and challenges, magazines and community radio slots, as well as digital schools' resources.

Between October 2020 and March 2021, during the COVID-19 pandemic, Phase 1 of the programme reached 2.5 million people across Scotland, including schools and community groups in areas of deprivation, through a range of engagement platforms:

- **Curious About: Our Planet** – an online portal for engaging with the science of the climate crisis, hosting content from the Glasgow Science Centre and partners. The three day festival ran in February 2021 with 11,000 visits to live online events. 72% of attendees agreed that the festival encouraged them to think about what they could do to tackle climate change.
- **Learning Lab** – a digital educational offer engaging teachers and pupils through curriculum-based lesson plans and Meet the Researcher sessions, even during school closures.
- **Spark and Spark of Science** – family magazine and community radio slots reaches those without access to digital technologies.

Glasgow Science Centre will deliver Phase 2 of Our World, Our Impact in the lead up to, and following on from COP26, both on existing digital engagement platforms and through in-person delivery.

Our programme of engagement events in Glasgow throughout the duration of the summit will help ensure a positive legacy for youth engagement and participation, including, for example, support for the 2050 Climate Group and the Malawi Scotland Partnership to develop youth leadership in Scotland and Malawi. Another example is working with the UK Government to ensure opportunities for people across Scotland to engage with the summit's 'Green Zone'. COP Green Zones are a space where the general public, youth groups, civil society, academia, artists, and businesses can have their voices heard through events, exhibitions, workshops, and talks that promote dialogue, awareness, education and commitments. We will seek to build on this cross-sectoral engagement as part of the COP26 legacy.

Collaborate

Supporting Trusted Messengers

We recognise that governments are often not the most suitable messenger when it comes to communicating policies to different audiences. The best communicators of climate change are those who are trusted by their audiences. These messengers are typically embedded within place-based communities; community organisations or trusts; sports and leisure clubs; cultural organisations; industry sector representatives; member groups such as faith-based groups; and organisations representing protected characteristics.

Findings from the Scottish Household Survey show there is a disparity between different sectors of society with regards to climate change awareness and concern³¹. It is important that we raise public awareness within all groups, particularly those currently less engaged on the topic. We will continue to partner with, and support, a range of networks to promote climate change engagement and motivate individuals and communities to take action. This includes identifying new networks and messengers within communities that have historically been less engaged in climate change conversations and decisions.

We will support trusted messengers providing the latest key messages on what the climate emergency means for them; timely information on Scottish Government policies; guidance on how they can discuss climate change with their audiences; and details of positive actions that can be taken to tackle climate change, which will be rooted in science. We will also signpost them to other support available, including financial support, to hold conversations with their groups and take action.

Building Strong Stakeholder Partnerships

Many of the policies included within the updated Climate Change Plan will require a range of organisations to help deliver them. This could be local authorities, public sector organisations, businesses, the third sector, and community organisations. The policies cut across all sectors of the Scottish economy and will require strong sector and stakeholder collaboration in order to be delivered effectively.

Our public bodies, in particular, are at the frontline of Scotland's climate emergency response, with many already going well beyond their legislative duties to drive action and influence change across society. We will continue to work closely with local government and the wider public sector to engage the public and communities through the vast range of public services they deliver. We will work with organisations across Scotland including through appropriate channels, such as, but not limited to, the Climate Change Communications Stakeholder Group, which consists of external partners interested in climate change, and the Climate Change Communications Working Group, which brings together communicators from key organisations to advise and feedback on government communications.

Our National Just Transition Planning Framework recognises the importance of developing just transition plans in collaboration with all key stakeholders – those liable to be most impacted by the transition.

Some areas of climate change policy, such as electricity regulation and energy markets are reserved to the UK Government. UK Government communications on reserved policies therefore have an impact on the Scottish public. We are working collaboratively with them and will continue to do so in the interest of managing communications effectively. We will work with partners including UK Government, business, public and third sector organisations, and communities to seek a joined up and effective communications approach.

Connecting with Nature

Nature loss and climate change are inextricably linked. Nature-based solutions to mitigating climate change are integral to achieving net zero. They can also help provide a nature-rich future which is vital for ensuring we adapt to the impacts of climate change already locked in.

People's connection with nature is also central to tackling biodiversity loss and the climate emergency. In recent years, particularly in response to the impacts of COVID-19 on everyday life, many people spent more time outdoors, enjoying the benefits from engaging with nature, for their physical and mental wellbeing. NatureScot's Make Space for Nature Campaign³² is building on the connections people have made with nature, and helping to initiate behaviour change.

Our natural environment demonstrates the impacts of climate change and offers an opportunity to demonstrate how nature can be part of the solution.

NatureScot's Climate Change Commitments set out how Scotland will address the key climate change challenges through management of our land and sea, and how NatureScot will support communities to mitigate and adapt to climate change while mainstreaming its own climate change actions to improve resilience and reach net zero.

We will continue to work alongside NatureScot to encourage people and communities to engage with nature and ensure links are made to climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Engaging through Culture and Heritage

Culture and heritage are integral to people's ways of life. By connecting us to our environments and contributing to our senses of belonging, they offer real potential to help deliver the culture and societal change that will be required to support our transition to net zero and adapt to our changing climate.

Culture and heritage projects often present a unique opportunity to engage directly with communities across Scotland. Heritage can develop our understanding of how society and our environments have transformed themselves in the past, building our faith in what might be possible in the future.

The arts, including screen and broadcasting, are a significant communication tool, with the power to help the public to understand

and visualise the potential impacts of climate change, challenge our beliefs and shift ways of seeing and thinking. The documentaries and broadcasts of Sir David Attenborough are only one example of this.

In line with the Culture Strategy for Scotland's ambition for heritage and culture to help transform public thinking on tackling the climate emergency, national public bodies are stepping up their contribution to an environmentally aware and sustainable Scotland. For example, Historic Environment Scotland's Climate Action Plan 2020-2025 sets out how it intends to work towards making our Scotland's historical environmental (e.g. castles, monuments, landscapes) more prepared for and resilient to changes in our climate. It details the organisation's commitment to engaging the public through the historic environment and mainstreaming adaptation and resilience throughout its operations.



A group of young people play together as part of the big band at SCO VIBE, a fusion orchestra project for 12-18 year olds. Credit: Photographer - Fraser Ban

We will work with the culture and heritage sectors to utilise the potential of the arts and heritage to deliver culture change and support pilot projects which raise awareness of climate change, its impacts and the need for action.

Climate Beacons



The Climate Beacons project was instigated by Creative Carbon Scotland following research into effective methods of arts-lead public engagement. The project brings together funded partnerships between cultural and environmental organisations to develop deep-seated and long-term public engagement with climate change.

Each Climate Beacon organises locally relevant and creative public engagement activity in the lead up to, and following on from, COP26. They have the independence to run in a way that is most suited to their locality, while still being supported by a programme-level steering group.

The project launched in June 2021 with seven partnerships, or 'Climate Beacons', across Scotland, situated in Argyll, Caithness and East Sutherland, Fife, Inverclyde, Midlothian, the Outer Hebrides, and Tayside. The projects cover a range of topics, including Scotland's temperate rainforests, climate colonialism, peatland restoration, industrial decarbonisation, the green recovery from COVID-19, and the adaptation of Scotland's islands to climate change impacts.

Empower

Encouraging Community

Climate Action

Communities will play – and already are playing – a fundamental role in Scotland's response to the global climate emergency. Since 2008, the Scottish Government's Climate Challenge Fund (CCF) has made over 1,000 awards, valued at over £110 million, to communities across Scotland. This funding has enabled communities to take direct action on climate change and many projects have focused on engaging with communities on climate change and improving climate literacy.

The current form of the CCF will come to an end in March 2022. Building on a review of the CCF in Spring 2019, we will continue to support community-led climate action as a key part of our transition to net zero. We are working with those involved in community climate action to launch a network of regional Community Climate Action Hubs to ensure that community engagement is co-ordinated and that different approaches can be adopted in different areas depending on local circumstances and priorities. Our Climate Action Towns initiative will empower and support communities to take action on climate change in a way that takes account of the unique challenges and opportunities each town and region face.

We will continue to develop our approach to community climate action to ensure communities are at the forefront of our green recovery and just transition to net zero.

Supporting Climate Change Education

In schools, climate change is addressed through the curriculum in a number of different ways, including through the cross-cutting curriculum theme of Learning for Sustainability. Learning for Sustainability encourages young people and their educators to consider issues of global sustainability and in doing so it can provide the skills to tackle climate change. For example, young people can learn about greenhouse gases in the sciences, assess the impact on the natural landscape in geography, calculate carbon emissions in maths and monitor climate change over time in history. It is important that young people fully understand the wide-ranging extent of climate change and the impacts (both positive and negative) of their actions on the climate. Learning for Sustainability is Scotland's contribution to a broader international approach, reflected in the 2021 Berlin Declaration on Education for Sustainable Development³³.



A group of students from Bo'ness Academy taking part in a Climate Ready Classrooms workshop.

In acknowledgement of the importance of climate education we are committed to implementing our Learning for Sustainability action plan and we are working with the Teach the Future climate education campaign to look at how we can further strengthen and improve the plan. The plan aims to ensure that all young people can experience their entitlement to Learning for Sustainability and that schools and settings adopt robust and effective whole school and community approaches. It focuses action around:

- curriculum and assessment delivery;
- supporting the skills and confidence of educators;
- securing leadership buy-in;
- adapting the learning estate; and
- developing a strategic approach to delivery.

Furthermore, our funding of initiatives such as the Eco-Schools Scotland Programme and Climate Ready Classrooms (see case study below) has helped to ensure that schools consider their environmental impact and that teachers have the skills and confidence to cover this vital area of education.

Education Scotland engages with schools to consider how and in what ways they could further improve their approach to climate education and Learning for Sustainability at school level. This includes initiatives like the Learning for Sustainability awards to showcase the

work of schools, teachers, pupils, and community education providers across Scotland; practitioner and local authority networks; and climate related material delivered via the National e-Learning platform and available to schools across Scotland.

We will work collaboratively with a range of our Learning for Sustainability partner organisations to continue to support education leaders, practitioners and learners to access the right skills and knowledge to learn, and be able to teach, about climate change.

Climate Ready Classrooms



The Scottish Government provided funding to roll out Climate Ready Classrooms across Scottish secondary schools. Targeted at 14-17 year olds, Climate Ready Classrooms helps those taking part to develop their understanding of climate change, its causes and impacts, and prepares the young people to join a national network of carbon literate ambassadors. It uses interactive activities and examples to start a conversation about climate change. Upon completing the course, pupils receive Carbon Literacy accreditation. Climate Ready Classrooms supports a whole school, pupil-led approach to Learning for Sustainability.

Research shows that a large number of educators feel they have not received adequate training to educate students on climate change, its implications for the environment and societies around the world, and how these implications can be addressed³⁴. A key component of Climate Ready Classrooms is that it also offers Train the Trainer sessions for educators, accredited by the Carbon Literacy Project. This trains educators to deliver carbon literacy training to young people and is suitable for head teachers, teachers, CLD practitioners, and youth and children's workers. The Train the Trainer course informs on climate change and what we can do as a society, as groups, and as individuals to take climate action.

Between December 2019 and March 2021, Climate Ready Classrooms accredited 1,630 pupils who took part in the programme. Over 250 teachers were accredited as a part of the Train the Trainer sessions, and it is projected that they will have trained a further 3,560 pupils in this time.

Promoting a Place-Based Approach

Given how connected people are to the places they live in there is a role for locally framed messages related to climate change that take into account the issues and challenges specific to Scotland's diverse geographies. When people recognise that the global issue of climate change has local implications, they are likely to become more averse to the risks of climate change and more mobilised to act. We will support this by working with messengers to deliver relevant messages which embed the 'think global, act local' concept.

As well as the National Planning Framework 4, new regional spatial strategies and local development plans provide an opportunity to set out a long-term place-based vision for delivering development and infrastructure that responds to the challenges of climate change at all scales.

Established tools such as the Place Standard and emerging local place plans will provide communities with the scope to set out how they see their places develop and improve in the future. The 20 minute neighbourhood concept³⁵ will help to frame discussions about change and development with climate change in mind and we are exploring this further.

We will continue to embed the Place Principle with partners. This principle underlines a commitment to work with local communities in order to improve the lives of people, support inclusive and sustainable economic growth and create more successful places. By engaging people and communities in the re-imagining of our places we can connect people to the many tangible benefits of taking ambitious action to tackle climate change and enable a just transition to net zero.

Monitoring and Evaluation

To ensure we stay on track, it is important that we monitor and evaluate progress towards our strategic objectives. When designing our approach to evaluation, we must consider both feasibility and appropriateness, ensuring our methods are proportionate, cost-effective and efficient. We are also committed to ensuring that all our reporting is accessible and inclusive, using clear and straightforward language, supported where appropriate with images and infographics, case studies, and quotes to illustrate key findings.

In previous public engagement strategies, we have monitored progress using a set of national indicators (see Annex C). In our consultation on the draft strategy, we asked for views on whether there was a better way for us to measure and report our progress. Overall, consultation respondents supported a holistic, multi-method approach that incorporates a range of quantitative and qualitative data, from national performance indicators to individual community stories. Respondents also suggested we report

on progress at various different intervals throughout our five-year implementation period. Based on this feedback, we will take a multi-stranded approach to monitoring and evaluation, as set out below.

1) National indicators

We will use the following three indicators from the Scottish Household Survey to monitor Scottish public awareness and understanding of the climate emergency and the actions they can take. We will continue to publish these statistics each year to provide an indication of Scotland's direction of travel over time¹. Whilst we acknowledge that there is a multitude of factors that will affect these indicators, we expect the programme of work set out within this strategy to make a positive contribution towards these national statistics, in line with our Theory of Change (see Annex B). We will also continue to explore whether there is scope to develop and resource any additional national indicators to improve how we monitor progress.

Indicator	Data Source	Baseline	Data next available
Percentage of people agreeing that climate change is an immediate and urgent problem	Scottish Household Survey (annual)	68% (2019)	2021 (for 2020)
Percentage of people who believe their behaviour and everyday lifestyle contribute to climate change	Scottish Household Survey (biennial)	58% (2018)	2021 (for 2020)
Percentage of people agreeing that they understand what actions they should take to help tackle climate change	Scottish Household Survey (biennial)	74% (2018)	2021 (for 2020)

¹ COVID-19 caused significant disruption to planned data collection activities in 2020 and 2021, which may affect reporting of national performance indicators for this period.

2) Programme evaluation

The successful delivery of this strategy involves the implementation of a wide range of policies and programmes under the three strategic objectives. Therefore, measuring the success of the strategy as a whole requires robust processes for evaluating these various programmes. As the programmes are very varied – from national advertising campaigns to place-based community-led projects – each will need a tailored and bespoke approach to evaluation. We have already established our evaluation strategies for our *Let's do Net Zero* marketing programme and Scotland's Climate Assembly, and we are currently developing these for Community Climate Action, Climate Week and COP26. We will ensure that we have programme-level evaluation strategies for all the major programmes of work set out within this document and will report our findings.

Responses to our consultation highlighted the importance of involving wider stakeholders in our evaluation activity, including recognising the role of community-led methods and data collection. We are committed to working with our delivery partners in designing programme evaluations that not only track progress towards objectives but also provide opportunities for learning and development.

3) Mid-term review

In addition to annual reporting of our key indicators, we also will conduct an interim review of the strategy at the mid-way point of delivery in 2024. We will draw together all the data we have collected from our programme evaluations to date, our national indicators and any bespoke commissioned research to provide an assessment of our overall progress towards our strategic objectives. We will also use this as an opportunity to gather feedback from key stakeholders and delivery partners on what aspects of the strategy they think are working well and what could be improved. The findings of this review will be made available and we will use them to shape and inform the remainder of the strategy's implementation.

4) Full-term evaluation

The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 places a legal duty on the Scottish Government to review the Public Engagement Strategy every five years. We will conduct and make available a full evaluation of this new strategy after five years. This evaluation will build on the mid-term review, incorporating new data collected, including a new and more comprehensive round of feedback from key stakeholders.

Making This Strategy A Success

The publication of this strategy is only the beginning of an ambitious new chapter. For it to be successful, we will need to work collaboratively. This strategy outlines an evidence-based blueprint for public engagement with people at the heart of our transition to net zero. The focus of the three strategic objectives is on increasing public understanding and acceptance of the ambitious policy response necessary for us to achieve our climate change commitments, and on enabling people in Scotland to actively participate in developing that policy and take action to meet our climate ambitions.

Success against this strategy cannot be achieved by working in isolation. It will require the expertise, knowledge and passion of all corners of society including from our local authorities, businesses, third sector organisations and communities. The Scottish public is key to the success of this strategy. They must feel able to engage now and beyond this strategy's lifetime. By working in partnership, as part of a national effort, we can achieve the just and fair transition required to achieve a net zero nation and a climate ready Scotland.

Annex A – Actions That Individuals and Households Can Take

This list is intended only as an indication of the actions people can take. We understand that people need access to support to achieve a number of the actions listed, and the required actions will also change over the lifetime of the strategy. For the most up-to-date information on the actions which individuals and households can take, and the support which is available to facilitate these, please visit www.NetZeroNation.scot



Every day

- ▶ Encourage your workplace, school or community to reduce its impact by considering any positive changes that could be made
- ▶ Talk about your experiences to help normalise action and encourage others to act
- ▶ Consider the wider impacts of your actions, including from any money you have invested



At home

- ▶ Install a room thermostat, invest in smart heating controls and have your boiler checked once a year to ensure it's efficient to help save energy and money
- ▶ Move from a low emissions heating system, such as a heat pump, or a renewable heating system to make your home more efficient
- ▶ Buy low energy models when appliances need replacing, and switch computers, laptops and kitchen appliances fully off (not just on stand-by) when not in use
- ▶ Help nature thrive in any outdoor space you have by allowing vegetation to dieback naturally, planting wildflower meadows, and creating spaces to naturally flood in times of high rainfall



Getting around

- ▶ Walk, wheel or cycle where possible
- ▶ Switch from private car use to public and shared transport to help reduce transport emissions, reduce traffic congestion and make journeys faster
- ▶ Consider the use of electric vehicles, plug-in hybrids and electric bikes instead of petrol and diesel cars
- ▶ Consider your working practices by using video-conferencing and avoiding unnecessary business travel



What you buy

- Opt for items with less packaging
- Move away from 'fast fashion', which is low-cost, mass-produced clothes. Also, think about sharing clothes with friends or buying second-hand items instead of new
- Choose good quality products that will last by checking guarantee periods or use-by dates, and opt to repair before you replace
- Re-use products by buying liquids and dry goods in refillable cartons that you can use again and again



What you eat

- Plan meals by looking at what you already have, making a shopping list and sticking to it, to help reduce food waste
- Recycle unavoidable food waste by using recycling points around your premises or your recycling caddy at home
- If you have space, grow your own fruit and vegetables, providing a range of healthy food and without the packaging
- Choose local, in-season food where possible

Annex B – Theory of Change

Vision Everyone in Scotland recognises the implications of the climate emergency, fully understands and contributes to Scotland’s response, and embraces their role in the transition to a net zero and climate ready Scotland.

Impacts People are aware of the action that all of Scotland is taking to tackle climate change and understand how it relates to their lives

People actively participate in shaping just, fair and inclusive policies that promote mitigation of and adaptation to climate change

Taking action on climate change is normalised and encouraged in households, communities and places across Scotland

Outcomes The Scottish Government and Scotland’s key communicators deliver a consistent and impactful message about our climate change national endeavour

People understand the causes and consequences of climate change and the need for ambitious mitigation and adaptation action

There are many opportunities for people to have their views heard on Scotland’s response to climate change and to hear the perspectives of other people in Scotland

The Scottish Government listens to, acknowledges, and responds to people participating in policy design

People understand the actions that they are encouraged to take and how to take them

Social norms are changed through increased local and community engagement and action on climate change

Indicative Actions **Inform, Consult, Involve, Collaborate and Empower**

Promote and maintain Net Zero Nation website	Deliver public awareness campaigns	Enhance consultation process	Apply lessons from Scotland’s Climate Assembly	Engage through culture and heritage	Encourage community climate action
Ensure accessibility	Promote positive messaging	Deliver Just Transition commitments	Deliver COP26 engagement and legacy	Build strong stakeholder partnerships	Support climate change education
Implement the updated Climate Change Plan	Communicate climate impacts	Involve children and young people	Facilitate climate conversations	Encourage connections with nature	Promote a place-based approach
					Support trusted messengers

Annex C – Progress Against Previous Strategy

We published our previous public engagement strategy, [Low Carbon Scotland: A Behaviours Framework](#), in March 2013. The framework includes a suite of indicators by which we can track our progress against its intended aims. We have used the most recent statistics to assess our performance against these indicators in the table below.

Low Carbon Scotland: A Behaviours Framework – Progress Made

Indicator	Figure (Year)	Performance Direction	Data Source
Percentage of people agreeing that climate change is an immediate and urgent problem	68% (2019)	▲ Performance Improving Increase of 22 percentage points since 2013.	Scottish Household Survey (2019)
Percentage of people agreeing that they understand what actions they should take to help tackle climate change	74% (2018)	= Performance Maintaining Increase of 1 percentage point since 2015 (Those who strongly agree have increased by 8 percentage points)	Scottish Household Survey (2018)
Food – % of people who consume 5 portions or more of fruit and vegetables per day*	21% (2019)	= Performance Maintaining Increase of 1 percentage point since 2013	Scottish Health Survey (2019)
Transport – % of journeys made to work by public or active transport	27% (2019)	▼ Performance Worsening Decrease of 3 percentage points since 2013	Transport Scotland (2019)
Consumption – household waste generated	2.42 million tonnes (2019)	= Performance Maintaining Increase of 9,084 tonnes (0.4%) since 2013	Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (2019)
Energy – % of households who monitor energy use (very or fairly closely)	58% (2018)	= Performance Maintaining Increase of 2 percentage points since 2013	Scottish House Condition Survey (2018)

As part of our 2013 strategy, we also launched a new tool designed to deliver improved outcomes for policy makers and practitioners whose work aims at engaging people and influencing their behaviours. The ISM Tool takes insights from across the main behavioural science disciplines and turns them into a practical tool to be used through the policy process. ISM should be particularly helpful when facing policy problems where significant levels of social change are required.

ISM is based on 'moving beyond the individual' to consider all of the contexts that shape people's behaviours - the **I**ndividual, the **S**ocial, and the **M**aterial.

By understanding these different contexts and the multiple factors within them that influence the way people act every day, more effective policies and interventions can be developed to influence behaviour.

We have learned through delivery of the strategy that while ISM is useful for engaging with policy-makers and identifying barriers, it has been less effective in helping to develop actions or policy options and needs to be embedded into the policymaking process. We are committed to further embedding the ISM tool in the policymaking process and ensuring that behavioural science is considered throughout.

Annex D – Glossary

Adaptation: Responding to the changes that we have already seen in our climate and preparing for the challenges we will face as our climate continues to change. No matter how successful we are at reducing greenhouse gas emissions, it will still be necessary to adapt to the impacts of climate change here in Scotland (which include; warmer, wetter winters, increased extremes of weather and increased risks of flooding) because impacts of past and ongoing global emissions are already locked in. The second Scottish Climate Change Adaptation Programme (SCCAP2), published in 2019, sets out the Scottish Government’s outcome-based approach to building climate resilience³⁶. The next programme is due to be published in 2024 and will respond to the updated independent assessment of climate risks for Scotland.

Climate Emergency: A situation in which urgent action is required to reduce or halt climate change and avoid potentially irreversible environmental damage resulting from it³⁷. A climate emergency was declared in Scotland in April 2019 by First Minister Nicola Sturgeon MSP.

Climate Literacy: Competence or knowledge in the area of climate change, including understanding humans’ influence on climate and climate’s impact on society³⁸.

COP26: The 26th meeting of the Conference Of the Parties (COP), the decision making body of United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), hosted in Glasgow. The COP typically meets annually to discuss and agree the global action required to address climate change.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions: The release of gases that have a negative impact on the planet’s ability to balance incoming and outgoing energy and therefore altering the climate³⁹. As the most dominant greenhouse gas is carbon dioxide (CO₂), greenhouse gas emissions are sometimes referred to as “**carbon emissions**”. However, other greenhouse gases are also contributing to global warming, particularly, nitrous oxide and methane⁴⁰.

Green Recovery: Connecting the need to recover from the COVID-19 crisis with the need to address the climate and ecological crises by prioritising “green” measures within government recovery packages. Also referred to as “**building back better**”, a green recovery will direct government funding towards sustainable and low carbon initiatives, innovation, and infrastructure, such as, active travel, the circular economy, and the growth of the renewable energy sector⁴¹. The Scottish Government is committed to a green recovery from COVID-19.

Just Transition: A just transition is both the outcome – a fairer, greener future for all – and the process that must be undertaken in partnership with those impacted by the transition to net zero. Just transition is how we get to a net zero and climate resilient economy by 2045, in a way that delivers fairness and tackles inequality and injustice.

Mitigation: Actions taken to reduce greenhouse gas emissions or enhance the capture of atmospheric greenhouse gases to prevent climate change. This incorporates a wide range of policies and investment across all sectors, including increasing renewable energy generation, switching to zero emission vehicles, and expanding forests.



Isle of Mull

Net Zero (Emissions): A situation in which any greenhouse gas emissions put into the atmosphere are balanced out by the greenhouse gases removed from the atmosphere, so that the “net” effect is zero emissions. Scotland has committed to ‘net zero’ emissions by 2045. To achieve this, we must reduce the emissions we produce to a minimum and capture any greenhouse gases we cannot avoid emitting through initiatives like tree planting.

Open Government: A commitment to ensuring government strategies and initiatives are based on the principles of transparency, integrity, accountability and stakeholder participation⁴². When we talk about ‘opening up government’, we mean making governments and decision-makers more accessible, more transparent, and more responsive to the citizens they serve. The Scottish Government

is committed to these principles and has been a (local) member of the Open Government Partnership since 2016⁴³.

Wellbeing Economy: An economy in which citizens’ wellbeing drives economic prosperity, stability and resilience, and vice-versa. The wellbeing of people and the planet is at the heart of policymaking, ensuring that growth is equitable and sustainable⁴⁴.

Endnotes

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- 11 See Annex B for a report of progress against key indicators.
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- 14 Information on Scotland's National Performance Framework and how Scotland is performing against it is available at: <https://nationalperformance.gov.scot/>
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- 24 Adaptation Capability Framework <https://www.adaptationscotland.org.uk/how-adapt/your-sector/public-sector/framework>
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- 29 <https://www.climateassembly.scot/sites/default/files/inline-files/Climate%20Anxiety.pdf>
- 30 More information on the Scottish Government's approach to climate conversations is available at: <https://www.climateexchange.org.uk/research/projects/climate-change-public-conversations-series/>
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Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to us at
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