



GET TO ZERO

A CLIMATE ACTION PLAN
FOR EAST RENFREWSHIRE



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1. OUR CONTEXT

East Renfrewshire Council's vision is to be a modern, ambitious council creating a fairer future for all. In relation to the economy and the environment the outcome that we want to achieve is that East Renfrewshire is a thriving, attractive and sustainable place for businesses and residents.

East Renfrewshire is situated to the south of the city of Glasgow. It covers an area of 67 square miles; 85% of which is rural land with the remaining area comprising mainly residential suburbs. The towns of Barrhead and Neilston and the village of Uplawmoor lie to the west of the authority. Newton Mearns Giffnock, Thornliebank, Clarkston, Netherlee and Stamperland are located to the east, together with the smaller villages of Busby, Eaglesham and Waterfoot.

Our population is growing faster than the Scottish average with projections expecting an 8% growth (2018 to 2028) and 19% growth (2018 to 2043). Our upcoming 3rd Local Development Plan and Local Housing Strategy set out a clear framework for delivering the location, scale and type of housing to meet population increases and local needs across all tenures. More homes are expected to be built in the next 10-years to meet local housing requirements.

Currently, car ownership is very high with 64% of people using a car to commute to work. 81% of households have at least one car. Eighty-two percent of homes are privately owned.

The Council provides many services to citizens and businesses. Our Get to Zero Action Plan (GTZAP) sets out how we will change our services to:

- Reduce our own operational emissions;
- Support our communities to reduce their emissions; and
- Adapt both our own, and our community's buildings, infrastructure and spaces to adapt to a changing climate.
- Protect and enhance our natural spaces for biodiversity and wildlife.

Making these changes is demanding and requires a collective effort now- if the worst impacts of climate change are to be avoided. In recognition of the challenge, the Council declared a climate emergency¹ in October 2021.

1.1. What is climate change?

Climate change refers to long-term shifts in temperatures and weather patterns. These shifts may be natural, such as through variations in the solar cycle. But since the 1800s, human activities have been the main driver of climate change, primarily due to burning fossil fuels like coal, oil and gas.

The planet is becoming warmer as more 'emissions' from human activity are trapped in the atmosphere. Emissions from human activities are created when fossil fuels are burned to make power, burn natural gas for heating, or by burning petrol or diesel for vehicles.

Linked to climate change, the planet is facing a nature and biodiversity crisis too. Climate change is driving nature's decline, and the loss of wildlife and wild spaces reduces our ability to reduce carbon emissions and adapt to change. The actions that humanity will take need to address both climate and nature emergencies.

The scale of the challenge

We are already feeling the effects of change. Average temperatures now are as much as 1.4 degrees hotter than the beginning of 20th century. Climatic changes already are estimated to cause over 150,000 deaths annually with estimates that between 2030 and 2050, climate change is expected to

cause approximately 250,000 additional deaths per year², from malnutrition, malaria, diarrhoea and heat stress. Locally, we will continue to see increased rainfall and extreme weather including heat and droughts. This impacts our communities – land and property values are impacted, with the poorest disproportionately affected; health impacts are felt by the most vulnerable in our society; food supplies are threatened by crop harvests here and abroad; and travel and tourism to places with more extreme weather will be avoided. This impacts the Council – our roads, waterways and greenspaces now need to be managed differently with flooding, heat and drought in mind; and our buildings need more shade and mechanical cooling to make them useable.

1.2. Global challenges

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)³ states “The world is in a climate emergency – ‘a code red for humanity’.” The world is far from securing a global temperature rise to below 2°C as promised in the Paris Agreement⁴ – a global commitment signed by 196 governments. To limit global temperature rises to below 2°C aiming for 1.5°C, as promised in the Paris Agreement, countries must cut Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions drastically every year. The Glasgow Climate Pact, agreed at COP26 in Glasgow 2022, committed governments, for the first time, to phase down unabated coal power and inefficient subsidies for fossil fuels. Reducing the demand and use of fossil fuels will be the most significant action governments, businesses and individuals can take in cutting GHG emissions.

1.3. Supporting Scotland’s Net Zero goal

The Scottish Government published its most recent update of the Climate Change Plan⁵ in 2020. This followed their declaration of a climate emergency⁶ in May 2019. The amended Climate Change Act has set new emissions targets for GHG as follows:

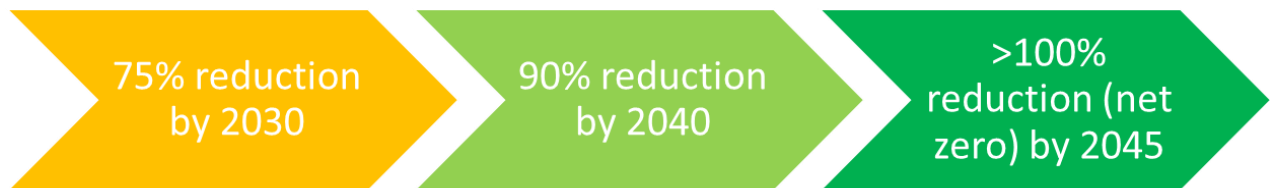


Diagram 1 - Scottish Government Carbon Net Zero Targets

The Scottish Government has also committed to the following targets:

- To reduce car kilometres driven by 20% by 2030.
- To have phased out new purchases of petrol/diesel cars and light commercial vehicles in Scotland’s public sector fleet by 2025.
- To have phased out the need for all petrol/diesel vehicles in Scotland’s public sector fleet by 2030.
- All publicly-owned buildings to meet zero emission heating requirements by 2038.
- Social housing to meet Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) Band B, or be as energy efficient as practically possible, by the end of 2032.

1.4. Specific challenges in East Renfrewshire

East Renfrewshire have some specific challenges which will shape the practical delivery of the GTZAP. For example:

- Car ownership is high (81% have access to a car) – 8th highest in Scotland, and 64% of people travel to work by car.

- There is a high proportion of owner-occupier households (82%) meaning we will rely on home-owners to take actions to the majority of properties.
- Although the adopted road network is improving, a significant proportion of roads still require repair and investment over coming decades.
- There are recognised issues relating to the availability of buses, particularly in less-urban areas. It is also understood that connectivity between the east and west of the area is very poor; services are not well integrated between bus and trains; and funding subsidy for buses means some services are reducing.
- Active travel (i.e. means making journeys by physically active means like walking, wheeling and cycling) decreased between 2014-2017, although active school travel in East Renfrewshire has steadily increased since 2008
- The Council’s property estate (i.e. schools, offices, community facilities, leisure centres) is generally in need of major upgrade to achieve lower energy consumption and zero-emission heating systems.

1.5. Ambition for East Renfrewshire

The Council agreed in November 2022 to set a target to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2045. This aligns with the Scottish Government target. There is a national interim target to achieve 75% emissions reduction by 2030 and 90% by 2040 (from 1990 baseline). The Get to Zero Action Plan acknowledges the interim targets because they help to bring the 22-year net-zero target into the field of vision.

What does “net zero” mean?

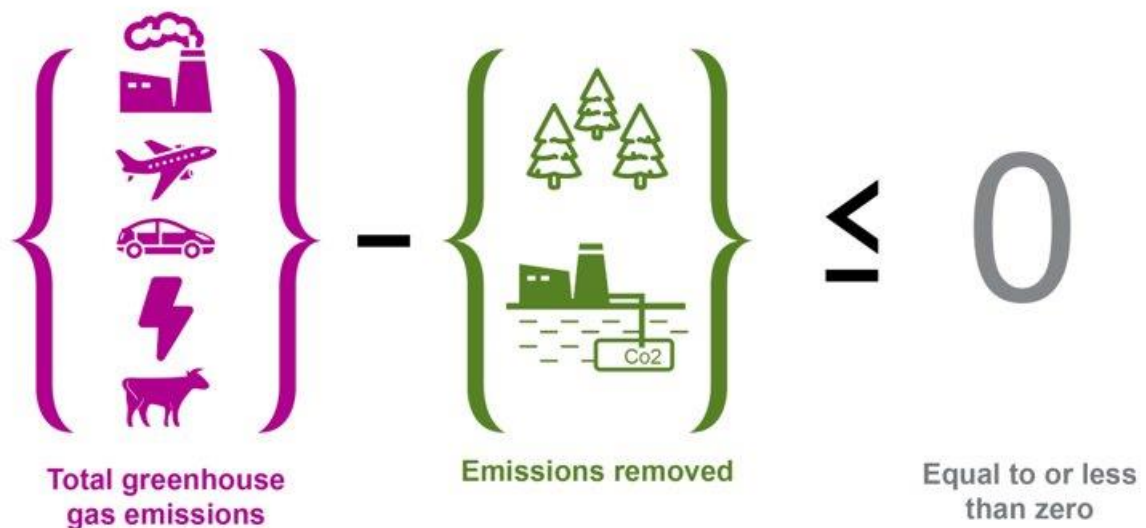


Diagram 2 - Scottish Government Carbon Net Zero Targets

This will require very significant reductions in the emissions from our operations, covering: the things we buy ; how we heat and power our buildings (e.g. schools, offices, leisure facilities, community facilities); how we manage the waste and recycling we collect from homes; how our vehicles are powered; and how and where our staff work.

Whilst the Council is estimated to contribute only 5% of the emissions in the area, the Climate Change Committee (CCC) (the UK and devolved governments' advisory body) estimates that we can influence as much as 50% of the emissions in our area. Through our work on transport, roads, active travel, planning, building control, regeneration, town-centre investment, and education we can influence the transformation that is needed to achieve this national ambition. Changing how homes and businesses meet their heating requirements, where they get electricity from, how citizens move around and use local services can be shaped by the Council.

Together with our regional partners, the Council is part of Climate Ready Clyde⁷ (CRC), which is a cross-sector initiative, supported by the Scottish Government. CRC developed Glasgow City Region's first Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan, launched in June 2021. The strategy aims to ensure Glasgow City Region's economy, society and environment is not only prepared for but continues to flourish in a changing climate. The GTZAP sets out actions that will support the Council and its community to adapt to the changing climate. This recognises that tackling climate change is about both reducing emissions and dealing with the damage that the historic emissions are inevitably going to bring in terms of more flooding, water shortages, extreme heat episodes and storms.

2. CARBON BASELINE

Achieving carbon reductions to ‘Get to Zero’ (i.e. Net zero emissions of carbon each year) requires a good understanding of the emissions that are being generated. The Council holds information on its own operations, which must be reported to Scottish Government each year, with data widely available to complete this. Local community emissions (i.e. from houses, business properties and transport) are more difficult to calculate given the data available. Improvements must be made on how we collect, analyse and publish data, with a particular need to better understand the community emissions being generated and how these might change over time.

2.1. Council Operations

The Council is starting from a position of progress. Emissions have reduced in the last decade, mainly through actions such as: street-lighting LED replacement programme; lighting improvements for energy efficiency in properties; investment in council housing; and a new waste contract diverting most waste from landfill to energy recovery.

The Council, like all public bodies, sets the boundaries for what it measures in terms of carbon emissions. The Council measures the following emissions.

Scope	Definition	Sources
Scope 1	All direct emissions from sources that are owned or controlled by the Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The gas supply and water supply and treatment for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The council’s own buildings ○ Buildings operated by East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust (ERCLT) ○ Offices in Domestic property ○ Sheltered housing • Petrol and diesel vehicles in the council fleet
Scope 2	Energy-related indirect emissions from generation of purchased electricity, steam and heating/cooling consumed by the Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generation of purchased electricity for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The council’s own buildings ○ Buildings operated by East Renfrewshire Culture and Leisure Trust (ERCLT) ○ Domestic property – close lighting and offices ○ Sheltered housing ○ Un-metered supply (i.e. street lighting, traffic signals, CCTV, bollards etc.) ○ Electric vehicles
Scope 3	All other indirect emissions that are a consequence of the activities of the Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council business travel • Waste disposal and processing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Landfill ▪ Recycling ▪ Incineration ▪ Composting • Supply chain emissions (e.g. purchased goods/services)

Figure 1- Scope boundary for Council emissions

The Council’s latest report on its own emissions is published on our website⁸. A summary of the main emissions is shown in **Figure 2**.

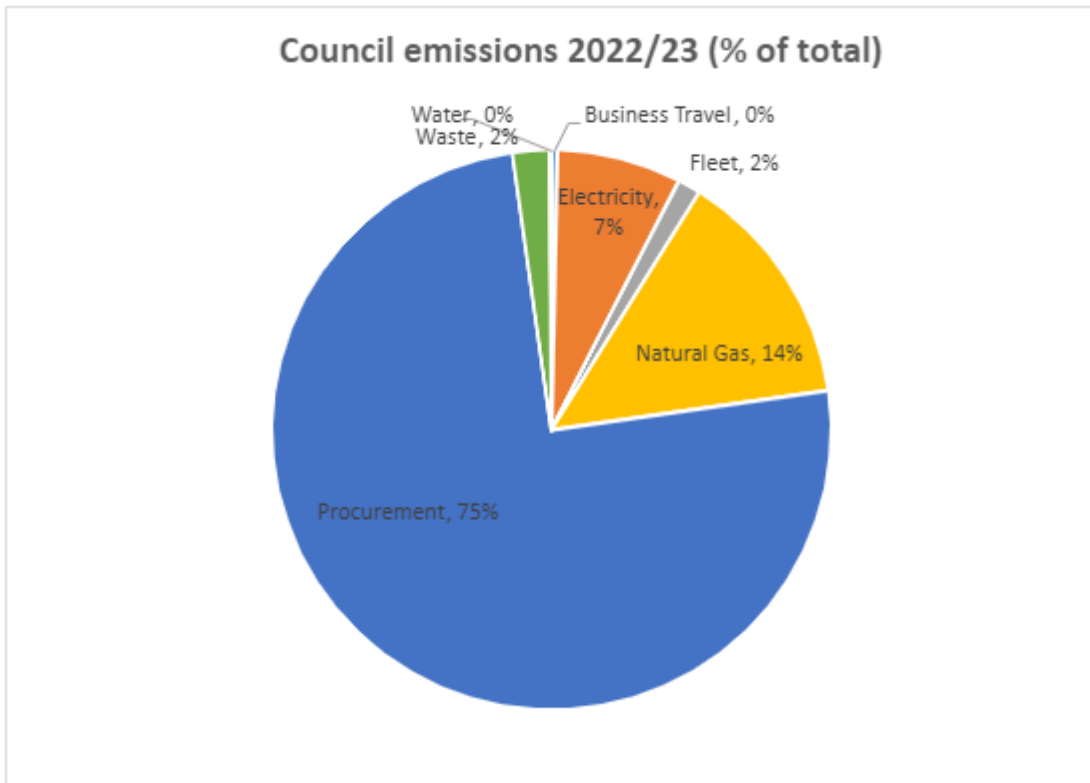


Figure 2- Council Operational Emissions 2022/23

A more detailed breakdown of the Council’s operational emissions without emissions from procurement, is shown in **Figure 3** below.

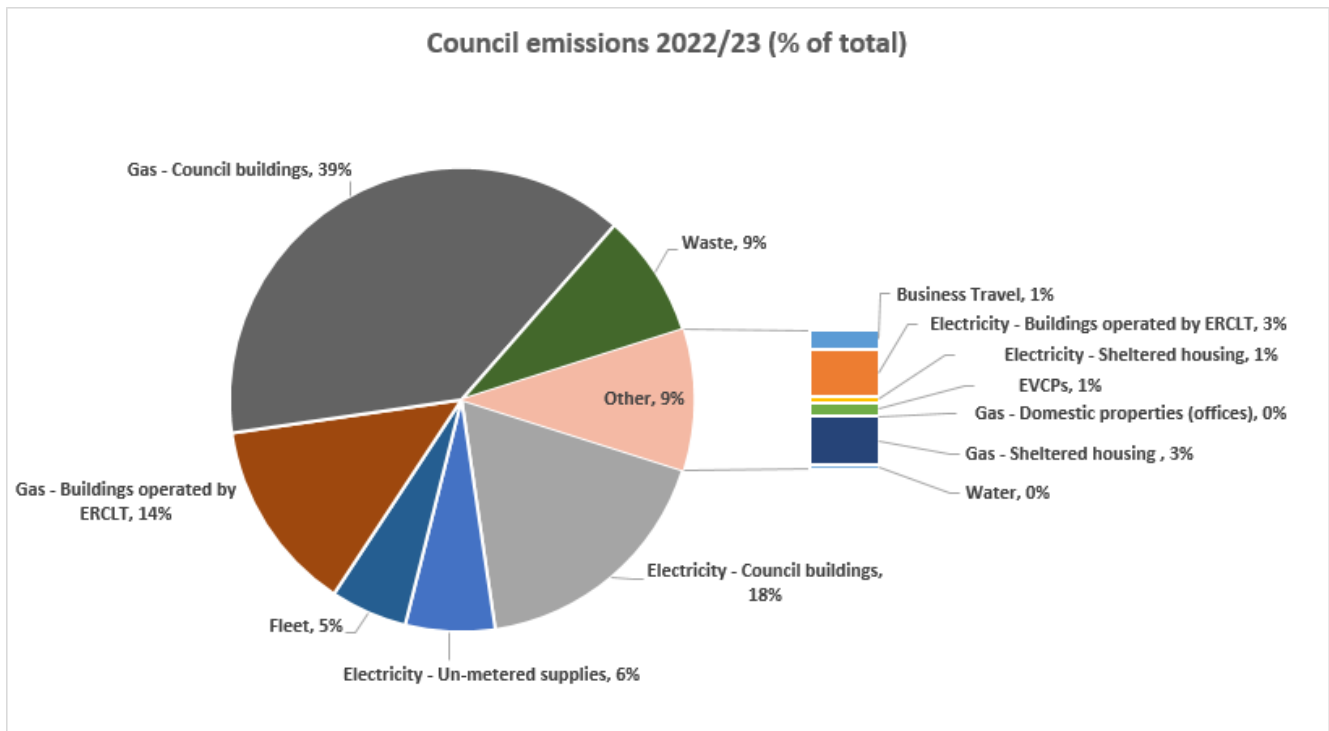


Figure 3- Council Operational Emissions 2022/23- Detailed, with procurement emissions removed.

2.2. Community emissions

The Council's own emissions accounts for less than 10% of the emissions across the whole of East Renfrewshire. Emissions from homes, transport, businesses and industrial activity is considered part 'Community Emissions'. The GTZAP seeks to influence these emissions through its actions.

The Council does not hold an accurate baseline position on the emissions that are generated across the area. This will be an area for improvement in our action plan. The Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) publishes data⁹ that estimates emissions in East Renfrewshire, based on a disaggregation of the UK GHG inventory. This data is limited, in that it will only reflect improvements made nationally, which won't reflect any local action, or inaction, being taken. The BEIS data suggests emissions have reduced by 35% (505ktco2e to 391ktco2e) over the period 2005 to 2019 in East Renfrewshire. BEIS have made a tool available called 'SCATTER' to help understand area-based emissions. A summary of the SCATTER¹⁰ tool calculation for 2019 is shown in **Figure 4**.

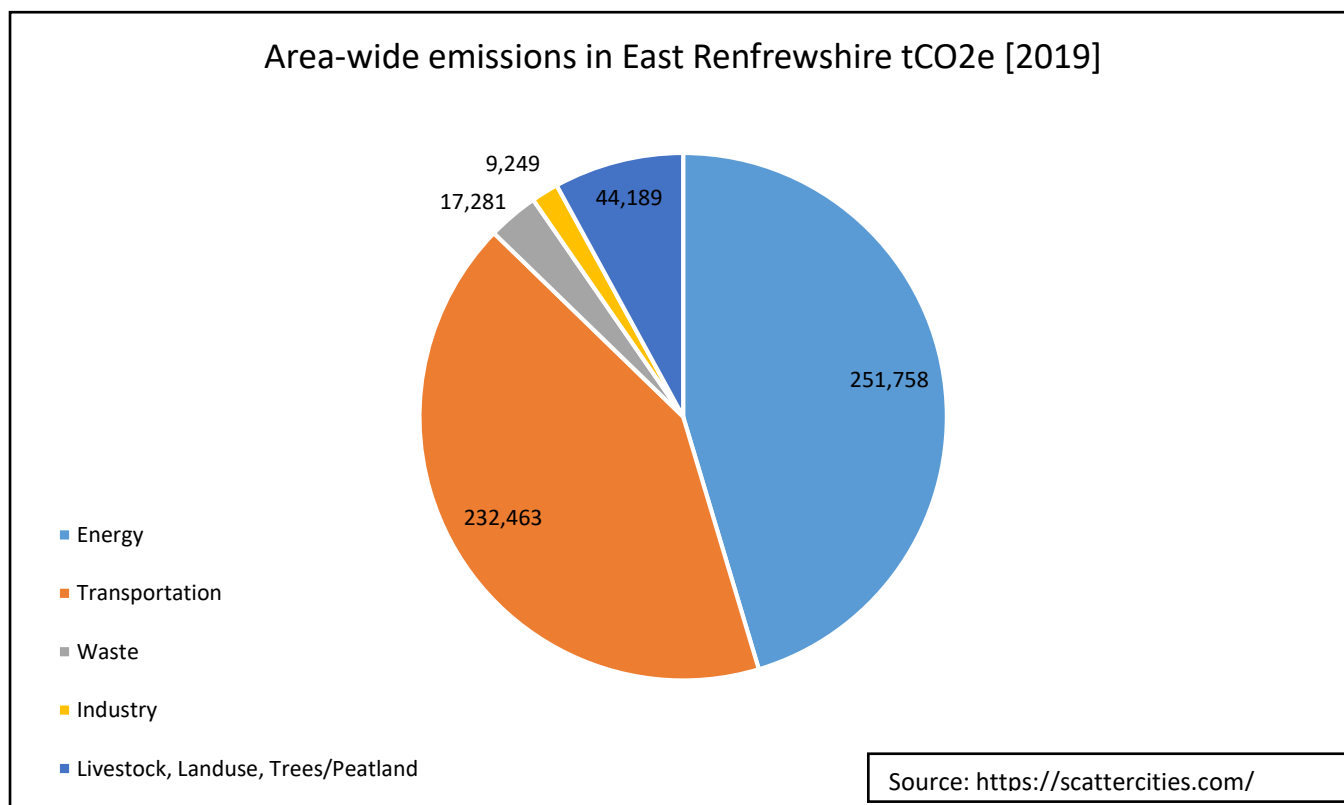


Figure 4- Area-wide emissions for all of East Renfrewshire, 2019

3. TARGETS FOR EAST RENFREWSHIRE

3.1. Net Zero

The Council commits to achieve the national target of being net-zero carbon by 2045. In achieving this end-target, the Council acknowledges the national interim targets to reduce emissions by 75% against the 2020 baseline by 2030, and 90% against the baseline by 2040.

3.2. Supply-chain emissions

The Council measured supply chain emissions within its 2020 carbon emissions calculation. These were included to acknowledge the significant percentage of emissions from the things that we buy and to help drive a change on how we purchase goods and services. The Council is one of the first public bodies in Scotland to measure supply chain emissions and the data and methodology is still being developed.

Until the data calculation methodology has been resolved for supply-chain emissions, the Council has chosen not to report supply-chain emissions in progress towards the net-zero target. However, it remains committed to reducing emissions from the goods and services it purchases. It is proposed that the Council will set a target to reduce supply-chain emissions once the data methodology issues have been improved.

3.3. Our estate

The Scottish Government has set a target of having zero emissions heating systems, supported by high levels of energy efficiency, in all public buildings by 2038. The Council has agreed to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2045 and recognises that reducing emissions from its estate will be a major part of achieving this target. However, the Council is not in a position to confirm achieving the 2038 date. A decision on achievement of the 2038 target will be considered again once further analysis on the scale and cost of transition has been completed.

3.4. Our transport fleet

The Council recognises the Scottish Government's ambitions to decarbonise the public sector fleet, as follows:

- After 2025, public bodies are expected to no longer operate cars with internal combustion engines (ICE). In practice this means all cars being used would be electric from 2025/26.
- Between 2025 and 2030, public bodies are expected to have begun, and completed, ceasing the purchase of new ICE vans and light commercial vehicles (i.e. less than 3.5 tonnes).
- By 2030, public bodies are expected to have plans in place that mean no new ICE heavy goods vehicles (e.g. bin lorries, gritting trucks, buses) are purchased.

A Fleet Purchasing Policy was agreed by Cabinet in September 2023, which will support the transition to electric cars and vans, starting in 2027. The transition for other vehicles will be considered nearer 2030.

3.5. Housing

The Council commits to meet the Energy Efficient Standard for Social Housing 2 (EESH2), to have all Council-owned homes at Energy Performance Certificate B by 2032.

3.6. Community emissions

The Council will contribute towards national targets for reducing community emissions:

- To reduce car kilometres driven by 20% by 2030.

- To introduce building standards measures to require zero emissions heating in all new buildings from April 2024.

3.7. Climate adaptation

As part of Climate Ready Clyde, the Council will contribute to the wider Glasgow City Region targets for climate adaptation. These are to have:

- Increased resilience of over 140,000 of the region's most vulnerable people to the impact of climate change;
- Closed the region's adaptation finance gap of £184m a year; and
- Involved 125 new organisations, community groups and businesses supporting Glasgow City Region to adapt to climate change

4. STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a way of considering the environment when preparing public plans, programmes and strategies. It identifies potential significant environmental effects and, where necessary, describes how these effects can be avoided or reduced. Through consultation, SEA also provides an opportunity for the public to express their views on proposed policies and their potential environmental impacts. In this case, SEA is being used to assess the likely environmental effects of the Draft Get to Zero Action Plan.

4.1. How was the Strategic Environmental Assessment undertaken?

Consultants (LUC Ltd.) reviewed all actions and held workshops with staff who will lead the delivery of GTZAP actions. This informed their draft assessment. The assessment identifies positive and negative environmental effects and the significance of these; considers whether they would be temporary or permanent; and notes where they would arise in the short, medium or long term. It also distinguishes between effects arising directly from the Draft Get to Zero Action Plan and any 'secondary' effects, which would indirectly impact on the environment.

The consultants completed a draft Environmental Report¹¹, which was the basis of consultation alongside the draft GTZAP.

4.2. Strategic Environmental Assessment findings

The environmental effects are considered as direct and indirect effects from the action themes.

Overall, only some of the actions will result in direct effects. The majority of direct effects relate to 'climatic factors'; 'population and human health'; and 'material assets' topics. The built environment actions were the only actions likely to directly affect cultural heritage and historic environment. During the assessment, no significant negative effects against the SEA topics were identified. Some of the actions within the built environment action theme are expected to result in significant positive effects in relation to biodiversity, flora and fauna.

There will be indirect effects on the environment across most of the topics, but most of the effects are minor. Most of the effects are positive for the environment.

4.3. What measures could be put in place to avoid, reduce or manage the environmental effects of the Draft Get to Zero Action Plan?

No significant adverse effects are identified from the assessment. Consideration of mitigation is focused on opportunities to avoid, reduce or manage minor adverse effects.

5. PRIORITISING OUR ACTION

We will prioritise the actions that can bring the most significant reduction in carbon emissions, whilst ensuring that we also adapt to the changing climate. This plan will address:

- Actions to reduce emissions from Council operations;
- Actions to support emissions reductions in the wider East Renfrewshire community;
- Actions needed to enable better decision making; and
- Actions to help the Council and the community adapt to a changing climate.

A summary of the action outcomes is provided in this section with a more detailed plan covered in the [timetable for action](#).

5.1. Council operations

The Council's operational emissions are covered earlier in the action plan. The following section outlines the actions the Council will take to reduce these emissions, and actions that will help both the Council and the wider community adapt to the changing climate.

5.1.1. What we buy – procurement and shaping our supply chain

The largest part of the Council's operational emissions (75%) comes from the goods and services it purchases. Reducing emissions from the supply chain will take time, and will rely on working closely with suppliers. The Council will need to adopt a willingness to innovate and try new approaches, as some of the solutions needed may not currently exist in the market. The Council spent c. £130 million on procurement of goods and services in 2022/23. There is a huge opportunity to use this spending power, working alongside other public bodies, to drive innovation in supply chains and develop new low-carbon products, or entirely new ways of using materials. Options are within circular procurement¹² principles, which the Council is keen to adopt.

Whilst seeking ways to reduce emissions across all categories, the scale of council spending means there is a need to focus on key categories that the data shows will have the most significant carbon impacts. These are covered in the sections below.

Building & Construction

The Council builds many different types of properties. The actions here will focus on reviewing the contracts for major projects (e.g. schools) and the products used by our largest suppliers to understand what scope there is for alternative products or changes to the design process. The Council is already adopting the principles of the Net Zero Public Sector Building Standard¹³ and Passivhaus¹⁴ but will consider formalising this in its construction design specifications.

Roads materials

Most road materials are fossil-derived products, or involve large quantities of heavy, quarried material. The climate impacts are therefore very high for the money invested. Actions here will focus on working with the supply chain, and in collaboration with national agencies and centres of procurement (e.g. Scotland Excel) to drive innovation that still meets the engineering needs of the roads network.

Food

School catering is a very significant category spend for the Council, which is likely to grow with increased school meal provision being forecast. Food production, manufacture, packaging, transport and waste have huge carbon impacts. Reducing emissions in this area will require meticulous assessment of data at a product level, more than any other spend category, to understand where emissions can be reduced. It is likely that considering the dietary requirements, with more plant-

based choices, as well as improved energy efficiency in manufacture, low-carbon/reduced transport, reusable packaging and reduced waste will offer solutions to reducing emissions.

Digital equipment

Electronic equipment, both infrastructure (e.g. servers) and personal equipment (e.g. laptops), is extensively used and purchased by the Council. It is estimated that making a mobile phone accounts for 85–95% of its annual carbon footprint because manufacturing its electronics and mining the metals that go into them is energy-intensive¹⁵. Solutions to reduce such emissions are likely to consider: reducing the volume of personal equipment needed; considering purchase of refurbished, reused or remanufactured equipment; consideration of ‘product as a service’¹⁶; and purchasing lower-carbon equipment (i.e. the manufacturing process is more material and energy efficient than currently).

5.1.2. Our estate

The council estate has over 100 properties, including schools, offices, leisure centres, community facilities, depots and stores. The council estate accounts for most of the direct (i.e. gas, water) and a large amount of indirect (i.e. electricity from the grid) emissions the Council generates. Excluding procurement emissions, around 50% of operational emissions is from the properties owned and managed by the Council. The first step in reducing these emissions will be establishing plans and proposals to manage investments, using both council and wider government funds. The Scottish Government’s ambition to ensure that there is zero emissions from heating public buildings by 2038, will shape the scale and scope of the Council’s plans for its estate.

As well as reducing emissions, it will be vital that the future estate is safeguarded as well as possible against the changing climate. More extreme heat-waves, prolonged periods of high-winds, and localised flooding are all expected to occur as the climate continues to change. Adapting buildings to cope with the changing climate will be integrated into the investments the Council makes to its properties.

Our future estate

The actions to manage the long-term transition to low-carbon heat and power systems for Council properties will start with establishing senior officer groups to consider recommendations to refurbish, rebuild or dispose of properties. This will inform the investment strategy and shape the application of funding from the government and/or its agencies.

Heat and power for our buildings

In the short to medium term, there are improvements that can be made to buildings. Taking actions to improve the lighting, heating, cooling and insulation in the estate will deliver incremental changes in advance of a much greater investment. Giving greater autonomy to responsible persons (i.e. those who are responsible for safety, security and welfare in each property) to monitor energy use, building temperatures, and support staff to take energy efficiency measures will help reduce energy demand.

5.1.3. Council homes

The Council currently owns 3,170 social houses. The Council is focused on achieving the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH) 2 standard, which aims to have all homes at Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) level B by 2032. The actions to deliver this will focus on assessing properties, piloting new approaches and reflecting the findings from these pilots into the investment strategy for social homes. The Council will also consider the standard it will build future social homes to, endeavouring to achieve the highest possible standard for energy efficiency, low-emission heating, electric vehicles charging (where appropriate), and also to ensure buildings are adapted to a changing climate.

5.1.4. Our vehicles

The Council currently operates a fleet of 173 vehicles, including social work rapid response cars, housing repairs vans, refuse collection vehicles, gritters, adapted buses, tractors, quad-bikes and mini-excavators. The Scottish Government has set out a challenging policy ambition to decarbonise the public sector fleet. To achieve this the Council must consider the following: additional cost for electric vehicles (EVs) or low-carbon fuels; the development of the market for vehicles; the infrastructure required to support new vehicles (e.g. charging points); and operational challenges (e.g. charging time for vehicles used across three shift patterns). The Council has a major constraint with the power supply at its main depot, which will need to be addressed alongside the transition to a low-carbon fleet. This constraint shapes the timing of the actions set out in the following sections.

Cars and light vehicles

The actions will be shaped by a 'Fleet Decarbonisation Officers' Group' who will recommend the steps required to secure the necessary charging infrastructure and to support fleet service-users to assess their options for transitioning to zero-emissions vehicles. The main fleet-users (i.e. HSCP, Roads, Housing, and Neighbourhood Services) will set out a business case for investment to remove internal combustion engine (ICE) cars from use by 2025 and vans over the period 2025 to 2030.

Heavy and specialist vehicles

There is more time to address the heavy and specialist vehicles (e.g. refuse collections, gritters, adapted school buses). However, work will start long before the deadline of 2030 for ceasing the purchase of ICE heavy and specialist vehicles. The main fleet-user services (i.e. Roads, Neighbourhood Services, and Education) will set out a business case for investment to stop purchasing internal combustion engine (ICE) heavy and specialist vehicles by 2030.

5.1.5. How we work

Council staff are returning to the office, following the disruption caused by the COVID pandemic. Some of the benefits of hybrid working, and reduced business travel likely mean that many emissions from Council operations have already been reduced. However, the Council will seek to ensure that the benefits from more digital working and the reduced need to travel for meeting other staff or customers is retained. Further emissions reductions are believed to be possible by promoting active travel to staff, reviewing IT infrastructure energy requirements, supporting more digital meetings and consideration of new policies for business travel.

5.2. Community – shaping business and citizen climate action

The Council will have a significant impact on reducing emissions created by homes, businesses and transport across East Renfrewshire. It will also play its part in making sure our community is prepared and ready to adapt to a changing climate. The UK Climate Change Committee estimates that as much as 50% of emissions in East Renfrewshire could be influenced by Council policy and decisions (**See Figure 5**).



Figure 5 How local authorities control and influence emissions, SOURCE: Local Authorities and the Sixth Carbon Budget¹⁷

The following sections outline the actions the Council will take to support our community.

5.2.1. Heating and powering homes and businesses

The energy needed to heat and power homes and businesses across East Renfrewshire is estimated to account for 45% of emissions within the area. Tackling these will be a joint effort, with input required from property owners, national government and other agencies.

Heat and power in homes and businesses

The Council will complete a Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES) by the end of 2023/24, which will establish area-wide plans and priorities for systematically improving the energy efficiency of buildings and decarbonising heat. The LHEES and accompanying Delivery Plan will be updated every 5 years and will reflect and support local and national policies, frameworks, strategies and targets, and identify opportunities for energy efficiency improvements and heat decarbonisation.

Powering homes

The Council will consider what more it can do to investigate and scope opportunities for renewable energy projects of varying scale across the area. These projects are expected to be community or private sector led, therefore predicting where and when they happen is difficult. However, the Local Development Plan 2¹⁸ (Policy D14) sets out that proposals involving the introduction of energy efficiency measures and/or micro-renewables installations to listed buildings and in conservation areas will be supported.

5.2.2. Transport

East Renfrewshire has a high rate of car ownership and use. Poor integration between active and public transport networks is a key issue impacting the convenience, attractiveness and affordability of sustainable transport options. Public transport is managed by a number of different operators across the Glasgow City Region. Effective partnerships with bus and rail operators is therefore vital to improving connectivity, accessibility and reliability of public transport provision. This, together with the development of high quality active travel links networks (to support more walking, wheeling and cycling for shorter, everyday journeys) and the ongoing development of Ultra Low Emission Vehicle infrastructure is key to reducing emissions from transport.

Local and regional partners, such as Strathclyde Passenger Transport (SPT), Scottish Water and Network Rail will also be vital in ensuring the transport infrastructure is adapted to meet the impacts of climate change. With localised flooding, heat-waves and high-winds becoming more frequent, infrastructure will need to evolve to continue to serve our communities.

Getting around

The Sustainable Travel Hierarchy¹⁹ aims to reduce emissions by prioritising walking or cycling, then public transport over private car use. These principles will inform the development of a new Local Transport Strategy and Active Travel Action Plan, which will provide a framework for transport decision making and investment in the area over the next 10 years.

Electric vehicles

Electric Vehicle Charging Points (EVCPs) have been introduced in the last five years, but the network is limited to 11 public charging sites across East Renfrewshire. Working closely with Glasgow City Region partners, the expansion of the network will be shaped by the new regional EVCP plan. This considers how private sector investment may accelerate network expansion.

Street lighting

Carbon savings of 62% have already been achieved through the LED replacement programme of street lights. The programme of replacing remaining old-style lamps will continue and a street lighting improvement initiative on active travel routes to enhance safety, prioritising remote footpaths and school routes.

5.2.3. The built environment

How we use land for its climate benefits or for development, and the standard to which we build future properties, will have long-lasting effects on area-wide emissions. National policies, such as the revised Building Standards and National Planning Policy Framework 4²⁰, and the Local Development Plan will shape many aspects of climate action - from buildings' location and specification, forests and

peatlands, and transport; to how we adapt our spaces, buildings and infrastructure to changing climatic conditions.

The most important decisions the planning system makes is where new development should be built and ensuring the best use of available infrastructure.

Planning

The Local Development Plan 2 (LDP2) was adopted in March 2022 and work has commenced on Local Development Plan 3. LDP2, and the guidance that supports it, will play a major role in shaping the built environment and how green-spaces are protected, managed and enhanced. LDP2 sets out a range of policies which contribute to tackling climate change through encouraging sustainable site selection; sustainable design, sustainable travel; integrated green infrastructure, electric vehicles, encouraging renewable energy proposals, reducing waste and pollution; encouraging recycling; promoting sustainable drainage and flood management; and the regeneration of vacant and derelict land. Specific actions will focus on: publishing supplementary guidance on 'development contributions', green network, affordable housing, place-making and supporting a planning culture to consider whole-life carbon costing. It will also support risk assessment of buildings and infrastructure for climate adaptation. The new 4th National Planning Framework (NPF4) will be one of the key documents that will inform the next LDP, with an increased focus upon climate change, improving health and well-being, and securing positive effects for biodiversity and nature recovery. We will strive to lead the way in setting ambitious policy that supports emissions reduction and climate adaptation.

Building control

We will fully introduce the Scottish Government's 2024 New Build Heat Standard (zero emissions heating in new buildings).

Greenspaces

We will continue to support and contribute towards the 'Central Scotland Green Network' project to create high quality green infrastructure across the Glasgow and Clyde Valley Region. We will shortly prepare of an 'Open Space and Play Sufficiency Strategy' to inform LDP3 and a biodiversity action plan. We will make changes to our Parks' services to reduce operational emissions and review opportunities for increased tree-planting to absorb carbon and improve biodiversity. Greenspaces will play an important part of adapting to climate change, and the Council will continue to support the delivery of the Climate Clyde Forest project. This aims to plant 18 million trees over the next 10 years across Glasgow City Region.

5.2.4. Investing in communities

The Council has secured £44m investment from the Glasgow City Region deal. Planned projects will improve transport links, increase leisure opportunities, support business development, create jobs and unlock residential land. How we deliver these projects will be aligned with climate ambitions. Projects will assess climate impacts and introduce a whole-life costing approach in line with Scottish and UK Government expectations.

The Council has business grants²¹ available to support investment in achieving lower carbon emissions and staff training.

5.2.5. Consumption

As much as 80% of the carbon footprint comes from the products that are bought, consumed and wasted. Taking action to reduce such emissions will require UK and Scottish Government action, as well as action from manufacturers and consumer brands. The Council and the wider community can

also play a part by changing the typical model of 'buy-consume-dispose' which is the key feature of the current economic model.

Circular economy

Whilst much of the significant progress is expected to be shaped by Scottish or UK policy interventions, the Council will support local actions. The actions we will take will support food waste reduction in schools and communities; remove single-use items from catering facilities; and identify ways to support businesses that encourage repair, refill and sharing. We will consider what actions the Council can take to support more local food growing to build food supply-chain resilience.

Waste and recycling

The Clyde Valley Residual Waste contract has already provided significant reductions in carbon emissions from the management of residual waste. The Council has one of the highest recycling rates in Scotland²² (56.6%, 2020; 2nd highest in Scotland), but there is likely to be improvements to the service provision. Upon completion of the Deposit Return Scheme²³ rollout in 2023 and the introduction of a revised Extended Producer Responsibility²⁴ system, the Council will consider what further actions are appropriate to maximise recycling, particularly of food and textiles waste, which have significant carbon impacts.

5.3. Enabling actions

To support the delivery of the actions in previous sections, the Council will progress cross-cutting actions that will support achieving the desired outcomes for the GTZAP. This includes our approaches to communication, reporting, data analysis, and forming critical partnerships. These ‘enabling’ actions will typically have less of a tangible impact on reducing emissions directly but they are no less vital in the achievement of the Council’s Get to Zero ambitions.

5.3.1. Communication and transparency

The Council is a trusted communicator that can provide the community with clarity on the action needed to tackle climate change. The Council also has a role to play in giving confidence to the public on the data and decision-making processes that the Council will follow.

Community engagement

The Council has committed to setting up a community partnership group to communicate, encourage and assist local residents and businesses to reduce their carbon footprint. This will involve councillors, residents, young citizens, businesses and other relevant parties.

The Council will communicate, using campaigns where appropriate and effective, with different parts of the community to raise awareness and encourage action at a business, group or individual level.

Education

East Renfrewshire has many of the best schools in Scotland. Using this strength, the Council will build on progress to date to further embed climate change into the primary and secondary curriculum, strengthen the Green Flag scheme within schools, and encourage and support pupils to make climate-friendly choices.

Reporting progress

The Council will provide an annual update of progress on our operational emissions, community emissions and the progress made to prepare for a changing climate.

Governance

The Council will establish a suitable governance process to make effective decisions, monitor and report on progress and fulfil the statutory duties with regard to climate change. To support this, the Council introduced a process in 2022 for Climate Change Impact Assessments to be carried out on all proposals seeking decision from Council/Cabinet/Committee reports.

5.3.2. Improving data and capability

The quality of data has been a limiting factor in making progress to date, but should not be a barrier to the goals the Council seeks. Improving the sources of data and the capturing, analysis and publishing of data will allow council staff, elected members and the wider community to make decisions with greater regard for climate impacts.

Operational data

The Council will continually seek to improve the data it captures on its own operational emissions, and how this is analysed to inform decision-making from staff and elected members. We will work with subject-matter expertise within the Council and from recognised bodies to find ways of improving data collection, analysis and application. We will also look at ways to automate the collection of data, streamlining the process and reducing the burden on staff and suppliers. This will be particularly challenging for data on supply-chain emissions and we will work with the Scottish Government, Sustainable Scotland Network (SSN) and others to find solutions.

Community data

The community data the Council holds is limited. Specifically, the Council needs better data on heat and power within domestic and non-domestic properties and better information on transport emissions. To inform better decision-making by the Council and also to empower communities to take their own action, the Council will seek to gather and analyse new or improved data. This will require working with community partners and national bodies. We will seek to make this information available to the community in helpful ways that allows communities to scrutinise the data and make informed decisions on their own.

Better analysis – shaping decision-making

The Council introduced a Climate Change Impact Assessment (CCIA) process in 2022, which requires all proposals seeking a decision from Cabinet/Council/Committee to have completed an assessment of the operational/community emissions and adaptation impacts of the proposal. The CCIA process will be rolled out across other aspects of the Council, including the Capital Asset Management Group, Procurement Strategy, and grant-giving functions, to ensure decision making is informed by climate impacts. In line with updated Climate Changes duties, and to meet expectations from Audit Scotland, the Council will consider how it further aligns its budget-setting processes with the GTZAP. Audit Scotland expect that all investment decisions are based on their contribution to climate change.

5.3.3. Climate confident staff

Achievement of the Council's climate ambitions will be a collective endeavour, involving all staff at some point. There is a core group of staff who shape policy and will implement decisions who will be vital in making progress. To support those staff, the Council will take forward a programme of professional development to build awareness of climate change, how it affects specific services and what solutions could be implemented. The programme will consider senior decision-makers and how they understand the strategic context; service-level decision-makers and how they understand the service development needs for GTZAP; and all staff to build general awareness and individual action.

5.3.4. Partnerships

Working in partnership with national and regional agencies, including our neighbouring councils within the Glasgow City Region, will be necessary to achieve our Get to Zero ambitions. The partnerships we have formed and will help the Council and its staff by learning from others, sharing examples of where we are making progress and in the delivery of actions that require a regional approach.

Learning and sharing intelligence

Through national and regional networks, such as SSN, Improvement Service and the Association of Public Service Excellence (APSE), we will ensure staff are connected to best practice, emerging thinking and policy developments. The Council will also share its own examples of best practice, and ensure that these are shared with community partners who could benefit.

Action through collaboration

The Council plays its part in regional collaborations. Climate Ready Clyde, Glasgow City Region groups, Green Network and procurement centres of expertise will continue to be key relationships. The Council will remain open and willing to work with any partner who can assist with the implementation of the GTZAP.




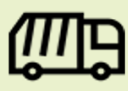

The Council operates a 'trusted trader' scheme to help choose reliable traders to carry out work in the area. Trading Standards Trusted Traders have been vetted by East Renfrewshire Trading Standards and the scheme is supported by Police Scotland and Citizens Advice Scotland. This scheme, and the

support from Trading Standards in ensuring that consumers are protected from bad trading practices, will be an important feature of supporting homes and businesses to make the net-zero transition.

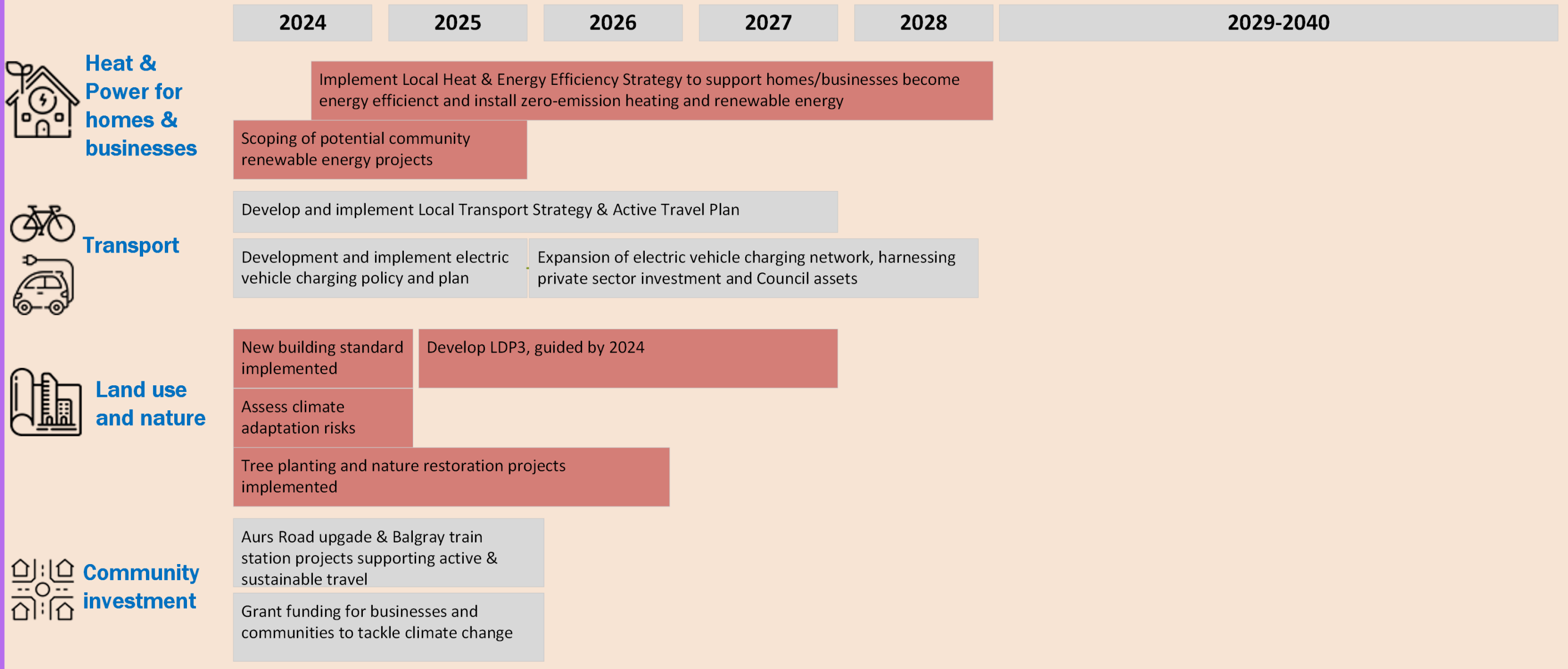
Investing with others

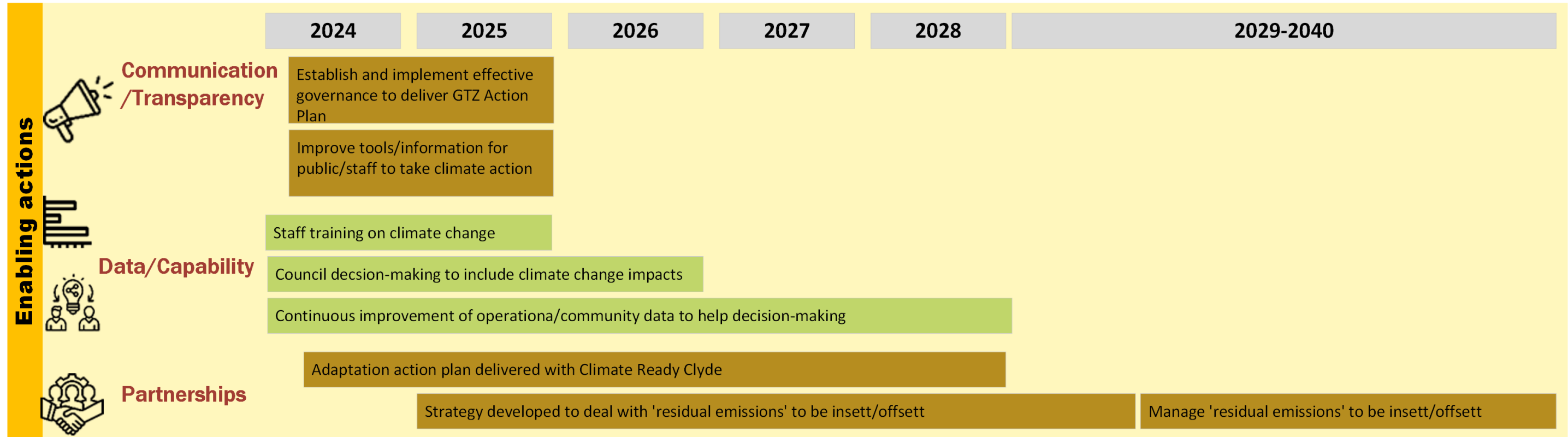
The Council will seek to use its influence as a buyer to investigate new ways of funding action. Established principles, such as planning gain or community benefit clauses, are examples that we will investigate to understand what more can be gained from procurement in terms of driving local investment in climate action. The Council is also exploring 'Authority-based insetting'²⁵, which is a new way of promoting local investment in projects to reduce or absorb carbon emissions. We have been working with other local authorities across the UK on Authority-Based Insetting, which looks to promote local, verifiable, projects to direct both Council funding (i.e. from managing residual emissions) and attract third party funding (e.g. from other organisations who are paying to offset residual emissions). Through this approach the Council is keen to attract investment within East Renfrewshire.

6. TIMETABLE FOR ACTION

		2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029-2040	
Council operations	 Purchasing	Engage suppliers and review current purchasing	Identify product improvement, supported by better data to reduce supply-chain emissions by 2%		Supplier engagement, revised approach to tender specifications and development of circular business models, reducing supply-chain emissions.			
	 Buildings	Gather data and recommend priority actions to decarbonise estate		Investment proposals to decarbonise estate	Rolling programme of investment in retrofit/replacement of office/education buildings to meet standard for zero-emission heating. Disposal of property assets no longer meeting the Council's needs.			
		Heat network studies	Investment proposals to develop heat networks		Heat network commissioning and operations			
	 Council homes	Complete pilot projects and gather evidence for investment business case		Rolling programme of investment in Council homes to meet Social Housing Net Zero Standard by 2040				
	 Vehicles	Planning to make changes to Electric Vehicles for cars/vans		Rollout of cars/vans to Electric vehicles			Rollout of HGV to zero-emission vehicles	
			Investment case for depot upgrade	Depot upgrade	Planning to make changes to zero-emission Heavy Goods Vehicles			
 How we work		Review operational emissions from IT	Reduce operational emissions from IT					
		Improve internal waste/recycling provision						
		Improve staff active travel and associated policies						

Community emissions (area-wide)





7. PRINCIPLES FOR ACTION

The Council will follow a set of principles to tackle challenges that are known and others yet to be encountered. This will support the plan to be adaptable to the changing circumstances that we face.

7.1. **Prioritise reducing emissions over managing residual emissions**

The primary focus of this action plan is to reduce emissions as quickly as possible, recognising the practical and financial constraints within which the Council operates. Real, measurable reductions in emissions will be the best way for the Council to achieve its targets. This will be a priority for our actions. In the long-term, this is also likely to be the most cost effective way of achieving net-zero targets.

The Council is likely to have some 'residual emissions' that will be required to be managed in order for the Council to achieve interim (i.e. 75% and 90%) and net zero targets. Residual emissions are the gap between the Council's annual operational emissions and the relevant target for net zero. Typically, managing residual emissions is achieved by purchasing offset credits from accredited markets. This works by paying someone else to reduce emissions or to fund a project that absorbs and stores carbon. This is known as sequestration or carbon capture (e.g. tree-planting, peatland restoration).

The primary focus is to reduce emissions and the Council does not want to rely heavily on managing its residual emissions. In 2020, to plant trees to capture the amount of Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions the Council produced (~25ktco_{2e}) would require 82 football-pitches (44ha) of space. This space would be required every year to offset the Council's annual emissions, assuming no reductions were made. Clearly this scale of land allocation and the associated cost is not feasible and moreover would not be as effective as tackling climate change as reducing emissions.

We have committed in this action plan to develop our strategy for dealing with residual emissions.

7.2. **Putting communities at the heart of climate action**

People are going to be at the heart of tackling climate change. The solutions and changes needed to reduce emissions and adapt our buildings and infrastructure within our communities will require strengthened partnerships with the community.

Initiatives like the rollout of electric vehicle charging points, retrofitting housing with insulation and new heating systems and having access to active travel routes, all run the risk of creating dis-benefits to parts of the community. The Council will address these risks in its approach and strive to make sure that every community is included and consulted as these initiatives are developed.

Fuel poverty is a major issue for 24% of families in Scotland with an estimated 13% of homes in East Renfrewshire in fuel poverty. There continues to be some homes that suffer from dampness caused by poor ventilation and heating. In taking action to reduce emissions from heating homes through the Get to Zero Action Plan, the Council will also ensure that fuel poverty and health outcomes for citizens are improved.

7.3. **Evidence**

The Council has long-established processes for developing business cases prior to investing time and money. The Council commits to continue development of a strong evidence-base to inform its decision-making. These business cases are shaped by the data we hold, from research undertaken and applying good practice from other public bodies. However, it might not always be possible to gather accurate and relevant data- particularly for actions that are not fully adopted elsewhere. The Council will follow best practice where it is recognised, but in circumstances where this isn't possible, we will make our assumptions clear and explain the rationale we have taken.

Having declared a climate emergency, we cannot afford to wait for the perfect solution before taking action. The Council commits to maintain an open mind to innovation and a willingness to try new things, accepting that we might not always succeed at first.

8. MEASURING PROGRESS

To meet its target (see Section 3), the Council will need to track and report on its progress each year. The Council commits to provide an annual report, supported by publishing the data used to compile the report.

8.1. Targets

Emissions reporting, excluding supply-chain emissions

Excluding supply chain emissions, the Council has a baseline of ~25,000 tCO₂e (2020). To achieve the target of zero by 2045, and the national interim targets, the Council needs to reduce emissions by approximately 1,900 tCO₂e between 2020-2030 and 400 tCO₂e between 2030-45.

The data for scope 1 and 2 emissions is reliable and easily captured. We do not anticipate any data challenges in reporting these.

Certain elements of Scope 3 emissions data are more difficult to capture and report on. Table 1 explains more:

Scope 3 emissions source	Comment on data availability/quality
Council business travel	Available but could be improved
Council leased domestic properties (gas and electricity)	Available and reliable
Procurement of goods and services (including social care contracts and leisure centres)	Available but limited. Requires significant improvement to be useful.
Waste disposal and processing	Available and reliable

Table 1 – Data quality for Scope 3 emissions

The data on Council business travel is recorded on a digital system but is too simplistic to capture the full extent of all travel and the vehicles being used for car mileage. Improving this would lead to better reporting.

Supply-chain emissions reporting

The main limitation with supply-chain reporting is that the data is directly linked to the amount of money spent by the Council. If the Council continues to spend the same amount then the data would not change, even if the products being purchased were lower-carbon or being swapped for a circular economy approach. Until the Council is able to report on the carbon impact at a product level, there will be limitations to reporting on progress.

The Council will work with suppliers, centres of procurement expertise, the Scottish Government and SSN to develop an approach that provides better quantitative data on which to base a progress-report.

This explains why supply chain emissions have separate targets and will be reported on separately. In the meantime, the Council will use a qualitative approach to report on supply-chain emissions. This will focus on the high-impact products we are purchasing (i.e. Metals, Concrete, Glass, Bitumen-based materials, Food, Textiles, ICT equipment) and the service-areas who are mainly responsible for purchasing these materials.

Offsetting emissions reporting

The Council will record the total amount of residual emissions it needs to manage to achieve its targets each year. This will clearly show how much progress towards the net-zero target has been achieved through emissions reductions.

Climate adaptation

The Council works with the Climate Ready Clyde partners to develop indicators for monitoring the targets within the Glasgow Regional Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan. Climate Ready Clyde anticipates completing a two-yearly independent assessment of progress. Climate Ready Clyde is developing a monitoring framework. Once completed the Council will gather the required data to track progress locally.

This is likely to include:

- Number of local interventions to support adaptation each year;
- A calculation of the number of people/homes benefiting from adaptation interventions; and
- Council expenditure on climate adaptation measures, including flood defence and land drainage.

Climate Ready Clyde will also gather a wider data-set from other partners and national statistics to inform progress reporting.

8.2. Reporting

The Council will publish an annual report covering, as a minimum the following:

- The Council's operational carbon emissions;
- An assessment of the progress towards the targets set out in the GTZAP;
- A progress report on the actions set out in the GTZAP;
- A qualitative assessment of progress made to reduce supply-chain emissions;
- Residual operational emissions, including what it may cost the Council should it want to purchase offsets; and
- An assessment of the climate adaptation preparedness for the Council and the community.

The Council also reports a wide range of performance indicators to national agencies or partners. This makes up the monitoring framework for wider environmental performance measurement. This will include: Air quality monitoring; Condition of public buildings; Traffic surveys; Active travel participation; Staff commuting surveys. These indicators will give a wider view of the environmental performance of the Council, including some climate change measures.

9. GLOSSARY

Net Zero: Net Zero refers to the goal of reducing the amount of greenhouse gases (GHG) produced by human activity as far as practical, with any residual GHGs produced being removed from the atmosphere.

Greenhouse Gas (GHG): Greenhouse gases are gases that trap heat in the earth's atmosphere, a process called the greenhouse effect. These gases occur naturally, but are also produced by human activity.

Low-carbon fuel: Fuels that, over their entire-life cycle, have lower carbon emissions compared to traditional fuels such as diesel and petrol. Examples include hydrogen and bio-fuels such as hydrotreated vegetable oil.

Electric vehicle: A vehicle that uses electric motors to drive the car forward. The power for the vehicle comes entirely, or in part, from rechargeable batteries.

Passivhaus: Passivhaus refers to a voluntary set of energy efficient building principles developed by the Passivhaus institute in Germany. Passivhaus houses are built to such a high construction, insulation, and ventilation standard that they require little to no additional heating or cooling.

Carbon Footprint: A carbon footprint is a measure of the amount of greenhouse gases produced (expressed as carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e)) by an individual or organisation as a result of their activities.

Territorial emissions: Territorial emissions are all the greenhouse gases produced within a set boundary, for example all the emissions produced in East Renfrewshire.

Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES): The LHEES is a long-term strategic framework that aims to improve the energy efficiency of buildings in a local authority area, as well as reduce the greenhouse gas emissions that result from heating such buildings.

Sustainable Travel Hierarchy: The Sustainable Travel Hierarchy is a tool used to improve the impact of journeys taken by ranking travel options. The higher up on the hierarchy a transport mode is, the more sustainable the travel option. Walking or cycling are prioritised over public transport, with private car use at the bottom of the hierarchy.

Climate Change Impact Assessment: A Climate Change Impact Assessment examines the positive or negative impacts a project or plan will have on climate change.

Circular economy: The circular economy is a system model that looks to eliminate the reliance on finite resources by changing the linear model of production to one that focuses designing for longevity and on recycling and reusing materials.

Fossil Fuels: Fossil fuel is the term given to non-renewable energy sources that formed beneath the Earth's crust as a result of geological processes acting on the remains of plants and animals that existed millions of years ago. Examples of fossil fuels include coal, natural gas or crude oil.

Circular procurement: A purchasing approach that favours the purchase of goods, services or works that contribute to the circular economy and negate harmful environmental impacts.

Deposit Return Scheme: A deposit return scheme is when a small charge is paid on a product, for example a drink bottle, which is then reimbursed when the product is returned to a designated collection point.

Extended Producer Responsibility: Extended Producer Responsibility is a policy that places the responsibility and cost of a products packaging disposal onto the producer rather than the consumer.

Energy Performance Certificate (EPC): An Energy Performance Certificate indicates the energy efficiency of a property on a scale of A (very efficient) to G (very inefficient). It also estimates the energy costs of the property, and the potential energy costs if recommended improvements are undertaken.

Energy Efficiency Scotland: Area Based Scheme (EES:ABS): Funding from Scottish Government, administered by the Council, to delivery energy efficiency improvements. This includes roof and wall insulation, and is targeted at areas with high levels of fuel poverty.

Fuel poverty: Fuel poverty is defined by the Scottish Government as any household spending more than 10% of their income on energy - after housing costs have been deducted.

Home Energy Scotland (HES):

10. REFERENCES

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- ³ [UNEP Climate Action Note, November 2021](#)
- ⁴ [Paris Agreement, November 2016](#)
- ⁵ [Climate Change Plan update, December 2020](#)
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- ⁷ [Climate Ready Clyde](#)
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