



***THINK GLOBAL
ACT LOCAL***

SCOTTISH GREENS LOCAL ELECTION MANIFESTO 2022

Scottish Green Party 



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THINK GLOBAL ACT LOCAL

Many of the challenges we face are global, but we know that solutions can and must be delivered at a local level. Last summer, the Scottish Greens made history by becoming the first Greens to enter central government in UK history.

Action by the Scottish Greens has already led to free bus travel

for young people, unprecedented action on single-use plastics and record investments in recycling, nature restoration and active travel.

Now, more than ever, we need to empower our councils to carry on this work for our communities. Green Councillors across Scotland have made a real difference already, opposing destructive developments, leading local authority action on the climate emergency and saving vital local assets like libraries and swimming pools.

This election is an opportunity for Scottish Green Councillors to play an even bigger role, entering councils that have never benefited from a Green voice before and leading change across Scotland.

Candidates have been listening to their communities and have set out local manifestos that reflect local needs and lead the way with the transformation required to meet national and global challenges. They can be found at www.greens.scot/ThinkGlobalActLocal

Councils have a crucial role to play in addressing the local impact of the climate and economic crises. The pandemic has shown us that global events can have a very profound local impact, but it has also shown us the differences communities can make when we work together to tackle the big challenges we face. We must continue that spirit and cooperation to deal with the climate and economic crises.

Scottish Greens are committed to empowering local authorities to meet the needs of their communities. That is why our MSPs in the Scottish Parliament have secured new powers for councils, new money for active travel and recycling, and the biggest increase in funding for teacher recruitment in a generation.

The next five years are vital for our democracy and our planet. Reforming local tax to get rid of the unfair and outdated Council Tax will be the subject of a Citizen's Assembly. Our MSPs have also ensured that local authorities can regulate the number of Short-Term Lets so that Councils can act to curb excessive concentrations of AirBnBs.

By electing Green Councillors to Council Chambers across Scotland you can change how your council works. Electing a Green Councillor by giving them your first preference vote is the best way to make your council one that supports you and your community to create a better place in a better world.

By considering the climate emergency in every local action and decision we take, Green Councillors will ensure a just transition to a zero-carbon economy and society.





TAKING LOCAL CLIMATE ACTION

WE WILL

We will push for real change, to **move from ambitious targets to tangible local action**, using council powers in planning and service provision to contribute to net-zero goals.

We will ensure that council land is managed to adapt to and **mitigate climate change** in a way that delivers nature-rich places, benefiting wildlife and people.

We will push our councils to divest from fossil fuels, nuclear weapons and the arms trade; and **support a just transition into new, secure jobs** for people currently working in these industries, so they can be part of a clean, Green future.



INVESTING IN LOCAL SERVICES

WE WILL

We will keep schools in council control but **give pupils, parents and teachers a real voice** in how schools are run and how money is spent. We believe every council should have parent and pupil representatives on their education committee.

We will champion those who care for the youngest and oldest in society, building on the pay rises we have introduced to **bring care workers' wages in line with those of NHS staff**.

We will campaign for **cheaper and more frequent bus and ferry services**, building on Free Bus Transport for under-22s and over-60s through the fair fares review.

We will **bring local buses back into public or social ownership**, expanding services and making them more affordable while reducing transport emissions.

CREATING COMMUNITIES FOR EVERYONE

WE WILL

We will invest in walking, wheeling and cycling networks and roll out 20-minute neighbourhoods (where essential services can be accessed locally), making local neighbourhoods safe, healthy and welcoming for all.

We will tackle rip-off housing costs, taking action against rogue landlords, poor property conditions and fuel poverty.

We will deliver Rent Controls and our councillors will introduce them locally.

REVITALISING LOCAL DEMOCRACY

WE WILL

We will put local communities at the heart of planning, prioritising their needs over those of big developers and protecting precious green and open space.

We will help communities own, run or have more say over their areas.

We will give communities much more say over how council money is spent, by making sure every council has a participatory budget target and plan.



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TAKING LOCAL CLIMATE ACTION

We know that tackling the climate emergency needs real leadership, ambition and action at a local level. This will require integrating climate adaptation and mitigation into all aspects of our life - not as an afterthought. Green Councillors will ensure that ambitious targets and plans are in place to become net-zero and, crucially, that action is taken in a way that considers the needs of all of society.

Since 2017 Green Councillors have:

Secured unprecedented commitments to tackle the climate crisis

- ▶ **Secured** Glasgow's 2030 net-zero target.
- ▶ **Persuaded** Highland Council to declare a Climate and Ecological Emergency and set a target of being carbon neutral by 2025.
- ▶ **Led** Edinburgh Council in declaring a Climate Emergency and setting a target of achieving net-zero by 2030 with interim targets and an action plan.

Led urgent action on the climate crisis

- ▶ **Secured** a £10m Climate Action Fund in Glasgow, to invest in renewable energy, green transport and restoring nature.
- ▶ **Proposed** a "Green budget for climate and social justice" in Edinburgh.
- ▶ **Helped win** a Climate Change Officer for Orkney Islands Council.

Stopped climate-damaging investment

- ▶ **Secured** divestment from fossil fuels in Glasgow.
- ▶ **Won agreement** for a new Responsible Investment Statement in Highland & Islands policy, which includes divestment from fossil fuels.

Reduced waste

- ▶ **Increased** recycling investment for flats and tenements and moved bulk uplift charging to a fairer per-item system in Glasgow.
- ▶ **Secured** agreement to install recycling facilities in Edinburgh Council buildings, reducing Edinburgh Council's use of disposable plastics including in school packed lunches.

MOVING TO A NET-ZERO SCOTLAND

Setting targets for achieving net-zero is an important first step in tackling the climate crisis, but it is only the first step. Councils need detailed and ambitious plans for how to transform all aspects of their services and decision-making to achieve net-zero. This means doing things differently in planning, transport, waste management, housing and so much more.

We know this can be done in a way that helps local communities thrive, with warmer homes, people-friendly streets and better local services. Proposals for how we will achieve net-zero in all of these sectors are included throughout this manifesto.

Green Councillors will:

- Ensure councils set ambitious targets for achieving net-zero and develop detailed, robust and integrated plans for achieving these targets.
- Support local authority-wide carbon budgeting to help meet climate targets in the most cost-effective way and to ensure accountability to the public.
- Reduce energy use in council buildings, with delivery of energy efficient and zero carbon emissions heating; support homeowners to retrofit their homes, saving energy and money; and promote the use of local heat networks, all supported by our work in government on net-zero buildings.
- Look at the potential for use of council land for renewable energy generation, especially for heat.
- Rethink the approach to street design and development planning, making walking, wheeling and cycling easier, safer and more efficient, and reducing demand for cars and parking in our towns and city centres.
- Make public transport a practical alternative to car use, by improving bus services, supporting railway re-openings, integrating

- ticketing and bringing local bus services into public or social ownership.
- Ensure the indirect impacts of council business on the climate are reduced, by pushing for divestment from fossil fuels and the arms trade and by carrying out a climate assessment of council procurement and any public funding of arms-length organisations.
 - Ensure that transitioning to net-zero is equitable and results in a just transition, by working closely with partners and local communities.

MANAGING LAND FOR THE FUTURE

Councils have a key role to play in tackling the climate and nature emergencies in the way they manage land. Working with nature we can create places that are rich in wildlife, help us manage water and pollution sustainably and benefit people. This should be part of a long-term approach to working with nature but requires a radical change in approach now.

Scottish Greens recognise that for people to thrive, they need nature. Green spaces within our cities, towns and villages should improve health and wellbeing, add value to our lives and provide places for wildlife to flourish.

Green Councillors will:

- Place councils' duties to conserve and restore biodiversity and tackle the climate emergency at the heart of how they manage land and carry out their work.
- Ensure every council has an ambitious plan in place by 2025 to create a Local Nature Network, that sets out the enhancement and restoration needed to deliver a nature-rich connected network of habitats across the whole of Scotland.
- Commit their council to Local Nature Network delivery by transforming management of council land so it maximises natural carbon capture and

becomes nature-rich, with wildflower meadows and verges that benefit pollinators, tree planting and wetlands all creating spaces for nature within our communities.

- Support habitat restoration by others, particularly where it benefits communities and enriches biodiversity.
- Ensure councils invest in the staff they need and in existing community expertise required to manage land well, advise others and engage communities actively in this process.
- Protect and invest in parks and green spaces, providing places for people to access the outdoors, benefiting their health and mental well-being, and for wildlife to flourish.
- Ensure councils use nature-based solutions to manage flooding, coastal erosion, urban drainage and pollution wherever possible, and invest in the expertise needed to do this.
- Encourage local food production through increasing the accessibility of land and support available to community gardens, allotments, school growing projects and more.
- Support local consultations and contributions to the Land Reform Bill and Regional Land Use Partnerships Pilot, and the rollout of the National Register of Ancient Woodlands.
- Champion sustainable land use, including crofting and small-scale farming, promoting the contributions these make to the local economy as well as environmental enhancement.

A CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Scottish Greens are leading Scotland's shift to a circular economy in government, banning single-use plastics, delivering record amounts for councils to support their recycling efforts and launching a major review into incineration.

Reducing waste with less packaging, encouraging more reuse and recycling means we can avoid incineration, save the cost and environmental impact of landfill and safeguard natural resources for the future. Council investment in bin collections and street cleaning is vital to make our neighbourhoods more attractive.

Green Councillors will:

- Ensure all councils have a zero-waste plan by 2025.
- Improve bin collection services, extend doorstep recycling to include textiles, promote composting and provide a rapid response service to deal with overflowing recycling containers.
- Establish grant programmes to support local deposit return schemes and encourage communities to develop, repair, reuse and community recycling networks and organisations.
- Support local businesses to reduce packaging and find recyclable and biodegradable alternatives.
- Support communities to develop litter prevention plans involving all relevant local partners, enhancing community warden services and taking firm action against fly-tipping and dog-waste problems. Increase the number of environmental health officers, explore ways to improve evidence gathering, and lobby for changes to national legislation so it is easier to prosecute serious fly-tipping. We will also support the case for a separate Environmental Court system to improve the enforcement of environmental protection laws.
- Oppose the large-scale incineration of waste and plan for a just transition for workers in this industry.





INVESTING IN LOCAL SERVICES

Councils educate children and young people, provide care and support services to people, and make our neighbourhoods better places to live. Green Councillors will continue to work to protect and improve these services.

Since 2017 Green Councillors have:

Delivered more teachers and safer schools

- ▶ **Delivered** record teacher recruitment and investment in classroom ventilation across Scotland, thanks to funding secured by Greens at Holyrood.

Led on urgent action on the climate crisis

- ▶ **Secured** the adoption of a Climate Change Charter for Health and Social Care in Edinburgh; committed to the Edinburgh net-zero 2030 target; supported closing the gap on emissions, changing work practices, appointing climate champions and reporting publicly on progress; secured agreement to install recycling facilities in schools and successfully called for cycle lanes to schools along key corridors.
- ▶ **Worked** to make streets safer for children with permanently car-free schools in Glasgow.
- ▶ **Supported** bike buses to school across Scotland.

Ensured the vulnerable were protected

- ▶ **Delivered** a 10% increase to foster and kinship carers' allowances, and reversed cuts to Citizens' Advice centres and women's aid organisations in Glasgow.
- ▶ **Won agreement** in Edinburgh to adopt John's Campaign in hospital wards and care homes, ensuring that the families of those suffering from dementia have full access to their loved ones and are included in all decisions about their care.
- ▶ **Ensured** that Playscheme holiday provision for disabled children in Edinburgh was retained after the lockdown period.

Championed public transport

- ▶ **Secured** funding for a free public transport pilot in Glasgow.
- ▶ **Carried** out a consultation on longer and standardised hours for bus lanes in Edinburgh.
- ▶ **Secured** an extra £5.5 million for ferry funding in Orkney.

THRIVING SCHOOLS AND EARLY YEARS PROVISION

Scottish Greens believe in education that offers children and young people much more than qualifications – education that supports their development as confident individuals equipped to explore the opportunities and face the challenges that our fast-changing world brings. In government we have secured reform of the qualifications and inspections system, and funding for the biggest rise in teacher recruitment in a generation.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Green Councillors will:

- Support teaching which promotes literacy, numeracy, and health and wellbeing.
- Support creativity and critical thinking in the school curriculum, alongside confidence, resilience, global and local citizenship, practical life skills and outdoor learning.
- Support more play-based learning and outdoor education for young people.
- Support Gaelic medium education at primary and secondary level.
- Support parents and carers who wish to opt their children out of standardised testing.
- Promote partnerships between schools and trade unions which give young people the opportunity to learn about their rights before entering the workplace.

SCHOOLS AND STAFF

Green Councillors will:

- Work towards improving qualifications, wages and conditions for Early Years staff.
- Make free childcare hours more flexible, to support parents in shift-work or irregular employment.
- Plan for enough Early Years centres and schools in areas where populations will rise and ensure buildings are high quality, flexible spaces, with environmental sustainability at their core.
- Keep school class sizes down and replace teachers and support staff previously lost to cuts.

- Campaign to protect rural schools and maintain quality library resources in all schools.
- Maximise the use of locally sourced and organic produce in the provision of school meals.

SCHOOLS AS SAFE SPACES FOR ALL

Green Councillors will:

- Review local authority processes for dealing with sexual harassment and abuse within schools to ensure that survivors feel able to come forward and that a zero-tolerance approach is consistently taken.
- Ensure that consent is taught as a core part of Sex & Relationships Education (SRE).
- Make schools LGBTI-inclusive, this includes implementing the Time for Inclusive Education (TIE) proposals.
- Support refugee and asylum seeker young people to fully access the educational and social opportunities available in school.
- Ensure that classrooms are Covid safe and appropriately ventilated and heated.
- Make the Health & Wellbeing Census available to everyone in the relevant age-group.

EMPOWERING PUPILS, STAFF AND PARENTS/CARERS

Green Councillors will:

- Reform Education Committees to include parents/carers, teachers, trade unions and young people.
- Ensure that schools have resources available to support the creation of independent Pupil Unions, so that young people can have their voices heard in education.

PROVIDING ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

Green Councillors will:

- Ensure that every child or young person with additional support needs who would benefit from a Coordinated Support Plan receives one, including care-experienced young people.
- Require that all staff assigned to support individual young people with additional needs have the appropriate training and/or qualifications to do so effectively.
- Make counselling available to all pupils by establishing a right to access school-based counselling provided by qualified mental health practitioners.
- Support pupils at risk of falling behind and support alternative provision for those for whom mainstream provision is not working.

POVERTY-PROOFING SCHOOLS

Green Councillors will:

- Introduce statutory guidance to cap the cost of school uniforms and ensure that uniform requirements are gender neutral and do not discriminate on the basis of any protected characteristic.
- Introduce uniform reuse schemes and support uniform banks to reduce waste and costs to parents/carers.
- Ensure all families have access to income maximisation teams, helping low-income households access the social security payments they are entitled to.
- Ensure all children have access to healthy and nutritious school meals and continue to push for the expansion of free school meals to older age groups.
- Immediately cancel all outstanding debt owed by pupils/families for school meals.

CREATING A HEALTHY AND CARING SCOTLAND

Scottish Green Councillors believe everyone has a right to the best physical and mental health, and access to high quality care, which is free at the point of use, maintaining individual freedom, choice and dignity.

The pandemic has shone a light on the results of a decade of under-investment in Scottish health and social care and the growing inequalities in public health and life expectancy. Waiting lists across social care are unacceptably high – as are staff shortages across services – making delivery of the preventative agenda and person-centred care harder to achieve.

Green Councillors will ensure that Health and Social Care is delivered locally, with community involvement at its heart, and that staff are properly valued.

PROMOTE AND ENABLE GOOD HEALTH

Green Councillors will:

- Work with local communities and trade unions to ensure all council policies aim to improve people's wellbeing, and tackle the root causes of poor health, such as



poverty, inequality, addiction, poor housing and air pollution.

- Ensure that there is good quality green space within walking distance of all our homes with access to seating, 'Changing Places' toilets, public conveniences and services so we can all enjoy the benefits all year round.
- Make funding available to the community sectors to provide out of school activities and opportunities for sports, culture and leisure for disabled young people.
- Provide a range of services for older people, recognising personal choice, and that they may wish to be supported and looked after in different ways at different times in their lives.
- Ensure the value of continuity of care is respected, keeping care workers and the people they support connected.
- Ensure that everyone who needs mental health support has access to the right support, at the right time, by providing mental health staff at all GP practices and funding for community-based support groups and activities patients may be referred to.
- Support HIV Scotland's Generation Zero campaign to eliminate HIV transmission in Scotland by 2030.
- Strengthen the policy around alcohol licensing, with the aim of reducing availability and reducing alcohol harm.
- Ensure access to free contraception and access to sexual health clinics.
- Ensure that local authorities Keep The Promise so that all young people grow up loved, safe and respected (www.carereview.scot/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/The-Promise.pdf).

ENSURE LOCAL DELIVERY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Green Councillors will:

- Ensure that the majority of care at home and care home services are provided by the public and voluntary sectors.
- Ensure that opportunities to bring private

care at home and care home services in-house are taken up where appropriate, increasing control and accountability, while ensuring continuity of care.

- Support and enable locally-led social care partnerships and social enterprises, including local disabled people's organisations, to provide good quality social care.
- Ensure that the development and delivery of services is fully informed by the views and suggestions of all service users and unpaid carers.

SUPPORT OUR STAFF

Green Councillors will:

- Support all health and social care staff to make sustainable travel choices including by making work-travel free at the point of use, including public transport, with appropriate training and financial support where needed.
- Ensure that the pay and conditions of paid carers reflect their expertise. Greens in Government have helped deliver pay rises for carers and Green Councillors support calls for social care workers to be paid at least £15 an hour.
- Support fair working practices by tackling zero-hours contracts, ensuring social care workers are paid for shift handovers, for time spent travelling between jobs and travelling expenses and have opportunities for continuing professional development.
- Provide free period products across council buildings and ensure they are made truly and fully accessible to staff, young people and those in need.

RESPECT UNPAID CARERS

Green Councillors will:

- Ensure that unpaid carers receive regular breaks to suit their needs and are fully supported with adult carer support plans ensuring their own physical and mental health needs.
- Take steps to improve unpaid carers' financial security - for example, providing

income maximisation advice to all unpaid carers and providing concessionary travel for unpaid carers on income support.

- Make sure income assessments for care charges do not include Carer's Allowance, while we work to eliminate all care charges.
- Support young unpaid carers by minimising children's practical caring responsibilities whenever possible, providing access to peer support and developing local forms of financial support.

SUPPORT THOSE FACING ADDICTION

Green Councillors will:

- Take an evidence-based, public health approach to tackling drug overdose and other addiction related deaths.
- At the frontline, support the person-centred approach to addiction with a focus on drop-in services, including drug consumption rooms and crisis centres which are accessible, making people safer and providing holistic support.
- Ensure that drug users who leave treatment or statutory services, whether planned or unplanned, receive follow-up support.
- Work with addiction services to address stigma and increase resources available for family and friends and support campaigns that increase drug overdose awareness.
- Provide specialist care home provision for those suffering from Alcohol Related Brain Damage.

SUPPORTING PEOPLE IN CRISIS

Scottish Greens believe councils have a key role to play in tackling poverty and helping people avoid crisis. Local councils can help tackle inequality and we will prioritise an equalities-led approach, working closely with those whose opportunities may be reduced due to class, race, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief.

Green Councillors will:

- Campaign to secure funding for support services for those who have experienced domestic abuse or sexual violence.
- Implement rent controls with a 'housing first' approach to homelessness, with measures to empower tenants at risk of homelessness through better advice and access to legal aid and improve the standard of temporary accommodation available.
- Ensure that every person leaving prison, hospital, residential rehabilitation, or fleeing domestic violence is provided with accommodation that meets their assessed needs.
- Help people to claim the social security benefits they are entitled to with 'income maximisation' teams embedded within communities.
- Welcome refugees and asylum seekers into our communities and push to ensure relevant support services are available to meet their specific needs as well as support for people with No Recourse to Public Funds.
- Push to take asylum housing and support out of private hands, so it is run by councils in partnership with the third sector, ensuring dignified, safe housing based in communities, not hotels.
- Commit to discussions across local authorities on how to expand participation in dispersal schemes for people seeking asylum throughout Scotland.
- Campaign to give people seeking asylum the right to work.
- Provide free bus travel to refugees and asylum seekers.
- Support a holistic approach to food policy, tackling the health, social and environmental impacts of food.
- Support community food projects which work to ensure good food is available to all.
- Work with businesses to identify healthier, local and ethical food choices, including plant-based food, and promote these through council catering and public information campaigns.

BETTER PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Being able to travel broadens our opportunities. Scottish Greens want to improve our public transport options, while reducing car use, making it possible for everyone to access the services and places they need. This will require both new infrastructure and new models for ownership, management and integration of transport services.

Green Councillors will:

- Connect communities with better bus services, actively support rural bus services in order to maintain thriving towns and villages and champion the creation of a publicly owned bus company in areas without one.
- Support the complete transition to electric vehicles for public transport and the development of a charging point network for electric cars.
- Integrate low carbon modes of transport through deploying Mobility as a Service, Demand Responsive Transport, and delivering integrated transport hubs and ticketing systems.
- Ensure connectivity of bus and rail services by using powers under the new Transport Act when franchising to require providers to offer integrated through-tickets with fare caps.
- Increase the reach and quality of digital connectivity to create alternatives to travel.
- Review accessibility of public transport provision and deliver recommendations that make public transport as inclusive as possible, with particular focus on transport connections and the needs of those making multi-stage journeys.
- Promote the National Entitlement Card (NEC) scheme and support marginalised communities through the process, to ensure the highest possible uptake of free bus travel for under 22s.
- Support extending NEC eligibility, particularly the current three-year period of validity for people with chronic or degenerative conditions, and work to improve the NEC application process to ensure it is as accessible as possible.
- Implement a workplace parking levy in areas where this would be appropriate and beneficial to encourage shifts in travel to work practices, reduce congestion and improve air quality.
- Work with the Scottish Government to formulate an innovative fleet replacement strategy for Islands Councils, to add capacity and replace ageing ferry fleets with renewable fuelled vessels, ensuring lifeline services are maintained.
- Support and plan for the reopening of rail lines and stations, including through the Strategic Transport Projects Review and other means, such as identifying sites in Local Development Plans, protecting strategic rail corridors and supporting rail in City and Growth Deals.



CREATING COMMUNITIES FOR EVERYONE

Councils can help build our communities and create the places and neighbourhoods where we live. Green Councillors want them to be safe, green and attractive places. We will help to connect people with a thriving local economy and strengthen neighbourhoods with good services and celebrations of local identity.

Scottish Greens will keep pushing councils to take an approach to decisions, policy and funding which amplifies the voices of people with the most expertise on how to make our towns, cities and communities fairer for everyone.

Since 2017 Green Councillors have:

Protected housing for all

- ▶ **Declared** a rent crisis in Glasgow, putting tenants in charge of leading housing reforms, and setting up a Tenant-led Commission to lead private rent reforms.
- ▶ **Delivered** action on empty homes in Edinburgh and Glasgow, successfully bringing hundreds of houses back into use.
- ▶ **Ensured** that 'affordable housing' in Edinburgh is genuinely affordable for those on low incomes and, with other parties, delivered a two-year council rent freeze during the pandemic.
- ▶ **Enabled** local progress, in Edinburgh and the Highlands, on limiting second homes and short term lets prior to national legislation.

Led urgent action on the climate crisis

- ▶ **Successfully** called for a new Road Safety Action Plan in Edinburgh, with a commitment to Vision Zero (a policy which aims to eliminate deaths and serious injuries on our roads), and added a focus on environmental and green principles into the economy strategy.
- ▶ **Passed** a motion for Greening the Fringe, the world's largest arts festival, to reduce its reliance on gas power and single-use plastics.
- ▶ **Increased** recycling investment for flats and tenements in Glasgow.

Stopped climate-damaging investment

- ▶ **Supported** the Churchill Barriers as a vital economic artery for Orkney.
- ▶ **Helped** secure a new future for Gorgie City Farm in Edinburgh, including over £100,000 in funding and additional support.
- ▶ **Ensured** the reopening of Glasgow's libraries, museums and local venues after vital community-led campaigns.

Championed sustainable transport

- ▶ **Ensured** that all 40 km of Spaces for People cycle routes in Glasgow will be made permanent, opposing car-centric developments and moving Glasgow closer to becoming the first city in the UK to ban drive-throughs.
- ▶ **Ensured** footway widening and segregated infrastructure would be considered on all road resurfacing projects in Edinburgh, which has led to the installation of new cycle and footpaths.

THRIVING LOCAL ECONOMIES

Scottish councils spend billions of pounds each year, directly into the local economy. But too often this money provides profits to big companies rather than investment for our communities, small local businesses and the third sector. Scottish Greens believe a thriving local economy is one based on what's good for people, not profit. Our economy should be sustainable, connect people with decent jobs and help to bind our society together.

Green Councillors will:

- Take a Green New Deal-inspired approach to procurement, oppose capital investment in outdated, carbon-intensive infrastructure, and instead invest in sustainability and climate target projects - for example, by retrofitting homes to be warm and affordable to heat or supporting businesses in the circular economy.
- Build community wealth by increasing procurement spending with smaller local firms by 2% every year. Make ethical policies like paying the Living Wage and environmental responsibility a condition of any council-funded support.
- Support Close the Gap's Equally Safe at Work Employer Accreditation Programme to advance gender equality at work and prevent violence against women in the workplace.
- Support more social enterprises, cooperatives and employee-owned businesses through public procurement and access to publicly owned property.
- Tackle rural and island fuel poverty, making it a high priority for councils, developing local fuel partnerships and encouraging renewable and local wood fuel initiatives.
- Encourage shops and post offices in local high streets, rather than chain stores or out-of-town development.
- Support credit unions and local banks that understand the local business community.
- Offer alternatives to high-interest payday lending and invest savings in the local

economy.

- Support payroll deduction savings schemes that allow council workers to save with credit unions.
- Support the better use of data by councils, to identify issues like households under-claiming their entitlements and make it easier to claim one benefit on the basis of entitlement to another - for example, automatically giving a school clothing grant if the family claims free school meals.
- Support community buy-outs and asset transfers, and increase the availability of grants, loans, financial advice, training, and other assistance with setting up small businesses, cooperatives or other social enterprises with a focus on green jobs.

AFFORDABLE WARM HOMES FOR ALL

Our vision for housing is for good-quality homes that are truly affordable to buy, affordable to rent and affordable to heat. There should be more social housing, better control of rents and better management of the private sector.

Green Councillors will:

- Endeavour to limit the numbers of Short-Term Lets, including through the new Short-Term Let licensing schemes, by introducing Control Areas and further actions as required.
- Help people who rent to create a stable home by making information about good letting agencies and landlords easily available, supporting action against bad landlords and letting agents, and pushing for rent controls to limit rent rises that could push people out of their homes.
- Promote better engagement between Registered Social Landlords and tenants and work to make housing services and processes clear for people who have language and other access needs.
- Support new housing cooperatives or initiatives to bring rented property into

- shared management.
- Make energy efficiency of existing houses a priority through establishing comprehensive and fully funded local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategies to create warm homes, reduce fuel bills and tackle fuel poverty.
- Establish a trusted not-for-profit service to manage major repairs, including to tenements, grants for low-income households, interest-free loans, or options to defer paying repair costs until the property is sold.
- Work to bring Scotland's 43,000 empty homes back into use.
- Support the construction of homes built for affordable rent, to tackle the 150,000-waiting list for social housing. This will need land to be available at low cost through a new council power to buy land for housing at 'existing use value'.
- Facilitate community-led housing projects, particularly in rural areas, and connect communities to financial support through the Remote, Rural & Islands Housing Fund.
- Prioritise new housing that is affordable, meets net-zero standards, is built on brownfield sites and is connected to local services, public transport and active travel routes. To help deliver housing and reduce land speculation we will push for a local 'vacant and derelict land levy'.
- Support action to drive up space standards and design houses which are easy to adapt for independent living.
- Explore ways of taking facilities like care homes and student housing into social ownership.
- Support measures to protect heritage buildings and extend conservation areas.

STREETS FOR PEOPLE

Our streets should be part of neighbourhoods and communities we can enjoy and be proud to call home. Streets within our cities, towns and villages need to be transformed, placing peoples' needs at the heart of our approach to transport and urban design, turning car-dominated places into spaces where people have priority.

Green Councillors will:

- Deliver 20-minute neighbourhoods, where essential services can be accessed locally, creating liveable towns and cities.
- Extend 20mph speed limits within residential areas and town and city centres by 2025 and seek to lower 40mph speed limits to 30mph to improve road safety, reduce air pollution, and give the streets back to communities.
- Seek to introduce low emission zones in town centres and carbon-free city centres, as well as introducing local authority targets for reducing carbon emissions from transport.
- Working with Greens in Government we'll direct record investment into local walking, wheeling and cycling projects.
- Reallocate road space to people and support the creation of low traffic neighbourhoods so that walking, wheeling and cycling are prioritised and made more attractive and safer.
- Deliver more 'Safe to School' initiatives, aiming to ensure that every child who lives within a two-mile route from school is able to walk, wheel or cycle there safely.
- Introduce a Vision Zero approach for road safety, which will significantly reduce (and aim to eliminate) deaths and serious injuries on our roads, and work with Greens in Government to fund road safety teams in all local authorities to make this happen.
- Work with communities to help prevent anti-social behaviour, tackle gender-based violence and improve community

connections.

- Improve public space lighting and accelerate the roll-out of LED lighting, including nature-friendly lighting.
- Seek local community input, giving priority to women, disabled people and other marginalised groups, to identify where spaces could be better lit, redesigned or activated to reduce risk.
- Take an equalities approach to road and path maintenance, including maintenance and winter weather treatment of footways and cycleways that are particularly important to marginalised groups.
- Engage with the public on investment in public art to revitalise our shared spaces.

LEISURE, RECREATION, ARTS AND CULTURE

People and communities connect through council services like libraries, community centres and sport facilities. Festivals and gala days help us celebrate our local area and identity.

Green Councillors will:

- Work to protect libraries and support their role as community hubs and guarantee funding for libraries for the life of the council term and ensure no decisions are made to cut core library services without full local consultation.
- Explore the potential for libraries to develop as climate action hubs, providing access to repair skills training, recycling advice, seed banks, tool sharing and other services.
- Quantify and promote the economic contribution of the creative economy.
- Work with cultural organisations to understand how councils can best support the whole sector, rather than 'picking winners' from competitive funding rounds.
- Improve accessibility to sport facilities.
- Support grassroots sporting activities, such as running clubs, and ensure provision of low cost 'community-use' sports facilities

for hire at affordable rates.

- Oppose the closure of local leisure facilities and the selling-off of common good assets.
- Support community-led festivals and events.
- Protect and enhance Scotland's museums and galleries, keeping general admission free whilst exploring new ways to raise funding and enhance people's experiences.
- Support the call for a new national museum of slavery, colonialism, migration and empire, and the ongoing strategic work to both recognise Scotland's history and tackle the legacy of racism that continues today.
- Support the introduction of a Transient Visitor Levy in appropriate tourist areas.
- Support and show solidarity with the LGBT+ community and their right to live free from fear and harassment, including seeking safe spaces for the community to gather and providing support for community organising.
- Increase support for Gaelic-inclusive tourism, culture and events.
- Support cultural ventures in all the languages of Scotland, encouraging use of Gaelic, Scots and Doric as well as languages of people from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- Provide access to council services in Gaelic and other community languages, including phone lines and translated web pages, and support Gaelic signage across the transport network, including road signs, on trains and buses and at transport hubs.

REVITALISING LOCAL DEMOCRACY

Scottish Greens believe that local government can put power in your hands. Green Councillors will listen to community concerns, then work hard to create solutions and make councils open and accountable.

Since 2017 Green Councillors have:

Empowered local communities

- ▶ **Consistently** stood up for local communities against big developers.
- ▶ **Won funding for** local communities in Glasgow, including millions of pounds for new play parks, back lane improvements, tenement repairs, 20mph speed limits, local green spaces and food growing.
- ▶ **Stood up for** migrant justice - opposing evictions, preventing deportations and fighting for decent housing.
- ▶ **Supported** the expansion of participatory budgeting schemes in Edinburgh, such as Feith Chooses.
- ▶ **Sought additional support** for community councils during the pandemic and pushed to accelerate the reopening of community centres after the pandemic.

Championed transparency and reform

- ▶ **Helped** return Glasgow Council to a proportionate, democratic committee system and bring alternative voices into Council decision-making.
- ▶ **Won** agreement to carry out a review in Edinburgh, led by the members of the BME community, of features within the city that commemorate those with close links to slavery and colonialism, to consult widely on the review outcomes and to make recommendations to rectify the glorification of slavery and colonialism.
- ▶ **Changed** Orkney Island Council investment practices so that all decisions require discussion of Environmental, Governance and Social dimensions.

Valued our council employees

- ▶ **Committed** Glasgow Council to the world-leading 'Equally Safe at Work' programme and won support across parties to secure Scotland's first-ever local authority gender pay action plan.
- ▶ **Introduced** best practice in Edinburgh Council's recruitment and employment practices, ensuring that equality, diversity and anti-discrimination training is standard for all staff.

Led on urgent action on the climate crisis

- ▶ **Supported** the school climate strikers in Edinburgh, securing authorised days of absence for pupils attending global days of strike action.
- ▶ **Secured** a commitment in Edinburgh to ensure all new buildings in the city will be very low-carbon under the new City Plan.
- ▶ **Included** climate and nature emergency activist groups in Glasgow in decision-making, scrapped parking perks for councillors and ended Council use of internal flights.

PLANNING FOR A GREEN FUTURE

Scottish Greens will strive for a planning system that listens to people. It should be transparent, accountable and give people the power to shape their communities, resulting in development that is driven by public interest, not economic growth, and which uses the planning system to tackle the climate crisis, contribute to ending poverty, and create pleasant, people-focussed places.

Green Councillors will:

- Invest in planning as a public service - empowering local groups and individuals to engage, providing meeting spaces, clear and accessible information and dedicated staff.
- Ensure transparency and accountability by pushing to make the voting record for all planning and development management committee votes available promptly online and in council offices.
- Ensure that planning officers and local councillors involved in planning decisions are supported with training to ensure they understand the long-term carbon impacts of development.
- Campaign with our MSPs to balance the rights of communities with those of developers by giving them an equal right of appeal over planning decisions. At present, only developers have the right to appeal.
- Undertake a review of planning enforcement processes to ensure that developers deliver on all conditions of their planning permission, that developer contributions are swiftly used for their intended purpose, and that planning breaches are effectively dealt with.
- Expand the use of place plans and development briefs, led by local communities, in order to 'front load' the planning system and provide more voice to communities.
- Protect wildlife sites and local greenspaces from development and seek sustainable solutions to managing public land in ways

that benefit people and nature.

- Prioritise development on brownfield land, seek to protect green belt and open space from development and oppose out of town retail developments.
- Help local authorities deliver their Climate Change Act commitments by making carbon assessments a requirement of development proposals and transitioning Scotland away from fossil fuel extraction and consumption.
- Seek to ensure the planning system plays its part in adapting to a world where climate change means more extreme weather events, ensuring our homes and businesses are resilient to flooding, working with nature wherever possible to manage flood water, and preventing developments in flood-risk areas.
- Support the development of local energy companies and local heat networks.
- Seek to ensure the planning system plays its part in tackling the climate emergency and ending poverty, by reducing the need to travel and creating 20-minute neighbourhoods, by encouraging highly energy efficient and nature-friendly buildings, and by ensuring the delivery of truly affordable housing where it is needed.

FAIR FUNDING FOR PUBLIC SERVICES

Scottish Greens believe in progressive taxation and investment in public services. The involvement of the community in financial decision-making is a cornerstone for revitalising our local democracy.

Green Councillors will:

- Engage with the forthcoming Citizens' Assembly on local government funding, won by Greens in Government, with the aim of ending the regressive Council Tax and replacing it with a fairer system.
- Give council employees a say on how their pensions should be invested, including options to divest from fossil fuels, tobacco

- and weapons and invest in local housing and renewable energy.
- Push councils to publish annual budget proposals early so that they can be scrutinised by councillors and communities and ensure that budgets have Equality Impact Assessments.
- Support the return of the power to set the rate for 50% of the assessed value of non-domestic property. This would devolve more fiscal power to local government and help make local decisions on rates which fit local circumstances.
- Support a fiscal framework for the relationship between Scottish and local government which promotes local democracy, devolved decision-making and stability for public services.
- Support the continued devolution of financial powers to local authorities by developing new local tax powers like the Transient Visitor Levy.
- Review the way the third sector is funded, in particular funding for core services and the need for long-term funding.
- Improve conditions for frontline workers across local authorities and support piloting a four-day working week which means a 20% reduction in working hours with no reduction in pay.

EMPOWERING LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Scotland needs a revitalised local democracy where citizens are engaged and active in the important matters affecting their communities and where voters can make real choices about the services they want and how to pay for them. Councils, and the important decisions they make, must be accountable to local people.

Green Councillors will:

- Support more powers for community councils, citizens' assemblies, street committees and other community bodies to be actively involved in making decisions

- about public spending, increasing the use of participatory budgeting.
- Support community-led development plans and projects, including buildings, parks, sports facilities, energy and much more, financially and by sharing experience.
- Continue to work with rural and urban communities on buyouts of land and assets that can transform local facilities and economies.
- Ensure that communities have a lead role in tourism development, facilitating tourism that benefits local communities rather than overwhelming them.
- Work to provide non-intimidating community discussion spaces. These will support a diverse array of voices and will pilot new methods for participation in council decisions, including through better use of technology.
- Make it easier for those with lived/direct experience of inequality to be involved in making council policy and directly fund equalities and anti-poverty groups where their expertise is needed to support the development or implementation of council policy.
- Make it easier to find out and understand what is happening in your council, standardise the live webcasting of council meetings, record councillors' votes on all committees and open up to public scrutiny.
- Remove barriers to elected office for under-represented groups and ensure that council business is conducted in an accessible and inclusive manner.
- Oppose top-down centralisation of services. We are open to collaboration between local authorities where this would enable better service provision for all.



Only the Scottish Greens understand that the climate and nature emergencies need urgent action by governments, by businesses and in our communities. We have proved that we can provide leadership in Scotland to tackle poverty and the climate emergency. Giving the Scottish Greens your first preference vote will build our leadership in your local council too.

