

**Response to Scottish Government consultation -  
Net Zero Nation – Draft Public Engagement Strategy for Climate Change**

**Q1. Objectives**

- a) What are your views on the three objectives underpinning our approach to engagement on climate change?*
- b) Do you think that any of these objectives should be removed or changed?*
- c) Are there any objectives that you think should be included that are currently missing?*

R1a. The three objectives set out key aspects of a public engagement strategy: raising awareness, supporting participation and encouraging action. The CLDSC proposes that there is a greater emphasis on education as a means of enabling active, critical engagement with climate change issues. The principles of the strategy state that “Climate justice will be embedded” within the approach taken; referring to climate justice within the objectives, and at other points in the strategy would strengthen its focus on measurable change.

R1b. While raising awareness of Scottish Government action to address climate change (Objective 1) is an important part of developing public engagement, the approach to showing how this action relates to peoples’ lives should be informed by participation/engagement around issues of concern to individuals and communities in addition to a communications strategy. It is proposed that the objective should be about sustaining a continuing and meaningful dialogue on climate change policy that involves communication both from and to the Scottish Government.

R1c. The three objectives focusing on raising awareness, supporting participation and encouraging action provide a clear overall framework for the strategy. The Council contends that its proposals in responses to 1a and 1b could be best included within the existing objectives,

**Q2. Principles**

- a) What are your views on our seven principles for public engagement set out in Box 1?*
- b) Do you think that any of these principles should be removed or changed?*
- c) Are there any principles of good public engagement on climate change that you think are missing?*

R2a. We broadly support the seven principles. However it is the view of the Council that it is difficult to know what “*Our approach will actively put people first and place people at the heart of all that we do*” means in practical terms and we propose an alternative in our response to 2b.

R2b. The Council proposes that “*Our approach will actively put people first and place people at the heart of all that we do*” should be replaced with:  
“*Our approach will be based on partnership between government and the public, and will encourage actively the development of leadership on responses to climate*”

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*change from individuals, communities, civil society, local authorities and business as well as from all levels of local and national government”.*

R2c. The CLDSC proposes that a further principle, set out below, is added:

*“Our approach will welcome challenge on policies and approaches for adapting to and mitigating climate change as an essential part of driving an effective response”.*

**Q3. Other comments**

*a) Do you have any other comments on our overall approach?*

R3a.

The proposed amendments to the principles of the strategy set out above aim to strengthen it by acknowledging clearly that tensions and disagreements are necessary parts of the process of public engagement, policy development and positive change and that to support this approach the Scottish Government is committed to a decentralised, distributed leadership model on climate change issues.

It is the view of the Council that the strategy:

- Would be also be strengthened greatly by emphasising that learning approaches should be embedded within support for participation and action.
- Should identify more clearly the relationship between macro and micro level change, in particular how changes in legislation, policy, taxation and the economy can support individuals and communities to contribute to combatting or mitigating climate change. For example by outlining the potential for mitigating climate impact through the reorganisation of food production and supply both within local communities based on models used across Europe, and across wider supply chains. This would contribute to creating a convincing narrative of the active role that individuals and communities can play in the overall process of effecting change.

**Q4. What are your views on the opportunities and challenges for public engagement in the Green Recovery?**

R4 The CLDSC welcomes the draft strategy’s broad commitment to *“delivering a green recovery which prioritises economic, social, and environmental wellbeing, and responds to the twin challenges of climate change and biodiversity loss”.*

Effective and meaningful public engagement in the Green Recovery will depend on articulating specific ways which enable individuals and communities to be involved actively in developing and delivering the activities that make such a recovery realistic. Promotion of concepts such as a wellbeing economy is unlikely to have an impact beyond a limited circle of those already involved without an effective strategy to support the development of the skills required by individuals and communities.

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***Q5 What are your views on our approach to communicating climate change policy?***

R5 The strategy indicates (p. 19) that *“marketing activity will also play a part in educating individuals and organisations about the scale of change needed to address climate change, the policies being developed by the Scottish Government to respond to climate change at home and overseas, and the role of individuals and organisations in getting Scotland to net zero”*.

Creative marketing approaches clearly have a role in communication on climate change. However the Council contends that this role must not be about selling a ready-made product as this will not result in an effective learning process, which needs to be created in partnership with individuals and communities. Developing, rather than *“creating”*, a *“compelling narrative”* to engage with will only happen through two way communication, which recognises that some people are already very aware of the scale of change required and playing a role in moving Scotland to net zero while there are a considerable number of others who face many, more pressing issues in their lives, which makes climate change and policies to respond to it seem remote and far from immediately relevant.

The strategy notes (p. 20) that *“governments are often not the most suitable messenger when it comes to communicating policies to differing audiences. Many of the policies included within the CCPu will require a range of organisations to help deliver them. This could be local authorities, wider public sector organisations, businesses, the third sector, and community organisations”*.

The CLDSC survey of CLD practitioners’ responses to the pandemic and lockdown demonstrated that this workforce is ideally placed to link up the work of community organisations, local authorities and other public sector bodies. This is a crucial role in the effective communication of climate change policy. The professionally qualified CLD workforce has a skill-set focused on developing the kind of two way communication referred to above.

This could include highlighting the Scottish Government’s agenda for corporate/organisation responsibility for climate change, making the link of responsibility for both personal and corporate/organisation

Theme 2 of the strategy emphasises (p. 22) that *“constructive dialogue with people and communities is at the heart of all new policy”*. This key principle should be reflected appropriately in all aspects of the strategy.

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***Q6. Are you aware of any practical examples or case studies of good practice for communicating on climate change that could be useful for informing our approach?***

*On Our Wave Length* is a youth-led research project exploring environmental impacts on coastal communities, funded by National Lottery Heritage Fund and delivered in partnership by Youthlink Scotland and Traditional Arts and Culture Scotland.

The youth-led research approach has given the young researchers (based in Argyll and Bute, Fife, North Berwick, South Ayrshire and the Western Isles) freedom to explore the issues that matter most to them and their communities whether this be climate change, industry, pollution, impacts on wildlife or oceans. They are being supported by experts including Scottish Natural Heritage and Marine Conservation Society as well as finding local advice in their communities.

Findings are shared by filming the young researchers telling the story of what they have discovered and through social media.

[Learning for Sustainability | On Our Wave Length \(youthlinkscotland.org\)](https://youthlinkscotland.org)

Keep Scotland Beautiful developed Climate Emergency Training that can be delivered to individuals, businesses and other organisations. They worked with Youthlink Scotland to deliver this training to Youth Workers and to develop a supporting toolkit (as part of the Youth Leader Climate Project funded by the Scottish Government). The training and toolkit are designed to equip youth workers with a working understanding of the climate emergency and give them the skills and tools to help young people to turn their concerns about climate change into positive action. There is potential to extend this approach to resource CLD practitioners in adult learning and community development settings as well as those in youth work.

[Climate emergency training | Keep Scotland Beautiful](#)

Glasgow Science Centre are working on developing two bespoke learning packs for community groups, which will be available on the *Our World Our Impact* Hub from 1st April 2021: the *Folklore for Future Learning Pack* for ages 3-10, using storytelling to explore the possibility of a greener, healthier future through; and *Preparing for a Just Transition* for Ages 13+, focused on discovering the opportunities and challenges Scotland faces in reducing our environmental impact.

However there is currently a lack of appropriate resources for community based adult learning participants.

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***Q7. What are your views on our approach to enabling participation in policy design?***

R7. The CLDSC acknowledges that all the activities outlined in Theme 2 of the strategy are positive and important. To achieve the type of society-wide change that the strategy aims for, other, additional means of embedding engagement with climate issues into day-to-day activities of individuals and communities are required. The basis for these could be provided by the type of dialogue-based communication strategy suggested in the responses to question 5. Engagement of this type requires to be supported by qualified practitioners who work in an enabling and educative role with communities. Therefore, the Council contends that CLD practitioners are essential to the successful implementation of the strategy.

While it is recognised that many other public and voluntary sector staff contribute to the type of engagement required, CLD practitioners are best placed in terms of their skills and relationships with communities to co-ordinate activities and demonstrate good practice.

***Q8. Are you aware of any practical examples or case studies of good practice for enabling participation in decision-making that could be useful for informing our approach?***

Local communities in Dundee have held ‘people’s assemblies’ across the city, focused on green recovery from COVID-19, supported by local community organisations and groups.

Extending the important role of the Climate Assembly at national level, a similar local approach through establishing “mini publics” may have equal potential for generating public engagement in climate change issues. CLD practitioners in Aberdeenshire have used the approach as a way of engaging with people who often do not take part in official consultations or surveys, for example to understand better why uptake of free school meals was so low in a particular school and what could be done to improve the system ([Fraserburgh PEF CLD mini public: Community Development Practice Exemplar — PB Scotland](#)). The same approach could be used to engage people and communities with climate change.

***Q9. What are your views on our approach to encouraging action?***

R9. The Council recognises that supporting community climate action, supporting key messengers, supporting climate change education, connecting with nature, connecting to culture and heritage and promoting a place-based approach are important aspects of encouraging action on climate change issues by individuals and communities; and that marketing campaigns focusing on the potential for people to take action on climate change have a place within a suite of approaches.



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In relation to climate change education, the strategy comments that *“In schools, climate change is addressed through the cross-cutting curriculum theme of Learning for Sustainability.”*

The Council contends that Learning for Sustainability requires to be pre-eminently seen as a focus for lifelong learning with the important work in schools being presented as a part of a lifelong engagement with climate change. An effective response to addressing climate requires action to be taken by those not engaged in school, and outwith school settings, therefore Learning for Sustainability should be embedded in the learning that takes place in a range of settings including communities. The forthcoming Lifelong Learning Policy (as set out in the Programme for Government) provides an important means of strengthening the impact of Learning for Sustainability through a system-wide approach.

It is important to note that immediately before the pandemic and resulting lockdown, action aimed at bringing about changes at government and economy-wide levels to combat climate change was taking place, independently of “official” support or encouragement. We propose that the strategy recognises this work and aims to support such activity.

***Q10. Are you aware of any practical examples or case studies of good practice for encouraging climate change action that could be useful for informing our approach?***

The “*Changing Tides, Making Waves*” youth conference in November 2020 was jointly organised by the Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (CPMR) North Sea Commission (which aims to “achieve a productive and sustainable, climate-neutral, connected and smart North Sea Region”) and the Northern Alliance Regional Improvement Collaborative. The conference focused on “Youth Participation Leading Positive Change Across The North Sea”; it was supported by CLD practitioners in the North East of Scotland and embodied approaches advocated in this response. The report on the conference is available here:

[Report from Youth Conference: Changing Tides and Making Waves. – CPMR North Sea Commission \(cpmr-northsea.org\)](https://cpmr-northsea.org/)

Health Issues in the Community ([HIIC](#)) is a course that enables participants to develop their understanding of the range of factors that affect their health and the health of their communities and to explore how these factors can be addressed. Co-ordinated and supported by the Scottish Community Development Centre and run by tutors across Scotland, HIIC supports people to develop the skills and knowledge to address health issues using community development approaches. It places value on supporting individuals to work collectively; on extending participatory democracy; and on social justice and equity. Developing and delivering a similar model in relation to climate change issues could provide an effective means of communicating with people who are unlikely to respond to marketing strategies, and engaging them in

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action and participation in decision-making. An initial step would be to investigate whether there are existing local initiatives of this sort that could be built upon,

***Q11. How do you think COP26 can help deliver a positive legacy for people of Scotland and climate action?***

R11. COP26 offers a major opportunity for learning, education and awareness-raising in relation to climate change and climate action for individuals, communities and businesses. As in response to question 9 above, the Council contends that it is essential that this is approached as an opportunity for lifelong learning. CLD practitioners have a key role in engaging people of all ages in learning focused on how they can bring about positive changes in their lives, and specifically in relation to the issues that COP26 is seeking to address. This approach to educational work will stimulate active engagement for instance through the Green Zone and will be effective in engaging with individuals and communities faced with many more obviously pressing issues related to deprivation.

Furthermore CLD practitioners are playing an important part in the work of Glasgow Science Centre in relation to COP26 to produce learning materials which will support the aims of the conference..

***Q12. How can we work with stakeholders and actors across Scotland to deliver our “people” theme for COP26.***

R12. It is essential to work with existing networks and partnerships supporting community learning, engagement and participation, including CLD Partnerships, as well as those focused on climate issues. Linking effectively with these existing resources for collaboration will enable effective delivery and avoid ineffective and wasteful duplication of activity that could arise from seeking to establish new channels and groupings.

***Q13. Are there other initiatives that the Scottish Government should consider joining or supporting ahead of COP26?***

***Q14. What are your views on how our progress towards our objectives could be most effectively monitored and evaluated?***

R14. Among a range of approaches including ways of evaluating changes in perception and involvement by the wider public, such as sample surveys, it will be important to seek feedback from the practitioners and “champions” that the Scottish Government is relying on for delivery of the strategy (see also response to question 15).

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***Q15. How regularly – and in what format – should we report on progress on the strategy?***

R15. Annual reporting in a simple format may both allow time for significant progress and also support review and adjustment of the delivery of the strategy in the light of experience. Discussion of annual reports could provide a focus for feedback from practitioners and “champions”, as referred to in response to question 14, and, for example, from focus groups drawn from the wider public or from a sample of people already known to be engaged with climate issues.

The strategy and reports on progress should be in formats that are accessible for all, especially seldom-heard groups who are often furthest removed from decision-making spaces, to understand and engage with. The strategy should go further to reach all peoples who may not already be engaged in civic activities - as we know through many studies that climate change impacts will be felt by those already facing most disadvantage in their lives.