



Highland
Community
Planning
Partnership

Com-pàirteachas
Dealbhadh
Coimhearsnachd

na Gàidhealtachd

Social Value Charter for Renewables Investment

The Social Value Charter sets out the community benefit expectations Highland has for companies wishing to invest in renewables in this area.

The Highlands have rich resources that are ideally suited to encouraging and maximising renewables development. It is important though that local communities benefit from the use of our resources. This is an opportunity to secure inclusive growth and lasting benefits for all Highland communities.

This Charter is designed to set out what the area expects from renewables investment alongside what we, as public/private/community sector partners, will do to support and enable this contribution. It aims to:

- Embed an approach to community wealth building into Highland
- Maximise economic benefits from our natural environment and resources
- Engage and involve relevant stakeholders to understand how we can continually improve our impact
- Unlock economic opportunities for the area

Our Partnership wants to work with companies wishing to do business in Highland to the benefit of all concerned and most importantly, the communities of the Highlands.



Social Value Charter Commitments – 9-Point Plan

No.	Theme	Commitment from Investors to Highland	Commitment from Highland
1	Community Fund	Investors will: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Retain the existing commitment of £5000 per MW from renewable energy developments to communities already receiving benefits and new developments emerging, in line with Scottish Government guidance.	We will: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Where communities wish to contribute and enhance wider developments within their community, we will create a mechanism for communities to transfer their residual community benefit sums to a strategic fund.
2	Strategic Fund	Investors will: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Contribute £7,500 per MW for each renewable energy development to a central fund which will support and enable economic development, increase prosperity and achieve equity for communities across Highland.	We will: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Facilitate creation of a Strategic Fund Partnership, to manage the strategic fund. To be comprised of public agency, Councillor, Renewables Companies and Community representatives.Create a Strategic Plan which will set out the investment priorities of the Community Planning Partnership around:<ul style="list-style-type: none">HousingConnecting People and PlacesEmployment and EmployabilityAddressing inequality
3	Housing	Investors will: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Provide legacy housing when undertaking large scale development or provide financial contribution to wider housing developments.	We will: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Provide financial models for investors to enable investment in housing. This will include investment in Council/ housing association/community models.



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4	Supporting Development of Highland Investment Plan	Investors will: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide both direct and indirect support, financial or in kind for council and community led projects impacted by local development.	We will: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• As part of the Highland Investment Plan, we will identify opportunities for investors to engage and contribute to new community Points of Delivery projects, enhancing future developments, delivering longer term community and employment benefits.
5	Shared Investment into Renewables	Investors will: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide the opportunity to participate in an integrated shared ownership model. This approach offers the opportunity to build a truly circular energy system by integrating generation, distribution and supply. The shared ownership model will enhance community involvement and investment while promoting equitable distribution of benefits.	We will: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Play a crucial role in setting targets for community and locally owned energy, facilitate access to necessary resources and leverage government support and shape guidance of a shared ownership model to encompass offshore renewables.• Establish collaborative frameworks to ensure renewable energy projects deliver widespread economic and social benefits, driving sustainable development across the Highlands.• Consider appropriate investment in partnership with communities and developers subject to full business cases and financial and legal due diligence.
6	Skills & Training – Workforce for the future	Investors will: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adopt Highland's Employer Charter, which will include commitments to Fair Work and the Living Wage• Create or contribute to an Apprenticeship programme• Consider supporting initiatives such as the Science Skills Academy, to ensure sustainable private sector led engagement to future generations in Highland.	We will: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create and support an Employer Charter recognition scheme which will include Fair Work commitments and the Living Wage



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7	Match Funding For Local Projects	<p>Investors will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide direct support – financial or in kind - for community projects within areas directly impacted by development.	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide a Highland Project Bank, identifying community projects and initiatives to enable funding or match funding to support specific opportunities and providing opportunities to secure additional investment.
8	Fast-track for Grid Connections	<p>Investors will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support Local Area Energy Planning (LAEP) in the Highlands ensuring enhanced economic opportunities, job creation, and a supportive regulatory environment.• LAEPs will facilitate direct collaboration with SSE plc to map grid priorities, informing investment plans and saving costs on development. They are crucial for delivering Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategies (LHEES) and align with national decarbonisation goals.• Support cross sector collaboration to increase the efficiency of projects, including offshore and onshore wind farms, pumped storage delivering energy at a national level, locally it will enhance energy security, reliability, and sustainability. These initiatives drive supply chain opportunities, local job creation, and community investment, supporting long-term economic growth and environmental sustainability.	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lead on Local Area Energy Planning (LAEP) in the Highlands, collaborating with SSE and other stakeholders to map out grid priorities and inform strategic investment plans.• Facilitate a regulatory environment that encourages renewable energy projects while aligning with national decarbonisation goals.• Promote local job creation and community investment by supporting innovative projects and fostering links between education and industry to deliver a sustainable highland workforce for the future. Through these actions, we aim to drive long-term economic growth, energy security, and environmental sustainability in the region.

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9	Maximising socio-economic prosperity through the planning system	<p>Investors will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set out how they intend to maximise the socio-economic benefits of their development proposals taking into account the Highland Outcome Improvement Plan, the key investment priorities of the Community Planning Partnerships and the Council's Community Wealth Building Strategy and the National Planning Framework 4, particularly in relation to biodiversity and green skills. • Collaborate with other investors and public sector partners to ensure that opportunities are maximised. 	<p>We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only support renewable energy proposals where they can demonstrate that they maximise socio-economic benefits. • Provide guidance at pre-application stage on what may be expected from development proposals. • Take into account the community benefit opportunities of a proposal within our consideration of a renewable energy scheme, in line with National Planning Framework 4 and the Scottish Government's Energy Strategy and Just Transition Plan. • Develop Partnership Agreements based on this Social Value Charter to highlight the benefits of private and public sectors working together to benefit the Highland economy. • Lobby the Scottish and UK Governments to lay a path for making community benefits a mandatory rather than voluntary transaction, through changes in legislation, guidance and any of the financial support mechanisms available. • Seek to secure socio-economic benefits, including community benefits, through planning conditions and/or agreements as may be appropriate and/or legally competent.