

Agenda Item	6.
Report No	CPPB/2/26



Highland
Community
Planning
Partnership

Com-pàirteachas
Dealbhadh
Coimhearsnachd

na Gàidhealtachd

Highland Community Planning Partnership Board – 10 March 2026

Title of report – 2024-2027 HOIP Delivery Plan Progress Report - Community Wealth Building including Social Value Charter

Report by – Community Benefits Manager and Service Lead Economy and Regeneration

Report Classification (tick as appropriate):

Strategic Priority: People Place Prosperity

Cross-Cutting Theme (tick all that apply):

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Connecting People and Places | <input type="checkbox"/> Employment / Employability |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Family and Community-Based Approaches | <input type="checkbox"/> Housing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shared Approaches to Commissioning | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Community Wealth Building |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aligning Partnership Practices | |

Report Purpose (tick as appropriate):

For Noting For Approval For Decision

Recommendation(s)

The Board are asked to:

- **Note** the update relating to the Community Wealth Building (Scotland) Act 2026, and requirements of the CWB Partnership Group to progress the duties within the act.
- **Note** progress with Social Value Charter activity
- **Note** the update on the Scottish Government's Guidance refresh in relation to the Good Practice Principles for Community Benefits from Onshore Renewable Energy and
- **Agree** that a collective CPP response is submitted in response to the Scottish Government's request for feedback on the Good Practice Principles

Executive Summary

In June 2024 the CPP Board agreed to adopt the Highland Social Value Charter for Renewables investment in Highland. The purpose of the charter is to set out the added value and social-economic expectations for organisations wishing to invest in renewable energy across Highland.

The Charter is a key commitment of the HOIP Delivery Plan's Community Wealth Building theme.

This report provides an update on

- activity in relation to the [Community Wealth Building \(Scotland\) Bill](#) which was passed by Scottish Government on the 10th February 2026.
- the work to implement the Social Value Charter and details of next steps to creating the Strategic Investment Partnership and Fund;
- and an update on the Scottish Government's renewables guidance.

1.	Community Wealth Building (Scotland) Act 2026
1.1	Community Wealth Building (CWB) is an approach to economic development that seeks to transform our local and regional economic systems to enable local communities and people to own, have a greater stake in, access and benefit from the wealth our economy generates.
1.2	The Community Wealth Building (Scotland) Act 2026 was passed by Scottish Parliament on the 10 February 2026, with an implementation date of March/April 2026.
1.3	<p>In summary the Act sets out the following requirements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Scottish Ministers are to prepare and publish a statement about community wealth building,• local authorities, along with relevant public bodies, are to jointly prepare and publish a community wealth building action plan, and to implement that plan,• certain public bodies to have due regard to community wealth building guidance produced by the Scottish Ministers; and for connected purposes. <p>The relevant public bodies responsible for the community wealth building action plan align with Community Planning Partners.</p>

1.4	<p>The Scottish Ministers community wealth building statement must set out the measures that Ministers are taking or intend to take to-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Reduce economic and wealth inequality between individuals and communities in and across Scotland, and b) Support sustainable and inclusive economic growth in line with the United Nations sustainable development goals.
1.5	<p>In August 2025, a cross-organisation Highland CPP Community Wealth Building Partnership was established to work collaboratively on the proposed CWB duties. Following the passing of the bill in February 2026, the Partnership will reconvene to assess the statutory requirements imposed by the bill with a view to addressing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Statutory targets for local procurement spend b) The requirement of mandatory indicators relating to business performance, employment outcomes, diversity of ownership, land use, pension fund investment and local financial institutions. c) A joint partnership action plan d) Assessment of common good assets for CWB purposes e) Statutory Consultation for each iteration of the CWB action plan f) The implementation of a five-year reporting cycle g) Mechanisms to address ‘Due Regard’ to Ministerial Guidance. <p>This will build on the existing approaches and action plans to Community Wealth Building that a number of partners already have. A report on this will come forward to a future Board meeting, setting out the proposed approach for the partnership.</p>
2.	<p>Social Value Charter – Progress to Date</p>
2.1	<p><u>Partnership Agreements</u></p> <p>Engagement has been progressing with a number of developers, with the aim of establishing Partnership Agreements setting out commitments against the Charter. SSEN Transmission were the first company to sign the Charter, with the details of their commitments set out in Appendix 1. The commitments include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £1.8bn spend on contracts to local businesses • Supporting over 2,200 jobs in the area – 60% of new roles to be advertised with Highland as an optional work location • £200m investment in roads and bridges • 10% new gain in biodiversity • £100m in Highland housing, with the development of over 500 permanent homes, 60% of which will be affordable housing • £62m of community investment into Highland projects <p>The scale of the investment and commitments demonstrates the opportunities that can be realised for Highland as a result of renewables development.</p>

	<p>Work is progressing on reviewing draft agreements which have been received from developers but also pressing other developers to commit to signing the Charter. It is vital that all partners across the CPP promote and press developers and contractors to commit to the Charter to enable us to unlock wider benefits for the Highland area.</p>
2.2	<p><u>Strategic Investment Plan</u></p> <p>As part of the development of the HSVC, the Council and CPP agreed that a Strategic Investment Plan would be developed with its purpose to direct investment from the HSVC Strategic Investment Fund.</p> <p>To support this work, the Council engaged the Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES) who have engaged with a range of stakeholders across the partnership as well as renewable developers. In particular, Area Place Plans have been critical in identifying potential project areas.</p> <p>Emerging themes include housing, social infrastructure, skills and employment. Work is ongoing to collate the information received and align it to the themes within the HOIP and Invest Highland to ensure we have a consistent and targeted approach to investment across Highland, and a clear message to encourage developers to commit. A report with a draft plan will come forward to the next CPP Board.</p>
2.3	<p><u>Strategic Investment Fund Governance</u></p> <p>In addition to developing clear investment criteria for the use of strategic funds, it is imperative that it is underpinned by strong and transparent governance. This is important to ensure that the Fund delivers meaningful, equitable, and lasting impact for communities. To that end, the Council has commissioned external legal support to develop and appraise governance models. This work is currently being reviewed to enable a preferred model to be identified.</p>
3.	Social Value Charter – Employer Charter
3.1	<p>One point of the Social Value Charter is for developers to adopt the Employer Charter, which includes commitments to Fair Work and the Living Wage. Since the update to the December Board, a further 15 organisations (including Work Life Highland) have been onboarded. All site visits and assessments for this new cohort are completed as of the 23rd of February. This brings the total chartership numbers to over 20 businesses within 9 months of starting. These businesses consist of third sector organisations, micro businesses, SMEs, and large businesses. This means that the charter has reached companies ranging from 3 employees to one with over 2,000 employees.</p>
3.2	<p>The digital platform is nearing completion (expected launch 19/03/26), with user interactivity being the key cornerstone of its functionality, with the website</p>

	<p>designed to allow a member of the public to find a charter member within 10 seconds of browsing the site. The site will accommodate job postings by Charter members, links to employability support (supported by Work Life Highland), and a dedicated section for our Employer Charter canvas which is a free self-assessment tool to support organisations identifying where they sit within the Charter.</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>Social Value Charter - Community Support Officers & Renewables Engagement</p>
<p>4.1</p>	<p>In May 2025, the Council employed three full-time dedicated Renewables Engagement Community Support Officers within the Community Support and Engagement Team. These roles were the result of a motion to Council in September 2024 seeking greater support for communities to engage with developers.</p> <p>The focus of these roles is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide impartial advice, support, signposting and guidance to community councils, community groups and wider communities in relation to the increased volume of renewable development activity linked to renewable development activity across the region. • highlight the importance of ensuring that meaningful and inclusive engagement brings together a wide range of groups and individuals to create diversity of perspectives and insights, and to ensure that everyone living in a community has an opportunity to have their voice heard. • ensure that communities are maximising potential opportunities for their local area and the wider region, by engaging in constructive dialogue with developers <p>An additional fixed-term Community Support Officer post assists with strategic activity across council services in relation to the SVC and supports senior officers with direct renewable energy developer engagement.</p> <p>Officers are directly engaging with communities and developers to offer this service upon notification of any renewable development. Notification can be instigated through the planning process, direct from a developer, community entity, partner organisation, Elected Member or any other source.</p>
<p>4.2</p>	<p><u>Community Resources</u></p> <p>To further support Highland communities, a resource pack has been developed to provide individuals, communities and community groups with a range of guidance, support and information in relation to renewable energy developments. Hosted on the Highland Community Planning Partnership website under the Highland Social Value Charter the pack is an evolving resource and currently provides information on: -</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role and remit of the Community Support Officers (including contact information) • Renewable energy planning guidance • Effective community engagement • Frequently Asked Questions – Renewable Energy • Technology fact sheets • Signposting to renewable specific support agencies • Case Studies – a section where best practice, innovation and project ideas can be shared. <p>The website resource was launched in November 2025 and promoted to communities through the fortnightly Community Briefing.</p> <p>Since commencing in post, the team have engaged in / attended 92 events to support communities.</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Scottish Government - Good Practice Principles for Community Benefits from Onshore Renewable Energy – Guidance Refresh</p>
<p>5.1</p>	<p>The Scottish Government’s Best Practice Principles for community benefits linked to onshore wind development was first published in 2014. It sets out a recommended voluntary community benefit value of £5000 per M/W per year, index-linked for the ‘operational’ lifetime of the project and expected best practice and guidance for developers and communities as to how voluntary community benefit provision can be offered to shape transformative and long-lasting investment. It was in response to the limitations of this guidance that the Social Value Charter was developed.</p> <p><i>Note: The Scottish Government cannot require developers to provide community benefits, as the powers to do so are reserved to the UK Government. We still await the outcome of the UK Government’s consultation relating to the mandating of community benefits and shared ownership opportunities.</i></p>
<p>5.2</p>	<p>As investment in green energy continues to grow, the Scottish Government is now undertaking a review of the best practice principles with a view to refreshing the guidance. Following consultation with industry bodies, third and public sector bodies, and community groups across Scotland last year (The Council’s and CPP Board’s collaborative response to the consultation can be found here.), the government is now seeking views on four key priorities where the good practice principles could be strengthened.</p> <p>1) The technologies in scope of the Good Practice Principles, and the approach to ‘co-located’ developments.</p> <p>2) The community benefit fund levels recommended by the Good Practice Principles.</p>

3) Principles and guidance for the governance and distribution of community benefit funds.

4) Measures to support communities and build their capacity to engage with and fully benefit from community benefit funds.

Although proposing an increase in the £ per M/W from £5000 to £6000 for onshore wind, the fund levels for other technologies e.g. solar and battery storage are lower than had been hoped, as detailed below.

- A new specific recommended range of **£700-£1000 per MW per year for solar developments**; and
- A new recommended level of **at least £150 per MW per year for battery energy storage** developments.

The guidance relating to offshore wind is still in development and will be included in future updates to the Board.

Ultimately, the proposed levels of funding appear not to be reflective of inflationary price rises since 2014 and do not go far enough in terms of delivering against the requests set out in the consultation responses from Highland.

5.3

The draft revision paper also includes improved proposals relating to the 'Governance and Distribution' and 'Supporting Communities' elements of the guidance.

In relation to the 'Governance and Distribution' the key areas relate to:

- Principles – core expectations for good governance and fair distribution.
- Indicators – examples of how to demonstrate the principles in practice.
- Tools – templates and resources to support more consistent practice.
- Governance structures – clearer options and expectations for how community benefit arrangements could be governed.
- Distribution – a clearer local-first process for deciding how funds are shared.

To support communities:

- Measures to build the capacity and skills of communities to actively and successfully engage in, and benefit from, community benefits from onshore renewable and energy storage developments.
- Proposed measures include establishing a Community Benefit Peer Forum pilot, and the development of a new Toolkit for communities to use throughout the community benefits process.
- This reflects the priorities of communities (identities through the consultation) of:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to free, independent expert advice and support; • Training and upskilling; and • Peer-to-peer learning and knowledge exchange opportunities. <p>Both the above focus strengthening the existing guidance and will assist communities in meeting their needs and aspirations which support our place-based approach.</p>
	<p>A draft response is being prepared to the Scottish Government’s request for feedback on the proposed changes. This will align with the feedback provided to the consultation last year and the principles and aims of the Social Value Charter. It is recommended that this is a collective response from the CPP, which will strengthen the voice from Highland.</p>
6.	Risks and Mitigations
6.1	<p>At present, and within the current legislative framework, the Charter remains voluntary, with no compulsion for developers or investors to comply. While work will continue with the UK and Scottish Governments to encourage a more statutory approach, the creation of the Charter nonetheless establishes a framework through which to engage developers. The Council will make full use of existing tools—such as the major pre-planning advice service and other discretionary planning services—to ensure early engagement and secure partnership agreements. Officers will also continue to work with developers and communities to maximise opportunities within the context of national policies and guidance, seeking innovative solutions and sharing best practice to ensure that all parties meet their obligations.</p>
6.2	<p>The proposed changes to the Onshore Best Practice Guidance presents a risk to the principles of the SVC. Risks include, but are not limited to;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The lack of mandating of community benefits. Voluntary schemes are not enforceable and rely on developers adopting the best practice guidelines. Inconsistencies in approach on a developer by developer and technology by technology basis may continue to be an issue. 2. Not all technologies have been referenced in the guidance, presenting some ambiguity for developers and communities as to the requirements / aspirations for the technologies that have not been listed e.g. hydro pumped storage.
6.3	<p>The Community Wealth Building bill presents opportunities to build wealth and prosperity across the Highlands, however, presents challenges in relation to the context of fiscal challenge across the public sector. E.g. ensuring best value, cost efficiencies, economies of scale and rising cost of living cost and the availability of supply chains to meet the purchasing requirement.</p>

Current procurement legislation would need to be aligned with the principles of community wealth building to ensure that organisations and businesses are not discriminated against in competitive tendering. The CWB Partnership Group will collaborative to consider the implications and mitigation required to ensure successful implementation of the bill requirements.

Impact Assessment

1) Resource

There are no direct resource implications as a result of the report however elements of what are proposed would require development of financial management models to enable these to be delivered such as the Strategic Fund. This will be progressed at the next stage. Implementation of the Charter will require to be embedded in business-as-usual activity. Where commitments are proposed that involve development of funding or financial management models, these will all be subject to a financial impact assessment prior to implementation

2) Community (Equality, Poverty, Rural and Island)

Initial impact screening highlights the potential for socio-economic benefit related to opportunities (skills and training), places (housing) and financial impact (employer charter – living wage) as a result of what is proposed in the Charter. There were no negative impacts identified as a result of what is proposed in the charter but there will be opportunities to maximise opportunities and address inequalities from the Charter which would enable positive benefits on particular groups e.g. those with protected characteristics

3) Climate Change / Carbon Clever

The Charter promotes renewable energy development to achieve a net zero future. By integrating projects that enhance local socio-economic benefits and sustainability, it supports a circular energy system, reduces emissions, and drives significant long term environmental, economic, and social benefits aiding climate change mitigation and adaptation

**Author(s): Gail Anderton – Community Benefits Manager
Alan Webster - Service Lead - Economic Development & Regeneration**

Date: 5-3-26

Appendix 1: SSEN's Social Value Charter Commitment



MINUTE OF AGREEMENT

Between

THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL, incorporated under the Local Government etc. (Scotland) Act 1994 and having its principal office at Council Buildings, Glenurquhart Road, Inverness, IV3 5NX (hereinafter called the "Council")

and

Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission plc incorporated under the Companies Acts (Registered Number SC213461) and having its Registered Office at Inveralmond House, 200 Dunkeld Road, Perth, PH1 3AQ (hereinafter called the "Company")

WHEREAS

- (One) For the purposes of this Agreement the Council will act as lead partner on behalf of the Highland Community Planning Partnership.
- (Two) The Parties intend to demonstrate a shared commitment to the Council's Highland 9-point Social Value Charter for Renewables Investment and to provide a clear, practical framework for delivering long-term community benefit through infrastructure energy investment.
- (Three) The Highland 9-point Social Value Charter for Renewables Investment will be used as the basis to develop the commitments of the Parties in this Agreement with the purpose of seeking to maximise socio-economic benefits for the Highland area.
- (Four) The Parties are committed to engage in regular senior update meetings which will include live mapping and annual monitoring in relation to the deliverables under this Agreement.

THEREFORE the Parties hereto have agreed that they will work together to deliver the commitments set out in the Schedule to this Agreement. IN WITNESS WHEREOF these presents are sealed with the Common Seal of the said **THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL** and are executed for them and on their behalf by one of their Proper Officers duly authorised to act in that behalf by:

.....Proper Officer

.....Full Name

.....Date of Signing

.....Place of Signing

and they are executed by and on behalf of **SCOTTISH HYDRO ELECTRIC TRANSMISSION PLC**

.....Director/Secretary

.....Full Name

.....Date of Signing

.....Place of Signing

THIS IS THE SCHEDULE REFERRED TO IN THE FOREGOING MINUTE OF AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL AND SCOTTISH HYDRO ELECTRIC TRANSMISSION PLC

SSEN Transmission is committed to working in partnership with the Highland Council to maximise the local opportunities and benefits associated with our Pathway to 2030 investment programme. Our commitment to the Social Value Charter directly supports the council's strategic priorities and is closely aligned with the Highland Investment Plan.

Through this planned investment, SSEN Transmission will provide substantial community benefit funding, promote nature conservation and biodiversity, facilitate skills development and employment opportunities, and contribute to a lasting housing legacy. SSEN Transmission's commitment to the Social Value Charter will deliver long-term, lasting legacy for the Highland area.

Our commitments are as follows:

- **£6bn investment in transmission projects across the Highland region**
- **Boosting the Highland economy by up to £1.3bn (Total GVA)**
- **Anticipated £1.8bn of contracts to be awarded to Highland-based businesses**
- **Supporting over 2,200 jobs in the Highland region**
- **An average salary of £55,000* for Highland employees**
- **c.60% of new roles advertised with the Highlands as an optional work location**
- **Committed to 5% of employees in earn as you learn roles**
- **Over £200m investment on roads and bridges, supporting the Highland Investment Plan**
- **Developing multiple park and ride sites and active travel routes for communities to support Highland connectivity**
- **10% Net Gain in Biodiversity and no net loss of woodland on all new projects**
- **Memorandum of Understanding with The Highland Council on a Biodiversity enhancement scheme**
- **Investing over £100m in Highland housing**
- **Contributing to the development of over 500 permanent homes in the Highland Council Area, with 60% unlocking affordable/social housing stock**
- **Unlocking £62 million of community investment through Highland projects**
 - **£31m of funding will be available through local funds to support Highland communities close to our infrastructure**
 - **The additional £31m will form part of the £50m regional fund to provide impactful investment across the broader region**
- **Working with supply chain partners to develop health, sport and wellbeing facilities in partnership with High Life Highland and local charities**

**based on 2023-2025 average, excluding trainees and graduates in early career roles*

We commit to regular, senior level update meetings to ensure a strategic overview of proposed project delivery. This will support communication of progress to key stakeholders, including Members and communities. This should include a commitment to provide live mapping of sites and locations in relation to social value charter deliverables.

Part 1

Social Value Charter Commitments – SSEN Transmission

1. Community Fund	Retention of the existing community benefit commitment to locally impacted communities in line with Scottish Government guidance.	Timeframe for Delivery
-------------------	---	------------------------

Company Commitment	SSEN Transmission will:	2025 - 2030
--------------------	--------------------------------	-------------

Bring positive benefits and a lasting legacy to local Highland communities through the delivery of up to £62m* in community benefits as its Pathway to 2030 investment programme projects move into the construction phase in the Highland Council area. This funding will be distributed through two primary types of funds: a Regional Fund and Local Funds, each taking up to 50% of available funding. As part of the distribution of both funds, SSEN Transmission will take into account the priorities outlined in the Social Value Charter Strategic Investment Plan and the Highland Project Bank.

- **Regional Fund:** £31m of funding will form part of the £50m Regional Fund, which is aimed at providing structured and impactful investment across broader regions. SSEN Transmission will continue to support community led transformation through its Regional Fund focused on three core themes of **People**: to aid skills, training and employability, **Place**: to support the culture of the region and to help **alleviate fuel poverty**. The regional fund is associated with electricity transmission projects that are already in delivery, with £2m awarded in February 2025 and the second round of £2m expected to be awarded in February 2026.
- **Local Funds:** SSEN Transmission's Pathway to 2030 projects will unlock up to £31 million in local funds to support Highland communities. SSEN Transmission's local funds will support Community Wealth Building in the communities close to its new infrastructure. Each local fund is shaped through consultation with communities, so local priorities are embedded in the independent decision-making process. This approach ensures local funds meet specific needs and priorities

Significant additional funding is anticipated as further energy generators requiring new transmission infrastructure are connected to the network. This will follow the UK Government guidance of £200,000 per kilometre of overhead line and £530,000 per substation, converter station and switching station.

SSEN Transmission's investments are the key enabler for wider renewable energy development

across the Highland Council region which are also expected to deliver significant community benefit funding.

*To be delivered in line with Government [Community Benefits Guidance for Transmission](#)

Council Commitment

Highland Council will annually update the Social Value Charter Strategic Investment Plan to ensure it continues to reflect Strategic and Local priorities across the area.

Annually

2. Strategic Fund

A central fund which will support and enable economic development, increase prosperity, and achieve equity across Highland communities by supporting key strategic and infrastructure projects.

Company Commitment

SSEN Transmission will:

2025 - 2030

Support community led transformation through its community benefit funding approach outlined in Point 1 – Community Fund.

As part of the distribution of both funds, SSEN Transmission will take into account the priorities outlined in the Social Value Charter Strategic Investment Plan and the Highland Project Bank.

SSEN Transmissions £50m Regional Fund is aligned with the Highland Council's Strategic Fund and supports priority areas as follows:

- Connecting People and Place, by supporting delivery of key infrastructure and supporting local communities to deliver local place plans.
- Employment and Employability through skills development schemes.
- Reducing inequalities by supporting schemes that aim to alleviate fuel poverty.

To date £1.2 million of the initial £2m funding awarded has been awarded to initiatives in the Highlands and has supported key projects including:

- Growing2gether - £55,591 to support vulnerable young people through mentoring and youth led social action
- Feis Rois - £181, 638 to support traditional music and the Gaelic language
- UHI Inverness – £352,000 to support creation of a Sustainable Construction Centre
- Kyle & Lochlash Community Trust - £361,989 to support creation of a heritage centre that also serves as a learning hub for endangered traditional endangered skills
- Regional Screen Scotland - £350,000, to fund a new mobile cinema for remote communities in the Highlands.

Council Commitment

Highland Council will annually update the Social Value Charter Strategic Investment Plan to ensure it continues to reflect Strategic and Local priorities across the area.

Annually

3. Housing	Supporting the housing challenges across Highland through the provision of legacy housing or financial contribution to wider housing developments.
Company Commitment	<p>SSEN Transmission will: 2025 - 2030</p> <p>Contribute to the development of over 500 permanent homes in the Highland Council Area to support construction worker accommodation needs which, following completion of projects, will support the needs of the Council and local communities.</p> <p>SSEN Transmission plans to invest over £100 million to deliver a range of solutions in partnership with The Highland Council, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temporary accommodation villages, which will provide access and services to support future affordable housing and commercial development, once projects are complete • Refurbishment of existing housing stock • Provision of new homes to the Highland area and unlocking various stalled sites <p>Of the 500+ homes enabled by the construction of SSEN Transmission’s projects, over 60% of which will support affordable/social housing stock, well above the standard 25%.</p>
Council Commitment	<p>Highland Council will work with SSEN Transmission and its contractors to ensure delivery and transfer of the legacy affordable housing into mainstream housing after the 5-year period.</p>
4. Supporting Development of the Highland Investment Plan	Direct and indirect support, financial or in kind for council and community led projects impacted by local development.
Company Commitment	<p>SSEN Transmission will: 2025 - 2030</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver the enabling infrastructure to support the Highland Investment Plan by upgrading the transmission network through the £22bn+ Pathway to 2030 investment plan. This will support the delivery of key investment programmes for the Highlands including the Green Freeport. • SSEN Transmission is committed to supporting enhancements to roads infrastructure to support project delivery and provide improved connectivity for communities, such as extensive public road improvements. Across the full portfolio of Pathway to 2030 projects, SSEN Transmission expects to spend over £200 million on Highland roads and bridges between now and 2030. In addition to the £23 million spent to date on various upgrades, including resurfacing works on the Kinloch Hourn Road, future proposed works include the £25 million upgrade to the Black Bridge in Kilmorack to allow for two-way traffic and larger vehicles. • Deliver significant economic benefit to local businesses through procurement and

supply chain opportunities associated with project delivery.

- Commitment to legacy developments from projects to benefit the local area

Council Commitment

Highland Council will work with SSEN Transmission and its contractors to support and enable the delivery of the infrastructure commitments to roads and bridges made as part of the legacy commitment.

Ongoing

5. **Shared Investment into Renewables**

Providing opportunities to participate in shared ownership models.

Company Commitment

SSEN Transmission will:
Support opportunities for community and shared ownership renewable schemes by providing the essential transmission infrastructure to enable renewable energy generation to be connected to the grid.

Ongoing

6. **Skills & Training – Workforce for the future**

Supporting and implementing a wide range of education, skills and training opportunities and Agreement, to help develop employment prospects for current and future Highland generations.

Company Commitment

SSEN Transmission will, directly and through contractors:

2025 - 2030

- Create and support an anticipated 2,200 jobs across the Highland region to support the delivery of the Pathway to 2030 projects.
- With SSEN Transmission's workforce projected to grow to over 4,000 by the end of the decade from c.2,500 today, 60% of the expected 1,500 new roles will be advertised with Inverness as an optional work location
- This includes at least 200 people that SSEN Transmission expects to recruit directly in the Highland region, in addition to the c.200 colleagues already recruited in Highland in the past two years.
- Support local skills and training initiatives through annual recruitment programmes, including apprenticeships, graduates, earn as you learn, local skills programmes and as a core theme through its Regional Community Benefit Fund.
- Commit every year to having 5% of its workforce in earn as you learn roles which means SSEN Transmission will have a minimum of 150 trainees in earn as you learn roles every year across the business.
- Support skills development through STEM events and programmes in Highland schools.
- Support Discovery Days and Discovery Work Placements for local students.
- Continue to be a Living Wage, Living Hours and Fair Tax employer and promote Fair Work through procurement and supply chain contracts.

- Adopt Highland's Employer Charter and promote principal contractors to adopt the charter.
- Remain committed to working in partnership with the public and private sector to support high quality jobs and skills in the local area.

Council Commitment

Highland Council will:

Ongoing

- work with SSEN Transmission and its contractors to facilitate and deliver STEM events, programmes and workplace programmes in Highland Schools
- ensure that SSEN Transmissions workforce requirements are embedded into the Workforce North Programme, supporting SSEN Transmission to enable local workforce development realisation of opportunities.

7. Match Funding for Local Projects

Company Commitment

SSEN Transmission will:

2025 - 2030

Where possible, supply chain partners will support local community projects in financial or in-kind contributions and be encouraged to support Highland's Project Bank.

Council Commitment

Highland Council will ensure the Highland Project Bank is kept up to date with local projects.

Ongoing

8. Fast-track for Grid Connections

Supporting a Local Area Energy Planning (LAEP) in the Highlands ensuring enhanced economic opportunities, job creation, and a supportive regulatory environment.

Company Commitment

SSEN Transmission will:

2025 - 2030

- Collaborate with the Highland Council, local stakeholders, and the energy industry to deliver essential transmission infrastructure supporting decarbonisation, energy security, system resilience and support long-term economic growth by delivering positive legacy benefits to the Highland region.

9. Maximising socio-economic prosperity through the planning system

Maximise the socio-economic benefits of 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.

Company Commitment

SSEN Transmission will:

2025 - 2030

- Deliver projects in line with NPF4 and align projects to the council's Highland Outcome Improvement Plan, Social Value Charter Strategic Investment Plan and the Highland Investment Plan.
- Deliver at least 10% net gain in biodiversity and no net loss of woodland on all new



projects, replacing any felled trees with native woodland where possible.

- Deliver sector leading first of its kind, marine biodiversity research
- Invest in a multimillion-pound nature restoration programme for the Highland area.

Implement socio-economic metrics for supply chain partners to report on.

.....

The Highland Council

.....

Scottish Hydro Electric Transmission plc