

Climate Change Committee – 12 August 2026

Item 4: Good News

D-C Project

The D-C Project continues to deliver significant benefits to Council tenants across Highland. Since February 2025, the project has installed 862 energy efficiency measures in 498 Council homes.

The project was paused October 2025 due to funding uncertainty and restarted May 2026. It will run until December 2026 when the current Energy Company Obligation (ECO) scheme ends.

To date, the project has successfully leveraged circa £7.6 million of external funding through ECO, enabling a range of energy efficiency improvements to the fabric of the property, upgraded heating systems and solar panels (subject to property eligibility/suitability). These measures have helped to make homes warmer, improve comfort levels for tenants while improving energy efficiency and potentially reducing fuel costs.

The D-C project has been delivered in alignment with the delivery approach outlined in the Council's Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategy (LHEES) and supports the Council's ambition to reduce fuel poverty across Highland.

This investment demonstrates the Council's commitment to improving the quality and sustainability of its housing stock, helping residents to enjoy healthier homes and lower energy bills for years to come.

The D-C Project represents additionality, with the works identified and undertaken not forming part of the original 2022-2027 HRA Capital Programme.

Energy Efficient Scotland: Area Based Scheme

Funding of £4 million has been awarded by the Scottish Government through the Energy Efficient Scotland: Area Based Scheme (EES:ABS) for 2026/27. In addition, the Council has secured £750,000 from the SSE Renewables Highland Sustainable Development Fund, comprising £400,000 in 2026/27 and £350,000 in 2027/28. This funding will support the delivery of energy efficiency improvements to eligible private sector households across Highland.

NESO's Strategic Energy Planning Forum

In June, Highland hosted NESO (the National Energy System Operator for Great Britain) in Inverness, where NESO ran its most northerly Strategic Energy Planning Forum. These important forums were held across the UK and provided an opportunity for industry representatives to share views on local energy generation and transmission needs, priorities, and opportunities for future growth. The forums

also enabled stakeholders to contribute to the development of the Regional Energy Strategic Plan.

The Inverness event brought together more than 75 industry specialists to discuss the future of renewable energy generation, electricity transmission and sustainable energy growth across the north of Scotland.

Neil Osborne, the Council's Climate Change Manager, was invited to represent the Council on an expert panel discussing how the Council is working to achieve a just energy transition. During the discussion, he highlighted the importance of the Council's Social Value Charter, Community Wealth Building Strategy, and community engagement in ensuring the benefits of the energy transition deliver meaningful opportunities and investment for communities across Highland.



North of Scotland EV Charging Network Migration milestone achieved

Highland Council has successfully completed the migration of its public EV charging network to EZO's North of Scotland operating platform, representing a significant milestone in the regional EV Infrastructure Fund programme.

The migration brings a range of benefits including enhanced network management, improved reliability and maintenance of charge points, greater visibility of network performance, and a more consistent customer experience across the region.

This achievement paves the way for the next stage of the programme, Pathfinder 1, which will deliver significant investment in new public charging infrastructure and support the continued transition to low-carbon transport across Highland and the wider North of Scotland.

Engagement with Ember

Members of the Climate Change & Energy Team recently visited Ember's Inverness bus depot following engagement with the company's management team to gain an insight into its operations, fleet management arrangements and the charging solutions it uses.

Ember staff provided valuable insight into their operating model and provided a tour of the depot. Ember's operating model relies heavily on technology to maximise efficiency, with the depot manager highlighting that once staff had adapted to new ways of working, operational processes became significantly more efficient. This highlighted that the technology systems supporting charging infrastructure are an important consideration when procuring charging solutions, as they can play a key role in maximising operational efficiency.

This engagement has opened discussions on potential opportunities for future collaboration to support the development of the Council estate.



Highland Adapts meets with Cabinet Secretary

In July, Fiona Daschofsky, the Council's Net Zero Programme Manager, attended a meeting with Gillian Martin MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Climate Action and Rural Affairs, in her capacity as a Highland Adapts Board member. The meeting provided an opportunity to discuss climate resilience across the Highlands and highlight the work being undertaken through the Highland Adapts partnership.

Discussions focused on the recently published Highland Climate Change Risk and Opportunity Assessment (HCCROA), the unique climate adaptation challenges facing the Highland region, and the importance of place-based approaches to

climate adaptation. Highland Adapts also highlighted the value of Scottish Government support in establishing and developing the partnership and discussed the need for longer-term funding certainty to support future delivery.

The meeting provided an opportunity to outline Highland Adapts' plans for the next phase of its work, including supporting organisations to implement adaptation actions, developing a pipeline of resilience projects, and exploring opportunities for investment through the proposed Highland Resilience Fund.



Highland Council becomes a founding member of Heat Network Scotland

Highland Council has strengthened its commitment to Scotland's low-carbon future by becoming a founding member of Heat Network Scotland, a new organisation dedicated to expanding affordable and resilient heat networks across the country.

The initiative brings together industry, academia, communities and government to drive innovation, share best practice and support the growth of the sector. Ruta Burbaite from the Climate Change and Energy Team attended the official launch in Edinburgh in June, representing Highland Council and highlighting the region's growing role in Scotland's transition to cleaner energy.

