

Summary of responses from public and community consultation and engagement on the draft CCP

Summary of engagement activities and participant data

To inform its scrutiny of the draft Climate Change Plan (CCP), the Net Zero, Energy and Transport (NZET) Committee undertook three engagement activities designed to hear the views of individuals and communities on what they think about how Scotland reaches net zero emissions.

Each engagement activity was based around four themes, identified by the NZET Committee's [People's Panel](#). The broad themes were then used to find out how people felt about the proposals set out in the draft CCP. The four themes were:

- accessible, relatable climate policy for everyone
- participatory and community-led solutions
- transparency and accountability in climate action
- advice and financial support for households to reach net-zero

The three engagement activities were:

1. A consultation on an interactive engagement platform (Your Priorities), which ran from 27 November 2025 to 25 January 2026. In total, there were 71 comments from 50 different participants. Respondents included individuals and groups. Submissions spanned postcode areas across Scotland and age-groups (see Annex 1). In addition, the National Lottery Community Fund (NLCF) submitted a response based on the collated views of five community projects it currently funds in Scotland. Perspectives shared have been included in the thematic analysis of the Your Priorities consultation, as although the comments were not shared on the Your Priorities platform, they responded to the same themes.
2. An Aberdeen Community engagement event, on 19 January 2026, in partnership with North East Scotland Climate Action Network, Aberdeen Council for Voluntary Organisations and Aberdeenshire Voluntary Action; with 18 organisations represented and 28 participants altogether (see Annex 2).
3. An online engagement event with the Scottish Youth Parliament (SYP), on 13 January 2026 with 5 participants/Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament (MSYPs) (see Annex 3).

Summary of key themes across all engagement activities

Overall, participants called for:

- **Greater clarity and practical detail:** Participants across engagements consistently asked for plainer language, worked examples, and a clearer explanation of who will do what, when, and with what resources. Many felt that communication must start with what matters in people's daily lives and felt that the draft CCP is too high-level, jargon heavy and lacking practical examples and clear asks. Young respondents consistently raised concerns about the Plan's accessibility and usability.
- **Meaningful participation that enables delivery:** Communities and young people want earlier, codesigned and resourced engagement, not just consultation. They emphasised the need for multiyear resourcing, support for volunteer and community capacity, and system fixes for planning and grid barriers, so that community led action is genuinely enabled and can scale.
- **Transparency and accountability with consequences:** Participants across strands question how targets will be monitored, what happens if they are missed, and who is held to account. They called for SMART targets, early-warning indicators with defined responses, and visible reporting that includes consumption and supply-chain impacts.
- **Accessible, sequenced and locally delivered household support:** While grants were welcomed, participants said complex processes, poor public awareness and rural infrastructure gaps limit uptake. Many advocated an 'insulation and demand-reduction first' approach. They also called for trusted intermediaries and practical advice that extends beyond energy into transport and everyday choices. Young people want active travel support scaled and integrated with public transport.
- **Cost of living and equity to be addressed:** Participants stated that net-zero action must reduce fuel poverty, reflect diverse circumstances and ensure support reaches those least able to act, including tenants, rural households and low-income groups.

Theme 1: Accessible, relatable climate policy for everyone

Taking the strands together, the weight of opinion on accessibility and relatability in the draft CCP is predominantly critical, with participants pressing for clearer, more practical, audience specific communication.

In the Your Priorities consultation, sentiment on headline accessibility was mixed in ratings but more negative in written comments, with many saying the Plan needs to be clearer, more practical and less jargon heavy. Positive voices did appreciate the intent to simplify and communicate. One person said, *"Climate change is simple. It shouldn't be made to look out of reach because it's too difficult,"* while another described it as *"a fair first draft [that] highlights most of the main areas that need acting on,"* and a third *"really enjoyed the addition of the ministerial foreword."* There

were also constructive suggestions that the Easy Read version should *“have a little more detail to express the severity of climate change.”*

However, a larger set of comments criticised perceived vagueness and format, including one who was *“disappointed that there are not clearer examples about what the Government will actually do to support the reduction of car use and other things they want the public to contribute to.”* Another participant called for a glossary because *“there are too many jargon terms... it may be helpful to have a definitions appendix,”* and a further participant asked, *“How do you get the audience to the text? A much wider use of technology and formats is required.”* Others felt the document was *“too simple and appears to lack any depth or detail,”* and one noted that in their school, *“no one else appears to have any idea that this plan exists.”*

Similar themes were stated by NLCF-funded organisations, who welcomed Easy Read and child-friendly versions but warned that relying on mainstream or technical channels risks excluding many. They called for inclusive, plain language communications across diverse formats, translated materials, visual storytelling and trusted local voices. They also recommended that communications start with what matters most in people’s daily lives (cost of living, health, local pride) to make climate action relevant and engaging: *“Don’t start a conversation with ‘climate change’ - start with what is important and relevant to that community.”*

In the Aberdeen Community engagement event, participants acknowledged the intent to communicate (children’s and easy-read versions, for example) and praised practical measures visible to the public such as free bus travel. However, they repeatedly argued the main Plan is too high-level, with “fluffy” indicators, few metrics, and unclear responsibilities. They asked for a “middle layer” between the Easy Read version and the technical document, short-form content like reels and podcasts, and accessible formats such as audio and Braille to reach disabled and digitally excluded audiences.

The SYP session was emphatic that the children and young people’s version is far too thin. One contributor called it *“the least detailed document I’ve seen in my life,”* and the full Plan felt overly long and technical. Young people wanted codesigned youth content, a “middle ground” version, and multimedia approaches.

Theme 2: Participation and community-led solutions

Across the strands, views on participation and community-led solutions in the draft CCP were mostly negative, with limited positive comments about participation tools or isolated examples of success, and a push for the CCP to contain more specific, quantified and resourced commitments.

In the Your Priorities consultation, there is support for participatory budgeting and community energy schemes in principle, but the focus of feedback is that specifics and enabling conditions are insufficient. One person wrote, *“I like participatory budgeting”*; another agreed but cautioned that *“the pot has to be significant and large”* while another warned that it can be reduced to a *“popularity contest”* and called for deliberative processes. One practical ask was to specify the actual share of budgets for communities, *“instead of ‘a portion’ say 30% or 70%.”* Another participant was *“pleased to see the CARES project mentioned,”* but asked that it be

promoted and another urged delivery: *“we must move beyond words into real action. What is already happening in community groups must be supported, encouraged and shared.”* Several asked how outreach would reach those not already engaged and questioned process mechanics, noting a consultation window that was *“far too short.”* A critical comment observed, *“The Plan currently overlooks the potential of community-led climate action.”*

Feedback from NLCF-funded organisations strongly reinforces these views: they champion trusted anchor and grassroots organisations as facilitators of involvement, welcome citizens’ panels and broader engagement methods (online surveys, open meetings), and stress long term investment in relationships and volunteering capacity. However, they caution that asking without acting erodes trust, calling for demonstrable follow through in planning decisions and budgets, *“it is better not to ask at all, than to ask but not listen or intend to act.”* They also highlight the case for food growing spaces in every community backed by planning and investment.

The Aberdeen Community engagement event discussions recognised existing community successes (for example, Aberdeen’s combined heat and power) and the potential of local energy and consumption reduction if backed properly, yet the prevailing view was negative about the quality and efficacy of participation. People described consultations as tokenistic or tick-box, and decisions as pre-determined. They also pointed to structural barriers - planning delays, grid constraints, infrastructure gaps, volunteer fatigue, and short-term, capital-only funding - that undermine community leadership. They asked for earlier, sustained co-design, revenue funding, multi-year certainty and more ambition for community ownership.

In the SYP session, community bus programmes were cited positively as examples of local solutions that work, but young people said they had not been seriously consulted and wanted meaningful local say. They also highlighted that the Plan says very little about community transport, which is crucial for rural youth.

Theme 3: Transparency and accountability in climate action

Across strands, the weight of opinion on transparency and accountability in the draft CCP is predominantly negative, with participants emphasising accountability design gaps and the need for consequences, as well as concerns about credibility, comprehension and trade-offs.

In the Your Priorities consultation, more people expressed negative views than positive ones on transparency and accountability, with repeated demands for clearer accountability chains, granular targets and explicit consequences. A modest positive note acknowledged, *“it is positive that a monitoring and reporting framework is part of the plan,”* adding that early-warning mechanisms can help Parliament hold Government to account. Another contributor observed that there are *“lots and lots of suggestions for metrics,”* cautioning that the volume could be overwhelming unless well communicated.

On the negative side, one person wrote, *“Just transition measurements seem like a good starting point but no indication... what would happen if indicators are not met. So where is the accountability?”* Another asked, *“It needs more actual explanation of what will be done with this data and who will be accountable”*. Others highlighted the

absence of a clear accountability chain across all levels of government, targets that are unspecific and set too far into the period, reliance on new technologies, and the perception that plans are a foregone conclusion with *“no action to be taken against those held accountable.”*

NLCF contributors welcomed the Plan’s linking of nature and climate and pressed for visible, comprehensible progress reporting that includes embedded/supply chain emissions so communities can make informed choices. It argued that to rebuild trust in delivery, communities should be directly involved in accountability, including budget scrutiny, with diverse representation rather than tokenism and clear consequences for failure alongside recognition for positive action.

In the Aberdeen Community engagement event, participants recognised the intent to monitor but asked for SMART objectives, named responsibilities and transparent trade-offs, including clarity on winners and losers and visibility of consumption emissions and supply chain impacts. Several recalled a history of missed targets without consequences, noted multiyear data lags that hinder scrutiny and spoke about political tensions - particularly between net zero ambition and ongoing support for oil and gas - undermining confidence.

The SYP session found limited positives and expressed concern that even after reading the full Plan some contributors *“still don’t really know what is going on,”* noting that sections labelled “actions” did not set out practical asks of people or households. The energy section was felt to be unclear on how Scotland will move away from fossil fuels and what this means for workers.

Theme 4: Advice and financial support for households to reach net zero

Bringing the strands together, the weight of opinion on household advice and support in the draft CCP is mostly negative, with limited positive comments about grants and advice where these are already working well. People value grants and advice where they are reliable, accessible and visible, but ask for simpler processes, trusted local intermediaries, clearer timelines and broader scope - especially in rural contexts where infrastructure shortfalls and affordability barriers dominate.

In the Your Priorities consultation, people welcome support in principle but worry about scope, awareness, timelines and practicality. On the positive side, one person wrote, *“it is very necessary to support homes financially with the major changes needed,”* another said *“people need significant subsidization for heat pumps.”* A third participant offered a personal testimonial: *“the financial support... has been fantastic. I personally have had loans and grants for EV and heat pump.”* A further comment found some grant/loan information online but warned *“I don’t think the message is getting out to the general public.”*

On the negative side, one person argued the Plan focuses too much on private transport while failing to set out improvements to public transport or safe routes for active travel. Another wanted clear incentives and timelines for heat pump transitions (especially where a new boiler was installed recently) and worried that the people who most need help *“will not be reached.”* Others questioned heat pump suitability in severe cold and pointed to installation delays - months for grants and loans -

compared to weeks for boiler replacements. Other participants highlighted missing equality considerations and the need for broader advice and infrastructure such as affordable local foods, reliable EV charging and secure bike storage.

NLCF contributors argued for practical, accessible, local advice delivered by trusted community organisations, offline as well as online. They supported grants and low interest loans for retrofit, insulation, heating upgrades, renewables and active travel, but warned that many households are unaware of support or deterred by complex applications: *“many households are unaware of what support exists or are discouraged by complex application processes.”* They called for streamlined systems, trusted intermediaries to help with applications, and reassurance that support would not negatively affect benefits or immigration status.

In the Aberdeen Community engagement event, participants valued grants in principle but found systems too complex and fragmented to navigate. They called for trusted local advisers, non-digital routes for those who are digitally excluded, and a sequenced approach that prioritises insulation and demand reduction before technology swaps. They also highlighted rural infrastructure deficits - EV maintenance availability, bus reliability and grid constraints - that make household transitions harder or unrealistic in the near term.

The SYP session praised free bus travel as essential for daily life but stressed that infrequent services in rural areas severely limit its value. Young people emphasised EV affordability and charging gaps, the cost of bikes and lack of secure storage, and called for active travel support to be scaled and better integrated with public transport.

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Annex 1: Your Priorities consultation

The Net Zero, Energy and Transport (NZET) Committee ran a consultation designed to hear the views of individuals and communities on what they think about how Scotland reaches net zero emissions. It used an interactive engagement platform (Your Priorities) designed to help individuals and community groups share their views in a short and accessible format. It ran from 27 November 2025 to 25 January 2026.

The consultation was set around four themes, identified by the NZET Committee's [People's Panel](#), to find out how people felt about the proposals set out in the draft CCP. The four themes were:

- accessible, relatable climate policy for everyone
- participatory and community-led solutions
- transparency and accountability in climate action
- advice and financial support for households to reach net-zero

It enabled people to share their views by rating (thumbs up/ thumbs down) and commenting on some of the proposals in the draft Climate Change Plan (CCP). It was also possible for participants to rate (thumbs up/ thumbs down) other participants' comments; however, this functionality was rarely used by participants, so the thematic analysis is based on the comments. Full responses are available on: <https://engage.parliament.scot/group/31676>.

The thematic analysis provided below also includes the perspectives shared in correspondence from the National Lottery Community Fund, which were not shared on the Your Priorities platform, but responded to the same themes., as well those emailed by some individuals and groups asking to be added in manually.

Summary of participant data

In total, there were 71 comments across the four themes, from 50 different participants.¹ Six of these participants added comments on behalf of groups, so the comments reflect the views of more than the number of direct participants. The groups were:

- Climate Action Lanarkshire
- Climate Café Dundee
- Community Transport Association
- Cycling Scotland

¹ Note: there are minor differences in final numbers reported here compared to those shown online (74 comments and 52 participants). The numbers reported here are correct and differences are due to initial testing of the platform.

- Dundee Youth Council
- Eco Committee at Edinburgh Academy.

Previous engagement

Of those who responded to the question: “Have you, or the group you are responding on behalf of, previously engaged with the Scottish Government in the development of the Climate Change Plan?” (44 people), 84% (37 people) answered no, and 16% (7 people) answered yes.

Age range

Of those who responded to the question on age range (48 people), 31% were aged 65 years and over, and 19% were aged 16-24 years. It is worth noting however that the group responses from Edinburgh Academy and Dundee Youth Council represented the views of more than the two 16-24 year olds who were the direct respondents.

Age band	Count	Percentage*
16-24	9	19
25-39	3	6
40-54	6	13
55-64	8	17
65 and over	15	31
Prefer not to say	7	15

*Numbers do not total 100% due to rounding

Area

Of those who responded to the question on postcode (44 people), all postcode areas were represented with the exception of Dumfries and Galloway (DG). Most were from Edinburgh (EH, 27%), followed by Aberdeen (AB), Glasgow (G) and Perth (PH) at 11%.

Area	Count	Percentage*
AB	5	11
DD	3	7
EH	12	27
FK	2	5

G	5	11
HS	1	2
IV	2	5
KA	1	2
KW	1	2
KY	1	2
ML	2	5
PA	1	2
PH	5	11
TD	1	2
ZE	1	2
Prefer not to say	1	2

The postcodes reported are shown on the map below.



Summary of themes

Overall, participants stated that:

- **The Plan is not clear or detailed enough**, with many saying it lacks practical examples, contains too much jargon and doesn't explain what the Government will actually do or how targets will be delivered or monitored.
- **Communication needs to be more accessible and varied**, as participants stressed the need for plain language, clearer definitions and better formats beyond text - including wider use of technology and multimedia to make the Plan more engaging and visible - and more proactive outreach.
- **Community involvement is valued but not enabled**, with concerns that the Plan overlooks the potential of community-led climate action and lacks specifics on how public input will actually influence decisions.
- **Accountability mechanisms are viewed as weak**, with repeated questions about who is responsible, what happens if progress is insufficient, and concerns that targets are vague and lack consequences.
- **Household support is welcomed but feels incomplete**, with concerns about affordability and equity, delays in grant processes, the suitability of heat pumps, and the Plan's limited attention to public transport, cycling infrastructure and safe active travel, as well as areas such as food.

Accessible, relatable climate policy for everyone

There were:

- 17 endorsements up
- 11 endorsements down
- 22 comments (6 under thumbs up; 16 under thumbs down).

A couple of participants welcomed efforts to simplify the Plan, with one stating that *"Climate change is simple. It shouldn't be made to look out of reach because it's too difficult"*. One participant felt the Plan was *"a fair first draft"* that identified the right areas for action. Another appreciated the *"addition of the ministerial foreword"* and said the Easy Read version was helpful but could go further.

Most comments in this theme were critical however. Many felt the plan lacked detail, with one participant saying *"there are not clearer examples about what the Government will actually do"*. The young people's version was often described as inadequate, with one person saying *"the child/young person's version needs revision – not all that accessible."* There were widespread concerns about jargon, with calls for plain language, for example because *"there are too many jargon terms... It may be helpful to have a definitions appendix."* Several criticised the communications approach as too text-heavy and inaccessible: *"How do you get the audience to the text? A much wider use of technology and formats is required."*

Others felt the plan was vague and simplistic, for example, the Eco Committee at Edinburgh Academy stated it was: *“too simple and appears to lack any depth or detail on the strategies and practical changes individuals or businesses etc. can take”*. Young people in Dundee highlighted financial implications for poorer communities, noting concerns about the cost of electric cars and how people in flats may not have charging access.

NLCF-funded organisations welcomed the Easy Read and child-friendly versions of the draft Climate Change Plan but cautioned that relying on mainstream or technical channels risks excluding many. They stressed that inclusive, plain-language communication is essential, noting that *“one size fits all will not and does not work”* and that messages should be so engaging that *“people can’t escape it!”* Groups urged the use of diverse formats, translated materials and *“visual storytelling that reflect Scotland’s diverse communities and lived experiences.”* One contributor from Inverness Tool Library stated that engaging with climate issues had felt *“like learning a new language... overwhelming,”* reinforcing the call to *“minimise the jargon and keep it simple.”*

NLCF contributors also highlighted the importance of starting with what matters in people’s daily lives - cost of living, health, heating, food, and local pride - to make climate action relevant: *“Don’t start a conversation with ‘climate change’ - start with what is important and relevant to that community.”* Many groups said that practical initiatives such as repair, reuse, or community food projects draw people in because they help with everyday pressures and offer wider benefits, such as reducing loneliness, building community cohesion and giving people a sense of agency.

Trusted relationships were identified as vital for sustained engagement. Paws4humanity noted, *“partnership working is essential”* and climate messages are more effective when delivered through *“familiar and trusted voices.”* GrowGreen Scotland emphasised that for community organisations to build those trusted relationships takes time and long-term investment – though often modest if supported well. Organisations also warned of growing challenges in volunteer capacity, with many groups reliant on early retirees and fewer younger people able to participate.

Participatory and community-led solutions

There were:

- 16 endorsements up
- 9 endorsements down
- 15 comments (7 under thumbs up; 8 under thumbs down).

Several participants referred to participatory budgeting, with one stating *“I like participatory budgeting.”* However, another noted that *“the pot has to be significant and large”* and one person called for a specific portion to be stated (such as 30% or 70%) rather than just “a portion”. Another cautioned that it could become *“a popularity contest... vs genuine community engagement.”* One participant welcomed

reference to CARES in the Plan, saying *“I am pleased to see the CARES project mentioned”* but called for it to be actively promoted.

A few noted the challenges of community engagement based on experience: *“most were interested in things that directly affected them... climate was seen as someone else’s problem.”* Young people also emphasised their right to be heard, stating they *“were not seriously consulted... their opinions need to be heard locally in a meaningful way.”* Many participants felt the plan failed to recognise the scale and potential of community action, with Community Transport Association saying *“The Plan currently overlooks the potential of community-led climate action.”* Others asked for more clarity on how public input will matter, commenting *“There don’t seem to be many specifics about this in the plan!”* The consultation process itself was criticised as confusing and rushed, with Climate Café Dundee noting: *“The amount of time to consult... is far too short.”* One participant said that government action remains *“top down and wasteful.”*

NLCF contributors focused on enablers: championing trusted anchor and grassroots organisations as facilitators of involvement, welcoming citizens’ panels and broader engagement methods (online surveys, open meetings), and stressing long-term investment in relationships and volunteering capacity. Groups noted that many people *“do not even know that they have a voice and can have a say in decision making,”* and that consultations can be *“inaccessible, confusing or costly.”* They stressed that communities often know best what should be prioritised for funding, and welcomed *“innovative approaches such as citizens panels... online surveys or open meetings”* to involve a wider range of people. Several highlighted the value of *“anchor or grassroots groups who are already trusted by their community”* to act as conduits for participation.

Contributors also cautioned that asking without acting erodes trust, calling for demonstrable follow-through in local planning decisions and budgets. Some organisations said *“it is better not to ask at all, than to ask but not listen or intend to act.”* GrowGreen Scotland stressed that verbal commitments on the right to food must lead to *“practical actions and deep delivery,”* calling for every community to have space to grow food, supported by planning processes and investment. They argued that this would strengthen understanding of nature, climate change and adaptation, because the food system is *“the biggest contributor to the ecological emergency and a significant contributor to climate change.”*

Transparency and accountability

There were:

- 10 endorsements up
- 13 endorsements down
- 16 comments (3 under thumbs up; 13 under thumbs down).

A small number of participants recognised progress, with one participant noting it was *“positive that a monitoring and reporting framework is part of the plan and vital that the parliament uses the outputs to hold the government to account for delivery of*

the plan.” Another said that the number of metrics *“might be overwhelming for public understanding.”* One participant stated that: *“targets set for the plan aren’t specific enough... many of them depend on new technologies.”*

Most participants felt that transparency and accountability were weak or missing. Key concerns included: *“where is the accountability?”*, *“It needs more actual explanation of what will be done with this data and who will be accountable if it is not being effective.”* Others said there *“needs to be a clear way for accountability to be assessed and delivered”* and *“a clear way to ensure that the accountability will work through all levels of government.”* Others noted the absence of consequences: *“there is nothing on the action to be taken against those held accountable if progress is insufficient.”*

NLCF contributors welcomed the draft Plan’s linking of nature and climate and pressed for visible, comprehensible progress reporting that helps communities understand impacts, including embedded and supply-chain emissions so that people can make informed choices. They highlight that this reflects feedback that action on biodiversity, animal welfare, energy and food systems is deeply inter-related, and that those most affected by climate change are also those most affected by poverty and disadvantage. Organisations stressed the need for Scottish Government and other decision-makers to make explicit links between the health of the planet and the health of communities, warning that without this, *“climate adaptation will lead to greater inequality because their wellbeing will be ignored.”* Linlithgow Community Development Trust emphasised that progress against targets must be *“visible and understandable”* rather than abstract, and that reporting should show impacts in other countries and emissions from different industries.

There was a strong call for communities to be directly involved in accountability, including scrutiny of how climate budgets are allocated, who benefits, and whether investment reaches those most affected by environmental harm. Some organisations questioned whether communities are genuinely welcome in decision-making spaces, suggesting they may *“cause too much trouble!”* and stressing that participation must not be tokenistic but diverse, inclusive and involve many community voices. Paws4humanity highlighted that *“BME communities should be meaningfully represented... not as a token presence but as equal partners,”* supported through funding and capacity-building so they can engage *“confidently and consistently.”* They also argued that *“clear consequences for failing to meet targets - and recognition for positive action - can reinforce accountability.”* Organisations further emphasised the role of networks and infrastructure bodies in amplifying small community groups, linking local action to wider impacts, and ensuring monitoring captures accountability at multiple levels.

Advice and financial support for households

There were:

- 16 endorsements up
- 11 endorsements down
- 18 comments (6 under thumbs up; 12 under thumbs down).

Participants welcomed financial help, stating *“it is very necessary to support homes financially with the major changes needed”* and that *“people need significant subsidization for heat pumps.”* One participant strongly praised current schemes: *“the financial support... has been fantastic. I personally have had loans and grants for EV and heat pump.”* Others appreciated guidance where they had found it, though said it isn’t widely known: *“There is some information... I don’t think the message is getting out to the general public though.”*

Many participants felt support was too narrow or insufficiently explained. One participant wanted clarity on timelines, noting *“I wouldn’t want to have to shell out straight away for a heat pump unless it was clear about support available.”* Another participant felt that for people to change their house heating system *“The time taken to implement a heat pump (can be months for grants/loans) (or alternative) must be made equivalent to gas boiler replacement (weeks).”* Some argued that the people most in need will not be reached: *“the people who will need the most help will not be reached by this except by chance. Fuel poverty hits people who are not getting qualifying benefits as well.”*

One participant also said the Plan focused too much on private transport while not addressing *“how to improve public transport, create safer routes for cycling and walking.”* There were also concerns about missing areas such as food and diets.

NLCF contributors argued for practical, accessible and local advice delivered by trusted community organisations, available offline as well as online, noting that many of those most impacted by climate change are also among the most digitally excluded. They emphasised that for every aspect of the Plan requiring households to change behaviour, homes or travel, there must be funding for community organisations to ensure that advice and support is effective and inclusive. Several highlighted the importance of financial assistance - grants and low-interest loans - for retrofitting, insulation, heating upgrades, renewable energy and active travel. Paws4humanity warned that *“many households are unaware of what support exists or are discouraged by complex application processes,”* calling for *“streamlined systems, trusted intermediaries to help with applications, and reassurance that support will not negatively affect immigration status or benefits.”*

Annex 2: Aberdeen Community engagement

This Annex provides a thematic summary of views expressed during four table discussions held as part of the North-East public engagement sessions on the draft Climate Change Plan (CCP) on 19 January 2026.

The event was held in partnership with North East Scotland Climate Action Network, Aberdeen Council for Voluntary Organisations and Aberdeenshire Voluntary Action. A total of 28 participants representing 18 organisations took part in the discussions in Aberdeen Science Centre.

Discussions were structured around the same four themes used across all engagement: Accessible, relatable climate policy for everyone; Participation and community-led solutions; Transparency and accountability; and Advice and financial support for households. The findings below represent issues raised across groups.

Summary of themes

Overall, participants expressed a need for:

- **Greater clarity, detail and honesty in climate planning and communication**, including a clearer narrative that connects climate action to cost-of-living, health and community benefits, and is upfront about trade-offs and “winners and losers.”
- **More inclusive, meaningful participation, supported by long-term capacity, paid staff and accessible engagement methods**, recognising that not everyone has digital access and that successful community initiatives need resources to grow and spread.
- **Transparent and accessible information about costs, benefits and trade-offs**, including how exported emissions, supply-chain impacts and recycling challenges (e.g. EV batteries) are accounted for, and clarity on accountability when targets are missed.
- **Long-term, stable funding and advisory support for both households and communities**, with trusted local advice, clear household “journeys” tailored to different home types, and certainty that enables confidence and planning.
- **A prioritised, realistic approach that recognises Scotland cannot “do everything at once,”** focuses on high-impact measures such as demand reduction and insulation first, and ensures fairness across regions, income groups and different community contexts.

Accessible, relatable climate policy for everyone

Participants widely felt that the draft CCP is insufficiently accessible, both in format and content. Although some participants appreciated the children’s and easy-read versions, many identified a significant gap between these and the full technical document. The main plan was described as *high-level*, *vague*, and lacking clarity on

responsibilities, implementation pathways, and measurable outcomes. Appendices were considered too complex for lay readers, with some noting that “you need a PhD” to engage with them.

There were strong concerns about the lack of relatable, practical information. Participants emphasised the need for worked examples illustrating how proposals affect different types of households (e.g. rural, low-income, tenants vs owners). The current narrative was seen as disconnected from everyday concerns, particularly the cost of living. Participants repeatedly emphasised that the plan is missing a meaningful narrative focused on what matters to people - including cost-of-living pressures, health benefits, and practical community benefits - and that without this framing, the plan feels abstract and irrelevant to daily life.

Many also stressed that Scotland cannot do everything at once, calling for clearer prioritisation of actions - particularly a sequenced “demand-reduction-first” approach that begins with insulation and reducing energy waste before introducing more complex or costly technologies.

Engagement and communication methods were also viewed as insufficient. Participants recommended much broader use of short-form media - such as soundbites, reels, and podcasts, as well as accessible formats such as audio and Braille. Some individuals, including those with limited digital access, were described as effectively excluded from current communication channels.

Participation and community-led solutions

Across all tables, there was a strong view that current participation mechanisms are not meaningful or effective. Many described consultations as “tick-box exercises”, with decisions perceived as predetermined. Communities, especially rural ones, reported feeling ignored or overridden in local developments. Young people in particular felt they had little influence.

Participants highlighted significant structural barriers to community action, including planning delays, grid constraints, lack of local infrastructure (e.g. EV charging), and heavy reliance on volunteers. Many community organisations operate without the revenue funding or staffing required to deliver or sustain projects, and current funding mechanisms, especially one-year cycles and capital-only programmes, were seen as poorly aligned with the needs of grassroots initiatives. Larger commercial organisations were perceived as advantaged within existing systems. A recurring message across all four tables was that community groups cannot deliver or sustain projects without stable revenue funding, paid staff, and long-term capacity support.

Despite barriers, participants noted that there are many examples of successful community initiatives - including energy projects, swap shops, and local renewable schemes - but these successes rarely spread because there is no resource or mechanism to replicate them elsewhere. Digital exclusion was also a major concern. Participants stressed that not everyone has digital access or confidence, and that current engagement and support systems assume online access.

Some participant raised concerns about energy infrastructure, with one asking if Scotland is self-sufficient with wind power, why is more energy infrastructure

needed. Others related this to the earlier point about reducing energy demand, suggesting this should be the priority over increasing energy infrastructure.

Several participants also called for community-relevant Just Transition indicators that reflect what success looks like in different geographical areas, arguing that national indicators may miss regional realities. There was a strong desire for earlier, more sustained, and co-designed engagement, and for greater ambition on community ownership models. Participants emphasised the importance of using evidence and lived experience already gathered, rather than repeatedly asking similar questions through new consultations.

Transparency and accountability

Participants expressed low confidence in the credibility of climate targets. Many referred to a history of missed targets without consequences, leading to scepticism about the achievability of new commitments. Participants called for clearer responsibilities, SMART objectives, early-warning indicators with defined consequences, and more accessible reporting on progress at both national and local levels. Five-year planning cycles were seen as too long to support meaningful accountability.

There were consistent concerns about the lack of transparency on costs, trade-offs, and distributional impacts. Participants stressed the need for honesty about trade-offs, including who benefits, who pays, and the implications for rural vs urban areas. Many highlighted that accounting for “territorial” emissions alone hides major issues - including exported emissions from imported materials, the carbon footprint of EV batteries, and the absence of a long-term approach to recycling and end-of-life impacts. They felt these omissions undermine public trust.

Participants said the political landscape sends conflicting signals, with Government seen as “riding two horses at once”: pushing for rapid progress on net zero while also supporting the ongoing role of oil and gas. This contradiction, they felt, makes the Plan harder to trust and contributes to a lack of openness about the real “winners and losers” in the transition.

Participants stressed that one plan cannot fit all, noting significant differences in geography, infrastructure constraints, and household types across Scotland. Participants said that outcomes should be framed around what people actually value - such as warm, affordable homes, reduced bills, and healthier living - not just emissions reduction metrics. Participants also sought clarity on what happens when indicators turn red or targets are missed, emphasising that accountability mechanisms are currently unclear or non-existent.

Advice and financial support for households

Participants agreed that existing grants and schemes are often generous in principle but inaccessible in practice. Barriers included complexity, lack of awareness, inconsistent advice, digital exclusion, and insufficient clarity about eligibility and sequencing (e.g. insulation vs heat pump installation). There was a strong call for trusted, local, long-term advisory services that help households navigate options.

The cost of living was central to discussions. Fuel poverty was seen as a primary concern, with participants emphasising that poorer households are least able to upgrade homes yet are often expected to act first (e.g. rental sector requirements). Some participants lacked basic access to mobile phones or internet, preventing engagement with support schemes. Participants asked who is actually taking up grants, how poorer households are being supported, and whether those most in need are being reached.

Across all sessions, people said households need a clear, relatable “journey” showing steps for different home types - rural, urban, tenement, detached, renters - rather than a one-size-fits-all approach.

Uncertainty created by short-term funding cycles, delayed legislation (e.g. Heat in Buildings Bill), and unclear long-term commitments were seen as undermining confidence and a major barrier to planning for retrofit or investment. Participants repeatedly emphasised the need for a long-term, stable plan so households and landlords can invest with certainty and trust the direction of travel. The strongest area of consensus was that insulation and energy-demand reduction must come first, both because it saves money and because it makes later technology choices more affordable and effective.

Infrastructure gaps, particularly in rural areas, were frequently cited - such as EV maintenance availability, reliable bus services and grid constraints. These gaps reinforced a sense that the plan does not fully reflect the practical realities faced by households.

Annex 3: Scottish Youth Parliament online engagement

This annex provides a thematic summary of feedback gathered during an online engagement session with the Scottish Youth Parliament (SYP) on the draft Climate Change Plan (CCP), which took place on 13 January 2026 with 5 participants/MSYPs (Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament) from across Scotland.

Discussions were structured around the same four themes used across all engagement: Accessible, relatable climate policy for everyone; Participation and community-led solutions; Transparency and accountability; and Advice and financial support for households. The findings below represent key issues raised.

Summary of themes

Overall, SYP participants emphasised the importance of:

- **Significantly improving the accessibility, clarity and usefulness of the CYP version of the Plan** - including providing a meaningful “middle-ground” version and adopting youth-friendly formats such as multimedia, co-designed resources and clearer explanations of actions.
- **Embedding young people’s involvement throughout the development, design and implementation of the CCP** - not just during consultation - and strengthening the commitment to ongoing youth engagement, recognising that young people have a critical role in shaping and delivering Scotland’s climate transition.
- **Setting out clearer, actionable and realistic plans**, with transparent responsibilities, credible targets, and honest discussion of how Scotland will transition away from fossil fuels - including implications for workers and communities.
- **Recognising that transport, affordability and rural inequality are central to young people’s ability to participate in climate action**, and ensuring the final Plan addresses service gaps, affordability barriers and the need for accessible active-travel options.

Accessible, relatable climate policy for everyone

Young people felt strongly that the draft CCP is not accessible or relatable in its current form. The Children and Young People’s (CYP) version was described as “*the least detailed document I’ve seen in my life*”, while the full Plan was considered overly long, technical and filled with jargon. Participants emphasised the absence of any meaningful “middle ground” version or alternative formats that would meet the needs of diverse youth audiences.

Several participants questioned whether the Plan needs to be a traditional written document, suggesting the use of multimedia formats such as videos, interactive tools

or co-designed digital resources. Participants asked whether young people had been involved in designing the CYP version and proposed that future iterations should be co-created with youth contributors.

Participants also noted positive examples of youth-friendly materials (e.g., the “jargon buster” in the Young Sea Changers Scotland manifesto), suggesting the CCP could adopt similar approaches.

Participation and community-led solutions

Participants raised concerns about youth engagement, noting that they were not aware of direct involvement of young people in the CCP process so far. They felt this was at odds with the high levels of interest in climate issues among younger groups and said it contributed to a sense that young people’s voices are frequently ignored or sidelined in decision-making. Participants stressed the need for meaningful, ongoing involvement of young people throughout the development and implementation of the Plan.

Participants highlighted the importance of recognising regional variation in transport and energy challenges, and the need for community-level solutions that reflect local realities. Community bus initiatives were cited as a positive example of local action, although participants noted that the draft CCP contains very little reference to community transport despite its importance, particularly in rural areas.

Transparency and accountability

Participants expressed significant concerns about the clarity and realism of the draft CCP. Even those who read the full document reported that they “*still don’t really know what is going on with it*” and that sections labelled “actions” did not clearly set out what is expected of people, households or communities.

The energy section was seen as lacking clarity on how Scotland will transition away from fossil fuels, and what the implications will be for workers. Participants noted that the absence of explicit discussion on this creates uncertainty about Scotland’s long-term direction.

Young people questioned the credibility of several targets, noting the Scottish Government’s historical challenges in meeting goals (e.g., forestry commitments). They emphasised the need for clear resourcing, delivery responsibilities, and evidence that targets are achievable.

Participants also called for open discussion on the advantages and disadvantages of renewable energy infrastructure, including environmental and community impacts.

Advice and financial support for households

Participants’ discussion centred primarily on transport-related costs and inequalities, which they regarded as fundamental to their ability to participate in a low-carbon transition. They spoke about rural transport gaps, describing infrequent buses, unreliable services and poor connectivity that make sustainable travel difficult. At the same time, the financial barriers to accessing electric vehicles were seen as

significant, with many young people unable to afford EVs or identify convenient local charging points. They stressed that, although EVs reduce emissions, cars will still create congestion, and therefore a more ambitious shift towards cycling and active travel is needed. However, the high cost of bicycles, particularly electric bikes, means that many young people would require financial support to take up these options.

Free bus travel was highlighted as an essential support for accessing school, college and daily activities, but participants emphasised that its value is limited in areas where services are sparse or unreliable. They also argued for extended concessionary travel schemes and for more investment in safe, accessible active-travel infrastructure to enable low-carbon choices to be realistic and equitable across different parts of the region.