

Climate Emergency Declarations and the Road to Net Zero: A report on the Scottish Local Authorities and their actions to reduce GHG emissions and meet their self-set targets by 2030.

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Section 1: Introduction to the Report

This report follows work by students at the University of Glasgow on the Environmental Law Foundation’s University Policy Clinic, Year 3 Research Project, during 2023. In terms of the remit of the project, students considered and analysed the 32 Scottish Local Authorities (‘LAs’) to assess whether and to what extent these bodies have been effective in meeting greenhouse gas reduction targets.¹

It is important to bear in mind the following aspects of the national picture in Scotland that are relevant to the scope of the work. The Scottish Government declared a climate emergency in early 2019, one of the first national governments in the world to do so.² The Scottish Government subsequently passed the Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) Act 2019 in October of the same year, thereby updating the previous Scottish Climate Act adopted in 2009. The 2019

¹ In relation to the emissions data we have analysed for LAs, only CO2 emissions data is available, and we hereafter refer to such emissions data exclusively in the report.

² <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-48077802>.

act set a more ambitious emissions reduction target of 100% (net-zero compared to 1990 emissions levels) to be reached by 2045,³ repealing the previous target of 80% reduction in 2050. Furthermore, the 2019 legislation set ambitious interim emissions reduction targets of at least 56% until 2020, at least 75% until 2030 and at least 90% until 2040.⁴ The 2020 interim target was met and indeed exceeded with a reduction of 59%, but it is likely that the necessary emissions reductions were only achieved by the travel restrictions and lockdowns imposed as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic (a theme picked upon below in our executive summary on analysis of Scottish LAs).⁵

The present report focuses on the progress of the 32 LAs towards reaching their 2030 targets. Due to the lack of pre-existing reports discussing the Scottish LA's we have chosen to take a higher-level approach and provide a general and comprehensive overview of each LA and its particularities.

In terms of the structure of this report, Section 2 of the Report outlines our methodology, whilst Section 3 contains an Executive Summary which presents the key findings following analysis of the data, including areas of effective LA's CO₂ emission reduction in Scotland, and areas of concern. The report concludes with Sections 4 & 5 where the data we collected is presented and our conclusions are again summarised. For ease of reference, we have synthesised data in places and represented some of it visually through two graphs which illustrate the incidence of CED by Scottish LAs (Graph A) and the reduction in CO₂ emissions by Scottish LAs (Graph B).

Section 2: Methodology

The methodological approach taken for this report consisted of primarily desk-based research. The desk-based research utilised the existing information available from each LA and the Scottish Government and followed a pre-set structure to efficiently collate information. The main sources of information were individual LA climate action plans and strategies, and data that was publicly available as a result of legal obligations incumbent on Scottish Public Bodies by virtue of relevant environmental legislation.⁶ We also requested information from LAs on a couple of occasions using Environmental Information Requests.

The following questions formed the basis of the research:

1. Had the LA made a climate emergency declaration (hereafter 'CED')?

³ As per Section 1 A1 of The Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019.

⁴ As per Section 3 A2 of The Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019.

⁵ <https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/scottish-emission-targets-progress-in-reducing-emissions-in-scotland-2022-report-to-parliament/#key-messages>.

⁶ All public bodies listed in Schedule 1 of the 'Climate Change (Duties of Public Bodies; Reporting Requirements) (Scotland) Order 2015' as amended by the Climate Change (Duties of Public Bodies; Reporting Requirements) (Scotland) Amendment Order 2020, are required to report annually on compliance with climate change duties established under S44 of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 and in accordance with Schedule 2 of the 2015 Order. Mandatory reporting began in 2015/16.

2. What GHG emissions targets had the LA adopted?
3. What progress was made against the target?
4. Is the LA on track to meet their targets based on progress so far?
5. Whether further targets had been adopted by the LA?
6. What main policy areas were chosen by LAs to reduce their GHG emissions?

Due to limited time, and the number of LAs we had to consider, the data collection was subject to constraints, however consistency was achieved across the LAs allowing for comparison and an overall picture of the net-zero policy landscape in Scotland to be formed.

The results are displayed in the form of two graphs and 32 tables for each LA. This method of showing results was chosen as it provides an accessible and broad view on the CEDs, emissions reductions, and actions taken across Scotland. The method also allows for an extensive amount of information to be shown in an organised manner within the confines of the report.

Section 3: Executive Summary

Following our analysis of the data collected, we have uncovered the following key points:

3.1 Progress Toward Emission Targets

Our work reveals, with some exceptions, that just over half of Scottish LAs appear to be on target in terms of meeting their emission 2030 goals. However, there is uncertainty in respect of some of the data collected given varying approaches to the categorisation and counting of Scope 3 Emissions (see below).

3.1.1 The Effect of the Covid 19 Pandemic.

The Covid 19 Pandemic and associated lockdowns had a noticeable impact on GHG emission reduction in Scottish LAs. During this period (whose effect was first registered by the 2020/2021 reporting), there was a noticeable and unprecedented steep decline in CO2 emissions, allowing Scotland to reach its overall emissions reduction interim target for 2020. Concerningly, it appears that the reduction target could not have been met by the reduction efforts of the Scottish government, and local authorities alone, illustrating how previous efforts have been insufficient.⁷ Making matters worse, for the period following the lifting of pandemic-related restrictions (2021-2022), the data reveals a visible ‘bounceback’ effect whereby CO2 emissions temporarily

⁷<https://www.theccc.org.uk/publication/scottish-emission-targets-progress-in-reducing-emissions-in-scotland-2022-report-to-parliament/>

increased to a level which hampered previous and ongoing reduction efforts. The future reporting for 2022/2023 will likely demonstrate this bounceback even more clearly.⁸

Aligned to this, a common feature of the data analysis was the general delay in implementation of many strategies and concrete projects for CO2 emission reduction due to the Covid 19 Pandemic. Some of the local authorities explicitly make reference to the effects of the Covid 19 Pandemic to justify falling off track with their climate strategies and action plans.

3.1.2 Scope 3 Emissions, Data Collection Models & Data Divergence

A notable feature of the data we have gathered and analysed is the lack of consistency relating to the collection methods and their reliability. Section 46 of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 requires the LAs to produce annual reports detailing their efforts to combat climate change as well as their emissions, but there is currently no guidance on the form and extent of the reports.

The emissions data which is published on the Sustainable Scotland Network website⁹ is reported under 3 different categories; Scope 1 (all direct sources that are owned or controlled by the council) Scope 2 (energy-related indirect emissions from generation of purchased electricity, steam and heating/cooling consumed by the council) and Scope 3 (all other indirect emissions that are consequences of the activities of the council).

East Renfrewshire Council provides a great example of the problem with inconsistent methodologies. From the financial year 2018/19 to 2019/20 the reported emissions have increased by 300.695%¹⁰ thanks to a change in methodology re classification of emissions as a result of an external review. The biggest change in methodology was the expansions of Scope 3 which public bodies are free to interpret as they see fit, or not report at all. The majority of the LAs do not use 3rd parties organisations to verify their findings therefore their Scope 3 data could still be largely underreported.¹¹ Environmental Standards Scotland, a fairly new organisation has recently launched an investigation into Local Authority climate change reporting¹² in hopes of setting a high standard for emissions reports across the board.

⁸ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-61718803>

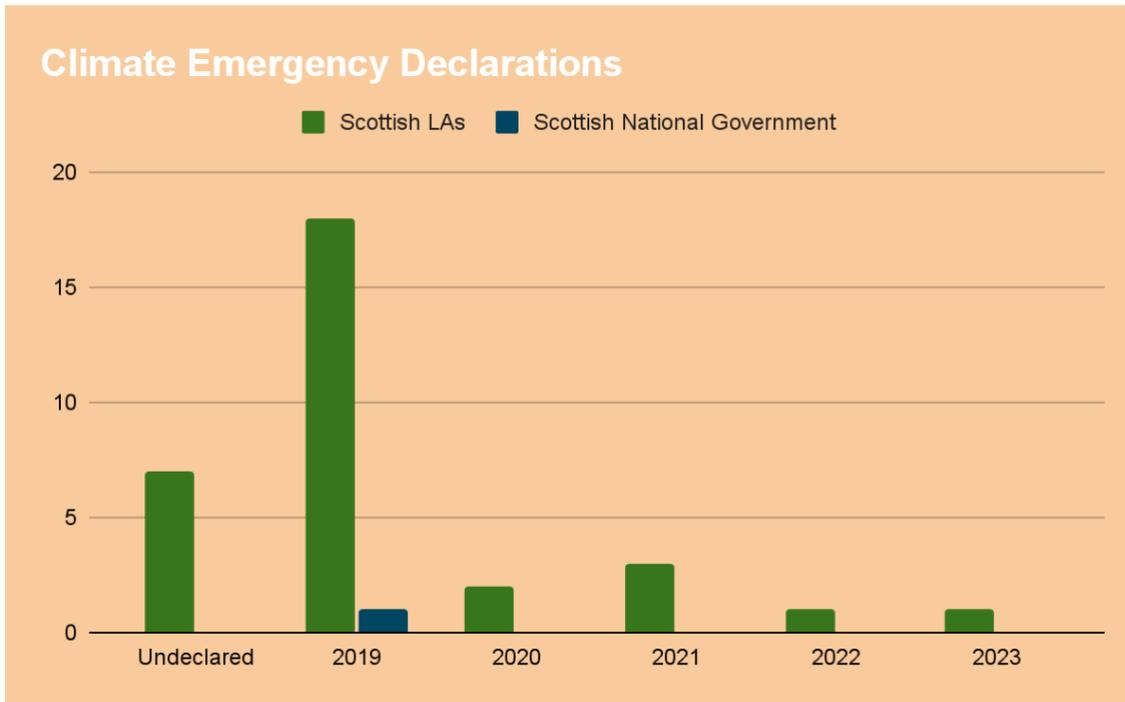
⁹ <https://sustainablescotlandnetwork.org/reports>

¹⁰ https://www.eastrenfrewshire.gov.uk/media/7578/ERC-2019-20-2020-21-Carbon-Emissions-report/pdf/Cabinet_item_04_-_27_January_2022_1.pdf?m=637850144953200000

¹¹ <https://theferret.scot/councils-could-massively-underestimating-climate-emissions/>

¹² <https://www.environmentalstandards.scot/investigations/investigations/>

3.2 Climate Emergency Declarations (CEDs)



Graph A: Climate Emergency Declarations

With no universal definition of a CED, they are usually seen in the form of a public declaration made by governments recognising the urgency and severity of climate change in a specific area. The form of a CED can vary, but generally they involve a public statement declaring a climate emergency and a commitment to take the required action to address it through means of concrete policy and climate targets. Declarations of climate emergencies have increased exponentially in recent years worldwide, with 95% of the UK population now living in an area where their local authority has declared a climate emergency.¹³ However, the substantive effect of making a CED has also resulted in some political backlash and scepticism regarding the utility of symbolic acknowledgment of global warming.

CEDs have faced criticism with some stating that they are nothing but mere political promises with minimal weight or utility. There is a risk that declaration becomes a form of ‘greenwashing’ where it is not accompanied by action plans and measurable targets. In 2019, Aberdeen City Council actively voted against declaring a CED, with concern that the SNP had only proposed the amendment as an act of PR in the run up to the election. The then Conservative council co-leader stressed “actions speak louder than words and that is what we are doing with our strategy” whereas Scottish Liberal Democrat councillor Ian Yuill, saw an issue with not “stating the bleeding

¹³ <https://climateemergencydeclaration.org/climate-emergency-declarations-cover-15-million-citizens/>

obvious”.¹⁴ In March 2023 and following a change in the political composition of the council, a CED was declared in Aberdeen. Ian Yuill, the now Co-Leader of the Council highlighting the symbolic nature of a CED, but emphasising symbolism still bears importance in the climate crisis.¹⁵

Making a CED is a positive recognition that a local authority’s current actions are insufficient and further emergency action is required. CEDs can be an effective mechanism of asserting attention to the climate emergency but equally our work has shown, it is the material action that really matters.

3.3 Common Themes in Efforts to Reduce Emissions

3.3.1 The Legal Context

Climate emergency declarations made by Scottish LAs necessarily involve commitment to action. However, when considering the kinds of action that these declarations entail, it is important to contextualise the scope of the commitment. Ultimately, Local Authorities are, and can only be, responsible for a limited range of activities in terms of both geography and power. For this reason, consideration of the commonalities (and differences) present in the action plans made by local authorities must be tempered by consideration of the legal platform held by Local Authorities *ab initio*.

Local Authorities in Scotland are underpinned by statute, in particular the Local Government (Scotland) Acts 1973, 1994, the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003; the Environmental Protection (Scotland) Act 1994, the Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 . These pieces of legislation prescribe to Local Authorities both duties and powers. The duties of course provide a positive obligation for Local Authorities and thus a great deal of commonality could be anticipated across the board in the fulfilment of these duties. However, powers being discretionary means that there is more scope for divergence, but broadly positive and permissive empowerment is constrained to the same categories, further guiding commonality.

For example, the duty to prepare an Integrated Waste Management Plan in their capacity as waste disposal and collection authorities under section 34 of the LGiSA 2003 means that all Local Authorities have, by duty, prepared a considered plan for the effective treatment of waste in their jurisdiction. The Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 empowers local authorities in the provision of public transport, but does not impose a duty. However, given the emissions impact of vehicles, this is a key area in which Local Authorities *are* empowered to make changes to meet their emissions commitments, in particular with low emissions zones as has been implemented in Glasgow recently as provided for by part 2 of the 2019 Act.

¹⁴ <https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/environment/1906042/aberdeen-councillors-vote-against-declaring-climate-emergency/>

¹⁵ <https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/news/aberdeen-city-council-declares-climate-and-nature-emergency>

Overall it is the powers and duties which are delegated to Local Authorities which ultimately shape and determine the collective commitments made in Climate Emergency Declarations, as well as framing the implementation thereof. Scottish local authorities claim a diverse variety of measures included in their action plans which are easily available on their official websites. LAs aim at integrating these measures within their community through a mitigation and adaptation approach.

3.3.2 Climate Ready Clyde

One way in which the commonalities and shared visions of the LAs to reduce GHG emissions can be seen in the form of group organisation which span across many LAs.

Climate Ready Clyde (CRC) is an initiative funded by 13 member organisations, supported by the Scottish Government. The CRC includes 8 of the 32 LAs in Scotland. These being; North Lanarkshire Council, East Renfrewshire Council, South Lanarkshire Council, Glasgow City Council, West Dunbartonshire Council, East Dunbartonshire Council, Inverclyde Council and Renfrewshire Council.

In May 2022, they adopted a new governance structure to enhance the delivery of their shared vision, strategy and action plan for Glasgow City Region. Their adaptation strategy is the first one developed with concrete actions under their Theory of Change to 2030¹⁶. The plan has the ambition to have a transformation adaptation approach, through an intervention that would provide new mechanisms to respond to adaptation needs, nurture new leadership and create expectations in society. The plan then underlines the importance to develop the ability of organisations, business and communities to adapt, while increasing the adaptation finance through leverage and innovation and finally, enabling and equipping individuals to participate in adaptation, focusing on the most vulnerable. This strategy would ensure that not only Glasgow City Region's economy, society and environment would be prepared, but also to continue to grow and adapt to the effect of changing climate.

The collaboration between LAs has the potential to be a successful mechanism of policy convergence which allows the LAs to share knowledge and successes with each other. Therefore, improving the likelihood of the LAs to meet their targets and move closer to net zero.

3.3.2 Direct Emissions

There are many ways in which LAs can directly and indirectly influence GHG emissions. Direct emissions reductions can take many forms, particularly in how we transport people and how we power Scotland.

Looking at the ways in which LAs have made policy decisions to reduce GHG the commonalities mentioned previously can be seen. Firstly, **transport** is one of the main common areas identified. Transport can be categorised in two ways: sanctioning non-electric car use (e.g. low emissions zones) and improving car-alternative transport infrastructure (e.g. bus services, pedestrianisation,

¹⁶ Glasgow City Region Climate Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan, Climate Ready Clyde, June 2021

cycle schemes etc). A practical example is North Lanarkshire through the project “SMARTways” promotes more sustainable modes of transportation like walking, cycling, car sharing and buses¹⁷. Similarly, LAs are working on the transition to **clean energy**, by increasing renewable energy sources and decarbonising the energy sector. For example, Renfrewshire Council strategy aims at mapping strategically across the local territory to identify local energy solutions for heat, power and transport on an area-by area basis while developing partnerships both public and private to ensure community wealth building with reduced reliance on fossil fuels and a more locally owned energy. Moreover, Aberdeen Council praises the position of “an undisputed centre of excellence globally for the oil and gas sector” and has a leading position in hydrogen technology production, it delivered the UK’s largest hydrogen production and refuelling station and has its own hydrogen energy centre¹⁸.

3.3.3 Soft Measures

In addition to activities with direct carbon impact, carbon management is also influenced by strategic and “soft” measures. Secondly, the councils are working towards better health and wellbeing of people by environmental projects. Starting from the engagements of young people, who will be the future generations to inherit a changing climate. In fact **education** from early years through schools, college and universities is an important tool to provide the necessary skills for tomorrow’s decision makers. In fact, some LAs understand that climate change is a social justice issue too and it is necessary to raise awareness among people. For instance, Shetland Islands Council has key projects like Carbon Literacy Training, to raise levels of climate change understanding across Shetland¹⁹. Or another one is the Climate Conversation which is an ongoing work stream with the purpose to instigate, encourage, promote and engage in conversation and discussion around climate change in Shetland²⁰ to ensure community priorities are reflected in Shetland Islands Council climate action works.

Another impactful measure is to encourage individuals to make the right choices for **waste management** because waste is an important area to tackle emissions. For example, Perth & Kinross Council aims at improving resource efficiency towards a circular economy through reducing, reusing, repairing and recycling. Related to the circular economy, **businesses** usually have a massive role in the generated emissions and also play a huge role in how society buys and consumes materials; they can definitely take steps to reduce their emissions through a circular economy. For instance, in the Perth & Kinross Council, individual businesses are becoming more sustainable through reducing water and energy use, waste packaging, improving transport efficiency, encouraging employees to change behaviours and increasing use of local supply chains.

¹⁷ <https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/roads-streetlighting-and-parking/smartways>

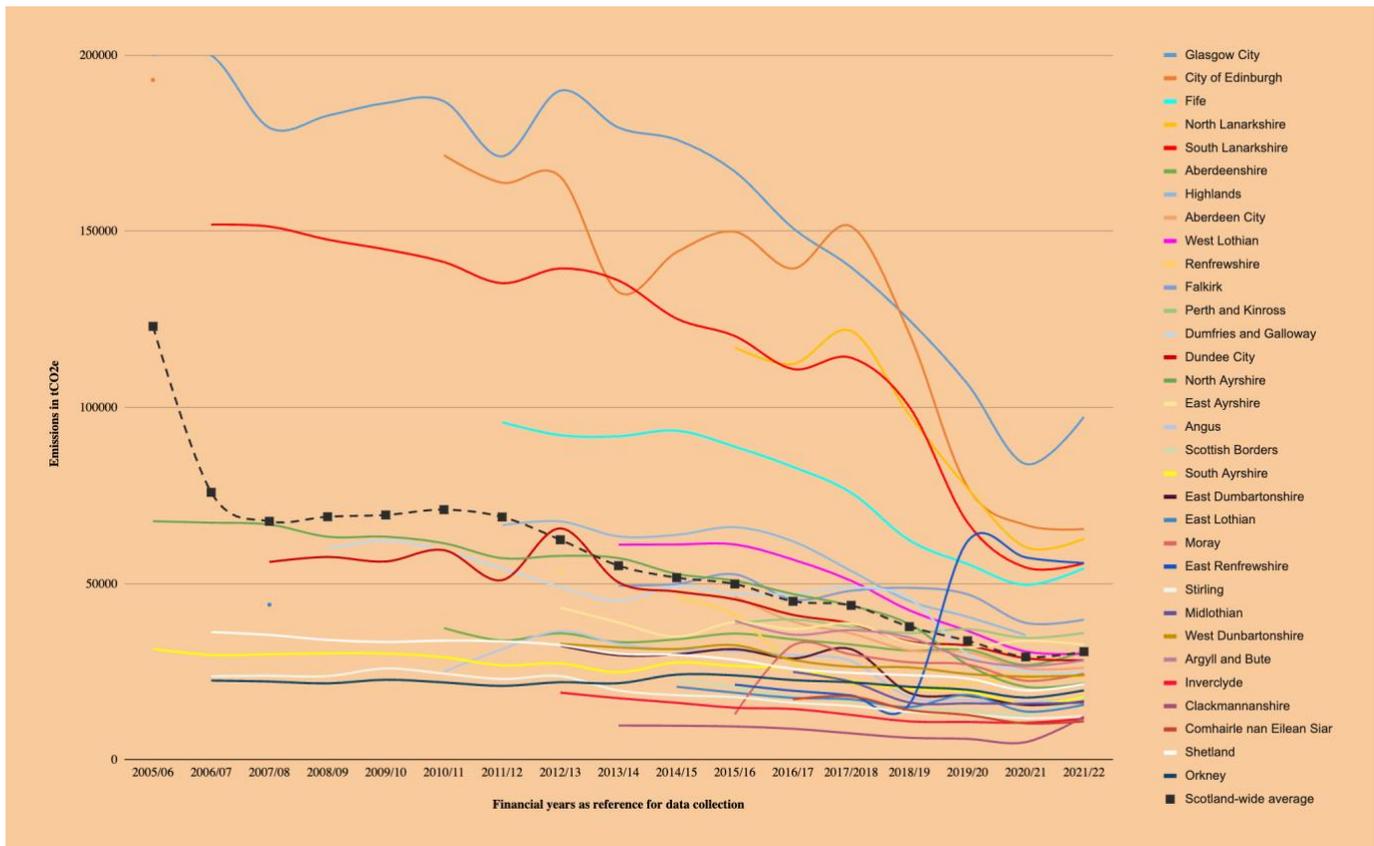
¹⁸ A climate-positive city at the heart of the global energy transition. A Vision and Prospectus for Aberdeen, Aberdeen City Council, 23 April 2020

¹⁹ <https://carbonliteracy.com/>

²⁰ <https://www.shetland.gov.uk/climate-change/climate-conversation>

All the aforementioned measures are usually part of a bigger strategy that LAs are trying to implement among all the buildings in their community, offering local projects from which everybody can benefit. Therefore, **biodiversity and green spaces** are key developments, for example West Dunbartonshire Council is making efforts to improve and increase local plant and animal species diversity, including greenspaces, parks and wider landscapes, with the aims of improving local ecology, health and wellbeing²¹. Stirling Council is also a leading case in the area, since it has received Green Flag Awards for 3 Urban Parks which all include an element of biodiversity enhancement and it is working towards maximising areas of grass managed for biodiversity²².

Section 4: An overview of CEDs and emissions reductions in Scotland.



Graph B: Reduction of CO2 emissions by local authorities (2005-2022)

²¹ Climate Change Strategy, A Route Map for a net zero future, West Dunbartonshire Council.

²² <https://www.stirling.gov.uk/media/qggievjb/climate-and-nature-emergency-plan-final-oct-21.pdf>

Graph B generally shows a progression towards emission's reduction. Up to 2020/2021, all LAs have been steadily reducing their emissions, with small variations in between. It must be noted that consistent and full data (all three scopes) is only available for all LAs from 2016/17 and for East Renfrewshire, their baseline and most accurate emissions reporting does not begin until 2019/20.

The majority of LAs have at least one small regression through the years, except for Moray, East Renfrewshire and Clackmannanshire which show larger differences in emissions' increase, that might be due to the change in the use of the parameters in Scope 3 in calculation in years 2015/2017, 2018/2020 and 2020/2022. East Dunbartonshire is the only LA that decreased more than 10,000 tCO₂e in emissions between 2017 and 2019. Other LAs have more recurring regressions through the years, for instance LAs like the City of Edinburgh, Aberdeenshire, Highlands, Dundee City, Orkney and South Ayrshire.

The Scotland wide emissions reductions, as shown by the black dotted line on Graph B follows the same trend of continuous emissions reductions overall. However, it must be noted that there was a drastic drop between 2005/06 and 2007/08 which was then followed by an increase between 2008 and 2011 in which there was an increase of almost 4,000tCO₂e. From 2011 there has been a steady and gradual increase in emissions. The drop and then increase of emissions between 2005/06 and 2011/12 is hard to fully analyse due to the extensive lack of data in those years.

4.1 The Scottish Government

As discussed previously, the Scottish Government has set out its interim targets of, 56% by 2020, 75% by 2030 and 90% by 2040 as well as its net zero target year of 2040. These targets were based on an older accounting methodology from 2017. There have since been changes to the methodology (changes particularly regarding peatland emissions). Though the Climate Change Committee (CCC) have found that the changes of the methodology will not impact the feasibility of the Scottish Government meeting their interim and 2045 targets and as such they should remain as they are.²³ However, alongside the interim and final targets, the Scottish Government have set annual targets which the CCC argue should be adjusted. The CCC states that the current targets will be "much more difficult to achieve, simply as an artefact of emissions accounting"²⁴, and that the annual targets should be adjusted to align with the new methodology and therefore will be feasible to meet. In regards to emissions reductions so far, the Scottish Government has failed to meet seven out of eleven targets (as of December 2022). Additionally, as mentioned previously, whilst the Scottish Government met their 2020 target, it was likely due to the emissions

²³ <https://www.parliament.scot/about/news/news-listing/unless-key-barriers-facing-local-government><https://www.theccc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Progress-in-reducing-emissions-in-Scotland-2022-Report-to-Parliament.pdf>

²⁴ Ibid, p. 11

reductions due to COVID-19. Therefore, calls have been made for a more comprehensive and detailed plan from the Scottish Government to meet their targets going forward.

Looking specifically at the LAs, a report published by the Scottish Parliament's Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee that without the barriers which currently face local government being dealt with, Scotland will not achieve net zero by 2045²⁵. As part of this, they recommend that Councils be given greater powers in order to take "an area-specific place-based approach to tackle climate change across Scotland"²⁶. Additionally, they recommend that the LA authorities which are showing good leadership and good practice in their actions towards tackling the climate crisis should be shared amongst Councils. The concern over lack of resources was discussed by Aberdeenshire Council following their decision to vote against a CED. With the then Council leader, Jim Gifford, stating:

"It is all well and good saying that we will do something but until we are afforded more resources by the Scottish Government we can only do what we can, with what we have."²⁷

4.2 The Local Authorities

The following tables present each of the thirty-two LA's in Scotland and provide an overview of their targets and actions as of April 2023. There are some inconsistencies amongst the tables, such as the baselines stated. The baselines used in the tables are the baselines from the Public Sector Report on Compliance with Climate Change Duties. Each report has a self-selected baseline from the LA and CO2 emission data from the baseline year until the most recent reporting of 2021/22. The majority of these baselines align with the baselines set out by the LAs in their climate action plans and strategies however some LAs such as Dundee City Council²⁸ have differing baselines in their plans versus the public sector reports. Additionally, to standardise the reduction in emissions section, the calculation is from the year in which all three scopes were reported on, because the addition of scope three skews the reduction as discussed earlier. Again, the majority of LA's reported all scopes from their baseline however it has been noted in the tables when a difference has occurred. Finally, the tables look specifically at the emissions from the council's (scope 1, 2 and 3), however some councils also discussed area wide targets and reductions. The information regarding area wide emissions per council is lacking and as such was impossible to contain within the realms of this report. Documentation is provided for each LA in which the area wide discussions can be found, alongside further details of the actions which each LA aims to take to meet their target. In order to conclude whether an LA is on track to meet their target, an analysis has been undertaken of the emissions they have so far reduced over the time frame from their baseline, and the yearly rates of reduction they have achieved so far compared

²⁵ <https://www.parliament.scot/about/news/news-listing/unless-key-barriers-facing-local-government>

²⁶ *ibid*

²⁷ <https://www.pressandjournal.co.uk/fp/news/environment/1857599/fury-as-aberdeenshire-council-leaders-reject-climate-change-appeal/>

²⁸ which states a baseline of 2005/06 however only provides reporting (and states a baseline) from 2014/15 in the public bodies duties report.

to the emissions reductions needed to meet their 2030 targets (in seven years time), and the yearly emissions needed. It must be noted that this approach does not consider any external influences which may have affected an LA over this time period. However, given the information available, we think it is the best approach to provide an estimation of the likelihood of the LA meeting their self-set targets.

4.2.1 Individual Tables of Each LA

	Aberdeenshire Council
CED? Date	No Voted against declaring a CED in 2019.
Baseline	2010/11 (37.436 tCO ₂ e)
2030 Target	75% reduction by 2030
Progress Against Targets	47.4% reduction by 2021/22
Post 2030 Targets	Net Zero by 2045
Main Strategies/Themes	Four main themes: 1. Increased awareness and understanding 2. Place-based Approach 3. Support decision-makers 4. Provide knowledge, advice and support to key stakeholders
Action Plan/Strategy	Climate Ready Aberdeenshire vision
Is the LA on track?	Yes, the LA is on track. In the past 11 years the LA has achieved a near 50% reduction, it is likely over the next 7 years they will be able to further reduce by 25% and meet their target.

	Comhairle nan Eilean Siar
CED? Date	No The council have acknowledged the SG CED and set up a net zero working group
Baseline	2016 (Calendar Year)
2030 Target	NA
Progress Against Targets	36.3% reduction by 2021/22

Post 2030 Targets	Achieved Zero Direct Emissions by 2038 (scope 1 and 2) Net Zero Western Isles by 2045
Main Strategies/Themes	Seven main areas: 1. Electricity 2. Buildings 3. Transport 4. Industry 5. Waste and Circular Economy 6. Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry 7. Raising awareness
Action Plan/Strategy	CNE-SIAR Climate Change Strategy 2022-2027
Is the LA on track?	The LA is on track for net zero Western Isles by 2045 as in a 5 year period they have already achieved over a third of their emissions reductions.

	East Ayrshire Council
CED? Date	No
Baseline	2012/13 (43.230 tCO ₂ e)
2030 Target	Net Zero by 2030
Progress Against Targets	24.4% reduction by 2021/22
Post 2030 Targets	N/A
Main Strategies/Themes	Six main themes: 1. Energy 2. Transport 3. Waste 4. Natural Environment 5. Carbon Zero Communities 6. Governance
Action Plan/Strategy	East Ayrshire Climate Change Strategy
Is the LA on track?	In the last 9 years there has only been a 24.4% reduction and therefore, the LA is not on track to meet their net zero targets by 2030.

	East Dunbartonshire
CED?	No

Date	The council are following the SG CED and a net zero pathway
Baseline	2012/13 (32.420 tCO2e)
2030 Target	59% reduction by 2022/23 75% reduction by 2030
Progress Against Targets	49% reduction by 2021/22
Post 2030 Targets	Further targets to be set out in the Climate Action Plan to be published in Spring 2023 Net Zero by 2045
Main Strategies/Themes	Nine objectives: 1. Supporting Local Businesses 2. Community empowerment 3. Reducing inequality 4. Health and Wellbeing 5. Sustainable Materials 6. Biodiversity 7. Zero Waste 8. Climate change resilience 9. Carbon Reduction
Action Plan/Strategy	Climate Action Plan (CAP) East Dunbartonshire Council
Is the LA on track?	Between 2019/20 and 2020/21 the council achieved a 15% reduction, therefore based on this rate of reduction there is a likelihood the LA will meet it's 2022/23 target and then its 2030 target.

	Inverclyde Council
CED? Date	No The council made recognition of the Scottish Government's CED and it's role in Inverclyde Council's policies.
Baseline	2012/13
2030 Target	73% reduction (by 2031)
Progress Against Targets	45% by 2020/21
Post 2030 Targets	Net Zero by 2045
Main Strategies/Themes	Four main themes: 1. Energy Use in Buildings 2. Transport

	3. Street Lighting and Waster 4. Waste
Action Plan/Strategy	Net Zero Strategy - Inverclyde Council.
Is the LA on track?	No. In recent years Inverclyde has had reductions of less than the 4% per annum needed to meet the 73% reduction by 2031, averaging around 2% between 2018/19 and 2020/21.

	South Ayrshire Council
CED? Date	No The council recognised the SG CED
Baseline	2005/06 (31.498 tCO ₂ e)
2030 Target	75% reduction by 2030
Progress Against Targets	43.5% reduction by 2021/22
Post 2030 Targets	90% reduction by 2040 Net Zero by 2045
Main Strategies/Themes	Three main themes: 1. Sustainable Council 2. Sustainable Environment 3. Sustainable Community
Action Plan/Strategy	Sustainable Development and Climate Change Strategy 2019-2024
Is the LA on track?	South Ayrshire council

	South Lanarkshire
CED?	No
Baseline	2005/06 (155.965 tCO ₂ e)
2045 Target	Net Zero by 2045
Progress Against Targets	64% reduction by 2021/22
Further Targets	Energy use in buildings: reduce to zero emissions by 2037/38 Transport: reduce to zero emissions by 2037/38 Energy use in buildings: reduce to as close to zero as soon as possible. Waste: reduce to as close to zero as soon as possible. Staff travel: reduce to as close to zero as soon as possible.

Main Strategies/Themes	Four main themes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. People 2. Places and Communities 3. The Natural Environment (Planet) 4. A Green Economy (Planet)
Action Plan/Strategy	Sustainable development and climate change strategy
Is the LA on track?	Based on the 2021/2022 Annual Report, South Lanarkshire seems to be on track to meet its 2030 target.

	City of Edinburgh Council
CED? Date	Yes 07/02/2019
Baseline	2013/14 (when all 3 scopes were counted = 132,730 tCO2e)
2030 Target	Net Zero by 2030
Progress Against Targets	50.6% reduction by 2021/22
Post 2030 Targets	N/A
Main Strategies/Themes	Five main emission areas: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stationary energy 2. Transport 3. Agriculture, forestry and other land use 4. Industrial processes and product use 5. Waste
Action Plan/Strategy	2030 CLIMATE STRATEGY Edinburgh Council
Is the LA on track?	Yes, they have managed to achieve a 50% reduction in the space of 7 years and are on track to meet their net zero target over the next 7 years.

	Orkney Islands Council
CED? Date	Yes 1/5/2019
Baseline	2004/5 (26.290 tCO2e)
2030 Target	42% reduction by 2025 Net Zero by 2030
Progress Against Targets	12.4% decrease by 2021/22

Post 2030 Targets	N/A
Main Strategies/Themes	Five main themes: 1. Buildings 2. Transport 3. Business Travel 4. Street Lighting 5. Waste
Action Plan/Strategy	Carbon Management Programme - Orkney
Is the LA on track?	Based on the emissions reductions so far, it is very unlikely that the LA will meet their target by 2025.

	The Highland Council
CED? Date	Yes 09/05/2019
Baseline	2011/12 (66,579 tCO ₂ e)
2030 Target	Planned for 2025 Net Zero which was changed in November 2022 ²⁹ Now - Carbon neutral Inverness and low carbon Highlands by 2025
Progress Against Targets	46.8% reduction by 2021/22
Post 2030 Targets	N/A
Main Strategies/Themes	Five main themes: 1. Economy 2. Energy 3. Land Use and Resources 4. Transport 5. Engagement Strategy
Action Plan/Strategy	What is Carbon CLEVER? Climate change The Highland Council
Is the LA on track?	Whilst the Highland Council was not on track to meet their 2025 net zero target, they are on track to meet their new targets. However, the Council is yet to declare an official new net zero target year and therefore it cannot be concluded if they are on track to meet any 2030 targets/a new net zero year target.

	Glasgow City Council
CED? Date	Yes 16/05/2019

²⁹<https://www.inverness-courier.co.uk/news/greens-slam-highland-council-for-abandoning-2025-zero-carbon-293368/>

2030 Target	30% reduction by 2020 Net Zero by 2030
Baseline	2006/07 (199,919tCO2e)
Progress Against Targets	48.5% reduction by 2021/22 from the baseline year 2006/07
Post 2030 Targets	N/A
Main themes/strategies	Two main areas: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Deliver sustainable transport 2. Become a Net Zero city by 2030
Action Plan/Strategy	Strategic Plan 2022-2027 - Glasgow City Council
Is the LA on track?	Glasgow City Council has surpassed their 2020 interim reduction of 30% by 2020 by nearly 20% (as of 2021/22). The rate at which the emissions are decreasing has notably increased over the last 7 or so years (as can be seen in Graph B) and therefore the LA has the potential to meet its net zero target if this increasing rate of reduction continues.

	West Dunbartonshire Council
CED? Date	Yes 26/05/2019
Baseline	2012/13
2030 Target	61% reduction by 2030/31
Progress Against Targets	27% decrease by 2021/22
Post 2030 Targets	87% reduction by 2040/41 Net Zero by 2045
Main Strategies/Themes	Nine main themes: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Energy and Water and Assets 2. Housing 3. Waste and Circular Economy 4. Sustainable Travel 5. Sustainable Procurement 6. Biodiversity, Landscape and Greenscape 7. Climate Impacts, Risk and Adaptation 8. Schools and Education 9. Communities and Health
Action Plan/Strategy	West Dunbartonshire Council Climate Change Strategy - a route map for a net zero future

Is the LA on track?	So far West Dunbartonshire Council has only achieved less than half of it's 2030/31 target and therefore, is not currently on track to meet this target in the next 7 years.
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North Lanarkshire Council	
CED? Date	Yes 01/06/2019
Baseline	2015/16 (117.075 tCO2e)
2030 Target	Net Zero by 2030
Progress Against Targets	46.6% reduction by 2021/22
Post 2030 Targets	N/A
Main Strategies/Themes	Three main themes: 1. Buildings 2. Transportation 3. Waste
Action Plan/Strategy	Climate Plan for North Lanarkshire
Is the LA on track?	As the Council was able to achieve a near 50% reduction over 6 years, following its current rate of decreasing emissions the council is on track to meeting it's net zero target in 2030.

North Ayrshire Council	
CED? Date	Yes 11/06/2019
Baseline	2006/07 (recorded baseline) 2005 (stated baseline)
2030 Target	Net Zero by 2030
Progress Against Targets	67.6% reduction by 2021/22 from 2006/07
Post 2030 Targets	N/A
Main Strategies/Themes	Seven main themes: 1. Affordable warmth 2. A Green Economy 3. Transport and Travel 4. Natural Environment 5. Sustainable Operations

	6. Carbon Absorption 7. Climate Change Adaptation
Action Plan/Strategy	Environmental Sustainability & Climate Change Strategy 2021-2023
Is the LA on track?	Yes. North Ayrshire is on track to meet their net zero target with significant reductions from their baseline.

	Dundee City Council
CED? Date	Yes 24/06/2019
Baseline	2005/06 baseline year for targets 2014/15 monitoring baseline year
2030 Target	40% reduction by 2030
Progress Against Targets	49.7% reduction by 2021/22
Post 2030 Targets	Net Zero by 2045
Main Strategies/Themes	Five main themes: 1. Energy 2. Transport 3. Waste 4. Resilience 5. Community Engagement
Action Plan/Strategy	Dundee City Council Plan 2022 - 2027
Is the LA on track?	Yes. Dundee City Council has surpassed their 2030 target and are reducing at a rate which suggests they will meet their 2045 target.

	The Moray Council
CED? Date	Yes 26/06/2019
Baseline	2015/16 (12.919 tCO ₂ e)
2030 Target	Net Zero by 2030
Progress Against Targets	13% reduction by 2021/22
Post 2030 Targets	

Main Strategies/Themes	Four main themes: 1. Waste 2. Heat and Energy 3. Transport 4. Food
Action Plan/Strategy	Climate Change Strategy 2020-2030 Moray Council
Is the LA on track?	Moray is not on track to meet their Net Zero target, they have significant reductions left to make in the next 7 years which are not likely given the rate they are currently reducing.

Dumfries and Galloway Council	
CED? Date	Yes 27/06/2019
Baseline	2008/09 (59,867 tCO ₂ e)
2030 Target	Net zero by 2025
Progress Against Targets	58% reduction in 2021/22 compared to baseline
Post 2030 Targets	N/A
Main themes/strategies	Four main Themes: Energy consumption in buildings 1. Transport 2. Street lighting 3. Waste 4. Water
Action Plan/Strategy	Carbon Management Plan
Is the LA on track?	No. Despite the reduction of nearly 60% Dundee Council is not on track to meet their net zero by 2025 target.

Renfrewshire Council	
CED? Date	Yes 27/06/2019
Baseline	2012/13
2030 Target	Net Zero by 2030
Progress Against Targets	56% reduction by 2021/22
Post 2030 Targets	N/A

Main Strategies/Themes	Five main themes: 1. Clean Energy 2. Sustainable Transport 3. Circular Economy 4. Connected Communities 5. Resilient Places
Action Plan/Strategy	Renfrewshire's Plan for Net Zero - Renfrewshire Website
Is the LA on track?	Yes. Looking at the reductions Renfrewshire have been able to achieve so far they are on track to meet net zero by 2030 with their current reduction rates.

	East Lothian Council
CED? Date	Yes 27/08/2019
Baseline	2007/08 (44.034 tCO ₂ e)
2030 Target	75% reduction by 2030
Progress Against Targets	64.5% reduction by 2021/22
Post 2030 Targets	90% reduction by 2040 Net Zero by 2045
Main Strategies/Themes	Seven main themes: 1. Net Zero and Sustainable Council 2. Active Travel and Sustainable Transport 3. Energy Efficiency 4. Route to Zero Waste 5. Low Carbon and Sustainable Economy 6. Healthy and Resilient Natural Environment 7. Low Carbon Lifestyles
Action Plan/Strategy	East Lothian Council's Climate Change Strategy 2020–2025
Is the LA on track?	Yes, East Lothian is on track to meet their 2030 target. They have achieved a 64.5% reduction in 14 years and are likely to meet the needed reduction of 10% in the next 7 years.

	Falkirk Council
CED? Date	Yes 27/08/2019
Baseline	2013/14

2030 Target	Net Zero by 2030 (on scope 1 and 2 emissions)
Progress Against Targets	43% reduction by 2021/22 all three scopes 46% reduction by 2021/11 for scopes 1 and 2
Post 2030 Targets	N/A
Main Strategies/Themes	N/A
Action Plan/Strategy	Expected Climate Change Strategy by March 2023
Is the LA on track?	Looking at the reductions for scopes 1 and 2, Falkirk has the potential to meet the net zero target by 2030 for these scopes. However, with scope 3 added Falkirk is not on track and needs to increase its rate of emission reductions.

	Angus Council
CED? Date	Yes 05/09/2019
Baseline	2010/11 (Scopes 1 and 2: 25,018tCO ₂ e) 2011/12 baseline for all three scopes
2030 Target	75% emissions reduction by 2030
Progress Against Targets	44.8% reduction by 2021/22 from the 2011/12 baseline for all three scopes
Post 2030 Targets	Net Zero by 2045
Main Strategies/Themes	Three main themes: 1. Buildings, Energy and Infrastructure 2. Waste, Recycling and Circular Economy 3. Fleet and Business Travel
Action Plan/Strategy	Transition to Net Zero Action Plan - Angus
Is the LA on track?	Based on the reduction of nearly 45% between 2011/12 and 2021/22, there is a strong likelihood Angus Council will be able to have a further 20% reduction in the next 7 years to 2030 therefore meaning they can be considered to be on track.

	West Lothian Council
CED? Date	Yes 24/09/2019
Baseline	2013/14

2030 Target	61% reduction by 2028 65% reduction by 2030
Progress Against Targets	49% reduction by 2020/21
Post 2030 Targets	86% reduction by 2040 Net Zero by 2045
Main Strategies/Themes	Six main themes: 1. Energy 2. Transport 3. Waste 4. Adaptation, Resilience and Biodiversity 5. Land Use and Management 6. Embedding Climate Action
Action Plan/Strategy	West Lothian Climate Change Strategy 2021-2028
Is the LA on track?	Yes. At the rate West Lothian is reducing their emissions they are on track to meeting their 2028 and 2030 targets. From their baseline they have achieved a 49% reduction and are not far from the 65% target to be achieved in the next 7 years.

	Fife Council
CED? Date	Yes 26/09/2019
Baseline	2011/12 (95.803 tCO ₂ e)
2030 Target	75% reduction by 2030 from 1990 baseline 95,803tCO ₂ e reduction from 2011/2012 baseline
Progress Against Targets	43% reduction by 2021/22 from 2011/12
Post 2030 Targets	2038/2039 Zero Direct Estate Emissions (scope 1) - 2014/15 as baseline year Net Zero by 2045
Main Strategies/Themes	<i>Climate Mitigation and Adaptation Action Plan</i> Main themes: 1. Innovation and Coordination 2. Energy Efficiency 3. Low Carbon Energy 4. Movement, storage and transformation of energy 5. Sustainable transport 6. Resource efficiency

Action Plan/Strategy	Climate Fife: Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan
Is the LA on track?	Yes. Fife Council is on track to meet it's 2030 target.

	Stirling Council
CED? Date	Yes 03/10/2019
Baseline	2006/07 (23,743 tCO ₂ e) for scopes 1 and 2. 2011/12 baseline for scopes 1, 2 and 3
2030 Target	Carbon Neutral by 2035
Progress Against Targets	46% reduction by 2021/22 from the baseline 2011/12 for all three scopes
Post 2030 Targets	Net Zero by 2045
Main Strategies/Themes	Five main objectives: 1. Resource Efficiency 2. Transport 3. Climate adaptation 4. Energy use and Generation 5. Nature and Biodiversity
Action Plan/Strategy	Stirling Climate and Nature Emergency Plan
Is the LA on track?	Yes, Stirling can be seen to be on track to meet its 2030 target and its 2045 target.

	Midlothian Council
CED? Date	Yes 17/12/19
Baseline	2016/17 (24.962 tCO ₂ e)
2030 Target	Net Zero by 2030
Progress Against Targets	34.9% reduction by 2021/22
Post 2030 Targets	N/A
Main Strategies/Themes	Four main themes: 1. Energy efficiency 2. Waste and Recycling 3. Travel

	4. Awareness Raising
Action Plan/Strategy	Midlothian's Climate Change Strategy 2020
Is the LA on track?	Midlothian is not currently on track to meet their target and the rate of emissions reduction would need to greatly increase to achieve net zero by 2030.

	Shetland Islands Council
CED? Date	Yes 22/01/2022
Baseline	2006/07 (36.274 tCO ₂ e)
2030 Target	75% reduction by 2030
Progress Against Targets	40.6% reduction by 2021/22
Post 2030 Targets	Two pathways to 2040: - Pragmatic pathway - Ambitious pathway (92% reduction in emissions from 2019/20 to 2045) The ambitious pathway achieves 76% more cumulative savings by 2045 than the pragmatic pathway Net Zero aim by 2045
Main Strategies/Themes	Six main themes: 1. Transport 2. Energy Systems 3. Reuse, Recycling and Waste 4. Business and Industry 5. Buildings 6. Land Use and Agriculture
Action Plan/Strategy	Shetland Council Route Map to Net Zero
Is the LA on track?	At the current rate of reduction the LA will not meet their 2030 target, however, with a small increase per annum the target can be met.

	Scottish Borders Council
CED? Date	Yes 25/09/2020
Baseline	2014/15 (23,062 tCO ₂ e) The Council stated their baseline year is 2010/11 however there is little information from this year.

2030 Target	75% reduction by 2030
Progress Against Targets	27.13% reduction by 2018 23.3% reduction by 2021/22 ³⁰
Post 2030 Targets	Net Zero by 2045
Main Strategies/Themes	Five main themes: 1. Resilience 2. Transport 3. Nature Based Solutions 4. Energy 5. Waste
Action Plan/Strategy	Our Climate Change Route Map (CCRM) for the Scottish Borders
Is the LA on track?	Looking at the 23.3% reduction over the past 7 years from the baseline of 2014/15 it does not seem likely that the LA will be able to meet its 75% reduction target in the next 7 years to 2030.

	Clackmannanshire Council
CED? Date	Yes 19/08/2021
Baseline	2013/14 (9,767 tCO ₂ e)
2030 Target	N/A
Progress Against Targets	48.3% reduction by 2020/21
Post 2030 Targets	Net Zero by 2045 Further target for the wider region by 2045
Main Strategies/Themes	Six main themes: 1. Energy, Heat and Buildings 2. Low-Carbon Transport 3. Waste, Recycling and the Circular Economy 4. Biodiversity, Carbon Storage and Agriculture 5. Adaptation, Planning and Organisational Capacity 6. Economic Development and Sustainable Procurement
Action Plan/Strategy	Item 09 Climate Change Strategy and Net Zero Targets
Is the LA on track?	Yes. In 7 years the LA achieved a nearly 50% reduction, therefore they are on track to meet their net zero target at the current rate of reduction.

³⁰ Additional emissions measurements were added to scope 3 increasing the total emissions for 2021/2022 compared to previous years.

	Argyll and Bute Council
CED? Date	Yes 30/09/2021
Baseline	2015/16 (39.464 tCO2e)
2030 Target	75% reduction by 2030
Progress Against Targets	28% reduction by 2021/22
Post 2030 Targets	Net Zero by 2045
Main Strategies/Themes	<i>Decarbonisation Plan</i> Main themes: 1. Waste 2. Energy and water consumption 3. Transport Emissions 4. Prepare and adapt for impacts of climate change 5. Offset emissions through partnership and innovation
Action Plan/Strategy	Argyll and Bute Council Decarbonisation Plan 2022- 2025
Is the LA on track?	Based on the 2021/22 reduction it does not look like Argyll and Bute are on track to meet their net zero targets.

	East Renfrewshire Council
CED? Date	Yes 27/10/2021
Baseline	2019/20 (59.588 tCO2e)
2030 Target	75% reduction by 2030
Progress Against Targets	10% reduction by 2021/22
Post 2030 Targets	90% reduction by 2040 Net Zero by 2045
Main Strategies/Themes	Three main themes: 1. Reducing Council emissions 2. Preparing for climate impacts 3. Using technology and nature to offset emissions
Action Plan/Strategy	Climate change - East Renfrewshire Council
Is the LA on track?	East Renfrewshire is not on track to meet their targets. They have currently

	achieved 10% reduction over 2 years (5% per annum) and would need to reduce by just over 9% per annum to meet their 2030 target.
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Perth and Kinross Council	
CED? Date	Yes 09/11/2022
Baseline	2015/16
2030 Target	75% reduction by 2030
Progress Against Targets	19% reduction by 2020/21
Post 2030 Targets	All buildings to be net zero by 2038
Main Strategies/Themes	Eight main themes: 1. Transport 2. Buildings and Energy 3. Business and Industry 4. Waste and Circular Economy 5. Land Use 6. Climate Resilience 7. Education and Engagement 8. Governance
Action Plan/Strategy	Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan - Perth and Kinross
Is the LA on track?	No. Based on its reductions so far Perth and Kinross is not on track to meet its 2030 target as they will need to have a further 55% reduction in the next 7 years, and only managed to achieve a 19% reduction in 5 years.

Aberdeen City Council	
CED? Date	Yes 27/03/2023 Actively voted against declaring a CED in 2019.
Baseline	2015/16 (46.371 tCO ₂ e)
2030 Target	48% reduction by 2025 75% reduction by 2030
Progress Against Targets	43.6% reduction by 2021/22
Post 2030 Targets	Net Zero by 2045

Main Strategies/Themes	<p>Specific focus on hydrogen technology</p> <p>Five additional themes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Buildings 2. Mobility 3. Other operations (inc. street lighting) 4. Leadership and Governance 5. Communications, participation and training
Action Plan/Strategy	<p>Council Climate Change Plan 2021 - 2025 and Aberdeen City Region Hydrogen Strategy & Action Plan</p>
Is the LA on track?	<p>Aberdeen is on track to meet their 2025 target. In regards to their 2030 target it seems likely they will meet it if the current rate of reduction continues.</p>

Section 5: Conclusion

Overall, using the data from Graph B and the individual LA tables it can be concluded that seventeen of the thirty-two LAs (just over half) are on track to meet their Net Zero targets by 2030. This report is able to give a very useful overview of Scotland and its LAs, and how they are doing regarding emissions reductions. However, given the many nuances which come with tracking emissions, including pre-discussed issues such as the COVID-19 pandemic, it must be noted that the results presented are subject to data collection issues. Moreover, given the fast changing landscape of the climate emergency and changes in policies and technologies, there is potential for LAs which are currently behind to catch up, and those which are ahead to fall behind. Additionally, this approach lacks a great deal of context of each LA and their individual situations and capacities. Therefore, to gain a more precise understanding of if the LAs are on track to meet their 2030 targets, and beyond, further research must be undertaken which looks in more detail at each LA on an individual level which can account for the differences in emissions tracking, scopes used and other areas of data divergence.

As of April 2023, there still remains seven LAs in Scotland which have not declared a CED. Future research could benefit from looking into why this is the case, particularly exploring the social and political contexts of each LA. However, of these seven LAs, six have acknowledged the existence of a climate emergency and have publicly acknowledged the Scottish Government’s CED and have opted to create their own targets and climate action plans in tandem with the Scottish Government. The only LA which has actively voted against and still does not have a CED is Aberdeenshire, in explaining why a CED was not voted for the Council discussed the lack of resources of Aberdeenshire in battling climate change. This lack of resources and barriers to LAs tackling climate change has been acknowledged by the Scottish Parliament and calls have been made for further power and support to be given to LAs to meet their targets and reduce their emissions.

Through the research into each LA and the wider landscape of emissions reductions in Scotland, it was noted that there are many common themes and actions which have been taken by each LA. Additionally, there are groups such as Climate Ready Clyde which contain multiple LAs working together given their shared geographical commonalities. Moving forward, and to help

support the LAs to reduce their emissions, the role of the Scottish Government could be to further facilitate information and support sharing between the LAs, especially those with similar demographics, geographical features and contexts.

In conclusion, each LA has taken steps towards reducing their emissions whether through the act of declaring climate emergencies, implementing action plans and strategies and/or collaborating with fellow LAs. Whilst not every LA has declared a CED, they are still succeeding in reducing emissions even if they are not directly on track to meet targets. The landscape in Scotland surrounding climate change is one of action and ambition and there is acknowledgment across the LAs about the need to reduce emissions and to mitigate the potential harms of climate change. However, our work shows the capacity for more to be done and suggests that the Scottish Government should work alongside LAs to provide the necessary support, whether it be through additional powers or funding, to allow them to meet their goals and move Scotland towards a net-zero future.