

Scottish party manifesto analysis: Energy

SNP

Key policies:

- Devolve energy powers to Holyrood
- £500m Just Transition Fund for workers and businesses making the change to a sustainable future.
- Ringfence at least £100m of ScotWind revenues for community-owned energy projects.
- 500 new jobs in Grangemouth industrial cluster, £9m to Mossmorran
- Expand the Community and Renewable Energy Scheme (CARES) to £15m

Summary and analysis:

The SNP's 2026 manifesto presents a climate and energy strategy centred on accelerating the transition to net zero, lowering household bills, and increasing Scotland's control over energy policy. It commits to expanding offshore wind, solar, pumped storage and emerging technologies, alongside warmer homes, a more resilient energy system, and an expanded Community and Renewable Energy Scheme. The party also sets out a Just Transition programme, including the £500 million Just Transition Fund, support for workers in the North-East and Grangemouth, and the creation of a ScotWind Wealth Fund to ensure future generations benefit from renewable revenues. Decisions on North Sea oil and gas are framed around a "rigorously evidence led, case-by-case" climate compatibility test, with energy security as a core consideration.

However, while the manifesto outlines broad ambitions, it provides limited detail on the delivery mechanisms required to meet them. Large-scale renewable expansion, grid upgrades, and home energy improvements depend on planning reform, supply-chain capacity, and workforce pipelines that are not fully specified. The Just Transition proposals rely on strong coordination across skills, industrial strategy and regional development, but governance arrangements are not clearly set out. A central argument is that devolving full energy powers would allow Scotland to cut costs faster and accelerate investment, yet the manifesto does not explain how short-term system pressures—such as price volatility, grid constraints or transition costs—would be managed during the shift.

Scottish Labour

Key policies:

- Support new nuclear development
- Digital Skills Passports for offshore workers to move towards renewable jobs
- £40m funding for the North East energy transition
- Introduce a new Marine Plan for offshore wind by 2040

Summary and analysis:

Labour set out a climate and energy plan focused on economic regeneration and cutting emissions, including a clearer willingness to use new nuclear power as part of Scotland's long-term energy mix. They argue nuclear can help with energy security, but the manifesto does not go into detail about the long timescales, regulatory hurdles or funding challenges, or how this would fit with Scotland's planning system.

Their wider plans for renewables, grid upgrades and home retrofitting would need a lot of delivery capacity from government, but the manifesto gives limited detail on how procurement, governance or workforce pipelines would be organised to make this happen at the same time.

Labour link their approach to a Just Transition, but they do not set out clearly how industrial strategy, skills policy and regional development would be coordinated, or how differences between regions would be managed.

They also aim to reduce bills through public ownership and energy efficiency, but the manifesto does not explain how short-term pressures on the system would be handled while these long-term changes are being put in place.

Reform UK (Scotland)

Key policies:

- Scrap all SNP Net Zero targets, subsidies and quangos
- New nuclear in Scotland
- Rehabilitate North Sea oil and gas as our primary energy system
- Simplifying planning system for energy infrastructure
- Scottish Energy Workforce Plan for colleges and apprenticeships
- Energy Price Impact Statement for every related policy decision

Summary and analysis:

Reform UK frame climate and energy policy around affordability, energy sovereignty, and opposition to Net Zero. They call for more North Sea oil and gas, fewer climate regulations, and reduced support for renewables. They also emphasise lower household bills, faster planning for energy projects, and prioritising economic competitiveness over emissions targets.

Analytically, this is a fossil fuel-led approach that rejects Net Zero, but the manifesto does not explain how expanded North Sea extraction fits with global demand trends, investor behaviour or legal climate obligations. Scaling back renewable support raises questions about grid upgrades, investment certainty and Scotland's ability to meet statutory targets, given how central renewables are to current planning. Their reliance on market-led mechanisms and lighter regulation leaves unclear how quality, resilience and long-term system costs would be managed. The focus on affordability through deregulation also places less emphasis on efficiency, demand reduction or changes to transport and housing, limiting long-term emissions reduction.

Scottish Conservatives

Key policies:

- Direct Crown Estate Revenues from wind projects to a direct £100 energy bill discount for households.
- Protect funding for energy efficiency upgrades but redirect money from heat pumps to building homes and infrastructure
- Abolish SNP's target for net zero by 2045
- Back the abolition of renewable energy subsidy schemes
- Abolish tax on oil and gas
- Scrap the Just Transition Fund and replace it with an Affordable Transition Fund
- Support new nuclear in Scotland

Summary and analysis:

The Scottish Conservatives set out an energy agenda centred on expanding domestic oil and gas production, accelerating nuclear development, and reducing regulatory barriers to new energy infrastructure. Their proposals emphasise energy security, affordability, and the role of Scottish-produced energy in lowering household bills. A key commitment is to return revenue from offshore wind auctions directly to households through a £100 annual bill discount. They also propose an Affordable Transition Fund rather than a Just Transition Fund and a commitment that new energy projects should proceed only where they have community support.

While the approach prioritises stability and lower bills, the manifesto provides limited detail on how major delivery challenges would be managed. Continued reliance on North Sea production assumes stable investment and regulatory certainty, but the manifesto does not explain how this aligns with long-term climate targets or future demand trends. Similarly, commitments to accelerate nuclear development require substantial investment and long-term planning, yet timelines and delivery structures are not fully set out. Proposals to cut bills depend on market-led mechanisms and infrastructure upgrades, but there is little discussion of how grid constraints, planning delays, or supply-chain pressures would be addressed.

Scottish Liberal Democrats

Key policies:

- Emergency insulation programme for homes
- Fairer Heating Bill for climate-friendly heating systems
- Oppose fracking and any attempts for new front of shale gas fossil fuels
- Move transport away from fossil fuels
- New nuclear in Scotland
- Giving local authorities the General Power of Competence for councils to further innovate around renewable energy

Summary and analysis:

Scottish Liberal Democrat energy policy is built around accelerating the transition to clean, affordable power through a combination of large-scale infrastructure investment, planning reform and community benefit. Their manifesto positions renewable energy expansion, grid upgrades and home insulation as the primary levers for lowering household bills and improving energy security, while also expecting local authorities and communities to play a greater role in shaping and benefiting from new developments. These ambitions depend on rapid progress in planning, consenting and grid capacity, yet the manifesto provides limited detail on how these system-wide bottlenecks will be addressed beyond broad commitments to modernisation.

The party emphasises a just transition for workers and regions currently dependent on oil and gas, but the operational mechanisms for retraining, industrial diversification and long-term regional support are only partially specified. Their proposals to rewrite community benefit rules and reform ScotWind-style processes signal a shift towards greater local returns, though the governance structures for distributing and managing these revenues are not fully outlined. Overall, the energy agenda sets a clear direction focused on affordability, renewables and community benefit, but the delivery

architecture required to coordinate planning, workforce transition and infrastructure investment is less fully developed in the manifesto

Scottish Greens

Key policies:

- End new oil and gas extraction
- £600m investment in renewables (including offshore wind, tidal and solar)
- Bring back the Heat in Buildings (Scotland) Bill for decarbonised homes by 2045
- Pay for people to install heat pumps, solar panels with linked battery storage and other green heating technologies on their homes
- Support expansion of locally-owned district heat networks
- 1GW of new community-owned energy projects by 2030
- Scottish Community Wealth Fund for distribution wealth from renewable resources

Summary and analysis:

The Scottish Greens set out a climate and energy plan focused on rapid decarbonisation, public ownership and a Just Transition. They commit to faster renewable rollout, more community energy, phasing out fossil fuels, and stronger climate laws. They also call for major investment in home insulation, public transport and nature restoration, with support for workers and communities affected by the transition.

Analytically, this is a big shift in Scotland's economic model, but the manifesto does not fully explain how such large-scale change would be delivered through current institutions and markets. Their plans rely on rapid renewable expansion and public ownership, which need more grid capacity, planning reform, and strong state delivery: all areas that currently face bottlenecks. Their just transition approach requires close coordination across skills, industry and regional policy, but the manifesto gives limited detail on how this would work in practice. The plan also assumes strong public support for phasing out fossil fuels and changing land use, but it does not set out how communities would be helped through these behavioural and economic adjustments.

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