

SCOTTISH ANTI POVERTY REVIEW



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EDITORIAL TEAM

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DISCLAIMER

The views expressed in the Scottish Anti-Poverty Review do not necessarily reflect those of The Poverty Alliance.

ABOUT THE POVERTY ALLIANCE

The Poverty Alliance is a network of community, voluntary, statutory and other organisations whose vision is of a sustainable Scotland based on social and economic justice, with dignity for all, where poverty and inequalities are not tolerated and are challenged.

Our aim is to combat poverty by working with others to empower individuals and communities to affect change in the distribution of power and resources. To do this we:

- Work with people and communities experiencing poverty to empower them to address poverty
- Work with organisations to build a strong anti-poverty network in Scotland
- Support the development of policies which promote social justice and combat poverty
- Raise awareness about poverty and encourage debate

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WELCOME

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EDITORIAL



Few people in Scotland will have failed to notice the preparations for the climate change summit, COP26, that is now taking place in Glasgow. This high level of awareness for an event discussing the climate crisis is not simply the result of many of the world's leaders being in town for a few days. Nor is it, as some cynics may say, more to do with the disruption that the conference will bring to the day-to-day life of people living in and around Glasgow. There may be some truth in both these views, but the larger truth is that people across Scotland and around the world have woken up to the reality that climate change is happening and that its impact on our lives will go far beyond any disruption that a global conference may bring.

Despite the welcome prominence of climate change in political and policy debates, these discussions can sometimes seem distant from many people's everyday lives. Writing in this edition of SAPR, Fraser Stewart, highlights that faced with the immediate need to pay bills and look after the kids, considerations about climate change may seem like less of a priority for families living in poverty in Scotland. He also reminds us though that the issues that do impact on the lives and incomes of people living in the grip of poverty, such as the cost of energy, access to transport or safe, warm and affordable homes, are absolute priorities and are intimately connected to climate change.

For too long issues of climate change and social justice have been seen as separate. Efforts to talk about poverty in the context of sustainable development have often

seemed to take place on the fringes of the anti-poverty and environmental movements. At last, however, this has changed. Jamie Livingston from Oxfam Scotland highlights that climate change is inextricably linked to issues of inequality, and to questions of inequality between the global north and south. We must be clear: if we do not address inequality, both globally and within nations, then our efforts to tackle climate change will be stymied.

Linking climate change and inequality brings home the scale of the challenge that we face and the type of action that is required to meet the challenge. Recycling, turning down thermostats and getting on the bike more often, may all be important, but they are not going to deliver the kind of change we need. Nothing less than system change is needed. Michael Matheson, the Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy & Transport, points to the need to move towards a wellbeing economy, one that puts people and planet first. An important step towards this new economy is measuring what really matters for wellbeing, and that means going beyond traditional measure of economic success.

It also means matching rhetoric with action. If our climate change and our poverty reduction targets are to be met then it means significantly greater investment in the building blocks of our local economies, the foundational parts of communities. Retrofitting thousands of house to make them energy efficient will not only have an impact on our carbon emissions, but will also create thousands of well paid jobs. Investing in local integrated transport systems will not only help people access employment and services but could help create new local manufacturing jobs. Investing in the care economy would create low carbon employment whilst helping to address gender inequality. Making the move towards a wellbeing economy will also require some real choices, difficult choices, to be made by governments. Decisions like halting the development of Cambo oil field. Some of these decisions really shouldn't be difficult if we are serious about climate change.

The COP26 conference in Glasgow gives world leaders the opportunity to ensure that we begin to deliver on the actions needed to address climate change. And as thousands of activists and campaigners gather in Glasgow it will also be an opportunity to demonstrate that the shift to a net zero economy is one that must benefit everyone.



CABINET SECRETARY COMMENT

Business as Usual is not an Option

Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy and Transport, Michael Matheson, discusses the role of Governments in supporting its citizens to make climate conscious choices and his role in ensuring the move to net zero in Scotland is defined by fairness and justice.



This month, Scotland will be welcoming the world to Glasgow for COP26, the UN Climate Conference. We are in a critical phase for climate action, a moment in history where our resolve cannot fail us. As nations gather in Glasgow, the

commitments and decisions they make represent our best, and potentially our last, opportunity to prevent the worst impacts of the climate crisis. The outcome of those talks will be critical for our collective future.

At the height of the Covid-19 pandemic it was sometimes said that we were in the same storm but in different boats. Acute inequalities in our society, our country and across the world were exposed. Those in insecure employment, in cramped, poor quality housing, or without a financial safety net were often left to fend for themselves and choose if they should risk their health to make ends meet.

Despite decisive Scottish Government action to abate the worst immediate impacts of the pandemic, we are seeing evidence that the most vulnerable in our society are facing worse outcomes as a result of measures to protect public health. Important mitigations that could support social and economic recovery, such as the £20 universal credit uplift, are now being ripped away just as fuel prices rise and a national insurance increase looms. The inequalities prevalent in our society are now inescapable.

The recovery from the 2008 financial crash was one of the most carbon-intensive events in our history. We swung from a historic drop in emissions to a historic rise that continued, unabated, for the next decade. Repeating that mistake with this recovery would be devastating – for our society, our economy and our environment.

With the climate crisis, we are also all facing the same storm but again in different boats. While some might have a more comfortable journey, no amount of wealth or status will insulate individuals from a planet that is beyond the limit of what it can stand. And those already facing social injustices and inequalities will bear the greatest burden. Urgent reductions to our greenhouse gas emissions are non-negotiable and must be consistent with the goals of the Paris Agreement. We must also increase our resilience to the impacts that are, unfortunately, already locked in.

Returning to business as usual is not an option. We must use our recovery from Covid-19 to create a fairer, greener Scotland. We must do so because it is the morally right thing to do but also because decisive action will improve our society, our economy and, of course, our environment.

Climate change is an urgent human rights issue posing a serious risk to the fundamental rights to life, health, food and an adequate standard of living of individuals and communities across the world. The impact that climate change has on our world touches all of humanity, however its effects are more likely to be much more pronounced for certain people.

The scale of the challenge is daunting, but in my view it is more than balanced by the sheer size of the opportunity if we can deliver a fair transition to net zero.

We often refer to this approach to climate policy as a ‘just transition’, which essentially means that the transition is fair to everyone – regardless of who they are, where they live and what they do for a living. This is linked to our ambitions for a wellbeing economy, where success isn’t measured by GDP but by the things that make our lives better – good jobs, good homes and communities, good health and educational outcomes.

In Scotland we are also committed to climate justice – a simple and powerful message that the poor and vulnerable at home and overseas are the first to be affected by climate change, and will suffer the worst, yet have done little or nothing to cause the problem. To help deliver on the principle of climate justice we launched the world's first Climate Justice Fund and have now doubled our commitment to £24 million over the next 4 years to support people in Malawi, Zambia and Rwanda to build more resilient and equal communities.

Alongside our recent Programme for Government we published Scotland's Just Transition Planning Framework and committed to publishing a Just Transition Plan for every sector and every region in Scotland. Planning may not sound like the most exciting activity in itself, but these Plans are action-focused and, crucially, will be co-designed with those most impacted by the actions needed to reach net zero.

These Plans can be a radical act of democracy and transparency, empowering communities, businesses, local government and workers to shape their future.

Scotland's National Just Transition Planning Framework is a world first and moves the conversation on just transition beyond fossil fuels, looking instead to embed social justice in all economic activity.

I will be launching the work on the first Just Transition Plan at COP26. This will be part of the draft Energy Strategy refresh, due to be published in spring 2022. This launch will also mark the beginning of our engagement to ensure the co-design process at the heart of just transition is met.

Co-design is so important because it allows us to see things as they are, not as we would like them to be in order to design neat and effective policy interventions.

For example, a single mother on a fixed income is not going to choose to purchase an electric vehicle or install a heat pump ahead of making sure her children are safe, fed and well. A small business or individual tradesperson installing boilers isn't going to invest thousands of pounds to retrain in a technology unless there is certainty about uptake – and even then they might need support to afford or access training. Even a large business with available resource cannot take the risk of significant investment without knowing that risk is mitigated by commitment from the public sector.

The role of Government is to make the road to net zero easier for people, for businesses, for communities. We have to make it more relevant to their lived experience, to their everyday anxieties and the inequalities they endure.

Fundamentally, we have to show people that we care about how the transition to net zero will be experienced by them and provide confidence that we will not leave them behind or struggling in that journey.

We've been taking action to demonstrate our commitment. To boost job creation the Scottish Government recently announced initiatives such as the Green Jobs Fund, the Green Jobs Workforce Academy and the Zero emissions affordable homes strategy that will offer people and businesses financial support, upskilling and retraining opportunities that will get them back into the labour market.

To reinforce our commitment to just transition across Scotland, we are working with partners, communities and other stakeholders to take forward a ten-year £500 million Just Transition Fund that will support energy transition, create jobs and maximise the future economic potential of Aberdeen and the wider north east as one of Scotland's centres of excellence for the transition to a net zero economy.

Finally, the new Heat in Buildings Strategy sets out the pathway for cutting greenhouse gas emissions from our homes and buildings by more than two thirds by 2030, through a £1.8 billion investment that will drive a widespread improvement in the energy performance of buildings. The guiding principles in the Strategy ensure that heat decarbonisation will not have a detrimental impact on rates of fuel poverty and instead serve to tackle social inequalities.

My challenge as Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy and Transport is ensuring that our transition to net zero is defined by fairness – that the actions to improve our planet's health also enrich society, build the industries of the future, and support the most vulnerable. Climate action can sow the seeds for a more equal Scotland, if we can be bold enough to imagine what that future can look like.

This is about the kind of country we want to be and the steps we need to take to get there. The world will be watching at COP26 – I want them to be inspired by what they see, by our collective effort to forge a greener, fairer Scotland.



RESEARCH COMMENT

Business as Usual and Beyond: Positioning Poverty and the Environment for Scotland



In his regular column, Professor John McKendrick of Glasgow Caledonian University, discusses the interlocking and damning relationship between poverty and climate change, but notes the potential optimism brought by COP26 and commitment to collective global action to stop the climate emergency.

The world awaits in the hope that the 26th annual United Nations Climate Change Conference in Glasgow (COP26)

delivers the transformation that the vast majority of climate scientists, activists and citizens desire. Although some may be sceptical that impactful action will result from the deliberations, the annual gatherings have a track record of bringing together nations and reaching agreement on global action to tackle climate change, as evidenced by the Kyoto Protocol (adopted in 1997 and effective from 2005) and the Paris Agreement (negotiated in 2015 and entered into force in 2016).

Globally, there are grounds for optimism. The pandemic-inflicted delay since COP25 in 2019 has given the world time to reflect on the environment low-points that were reached prior to the pandemic. For example, as reported by the UN Sustainable Development Goals, 2019 was the second warmest year of record, the decade 2009-2019 was the warmest ever recorded, and CO2 levels in the atmosphere rose to new records in 2019. Optimism may also be found in the adversity of the global COVID-19 pandemic. For some it may be found in the immediate environmental improvements resulting from economic slowdowns and travel restrictions. Decline is not inevitable. For others it may be found in a renewed quest for systemic changes to achieve sustainable economies and more just societies as we build back (differently) and better. The Biden Presidency's reversal of the USA's recent aversion to global environmental action is also a positive sign.

Locally here in Scotland, there may never be a better time to 'think environment'. Our interest is super-charged simply by virtue of Glasgow being the host city. All manner of specialist interest groups in the UK – including, as evidenced by this edition of the Scottish Anti-Poverty Review, ours with an interest in tackling poverty – are taking the opportunity to assert their environmental credentials and question their professional practice, e.g. across housing, accountancy, and tennis, among many others. Furthermore, the Cooperation Agreement of the Scottish Green Party Parliamentary Group

and the Scottish Government (approved by the Scottish Green Party), with the sharpening of focus on existing 2030 targets, will provide political focus on environmental issues like never before.

What about poverty? In some respects, we should welcome 'business as usual' in relation to thinking about poverty and environment in Scotland.

As Jamie Livingstone of Oxfam Scotland explains in *Poverty in Scotland 2021*, the global climate crisis is fuelled by the world's rich industrialised countries - such as Scotland – and Scotland must deliver on its global responsibilities for tackling climate change. Business as usual means doing what is right at home and abroad. But if this responsibility is to be met, there is a need to ensure that the rebalancing does not further impoverish those who are just 'getting by' and those who are already struggling. Just as credit to the UK Government for advancing a solution to the funding of social care may be undermined by concerns at the cost to be borne by low paid workers, so there is a need to ensure that any future global or national environment settlement does not impoverish or further impoverish citizens in Scotland.

We should also focus on the 'business as usual' of articulating how poverty is bad for the environment at home and how an impoverished environment impacts more on those vulnerable to poverty. This is the familiar turf of anti-poverty campaigners in Scotland and is a line of argument that regrettably but predictably also applies to health, education, transport, housing, etc... Living in poverty makes us less able to consume ethically, heightening environmental vulnerabilities. Buying cheap is not always a bargain for the environment. Similarly, a bad environment is bad news for people experiencing poverty. Just as the impoverished in industrial cities lived among the noxious industries that polluted their environs in the 19th and 20th Century, and their ancestors to endure the toxicities and dereliction of de-industrialising environs in the early part of the 21st Century, so we might expect the poorest to be most affected by climate change now.



RESEARCH COMMENT Cont'd



There is also a risk that the taxation and income-raising tools that could be used to change behaviour and/or raise funds to address climate change are ones that most regressive and draw more from the pockets of those with the least. On the other hand, as we progress into a phase in which we manage COVID-19, attention will turn to public finances, how they have been impacted by COVID-19 and what must be done to manage our burgeoning public debt. In the likely event of more radical solutions being deemed unpalatable, optimistically, there may be more willing ears to listen to arguments to tackling wasteful and ineffective spend that perpetuates poverty and environmental damages.

But, there is also a need to move beyond business as usual.

We have noted how poverty and environmental damage are evils that are linked, and that there is a tendency for one to exacerbate the problems of the other. It is also very likely that these – tackling child poverty and making significant progress to tackle the climate crisis through sustainable and inclusive development - will be the twin priorities for the Scottish Government for the remainder of this term of office and the one beyond. There is an urgent need to align these challenges, rather than risk this becoming a perverse competition for public attention (and public monies) in the years ahead. In effect, we need a Scottish equivalent of the United Nations Poverty-Environment Initiative, which aims to position 'pro-poor, pro-environment objectives into the heart of government by mainstreaming poverty-environment objectives into national development and sub-national development planning, from policymaking to budgeting, implementation and monitoring'. The UK co-

funds the programme, but it must also embrace it at home. More challenging for the anti-poverty sector might be consider the possibility that poverty might be good for the environment. Although this might run contrary to our experiences, and may appear to promote poverty, it is a line of thinking that needs to be considered. Three Chinese economists have modelled the inter-relationship of poverty alleviation, environmental protection and healthcare in China, concluding that – from a consumption perspective – poverty alleviation could be a substantial threat to the environment. Put simply, as people leave behind poverty, so people consume more, which could have adverse impact on the environment (with, for example, more polluting gases generated). We in the anti-poverty sector need to engage this argument. We need to make clear that there is no need to advocate poverty to protect the environment. Indeed, as the Chinese economists themselves conclude, there is a need to promote green production and green lifestyles, as an integral part of strategies to reduce poverty, which of course is very much the thinking that is promoted by proponents of wellbeing economy. There might also be some potential to challenge our existing approach to behavioural change and poverty. Notwithstanding the work across Scotland that is 'giving voice' to lived experience of poverty, there remains a prevailing tendency in policy and practice to preach to people living on low incomes. Solutions to poverty and the problems it presents all too often imply what those experiencing it are doing wrong; well-intended they may be, but strategies to enable households to cook with fresh produce, to budget effectively, to prepare themselves to re-enter the labour market perpetuate an idea that people experiencing poverty are the problem. We need to challenge this thinking, and two ways are possible.



RESEARCH COMMENT Cont'd

First and foremost, we need to assert that everyone is entitled to a decent standard of living and to live in dignity, and not to believe that in order to address climate change we must leave millions living in poverty. However, when some choose to focus on individual behaviours - blaming individuals for the circumstance in which they find themselves - then there is a need to present an alternative narrative - promoting learning from people experiencing poverty. If the difficulties of getting by on a poverty-income are forcing people to manage some resources in ways that are good for the environment (wasting less, being less reliant on central heating, being more sustainable in transportation), then there is a need to share these lessons with those who are more wasteful. Let me be clear – I am not valorising or promoting poverty. I am not underplaying the adverse impact of poverty on people’s lives. Neither am I trying to deflect attention away from the need to address wealth inequalities, which I would argue are the root cause of the problem. However, there may be opportunities to challenge misperceptions that prevail about people in poverty by sharing lessons that all could learn.



In a similar vein, we might consider how a ‘bad environment’ might be good for poverty. Here, I am thinking of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. These 17 Goals to transform the planet by 2030 include Goal 1 (No poverty) and Goal 13 (Climate action). Progress toward achieving each of the 17 Goals is monitored regularly. Interestingly, each Goal currently describes a ‘COVID-19 response’. The COVID-19 response for poverty

recognises the immediacy of the challenge and encourages governments to increase efforts to challenge poverty – in effect, more of the same. In contrast, the COVID-19 response for climate action calls for transformative action. While there is a need for more of the same, our anti-poverty strategies need to be as bold as those being proposed to tackle climate change.





TRADE UNION COMMENT

Justice in a Just Transition



Francis Stuart, Policy Officer at the Scottish Trade Unions Congress (STUC), writes on the importance of building alliances between trade unions, community groups and environmental campaigners in order to bring about the social and climate justice we need.

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It would be easy to imagine that the most important thing about COP26 is to showcase Glasgow and Scotland to the world. Various local and national politicians seem intent that a positive picture is projected to visitors and the onlooking world. What seems to matter less is whether that picture is accurate or not.

Glasgow and Scotland are not unique in terms of poverty, wage inequality, cuts to services and inadequate public transport. But the fact that we are not unique cannot disguise the fact that these are problems we have.

So allow me a little scepticism when many of our politicians talk about climate justice and just transition while criticising key workers organising for better pay and conditions, housing campaigners calling for investment in waste services, and public transport campaigners demanding smartcards for ordinary people, not just COP26 delegates.

That feeling of disconnectedness from COP is increasingly felt, not only from local citizens, but by the international climate movement. COP26 is the most exclusionary in history, with the UK Presidency insisting on a physical presence while cutting observer participation. This means thousands of civil society delegates, mainly from the global south, will be blocked from making their voices heard.

This matters because we know that globally, the emissions of the richest 10% are the same as the rest of the world combined. In the UK, the carbon footprint of someone in the top 1% is eleven times that of someone in the bottom half.

But while climate change is a global justice issue, requiring global wealth redistribution through climate finance, it is primarily at a national and local level where we need emissions reductions to happen.

Over the next 10 years we need to transform how we heat our homes, transport our people and green our industry.

There may be a lack of green jobs, but there is no shortage of work to be done.

Our Climate, Our Homes

Almost a quarter of Scotland's emissions are associated with our buildings. We have some of the worst housing stock in Europe with £1 in every £4 we spend heating our homes, leaking straight back out again. 613,000 households in Scotland are in fuel poverty, with a 100,000 more expected from recent spiralling gas prices and cuts to Universal Credit.

To create good quality, unionised jobs and ensure that profits aren't hoovered up by the rich, we need a street-by-street retrofitting programme to insulate and climate proof our homes. While this requires national funding, it is best delivered by local authorities, using direct labour, with national sectoral bargaining to improve terms and conditions.

Our Climate, Our Buses

Transport accounts for 36% of Scotland's emissions and has seen no real progress in emissions reductions in 30 years. At the same time, 29% of households don't have access to a car with the rate being higher for women, disabled people and those living in deprived communities.

Since Margaret Thatcher deregulated and privatised the bus network in 1986, bus fares have soared and passenger use has massively declined (apart from in the Lothians). While there were 644 million passenger journeys in 1986-87, this fell by 43% to 366 million in 2019-20.

The current system allows private bus companies to cut routes and raise fares, with no regard for the communities that rely on them.



The alternative, illustrated by the success of Lothian Buses, is to take back control of our buses' networks, re-regulate services, set up municipal bus companies, and lower costs. This requires the Scottish Government to move beyond 'bus partnerships' with private operators. These "voluntary partnerships between bus companies and local transport authorities are a failed middle ground that should be phased out in favour of public control and ownership." as former UN Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, Philip Alston, put it.

Our Climate, Our Jobs

Rebuilding our manufacturing sector and localising supply chains, through an industrial strategy, public-sector investment and new models of ownership, is crucial to a green recovery.

But let's be honest, Scotland's track record on renewables – while impressive in terms of deployment – has led to real scepticism in parts of the trade union movement about the benefits of climate action filtering down to working-class communities.

A decade ago, the Scottish Government's Low Carbon Strategy predicting there would be 130,000 low-carbon and renewable energy jobs by 2020 – with 28,000 direct jobs in offshore wind alone.

The latest figures show there are less than 2,000 jobs in offshore wind and only 23,000 direct jobs in the entire low-carbon and renewable energy economy. And what is worse – these figures have fallen since 2014, despite massive deployment of renewables.

These promises of green jobs are being broken because Scotland's low-carbon and renewable energy economy is dominated by private and overseas interests.

Our low-carbon economy suffers from a huge trade deficit – importing more goods and services than we export. Apart from one single demonstration turbine off the coast of Leven, all of Scotland's offshore wind is controlled by private corporations or overseas governments: 45% is controlled by overseas private companies, 29% by overseas governments and 25% by UK-based multinationals. These multinational companies have limited interest in providing good quality jobs in Scotland's supply chain. Time after time we see migrant workers being paid less than the minimum wage to

undertake survey work on the seabed, while manufacturing work, which could be done in communities such as Methil, is offshored to the Far East.

It is real life events like this that make many of Scotland's energy workers and unions suspicious when business and government talk of a "just transition" at the same time as they engage in a race to the bottom on terms and conditions and fail to intervene to create real jobs.

Put simply, if trade unions are to be more green, we need green policy to be more red.

But we know that we can't rely on politicians, policy makers or legislation alone, to deliver for working class people. History shows us, that only strong, organised movements, deliver real change. That change starts in our workplaces and our communities.

It is why Scotland's rail unions, who recently won a pay dispute with Scotrail after balloting for industrial action, launched 'A Vision for Scotland's Railways' a plan that could contribute massively to reducing transport emissions. These two issues – organising around better pay and conditions and campaigning for investment in services are not separate, they are linked. The intersection between them is why many parts of the climate movement are increasingly realising they need organised workers on their side if they are to win.

If there is hope to come out of COP it will manifest outside the steel fences of the official conference. It will be found in the links being made between Glasgow's cleansing workers and the figurehead of the environmental movement, Greta Thunberg. In the alliances between trade unions, community groups, and environmentalists campaigning on issues which matter to working class communities.

Only by building that collective people power and fighting back, will we be able to deliver the changes we so desperately need to tackle climate change and poverty.

Of all the messages that come out of COP26 this may turn out to be the most important and the most enduring.



ACADEMIC COMMENT

What really is a Just Transition?

Dr Jamie Stewart and Professor Karen Turner from the Centre for Energy Policy, University of Strathclyde explain what a 'just transition' really is and the challenge of understanding and predicting the consequences of proposed policy solutions to the climate emergency.



With under a month to go before the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP) in Glasgow, anticipation is building. Ahead of the conference, and aligning to the more ambitious ambitions of the 2015 Paris COP agreement, the UK and Scottish Governments have committed to mid-century net zero targets, along with challenging interim emission reduction targets of 78% by 2035 for the UK as a whole, and 75% by 2030 for Scotland. While these commitments set out world leading ambition that will no doubt be showcased at COP, the real challenge lies in delivering the required transition in ways that are socially, economically and politically feasible – and social justice is a crucial component of that.

In Scotland, big steps have already been taken to reduce our domestic emissions. This has largely been through changes in how electricity is generated, with renewables now meeting almost all of the annual electricity demand. Progress on industrial emissions is more mixed: while carbon efficiency gains in the remaining industrial base are positive, substantial reductions in emissions from closing some of our industrial base (such as steel manufacturing) are a false positive in terms of climate justice at home and abroad.

The changes we've made to reduce emissions from the base line date of 1990 has already had an impact on society in Scotland. For example, the closure of Scotland's remaining coal power plants at Longannet and Cogenzie has led to economic activity and associated jobs being lost over time. While the growing renewables sector has provided some opportunities for Scottish companies and linked supply chains, more clearly needs to be done to boost this contribution going forward.

Big challenges also lie ahead to reduce emissions in sectors such as transport and building heating and generally in how we transition away from burning fossil fuels. The changes now required across the economy have the potential to affect livelihoods and the social and economic well-being of Scotland more generally.

What is a just transition?

The risk that the move to net zero emissions could drive inequality further and lead to job losses in sectors such as oil and gas, has been recognised by the Scottish Government, who have committed to the delivery of a 'just transition'. For the Scottish Government a just transition is both the outcome – a fairer, greener future for all – and a process that must be undertaken in partnership with those impacted by the transition to net zero. As a first step, the Scottish Government set up an independent Just Transition Commission, which delivered its report in early 2021.

In their response, the Scottish Government set out its priorities around planning for a managed transition that involves and equips people for the role they must play in delivering a transition where benefits must be spread widely and in ways that do not burden those least able to pay. However, while Scotland is leading the way on focussing attention on social justice aspects of the transition to net zero, whether the transition is fair and just, or not, is a complex topic and will ultimately be judged by the people impacted.

Delivering a sustainable and just transition

At the Centre for Energy Policy, our central aim is to undertake research that genuinely supports policy makers in delivering a sustainable and just transition to net zero. We use our expertise in whole economy scenario analyses to understand the opportunities, consequences and trade-offs of delivering different policy actions. This is crucial component for planning and delivering a just transition to net zero.

We focus on understanding how new policies, such as the roll out of electric vehicles (EVs), will impact the health of the economy and how specific sectors and income groups might be affected. For example, our work in this area has shown that the transition to EVs could lead to economic growth, with the switch to electricity instead of petrol and diesel to fuel vehicles relying more heavily on UK supply chains.



ACADEMIC COMMENT Cont'd



But with consumers picking up the bill for the infrastructure upgrades needed to charge vehicles, and an increasing demand for electricity more generally, the transition may put pressure on electricity and other prices. Unless other actions are taken to bring electricity prices down, this could have a detrimental impact on households in poverty who already struggle to pay energy bills and pay for other necessities in life, the cost of which will be impacted where higher energy costs hit supply chains. With a quarter of households in Scotland being fuel poor, particularly those relying on electricity for heating, delivery of social justice requires that policy makers mitigate drivers of unfair outcomes.

Our work also focuses on understanding how actions in any one sector will impact across the economy and prosperity more generally through impacts on jobs, wages and the cost of living. For example, the Chemicals sector at Grangemouth is one of Scotland's largest emitters of greenhouse gases and will have to decarbonise if net zero targets are to be met. However, chemicals made there are needed in essential products, such as toiletries and medical equipment. Similarly, the Grangemouth site provides high quality jobs and makes an important sustained contribution to the Scottish economy and the surrounding communities. The challenge lies in that if producers in our consumption

supply chains need to put up prices to decarbonise, there is a risk both to the cost of everyday items we all rely on, and of jobs and activity simply moving overseas to less costly production locations, along with the emissions involved.

Net zero – a political and societal challenge

In short, realising a just and fair pathway to net zero, means finding one that provides solutions to all these issues and delivers a fair and prosperous outcome for communities and citizens across Scotland. Understanding who truly pays, how and when in delivering the essential transition to net zero, and how this impacts the way we live and work, including and beyond the risks of climate change, is the real key to delivering a just transition. As the negotiations between nations from around the globe at COP will highlight, meeting net zero really is a political and societal challenge with justice at its core.



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THIRD SECTOR COMMENT

It's a Matter of Justice



There is an imbalance of consequence of the climate emergency between the poorest and richest in our world, Jamie Livingstone, Head of Oxfam in Scotland, explores what constitutes a fair and just response to the growing threat of the climate emergency already having a disproportionate impact on the world's poorest communities.



There are at least three injustices at the heart of the climate crisis. Firstly, that those with the least are already paying the price, first and worst. Secondly, the clear evidence that those suffering the most did very little, if anything, to cause this crisis. And thirdly, the need to deliver fairness in the way the world responds, as it must – and quickly.

When I think of climate justice, I think of people like Claire Anterea. She lives in Kiribati, a large ocean state in the central Pacific Ocean. For her, the very ground beneath her feet is at stake. Almost the entire land area of Kiribati lies less than three metres above sea level. “I’m scared. And I’m scared for my people”, she told my colleagues in the Pacific.

Over the last decade, weather-related disasters, fuelled by climate change, have forced an estimated 20 million people a year to leave their homes: 80% of them are women. The global climate emergency is already causing more poverty, more suffering, more migration and more hunger. Those who are least able to cope are suffering the most.

But such climate injustice is also felt by those with the least in Scotland. Even before COVID, some 279,000 households faced the injustice of “extreme fuel poverty”, spending more than one fifth of their income to stay warm. Low-income groups are more likely to live in urban areas with high levels of pollution and they’re also more likely to have health conditions aggravated by it. The second climate injustice is that the poorest, wherever they live, have done the least to cause climate change. Globally, the emissions of the richest 1% are more than double those of the poorest half of the world put together. And within the UK: the average carbon footprint of the wealthiest 1% is 11 times larger than that of someone in the poorest half of society. COP26 must confront this extreme carbon inequality. No longer can the wealthy be allowed to plunder the planet through over-consumption, leaving poorer communities, young people and those yet

to be born to pay the price, now and in the future. And so, to the third question of justice: ensuring a fair response. As a white, middle-aged climate campaigner from a rich, developed country who likes to travel and enjoys a nice steak every now and then, this can all feel deeply uncomfortable. The reality is that it needs to. I’m part of the problem. So, probably, are many of you. To deliver climate justice we must all ask ourselves a simple question: am I prepared to change?

But while individual change is needed, it won’t be anywhere near enough - governments must lead the change. Collectively, countries’ current plans to cut emissions are nowhere near sufficient to limit warming below 1.5 degrees Celsius. Incredibly, they’ll deliver only around a 1% cut by 2030. Meanwhile we hear promises to deliver “net zero” years from now. Ambitious-sounding pledges cobbled together with unreliable, unproven and unrealistic schemes to remove carbon from the atmosphere, cannot be used as an alibi for not cutting emissions now.

The recovery from Covid must energise the transition to a climate safe future, not lock us deeper into crisis. Yet a unit at Oxford University that’s tracking recovery spending with the UN, says just over a fifth of it could be described as “green”. All countries must do more to cut emissions in ways that do not leave those in poverty to pick up the tab for tackling a crisis created by the richest. Amid public finance pressure, the poverty, inequality and climate crises can – and must – be tackled together. Scotland’s legal climate targets are amongst the strongest in the global North: intending to reach so-called net zero by 2045. But while our emissions have halved since 1990, we have missed our last three annual reduction targets.



THIRD SECTOR COMMENT Cont'd

There is much more work to be done.

Scotland must build upon strong progress in weaning ourselves off coal by calling on the UK Government to block the new proposed oilfield at Cambo while cutting emissions from agriculture and making our buildings fit for the future. Importantly, we must also curb emissions of the richest, including from excessive car journeys and flights.

Our actions should seek to benefit those in poverty while addressing the links between climate, gender and racial injustice. For example, investment in heat and energy efficiency can help tackle fuel poverty and create green jobs. Similarly, spending on public transport can cut emissions and disproportionately benefits those in poverty. Meanwhile, boosting investment in the care sector would generate new, low-carbon jobs while helping to protect many of those with caring responsibilities, mainly women, from poverty.

But nor can we be blind to the potential for climate action to create fresh injustice. For the workers and communities impacted by this period of necessary change, we must deliver upon the Just Transition Commission's call to "move beyond the rhetoric" in Scotland. Doing so won't be easy, but it is no less essential.

And to ensure this rapid transformation of our economy and the society it serves is both as effective and socially just as possible, it must be financed by taxing high emitters with parallel steps to ensure that firms accessing public money are required to cut their emissions. But as we deliver rapid and deep emissions cuts, we cannot leave those already impacted by the climate crisis without the support they need now either. In 2009, developed countries agreed to contribute \$100 billion (£72.5bn) a year in climate finance to low-income countries by 2020 to help reduce their emissions and

adapt their lives, with the Paris climate summit in 2015 extending this commitment to last through to 2025.

This promise is the glue that holds together the entire Paris Agreement – but it's coming badly unstuck. Wealthy nations are expected to fall up to \$75 billion (£55bn) short of fulfilling their pledge. Meanwhile, in 2020 alone the bill for damage caused by floods, storms and other climate-related disasters and was at least \$171 billion (£124bn).

In September, participants from the global south told a Glasgow Climate Dialogue on Adaptation and Resilience, an event co-hosted by the Scottish Government and Stop Climate Chaos Scotland, that communities with the least resources to cope are being left to adapt without the support they need. For some, the impacts are already too great with homes becoming uninhabitable and lives unbearable.

Countries that enriched themselves on high-carbon activities can no longer side-step their climate debts: they must support those impacted to adapt and, where this is no longer possible, compensate them for their losses and damages.

As President of COP26, the UK Government has a huge responsibility to galvanise this global action but as home to the host city, Scotland's voice must be heard too. The Scottish Government's recent doubling of its Climate Justice Fund after a five-year freeze is therefore a timely and very welcome contribution. It should now go further by raising these funds through a new tax on high emitters. Doing so would send a powerful message to a watching world that climate change isn't just a matter of science, technology and economics: it's a matter of justice.

TO FIND OUT MORE, READ:

Oxfam Scotland's policy priorities for the Scottish Parliament, Care, Climate and Covid 19: Building a Wellbeing Economy for Scotland:

<https://oxfamapps.org/scotland/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/CARE-CLIMATE-AND-COVID-19-November-23-2020.pdf>

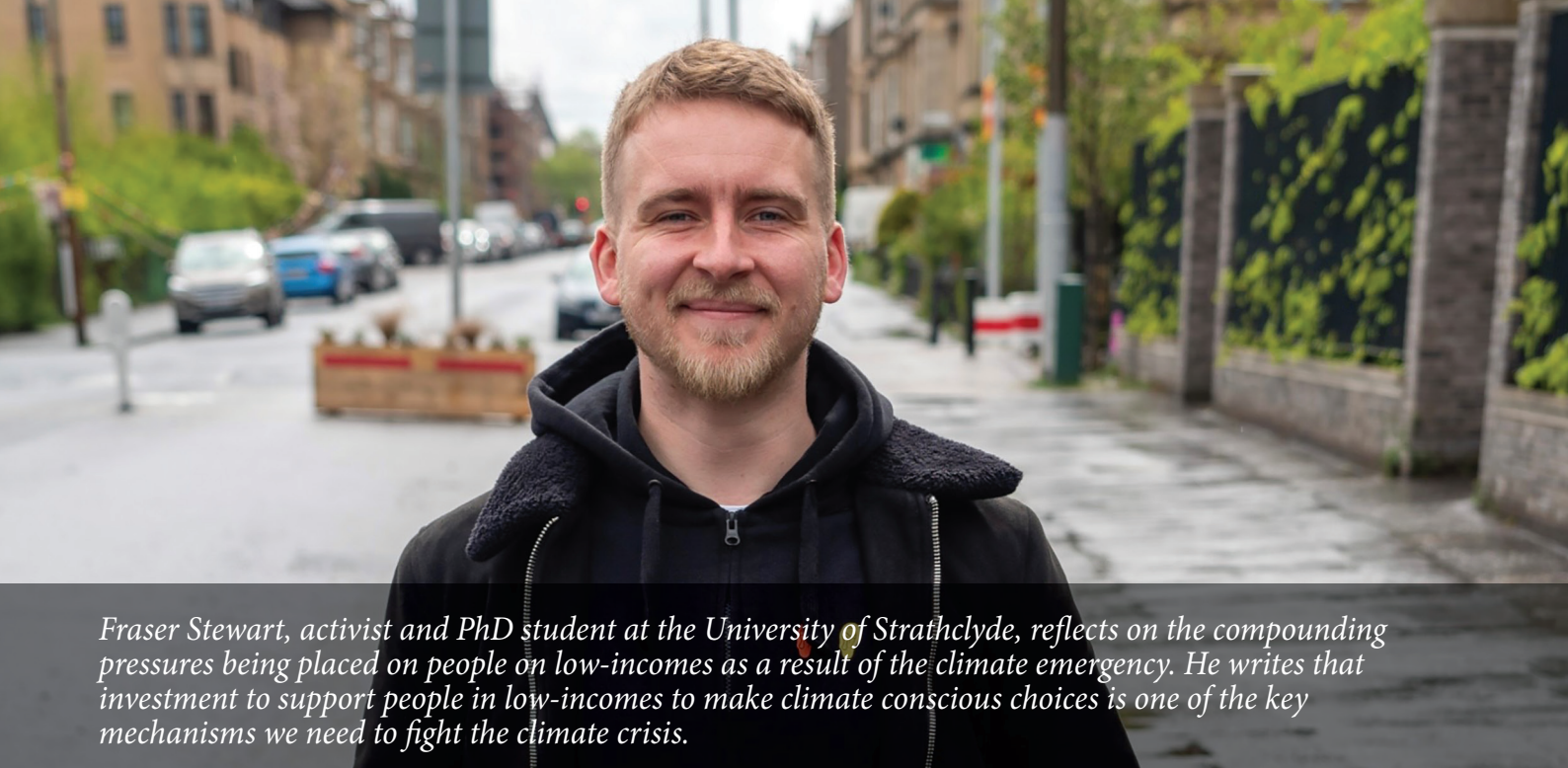
Stop Climate Chaos Scotland: Delivering climate justice at COP26 in Glasgow:

<https://www.stopclimatechaos.scot/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Delivering-climate-justice-at-COP26.pdf>

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WE HAVE TO INVEST IF WE WANT TO LIVE



Fraser Stewart, activist and PhD student at the University of Strathclyde, reflects on the compounding pressures being placed on people on low-incomes as a result of the climate emergency. He writes that investment to support people in low-incomes to make climate conscious choices is one of the key mechanisms we need to fight the climate crisis.

I grew up in poverty, in various rough and ready housing schemes in Forfar in the North-East of Scotland. My Mum was a single parent who raised my brother and I just about single-handedly, which was no mean feat given what a pair of wee terrors we generally were (more than once we were dropped off together in the back of a police van, but that's a story for another time). Growing up, we dealt with all the relentless social, financial, psychological and physical stresses that come with the territory of happening to have been born skint. I'm 30 now, but it wasn't until my mid-20's having drawn from a bottomless well of social support that I finally started to feel like I'd 'gotten out'.

The experience doesn't leave you easily. I'm just about ok now – I'm lucky to have a good job and a liveable income – but poverty sticks to you like smoke to fabric even years after you start to feel like you're on top of things (should the stars ever align for that to happen). The carried-over debt. The health issues. The psychological pressures especially. I swear I have a form of PTSD because of it, which recent research shows is apparently a very real thing. Nothing makes me want to jump out the window like the whiff of a missed payment or suggestion that things might be becoming more expensive, and that's before we even get to the wider stigma.

Energy bills rising due to the price cap increase, coupled with gas prices and general inflation mounting, and adding universal credit being cut into the bargain, sent me just about over the edge. I genuinely had to remind myself that I was ok in the first instance. But a whole load of folk aren't. For millions of people, these factors have meant a change from barely coping to having to magic up almost £140 per month in new money overnight. It hardly bears thinking about.

With these pressures mounting and the immediately material issues people in poverty face, it would be easy to assume that climate is the last thing on people's minds. That's probably fair – surface transport emissions weren't exactly my main priority when I was trying to scrape money together for a bus to a job interview. My Mum wasn't kept awake at night thinking about how to clean up our energy system. Lots of people probably feel a bit disconnected from the wider climate conversation, and that's perfectly fine and reasonable (although lots of people in all corners of society do care about climate and that's also fine and reasonable, too). But that doesn't mean these are disconnected issues by any means.



GENERAL COMMENT Cont'd



Quite the opposite, in fact. What we're seeing with the energy crisis just now is a prime example of where the climate crisis and inequalities meet head-on in the UK. Despite being responsible for barely a single iota of carbon in the earth's atmosphere, those who live in poverty tend to live in the least efficient housing, which makes them more susceptible to the adverse health impacts of extreme temperatures caused by climate change and higher energy bills. This is especially true for people with underlying health or ability issues. Due to being in rented accommodation or simply lacking the time, bandwidth, financial means or know-how, people in poverty are less well-equipped to switch from gas heating or insulate their homes as fossil fuel prices rupture and soar. Those who can afford it then benefit from cheap leccy and retrofit subsidies, while those who can't are stuck bearing disproportionate financial and physical costs.

This is just one example, of course: inequalities are much wider still. People in poverty in the UK are more likely to live in areas that flood, which becomes more frequent as the climate changes; they suffer most from proximity to the air pollution from roads and industries that drive climate change in the first place. Tackling the climate crisis thus has enormous social justice implications and implications for people living in poverty. At the most basic level, we can improve health and help keep expensive gas bills down for people who feel those things disproportionately by making our energy supply completely renewable. We can bring down emissions from transport to make our air and lungs cleaner.

With some vision and determination, though, we can do a whole lot more than that. We can retrofit those lowest-income houses to create lots of new local jobs and bring

down household emissions, but also to tackle fuel poverty through bringing down energy bills and improving physical and mental wellbeing for lots of people who desperately need it in the process. We can create a clean, expansive public transport system that not just cuts carbon or encourages people to leave the car at home, but that connects previously excluded communities to open new leisure and employment opportunities as well. More than saving the planet (which should be justification enough in itself), tackling the climate crisis – as we ultimately have to do – can work actively for people in poverty in a seriously big and transformative way.

But only if we're willing to jump at the chance. As things stand, we're veering away from this massive historic opportunity and into the territory of exacerbating inequalities more and more by the day. By slashing universal credit as energy bills rise, we compound the pressures of poverty and put people into a deficit from which any kind of recovery starts to feel utterly impossible. By raising the price cap and shifting the social and green levy on electricity bills over to gas instead, we're about to further penalise people who can't afford or don't currently have the support to switch their energy supply. By half-heartedly promoting £20,000 electric cars, we're locking in the infrastructural inequalities of a society built for fossil fuels and making them ever so slightly greener. Far from doing the things we could and need to do on poverty and climate, we are doing far too little on both in a way that will hurt all of us in the longer-term.

What is important to remember, though, is that these are political choices. We could be creating those jobs and helping those people and bringing down emissions all at once. Instead, we're cutting benefits and opening coal mines for short-term gains because we've chosen to. Yet whatever your political colour or creed, the need to combat the climate crisis remains paramount. We have to invest if we want to live, there's no two-ways about it at this point, and the longer we leave it the more expensive and urgent the problem becomes. If we're willing to start by investing in those who need it most – those who live in the draughtiest houses and suffer the worst impacts despite having next-to-no responsibility for the crisis in the first place – then we can do even more than save the planet. We can make things a whole lot better for lots of the people who live on it as well.

COLD REALITY

Facing a hard winter in fuel poor Scotland

Frazer Scott, CEO of Energy Action Scotland, takes us through the challenges of rising rates of fuel poverty in Scotland in relation to moving to a decarbonised energy system.

Unprecedented increases in energy costs are set to have a devastating impact on households across Scotland this winter. £250 has been added to average bills compared with last winter. It is estimated that a further £350 could be added in the spring. Energy companies are failing every week and cheaper fixed deals have all but disappeared. Pre-pandemic, a quarter of households, over 600,000 in number, were struggling with their energy costs. Energy Action Scotland estimate that is set rise by over 100,000 households as the universal credit uplift is removed, furlough has ended, and people remain at home, increasing the number of fuel poor households in Scotland as high as one in three in the foreseeable future. These figures sit in contrast to the rest of the UK (note that the most recent figures are all pre-pandemic)

- In 2019 (the most recent Scottish House Condition Survey), Scotland's levels of fuel poverty were estimated at 613,000, or 24.6% of households;
- Northern Ireland was estimated at 131,000 households in 2018, or 18% of households.
- Wales was estimated at 155,000 in 2018, or 12% of households;
- England was estimated at around 2.4 million in 2018, or 10.3% of households

The stark facts are that the impact of high levels and rising fuel poverty is the inevitable undermining of the health and wellbeing of people and put additional pressure on the already struggling NHS. Fuel poverty is estimated to cost NHS Scotland over £100million annually. Inevitably, 2021's additional pressures will lead to an increase in excess winter mortality, which already accounts for over 2000 deaths more in winter months than summer months. Indeed, over the last 10 winters that figure has averaged 2600 more deaths in winter than in summer months.

COP26 in Glasgow has provided a focus for discussions on achieving NetZero globally. Scotland has its ambitions to achieve NetZero enshrined in legislation for 2045. Our fuel poverty target of only 5% of households is similarly enshrined but for 2040. It is a challenge.



To make progress there needs to be huge systemic movement. Our relationship with energy needs to change. The stealth taxes that so unfairly burden those on the lowest incomes need to be removed. We have long argued against the unfairness of tax levies on gas and especially on electricity. Fairness dictates, that these should sit within general taxation. Energy suppliers appear to agree that the current position. It isn't fair and isn't part of a just transition.

It will be difficult to change the behaviour of the public set against a backdrop where millions of households in the UK are in energy debt. Scotland's Energy Consumers Commission is rightly concerned. As a Commissioner I am very troubled by what I see. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation estimates that over 4million households are already in debt and that 1.4million households are behind on energy bills, making the transition to NetZero even more complicated and stressful for people.

I am concerned that decarbonisation could come with a dogmatic approach that isn't sensitive to the issues faced by vulnerable and low-income households. Environmentalists have waited a long time to be taken this seriously and by underestimating the challenge in shifting the lives of people already disenfranchised and on the margins of society, there is a risk of social collateral damage. Of course, there will be an improvement in the long term to the quality of our lives and indeed potentially our health and wellbeing. But there needs to be genuine transition, signals, and incentives to engage us all on this journey. Frankly put, warm words do not heat homes in a country where six people die of fuel poverty every day of winter.

The pandemic and energy prices have put back some of the really great work delivered by fuel poverty support programmes in Scotland. But ambition is rising, investment increasing and there are changes afoot for energy industry supports Warm Home Discount and the Energy Company Obligation.

I genuinely believe that we stand at a new dawn for our relationship with energy. Where there will be room for diversity, for heat networks, for community ownership, for domestic renewable energy, as well as a shift in the perspectives of our scaled energy generation, our energy infrastructure, and suppliers. The signs are there. Targets are being set. Budgets are being prepared. Policy and strategies are being developed. Governments and society more widely understand the rationale for change and indeed what needs to change. I am optimistic, in the medium to long term certainly.

Short term, we face a tough winter this year with perhaps worse to come. COP26 asked us to prioritise those that are disadvantaged and unable to mobilise the support need to make a difference. In Scotland, we need to act in a similar way. We will need to mobilise unprecedented levels of support to even approach something like a standstill for fuel poor households. I fear that the winter will be a time for damage limitation for households. We need that leadership, and we need it now.



FEMINIST GREEN NEW DEAL

Bringing gender analysis to the just transition

A genuinely Just Transition needs to tackle our long-standing inequalities, argues Sara Cowan, Coordinator of the Scottish Women's Budget Group, and recognise the role of care in society if we are to realise this opportunity to progress gender equality and tackle poverty reduction.

As we recover from the crisis of Covid-19 we walk straight into the eye of another storm with the climate emergency rightly front and centre of the agenda at the end of 2021. The COP26 conference taking place in Scotland will bring even more focus to the climate emergency, with greater interest in its outcome. The recent IPCC report was unequivocal in making the case for a rapid decarbonisation of economic activities to prevent the most devastating impacts of climate change and keep global warming below 1.5C. Alongside this, the Covid-19 pandemic has shone a fresh light on inequalities in our society highlighting that we cannot respond to the next crisis without tackling the vulnerabilities so clearly shown by the pandemic. Responding to climate change, through a just transition or delivering a green new deal, must build-in the opportunity to tackle inequalities and create a green and just recovery.

As a historic and current high-emitter that has economically benefitted from a high-carbon economy, Scotland has a responsibility to its citizens and all of humanity to use every tool at our disposal to meet this goal and secure a prosperous future for future generations. However, such a momentous structural and societal transformation must not come at the expense of those who have already lost out due to our highly unequal and extractive economic system, whether closer to home, or in other parts of the world. Scotland must be a champion of a just transition, that simultaneously tackles emissions and inequalities with the help of a comprehensive green industrial strategy, creating a wave of decent green jobs and strengthening social safety nets around the world in preparation for climactic disruption. There is much to be done to transition to a low carbon economy and a gendered analysis is a vital part of the planning process. There is a risk that investment in much needed infrastructure change in housing, transport and construction will widen gender inequality in the labour market, if a gendered analysis is not built into the planning process from the start.

That is why women's organisations and feminist academics have been organising to provide a critique of some existing Green New Deal thinking, particularly where it fails to consider the risk of further entrenching gender inequality as we seek to tackle climate change.



Earlier this year the Women's Environment Network and the UK Women's Budget group published a draft roadmap for a feminist green new deal for the UK. This work seeks to build support for a Feminist Green New Deal that puts gender equality at the heart of strategies to tackle climate change and sets out a vision for a Social Guarantee framework that aims to ensure everyone has access to life's essentials.

Measures to develop a feminist green transition go hand in hand with what is needed to tackle poverty. For example, sustainable, more accessible, affordable public transport systems may be different when developed with gender analysis. Understanding that women and men have different needs from public transport services, with women more likely to take cross town transport with regular stops (rather than city centre commuter journeys) – to support caring and unpaid work roles, will deliver a green transport system, but one that also addresses gender inequality and poverty. Building in the gender analysis to the planning process will enable these kinds of measures to bring transformation to how services such as transport are delivered in our society.

Take housing as another example. Greenhouse gases from housing contribute to 22% of the UK's carbon footprint. We are likely to see large investments in retrofitting our homes and in building new homes. This is positive news with the potential to tackle multiple demands on people's living costs.



FEMINIST GREEN NEW DEAL

To ensure this investment can maximise its potential to deliver for women and poverty reduction building intersectional gender analysis into the process will lead to questions such as: will this investment provide affordable options to meet the level of demand? Who has access to our current housing stock? What data exists on how women and men access housing, where are the gaps and how can investment target these? What access do single parents or women from ethnic minority communities have to affordable housing? Questions such as these will once again lead to potentially very different decisions being made.

Securing the just transition, however, is often focused on physical infrastructure: transitioning to renewable energy sources, adapting our lived environments to a new reality of climate impacts, retrofitting our homes to be more efficient and advancing research and development of low-carbon or renewable technologies.

However, these can and must be complimented with investment in green social infrastructure. A comprehensive just transition policy would expand socially necessary and low-carbon jobs, such as those in the caring economy for example health, child and adult social care. Investment in this caring economy brings gains to women who make up the majority of those working in care and for whom a greater proportion of unpaid care work falls upon; it means expanding access and affordability of this social infrastructure which in turn can open up access to work, for those who can, and support routes out of poverty.

Following this line of thinking, care jobs are green jobs and must be considered a crucial pillar in climate and gender-sensitive transition planning. A transformative transition will recognise the need for care in our society and economy, care for both people and planet.

The green transition is an opportunity to tackle inequality but this requires concerted effort to recognise the inequalities faced in our society and plan for change. An equalities lens must be applied to climate policy to ensure it does not reverse progress on gender equality in high-value sectors while also committing new investment to traditionally feminised 'green' sectors such as care - transforming how our services deliver for communities. Transition investment therefore offers an opportunity to secure a greener more equal economy, one that also addresses poverty.

For more information on the work of the Scottish Women's Budget Group visit www.swbg.org.uk