

26TH UN CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE OF PARTIES

SUSTAINABLE SCOTLAND NETWORK ENGAGEMENT AT COP26

In November 2021, COP26 brought almost every country together for the global climate summit held in Glasgow. During the critical 26th annual conference, nations aimed to reach agreement on tackling the climate emergency and limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees. World leaders, negotiators, businesses, representatives, and citizens visited Scotland for two weeks of talks, events, and exhibitions to scale up ambitions, inspire action and exchange knowledge from around the world.

The summit negotiations brought UN member nations together to accelerate action on climate issues and agree on global actions to limit warming to 1.5 degrees. A number of new pledges and commitments were announced throughout COP26, including deals covering coal, deforestation and methane.

Below are some of the key outcomes of negotiations:

- The '**Glasgow Climate Pact**' was formed, calling for a more ambitious climate response to cutting emissions, climate finance, adaptation, and loss and damage, with the challenge on nations to return next year with improved targets
- Members agreed to 'accelerate efforts towards the **phasedown of unabated coal power**' and phase-out of inefficient fossil fuel subsidies
- More than 100 world leaders agreed to aim to **end and reverse deforestation by 2030**
- **India announced a new net-zero pledge** which would reduce projected global temperature rise by around 0.2°C
- The **Global Methane Pledge** was introduced with the aim to limit methane emissions by 30% compared with 2020 levels, more than 100 countries have signed up to the initiative

More information on key COP26 outcomes can be found on [Carbon Brief](#), the [UK Government](#) or the [UNFCCC](#).



SSN at COP26

Throughout COP26, the Sustainable Scotland Network was involved in a number of events, and exhibitions, providing a great opportunity to share more about the unique position of SSN as well as network members' projects and achievements.

Green Zone

The SSN exhibition stall ran on the 9th of November in the Green Zone. We shared more about SSN's services, members, projects, and the work being carried out under SSN's three key strategic themes: collaborating to develop net zero places; leveraging influence towards net zero indirect emissions; and networking to achieve net zero public sector organisations.

View more of what we shared at COP26 green zone [here](#).



NatureScot | Nature is Climate; Climate is Nature

SSN Steering Group member, Clive Mitchell, attended the blue zone as part of NatureScot's involvement in the conference. Clive shares his thoughts on the importance of acknowledging nature when striving to reach climate targets.

"For all the talk of nature-based solutions they are mainly framed as another 'sector' on the journey to net zero. But nature is much more important than that: it regulates the 'fast' (atmosphere and life) and 'slow' (sediments and fossil fuels) parts of the global carbon cycle and hence the climate. That's why 'Nature is Climate; Climate is Nature', with soils at the centre. Nature-based solutions must concern all life everywhere, and all uses of the land and sea. Healthy soils are vital to a healthy planet."

"So, what next? Action counts. There must be hope for 'coalitions of the willing' to agree on the level of ambition and action required, and pursue this through relevant trade policies and carbon border taxes, to capture both emissions resulting from production within the country boundary, and consumption of imported goods – with complementary measures for nature." - Clive Mitchell, Outcome Manager: Nature and Climate Change at NatureScot



Scottish Local Government and Partners Leadership Event

Hosted by COSLA, in partnership with the Sustainable Scotland Network and the Improvement Service, the event explored Scottish Local Government's role in combating climate change, contributing to a net zero society, and delivering locally in support of international climate targets. Chaired by SSN Chair, John Wincott, and Vice President of COSLA, Cllr Graham Houston, the hybrid event welcomed many SSN members to the Lighthouse in Glasgow and virtually. [View agenda.](#)

SSN Project Director, George Tarvit, attended the event:

"This partnership event by COSLA, SSN and the Improvement Service reflected the vital role local authorities and their partners play in delivering climate action across Scotland. It profiled the excellent work being done by Scotland's local authorities on energy, transport, waste, and the new net zero economy, with an emphasis on a just transition. The event stressed that timescale is pressing for action on climate change and that local authorities are not alone in their efforts to implement change. COSLA, SSN and IS will continue to collaborate in the wake of COP26, prioritising action and delivery for people and places throughout Scotland".



Scottish Water | Partnerships and collaboration at COP26

Over the course of COP26, Scotland's public water and waste water provider, Scottish Water, hosted a number of events and shared resources on reaching climate targets.

Scottish Water shared their [Net Zero Routemap](#) at the Hydro Nation Virtual Water Pavillion and participated in the NatureScot 'Scottish Bonsal Landscape' exhibit. The organisation also took part in the Water UK green zone event on 'unlocking the nature/net zero balance' and participated in Scottish Canals event, highlighting the innovative use of waterways to deal with rainwater and support regeneration in communities.

Partnering up with Police Scotland, Scottish Water provided temporary water points at posts around the country, offering a sustainable solution during COP26. *"We're delighted to partner with Police Scotland and contribute towards lessening the impact of single use plastic around such a significant event as COP26"* Brian Lironi, Director of Corporate Affairs, Scottish Water.

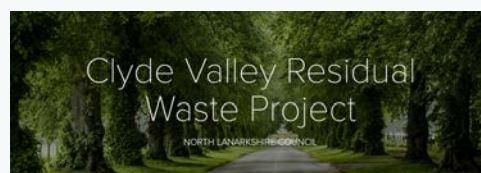
Discover more in video case studies from Chief Executive, Douglas Millican and the latest Scottish Water net zero news [here](#).

Sharing SSN member projects during COP26

COP26 has been a great opportunity to showcase the work SSN members have been involved with, across Scotland. Find out more in the member case studies below:

The Clyde Valley Residual Waste Project

North Lanarkshire Council is the lead authority of a consortium of five local authorities that aim to deliver an improved recycling and residual waste treatment. Read the full case study [here](#).



Aberdeenshire Council's Routemap to 2030

Aberdeenshire Council are working on the development of a route-map that aims to identify the actions needed across the organisation in order to meet a 75% reduction in its own emissions by the end of the decade. Read the full case study [here](#).



Loch Lomond and the Trossachs Mission Zero Route Map

The Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park Authority has developed a refreshed and ambitious approach to all future climate work. The National Park published their Mission Zero Route Map, outlining a net zero target date of 2030 and key priority actions and aims to get them there. Read the full case study [here](#).



Climate Ready Aberdeenshire

Climate Ready Aberdeenshire (CRA) is a cross-sector initiative with the aim of a shared vision, strategy and action plan for Aberdeenshire to mitigate climate change and adapt to its impact while protecting biodiversity. Read the full case study [here](#).



Zero Waste Scotland: Tackling Scope 3

SSN has been working in partnership with Zero Waste Scotland to support two key projects, designed to help tackle public sector scope 3 emissions. Zero Waste Scotland has developed a commuting tool and exercise to estimate embodied carbon in office equipment, piloted by SSN members. Fraser Millar, Environmental Analyst at Zero Waste Scotland, discusses this project [here](#).



Ayrshire Officers Network

Ayrshire officers network celebrates successful projects that help public sector bodies to deliver net zero commitments by learning from, and collaborating with, each other. Lorna Jarvie, Coordinator for Sustainability and Fleet at South Ayrshire Council and SSN Steering Group member, outlines more information about the network [here](#).



Edinburgh Napier University | EAUC-Scotland | Beyond COP26

During COP26, Edinburgh Napier University hosted the '[Beyond COP26](#)' Conference that showcased applied sustainability research in partnership with business and discussed a range of practical steps that businesses can take on their journey towards net-zero. They also partnered with [After the Pandemic](#), a grass-roots community initiative from Glasgow, for a 12 day event that brought together young people from across Scotland to share their creative solutions to tackle the climate emergency. The timing of COP26 saw their new [Environmental Sustainability Strategy](#) agreed by the University Leadership Team to build on successes and take their work forward.

Jamie Pearson attended the Blue Zone and shares some thoughts on his experience below;

"Thinking back at the overall experience COP26, two thoughts stick with me. First of all, even when physically in the Blue Zone, as much as it was interesting, there were times I really didn't feel connected to the actual purpose of the event. That thought and feeling has further reminded me that we have an absolute need to ensure our individual and collective communities feel connected to and empowered to lead change. My second thought is that COP26 was obviously bigger than the actual event itself. It offered opportunity to highlight and take pride in our existing and collective successes to date. And to look ahead to the legislative aspirations and expectations we have to drive change in Scotland and beyond." - Jamie Pearson, Environmental Sustainability Manager at Edinburgh Napier University

West Dunbartonshire Council | Working towards net zero

West Dunbartonshire Council took part in the COP26 Green Zone exhibition on 11 November, supporting the Cities, Regions and Built Environment Day. They shared their work including a new [Climate Change Strategy](#) and [Action Plan](#) that outlines how they aim to reach net zero status by 2045.

The Council also shared their recently launched [Water-Source District Heating Network at Queens Quay in Clydebank](#), a project that highlights what the Council are doing to tackle Fuel Poverty, reduce carbon emissions from heat, and help make large scale renewable heating a more viable option for Local Authorities going forward.



"We are proud to have been part of COP26, and this was of course vital for showing what Scotland can do to achieve net zero targets, and also, how partnerships with the public, private organisations, and other Public Bodies is vital to help us achieve this.

Going forward beyond COP26, we hope that the discussions we had with the public, and the contacts we made with other public bodies, will help share knowledge and ideas on how scaling up renewable district heating can help us on our journey to net zero." Adam Armour-Florence, Sustainability Officer at West Dunbartonshire Council



COP26: What happens now?

A message from SSN Chair, John Wincott:

"After COP26 - what have we learned and where do we go from here? Although the final decision document 'urges' much, 'welcomes' other things, 'notes' and 'requests' more, actual 'decisions' were much rarer. But I ask the question, how does that affect what we, as public bodies in Scotland, do in the next few years? I would suggest that, with a few exceptions, very little. We are already at the front of the charge to change. Are we doing enough? No, not yet. But I think that COP has changed only a few elements for us. We need to do more, faster, and we will do that. SSN is here to make sure that we share best (and worst) practice so that we can all learn from each other and improve.

For me, the key message is that the 1.5 degree target is 'still hanging on by its fingertips' which means that the next few years will be crucial if we are to keep that goal alive. Scotland is often lauded as leading the way, but even here we are not going far enough, fast enough. Public bodies are being looked at to lead the way - collaboration is key to our success, and SSN is the collaboration space." - John Wincott, Chair of SSN Steering Group. [Read more.](#)

SSN Conference



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COP26... What now?

Building Public Sector Capacity to Deliver on Net Zero

Wednesday 8th December 2021

09:30 - 16:00

Attend the SSN conference where we will explore 'What now?'

COP26 brought together SSN members to exhibit their work, highlight their journeys to achieving climate targets, and collaborate with each other. It encouraged global discussion on climate change and ensuring a sustainable future for all. But what happens now?

Join us on the 8th of December for our SSN conference exploring what is next for the public sector post COP26. You can hear from a range of speakers, who will be discussing the challenges facing the public sector in developing the skills and finance necessary to achieve net zero. Speakers include: Michael Matheson, Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy and Transport, The Scottish Government; Dave Reay, Edinburgh Climate Change Institute; Chris Stark, Chief Executive, Climate Change Committee

You can find out more information [here](#).