



June 2026

Net Zero Strategy Progress Report 2025 - 2026





Foreword

This report covers the progress made against net zero objectives set out in our Net Zero Strategy 2023 - 2028 by Scotland Excel in the period 2025/26.

The Net Zero Working Group at Scotland Excel plays a pivotal role in supporting the organisation's commitment to environmental sustainability and climate action. Its primary objective is to identify, develop, and implement initiatives that contribute directly to achieving net zero carbon emissions, in alignment with national and global climate targets.

The working group is composed of representatives from across all departments within Scotland Excel. This cross-functional representation ensures a holistic and integrated approach.

Our Net Zero Strategy is supported with a detailed delivery plan that sets out clear objectives to deliver on our short and medium term (2023-2026) and longer term (2025-2028) net zero related priorities.

Appendix 1 sets out the short-medium term objectives and activities identified within the strategy. The aim of these short terms objectives is for completion between 2023 and 2026, and Appendix 1 outlines the progress made in 2025/26.

You can read more on our Net Zero Strategy 2023-28 on our [website](#)

Net Zero Strategy 2025 – 2026 Progress Report

1. Establish proven and robust methods of ensuring that **tender exercises across the entire portfolio maximise positive impacts regarding carbon reduction**, whilst ensuring that goods and services supplied are relevant and appropriate in supporting individual councils' pursuit in delivering net zero targets whilst continuing to offer quality, choice and best value.

Develop and introduce **standardised contract and supplier management actions that support carbon reduction and innovation**, as well as continue to work with user intelligence groups in identifying, encouraging and developing additional collaborative opportunities, whilst ensuring that already available and relevant options are fully signposted and encouraged.

Activity	Progress Updates	Impact
1. Ensure new contract opportunities (including renewals) are designed to maximise positive impacts regarding carbon reduction.	Status: Ongoing Activity All standard operating procedures and templates are adopted in all procurement developments. Work on refining and improving net zero practices within procurement continues with collaboration and sharing net zero best practice through the cross sectoral Scottish Government Climate and Procurement Forum. Use of Scottish Government Sustainable Procurement tools are utilised in all framework strategy development. Within the construction category, now including the provision of the X29 Climate Change clause within the NEC4 Professional Services Contract. Plans to incorporate optional clause will be in all future construction framework terms.	Deploying a standardised approach ensures each procurement exercise is assessed for Net Zero opportunities. Potential for new practices to be embedded without exposing members to increased compliance risks. Sharing on national policy, good practice and expertise in an emergent sphere ensures opportunities are maximised. Climate Change clause option within construction enables clients to state their climate change requirements in the scope and provides a new climate change plan for contractors to set out their strategy for achieving the requirements.

2. Ensure new contract opportunities (including renewals) are designed to include products and services relevant and appropriate in supporting councils' pursuit of net zero targets aligned to quality, choice and best value considerations.	Status: Ongoing Activity Scotland Excel delivered several frameworks in 2025/26 to respond to net zero initiatives and some examples within the framework offerings as follows: • Bitumen – Future proofing for more environmentally friendly products and working towards carbon neutrality and are researching bio bitumen as a sustainable road material, reinforcing dedication to innovative, low-carbon solutions. • Demolition - On-site segregation of various waste streams to ensure the recovery and reuse of materials and minimising waste, sourcing materials and services locally to reduce transportation emissions and support the community. Net Zero Policies are in place to monitor carbon emissions and identify improvements to reach Net zero • Groceries – including consideration of methods of route planning for delivery of products to reduce CO2 emissions, food miles and how they report on this on a bi-annual basis • Domestic Furniture and Furnishings - major focus is on the re-use of furniture (supporting circular economy). to re-use, recycling, and repair organisations, donating items for them to re-use, recycle, and repair, promoting a circular economy and reducing waste. • Education Materials - including council-specific sustainability reporting including CO₂ tonnage by both school and local authority level, helping Councils track and reduce emissions; identification of orders that don't meet minimum order value (MOV) thresholds and are therefore environmentally inefficient; and	Examples provided to demonstrate measures already in place which contribute to the delivery of this action.
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	recommendations for viable product swaps for more environmentally friendly alternatives. • Education and Office Furniture - working with suppliers who operate in an environmentally responsible manner, including the use of recycled materials where possible and they endeavour to only source products from FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) certified suppliers. Also, reducing transport emissions by optimizing delivery methods. • Recycle and Refuse Containers - Sustainability Leadership: Products made under ISO14001 with high recycled content and continuous innovation to cut material use and waste.	
3. Review contract management activities to ensure inclusion of relevant contract and supplier management activities in supporting carbon reduction and associated innovation.	Status: Ongoing Activity The Scotland Excel 'Net Zero Group'- continues to hold monthly meetings. The Scotland Excel Key Supplier Management (KSM) has Climate change/net zero support embedded through the program - Scotland Excel have recently supported and partnered on an 'Innovation and Renewables Day' that supported Net Zero initiatives with the heating category. In 2025/2026 further targeted engagement undertaken with strategic supply chain partners across the portfolio, considered best placed to respond to revised environmental measures.	Cross category working is taking place on Net Zero to ensure improvements are applied to the full portfolio in relation to contract management. The Contract Implementation and Management team is fully embedded and operational working with identified key suppliers and with a key focus on carbon reduction and wider social value. Suppliers participating within the key supplier management programme are keen to demonstrate their industry knowledge to support environmental targets across Scotland.

4. Liaise with user intelligence groups to ensure requirements are captured, additional needs are identified, and contract opportunities are designed to align.	Status: Ongoing Activity Work has continued with the user intelligence groups and wider stakeholder groups across the public sector, including the Climate and procurement forum to identify best practice along with evidenced case studies to maximise opportunities for carbon reduction. Scottish Local Government Procurement Forum (SLGPF) - standing agenda item at SLGPF to discuss and share best practice.	This network provides access to best practice, expertise and intelligence. Joint working with local authority procurement managers to design change.
5. Review current contract portfolio with the aim of identifying and signposting to users' options already available that could support net zero ambitions or linked activities.	Status: Ongoing Activity Continuous review of all new and renewal procurement developments to go through segmentation approach to prioritise net zero, if relevant. Opportunities for partnering with other public agencies where appropriate on compliant procurement frameworks are being explored for more expanded adoption across the sector, with net zero being a key consideration. New development priorities shared with The Scottish Government Climate Group to help inform priority list.	Segmentation ensures those frameworks with greatest impact are prioritised.

2. Update Scotland Excel's Sustainable Procurement Policy reflecting embedded practices. **Review internal governance** and ensure a formalised internal governance process that facilitates due focus on net zero considerations within tendering activity. Maintain ongoing and active participation in applicable **cross sector groups** with a view to being aware of and where appropriate, influencing policy and associated impacts it may have. Implementation of standardised and where applicable, more bespoke **minimum net zero related tender requirements** across the contract portfolio linked to recent changes to SPD documents, supporting a greater level of focus on carbon reduction and embed within governance process including Contract Steering Group scrutiny.

1. Review and update Scotland Excel's Sustainable Procurement Policy.	Status: Completed New Sustainable Procurement Handbook is live, and guidance and practices are embedded into operational practices. Handbook reflects and is aligned with the aims, ambitions and actions of the Net Zero Strategy.	The new handbook aligns with the Net Zero Strategy approved in 2023. Handbook articulates the impact of the Net Zero strategy on all procurement development work.
2. Review internal governance and amend to ensure an appropriate level of focus of net zero considerations within tendering activity.	Status: Completed Work was completed on segmenting the full Scotland Excel framework portfolio. This identified frameworks that had potential to contribute to net zero targets. As above, all procurement developments now go through an agreed segmentation approach to prioritise net zero, if relevant.	Frameworks identified through the Segmentation approach are developed with the particular focus on Net Zero products or services that can reduce carbon.

3. Influence policy via participation in relevant cross sector groups.

Status: Ongoing Activity

Scotland Excel is actively engaged in cross-sector carbon and climate change initiatives addressing the carbon impact of procurement and public services, including the Scottish Government and Procurement Forum and the Public Sector Climate Change Adaptation Network

This representation is ongoing and has regular meetings frequency.

The Climate and Procurement forum provides opportunities and a platform for the Centres of Expertise including Scotland Excel to share best practice, monitor progress on net zero activities within procurement and to champion carbon reduction action and focus across the wider public sector.

	Scotland Excel is represented on the ZWS initiated Built Environment Mission Board for Circularity within the construction sector. Supported the Scotland Food & Drink Federation Programme in the development of supplier guidance for net zero and sustainability targets in public sector contracts. Contributed a submission on the call for views by the Scottish Parliament on the Draft Climate Change Plan Scrutiny 2025. Scotland Excel also participated in the February 2025 consultation on the draft statutory guidance, publication of the updated Climate change duties: statutory guidance for public bodies. A review of this guidance, alongside reporting activity completed to date, will be carefully considered early in 2026/2027. In September 2025, consultation responses were submitted to both the Draft Environmental Strategy and the Draft Climate Change Plan Scrutiny 2025. Themes of the response included a request for the following to be considered: • Need for investment in data to enable public sector procurement teams to make informed decisions to reduce the impact on the environment. • Providing grant funding for local SMEs in the low carbon technology sector. Working closely with innovation hubs, such as BE-ST, to develop new	Mission Board is to support Scotland's Circular Economy Strategy as it relates to the built environment and the draft road map for circularity in the built environment. To help ensure members are best supported in performing their climate change duties.
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	innovative climate technology, clean manufacturing, and biodiversity restoration processes. Scotland Excel continues to engage in cross-sector forums shaping sustainable public service delivery. Recent activity includes ongoing contribution to the delivery of the Transformation Action plan for The Construction Accord, and senior leader engagement in relation to the development of New Delivery Model for Social Infrastructure.	
3. Measure, record and report on our own carbon footprint impact linked to business activities, with the aim of reducing this via actions that may include refreshed and formalised policies on home working, virtual and in-person meetings, office space and resource use, and staff travel arrangements.		
1. Explore feasibility of measuring, recording and reporting Scotland Excel's carbon footprint linked to business activities.	Status: Ongoing Activity Internal planning is underway to explore approaches to measuring and reporting the carbon impact of business activities. Scotland Excel's office space is based within Renfrewshire House, a Renfrewshire Council office building. Renfrewshire Council is responsible for the management and operation of the building, including environmental factors such as energy use and waste management. This arrangement limits Scotland Excel's direct control over and visibility of key sources of carbon emissions. Scotland Excel will continue to explore approaches to measuring and reporting the carbon impact of business activities.	Scotland Excel's carbon impact contributes to the total carbon impact of Renfrewshire House. Developing an understanding of the total carbon impact of the office building can help Scotland Excel to identify key sources of waste and emissions, and to take a data-informed approach to reducing the impact of business activities.

2. Identify and implement means to reduce Scotland Excel's carbon footprint/positively impact linked to business activities.	Status: Ongoing Activity The number of car parking spaces available at Scotland Excel's office space has been reduced, encouraging alternative and more sustainable routes of travel to the office. The organisation has been focusing more on online events as opposed to in person, wherever possible. Reduced use of paper at events - Instead of printed materials, Scotland Excel have been using QR codes linking back to our website with the opportunity to download electronic versions of our documents.	Scotland Excel can reduce the short and long-term carbon impact of business activities by regularly identifying and implementing energy-saving measures. The implementation of carbon reducing measures can also provide financial benefits through reducing the running costs of business activities.
3. Review, amend and/or introduce relevant internal policies linked to positive carbon-related actions and business practices.	Status: Ongoing Activity Scotland Excel reviews policies periodically to ensure compliance with current workplace standards and practices. Carbon footprint and environmental considerations are incorporated into workplace policies where appropriate to reflect relevant policy. Policies continue to be refreshed as/when required.	The ongoing incorporation of carbon measures in internal policies can support the mandated reduction of Scotland Excel's environmental impact, whilst ensuring compliance and relevance to policy and regulation.
4. Deliver targeted and regularly refreshed training internally and externally, ensuring appropriate staff across the sector are fully aware of compliant options that can be utilised during the procurement process and lifetime of a contract arrangement that can maximise a positive impact on net zero targets and ambitions.		
1. Design suitable training for internal and external access.	Status: Ongoing Activity Staff have been undertaking Climate Awareness training as provided by The Scottish Government. Scotland Excel staff have a requisite level of climate awareness and net zero. This has been monitored and measured with the most recent completion figure of 91% of all staff completed training as of March 2026.	Staff training emphasises Scotland Excel's commitment to delivering net zero objectives and helps to foster an environmentally conscious culture within the organisation.

2. Deliver targeted training across the sector, including refresh as required.	Status: Ongoing Activity The Scotland Excel Academy continues to be sustainable through online delivery, eliminating the need for travel and its impact on the environment. Developing online resources will continue to reduce any environmental impact. The Academy's digital-first model supports Scotland's Net Zero ambitions: • Eliminated 299,000 learner travel miles, saving 121 tonnes of CO₂. • Reduced paper use by 100% through fully digital materials. • Reused digital assets across programmes, cutting development costs by 30%.	Building Net Zero awareness and skills to deliver on Net Zero planning throughout the procurement community.
5. Continue ongoing engagement with corporate procurement managers and other appropriate procurement colleagues within individual councils, ensuring clear lines of communication regarding council need and options available via Scotland Excel as portfolio develops. Activities are likely to include regular updates on progress of council net zero/climate change strategies, signposting to areas of interest and ultimately a level of commitment from councils to support and utilise options offered within Scotland Excel's contract portfolio linked to supporting net zero ambitions.		
1. Establish and maintain two-way communication regarding progress of strategy developments and delivery, individual council need and solutions available.	Status: Ongoing Activity Quarterly Business Reviews carried out between Council Procurement Managers and Scotland Excel Project and Account Managers facilitate a wide range of topics for discussion, including when appropriate, those linked to council net zero ambitions. All UIG's for procurement developments have clear focus on sustainability and on climate and net zero considerations, tailored to each development to be proportionate and realistic and to deliver real net zero outcomes throughout the lifetime of each framework.	A collaborative approach to planning is fostered. Feedback mechanism in place and opportunities for new initiatives to be explored.

2. Secure a level of commitment regarding participation as solutions are designed and made available.	Status: Ongoing Activity Scotland Excel's governance landscape continues to invite feedback at every engagement level. Communication at each forum now includes Net Zero as a key theme.	Information and feedback provided to elected members, executive officers, procurement functions and buyers.
6. Progress existing and develop new relationships with suitable stakeholders from across the public and private sector, spotlight good practice examples from within the supply base, focus upon and include net zero considerations within appropriate events such as seminars, user intelligence groups and mobilisation sessions, promote the availability of reuse and repair organisations and communicate regularly of Scotland Excel and this Strategy's progress to appropriate audience as it develops.		
1. Build relationships with stakeholders from across public and private sector.	Status: Ongoing Activity Scotland Excel sits on the cross sectoral Climate and Procurement Group forum chaired by The Scottish Government. Meetings are held quarterly. Strong relationships continue to develop with organisations such as Zero Waste Scotland, Scottish Futures Trust, Transport Scotland, Energy Technology Partnership, Civ-Tech Alliance and BE-ST. Scotland Excel and Zero Waste Scotland work collaboratively and most recently, ZWS have delivered targeted training on Circular Procurement to Scotland Excel's Strategic Procurement Team. Scotland Excel are members of Adaptation Scotland. Adaptation Scotland helps Scotland be better prepared and resilient to the effects of climate change. Scotland Excel is represented on the Zero Waste Scotland initiated Built Environment Mission Board for Circularity within the construction sector	Share best practice, monitor progress on net zero activities within procurement. Share ideas, information, industry intelligence, opportunities, innovation and best practice.

	(https://www.zerowastescotland.org.uk/resources/roadmap-and-mission-board-set-direction-scotlands-circular-built-environment.)	
2. Identify and share good practice examples within the supply base.	Status: Ongoing Activity Some recent examples include: Bitumen: there is growing interest in sustainability and environmentally friendly materials, prompting suppliers to innovate with new technologies, such as warm-mix bitumen and recycled bitumen products as well as packaging. Councils are increasingly seeking to incorporate these products into their roadworks to meet sustainability targets, thereby influencing supplier offerings and market dynamics. Education Materials – introduced minimum order values to encourage councils to place larger orders less frequently. Technical section of tender focused on how suppliers can encourage reduction of deliveries and offer more environmentally friendly products through the core list. Demolition – identified recyclable materials prior to demolition to ensure the method of demolition maximises the materials that can be salvaged and reused. Domestic Furniture and Furnishings - major focus is on the re-use of furniture (supporting circular economy). to re-use,	Benefits delivered to Scotland Excel members through contract management were shared more widely through the public sector, promoting good practice.

	recycling, and repair organisations, donating items for them to re-use, recycle, and repair, promoting a circular economy and reducing waste. Local Heat and Energy Efficiency Strategies framework - undertaking feasibility studies on decarbonised heating options for multi-storey domestic buildings as well as feasibility studies for a heat network. Scotland Excel continues to seek opportunities to publicise good practice achieved by councils working effectively with the Scotland Excel supply base.	
3. Ensure net zero is included as an area of focus at appropriate internal and external events.	Status: Ongoing Activity Opportunities are reviewed by User Intelligence Groups (UIG's) for all framework developments to ensure frameworks are planning for Net Zero outcomes. Scotland Excel staff have contributed to net zero related themes at several events or seminars including: - Construction Opportunity Workshop – wide stakeholder participation covering potential future construction opportunities to broaden the portfolio offering with key emphasis on carbon reduction and net zero - Scotland Excel supported the development of the Zero Waste Scotland Built Environment Roadmap and Energy Infrastructure Roadmap including the development of relevant Mission Boards. A focus of these discussions was to how best deploy public procurement and powers to actively shape the rewiring of the Energy Infrastructure and Built Environment sectors. - SOLACE Climate Change Plan workshop to help gather feedback on how the plan impacts urban, rural and island	Scotland Excel teams will continue to support engagement and focus on net zero. Scotland Excel has used these events to also learn from other key stakeholders on innovation and best practice within the net zero space. Working with public sector partners, use procurement activity to reward best practice in Circular Economy adoption & incentivise new best practice development and to work with public sector partners to determine how circular practices can be integrated within their enabling powers

	areas, with discussions focused on key sectors such as housing, transport, waste, and land use.	
4. Promote the availability of reuse and repair organisations.	Status: Ongoing Activity Examples where the promotion of circular procurement has been embedded in the framework are: Domestic Furniture and Furnishings framework. Including a specific lot to promote the re-use of furniture (supporting circular economy). to re-use, recycling, and repair organisations, donating items for them to re-use, recycle, and repair, promoting a circular economy and reducing waste. PPE framework – promoted through scored method statements on suppliers’ activities to reuse, recycle materials and products, their adoption of product take-back schemes and design for longevity built into their products.	Supporting the circular economy, reducing landfill and reducing carbon emissions.
5. Communicate progress of Strategy to appropriate audience as it develops.	Status: Ongoing Activity Discussions continue in a regular fashion with other public sector bodies and agencies – NHS, APUC, SPS, ZWS, Scottish Climate Intelligence Service (SCIS) as well as The Scottish Government.	Scotland Excel continues to communicate progress on net zero across the sector.

You can contact us or find out more online via the following routes:

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www.scotland-excel.org.uk

 [@ScotlandExcel](https://twitter.com/ScotlandExcel)  www.linkedin.com/company/scotland-excel

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