

Environment and Economy Board Plan – 21 June 2024

Strategic Goal – A Just Transition to a Net Zero Economy no later than 2045				
Priority	Update		Connection to Strategic Goal	Comments
Digital Connectivity Lead: Robert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The update provided in May is the best update we have on digital connectivity. The Scottish Government made an announcement on 17 April about digital connectivity. The statement is available online here. The Quarterly Digital Connectivity Update event for Local Authority Single Points of Contact (SPoCs) was held on 29 February 2024. Unfortunately COSLA was not able to attend as we had planned but a detailed bulletin from this meeting was sent out to all local authorities on 21 March. This bulletin provided information on: R100; the shared rural network; 5G Innovation Regions Projects; green data centres among other updates. If members are interested on the detail in the bulletin we can circulate this round the Board. COSLA met the industry group Mobile UK on 10 June as part of our ongoing liaison with them on mobile issues. We have not yet set up a Scottish Government briefing on digital connectivity but will plan to do this in the second half of the year. 	A	A Just Transition will require better and more equal access to high quality digital connectivity	The priority is marked amber due to challenges of delivering R100.

<p>Climate Change</p> <p>Lead: Silke</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See agenda item 5 	<p>A</p>	<p>The core aim of the strategic goal is to reach net zero emissions in a just manner no later than 2045. We also need to adapt to climate change and protect communities from the worst effects of global warming.</p>	<p>The priority is marked as amber as per the agreement at the September 2023 Board. This will be kept under review.</p>
<p>Biodiversity Policy</p> <p>Lead: Ed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COSLA, SOLACE and a representative from the Local Authority Biodiversity Network met with the Scottish Government on Tuesday 4 June to discuss local authority actions within the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy. This included actions to support local authority wide nature networks. COSLA will coordinate next steps with local authority colleagues. • COSLA also met Nature Scot on 13 June as part of our ongoing work with them on biodiversity. • A report on biodiversity actions is likely later in the year. 	<p>G</p>	<p>Human health, economic wellbeing and the natural environment are closely linked. Restoring biodiversity can help with a range of outcomes linked to a Just Transition.</p>	<p>This priority is marked as green for now as work has progressed satisfactorily</p>
<p>Heat and Energy</p> <p>Lead: Calum and Drew</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See agenda items 4a and 4b 	<p>G</p>	<p>Decarbonising heat is a core part of the Just Transition</p>	<p>The priority is marked green as work is progressing well with Scottish Government. It's possible that given</p>

				technical and financial challenges this could become amber in the future.
Place, Planning and the Wellbeing Economy Lead: Calum and Robert	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See agenda items 7 and 8 • Following the Scottish Government Cabinet reshuffle, Mr Ivan McKee – Minister for Public Finance – now has responsibility for planning. The Spokesperson held an initial meeting with the new Minister to discuss priorities moving forward and set out COSLA’s position on key elements of planning reform. • Following final approval by COSLA Leaders, a response was submitted to the Scottish Government Investing in Planning consultation, reflecting the views expressed by the Board at the previous meeting. • The Spokesperson is due to meet the Deputy First Minister to discuss the economy on 26 June. 	G	A shift to a net zero, wellbeing economy is core to the strategic goal.	
Europe, International & Post UK Exit from the EU Lead: Judith	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European elections took place in the EU27 between 6-9 June to elect 720 MEPs. The Group of the European People’s Party (EPP) representing the centre right has taken 189 seats, up from 13. At time of writing, it is likely therefore that the EPP candidate Ursula von de Leyer will once again become President of the Commission. Renew Europe representing liberal democrats and the Greens/EFA have taken the biggest losses. The European Parliament is due to meet 16-19 July in Strasbourg for a constitutive session, before starting in September. 	A	International treaties and regulations and the impact of the leaving the EU will all impact on the pace of transition to a net zero economy.	The priority is currently marked as amber as this reflects issues arising from the UK leaving the EU.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COSLA member Cllr Gary Robinson is attending a Policy Committee meeting of COSLA's European organisation CEMR (Council of European Municipalities and Regions) in Brussels 16/17 June. As well as participating in statutory business supporting governance of the organisation, Cllr Robinson will attend a European Leaders Summit and debates on Local and Regional Priorities and Rural/Urban Policy. Taking place two weeks after the EU elections, there is due also to be discussions around the results and priorities for the new EU mandate. • Cllr Tony Buchanan, as COSLA member at the Congress of Regional and Local Authorities at the Council of Europe, has been appointed rapporteur for an upcoming report on coastal erosion. This builds on prior work on international ocean governance. The report will seek to outline possible strategies and actions at local and regional levels to effectively counter coastal erosion and is due for adoption in 2025. • COSLA Brussels Office continues oversight of the EU/UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement. Under the terms of the agreement, the EU has launched dispute proceedings against the UK, requesting formal consultations over a recent UK ban on sandeel fishing in the North Sea. The complaint relates to lack of scientific evidence and of cooperation over management of shared fishing stocks. If consultations do not lead to agreement, the matter could be dealt with in arbitration tribunal. This is significant in terms of EU/UK relations, marking a first test of the dispute mechanisms within the trade agreement 			
<p>Transport</p> <p>Lead: Ed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders agreed the distribution recommendation for Tier 1 Active Travel funding from the Settlement and Distribution Group at the Leaders meeting on Friday 31 May. We expect allocation letters to councils to be circulated prior to the Board meeting. 	<p>G</p>	<p>Transport is Scotland's largest source of greenhouse gas emissions. It is a critical component of a Just transition.</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We expect the Settlement and Distribution Group to consider a paper on Road Safety Funding in June. • Officers are continuing work as part of the Public Health and Sustainable Transport Partnership Group. • Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Fund Programme Board was due to meet on Tuesday 18 June but has been cancelled. We expect to still meet with Transport Scotland officials to discuss electric vehicle infrastructure. 			
<p>Waste and the Circular Economy</p> <p>Lead: Silke</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See agenda item 6 for Extended Producer Responsibility for Packaging Waste (pEPR) • We are in the process of taking forward the recommendations from Leaders on seeking full cost recovery from Scottish Government incurred by Local Authorities adapting their waste management operations in line with new regulations for Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs). • We are working in the joint Scottish Government/Local Government Waste Policy forum to drive a more strategic and forward looking approach to local government action in the Circular economy and waste route map to 2030 (Scotland), especially with regard to significant infrastructure investments. • A number of policy measure in the route map are of concern to us, such as considerations for new statutory duties (food waste, garden waste, bulky waste uplifts), changes to the WEEE Directive (Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment), or proposals to include Energy from Waste (EfW) emissions in the Emission Trading Scheme (ETS). 	G	<p>The elimination of waste and the smarter use of resource to improve recycling and reuse are critical to a Just Transition.</p>	<p>There is good progress on cooperation with Scottish Government on Scottish national policy.</p> <p>There are concerns about UK wide policy measures.</p>

Priority Workstream	Update	Milestone	Desired Outcome	RAG
Circular Economy Bill	<p>Following substantial work with Scottish Government, during stage 2 of the parliamentary process an amendment to the Bill was accepted without division that removes financial penalties from the Bill.</p> <p>Instead there will be a joint improvement-led action programme between Scottish and Local Government through which local targets are jointly set for no earlier than 2030 between Scottish Government and individual local authorities, and underpinned by funding agreed as sufficient to enable their delivery and justified by robust evidence.</p> <p>The Minister has also dropped her request to include a provision on public reporting of such local targets during Stage 3 of the Bill.</p>	<p>Circular Economy bill is in the Scottish Parliament.</p> <p>We have achieved our milestone that set out that we are looking to achieve changes to the Bill in line with the position adopted by this Board in stage 2.</p> <p>Co-production (between Scottish and Local Government) of relevant new measures under the “Delivering Scotland's circular economy - route map to 2025 and beyond”</p>	<p>A Circular Economy Bill that enables improvement of Local Government service provision in line with our interests, and for any new requirements placed on Local Government to be fully funded and co-produced.</p>	G

RAG Key

Green

- COSLA's policy work with Government and/or other partners is proceeding with minimal issues
- Delivery of a policy or project is proceeding as planned with minimal delays
- Policy differences between COSLA and Scottish Government are minimal.

A Leader report may be required at the end for the final sign off on a policy, but will have minimal political implications.

Amber

- COSLA's policy work Government and/or other partners is facing significant issues
- Delivery of a policy or project is facing more significant delays which if not mitigated could have implications for local government
- There are larger policy differences between the COSLA and Government

A Leaders report may be needed to agree a COSLA position on how best to proceed. This may have political issues for some or all Local Authorities.

Red

- COSLA's policy work with Government and/or other partners is facing major issues which have implications for the whole of local government.
- Delivery of a policy or project has stalled or is off track in a major way, which has implications for local government.
- Policy differences are significant and have the potential to lead to a major disagreement between Governments.

An urgent report for Leaders is needed which may have major political implications for all Local Authorities.