



2030 Climate Strategy

Delivering a Net Zero,
Climate Ready Edinburgh

Executive Summary
Dec 2021

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Foreword

Climate change is the biggest threat facing our planet. That is why the World Health Organisation has placed climate change and air pollution at the very top of its list of threats to [public health](#).¹

It's also why the City of Edinburgh Council declared a climate emergency; established an independent Climate Commission; and set a target for the city to be net zero by 2030.

As noted by the Climate Emergency Response Group, if Scotland as a whole is to meet its 2045 target, our cities need to make faster progress and Edinburgh needs to play its part by striving to reach net zero by 2030.²

As the capital city of an industrialised country where the industrial revolution was born, we have a responsibility to act now to play our part globally and to protect and improve the city for generations to come. The faster we can reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the more we can reduce the damaging consequences.

2020 saw the world work together to combat the public health crisis created by a global pandemic. That shone a light on what communities and organisations can achieve in the face of an emergency.

2021 has seen world leaders gathering in Scotland for the 26th Conference of Parties (COP26) to agree actions to limit global temperature rise.

We need to act now to ensure that the legacy of COP26 is renewed action on climate change – building on the capacity for collaborative action that communities and organisations demonstrated during the pandemic – and is driven at the scale and pace needed to respond to the climate and nature emergency.

This means that as we continue to deal with the lasting effects of the pandemic, we need to ensure the city's recovery is both green and fair and one which accelerates progress on reducing the city's emissions and adapting the city to be resilient to climate change.

To achieve that goal, we need to improve air quality, protect and enhance our thriving green spaces, support sustainable travel and continue to create energy efficient, good quality places to live and work, to make Edinburgh a healthier and happier place to live.

Young people have been at the forefront of demanding faster action on climate change and our residents have told us they want Edinburgh to become a sustainable, fair and thriving city.

Around 80 per cent of people responding to the consultation on a draft of this strategy supported its vision, aims and actions. The question is not whether we act, but how we deliver change individually and as a city.

The challenge we face is clear. We must reduce our transport emissions 12 times faster; emissions from buildings need to be reduced twice as fast year on year; and our homes need to be retrofitted 50 times faster.

The good news is we know from independent research that we can get over 65 per cent of the way there with actions that pay for themselves within their lifespan.³

We also know that taking climate action will create opportunities for the city that can offer new and exciting skilled jobs and make Edinburgh a leader in green industries and innovations.

This strategy sets out how we will enable, support and deliver action to meet our net zero ambition.

It is aimed predominantly at partners within the city who have a duty to transition to net zero, those with significant city emissions footprints, and those with power and budgets to make impactful change.

However, it also speaks to citizens, communities and smaller businesses, highlighting actions they could take to help drive down emissions.

Our communities, businesses and residents have a strong record of climate action and I know the city will work together to deliver change at the speed and scale needed.

Together we have enormous power and influence over the emissions in the city and we can create a thriving net zero future for the benefit of everyone.

CLlr Adam McVey, Leader of the City of Edinburgh Council

CLlr Cammy Day, Depute Leader of the City of Edinburgh Council

¹ https://cerg.scot/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/CERG_Report_Final_Sept_2021.pdf

² *Delivering on Scotland's response to the climate emergency*, Climate Emergency Response Group, September 2021

³ [A Net Zero Carbon Roadmap for Edinburgh, PCAN, 2020](#)

A net zero vision for the city

Our vision for a net zero, climate resilient city by 2030

Citizens told us in the City Vision⁴ that they want Edinburgh to be:



A thriving city
that is clean,
green and
sustainable.



A pioneering city
built on data,
culture, and
business.



A welcoming city
that is happy,
safe, and
healthy.



A fair city
that is inclusive,
affordable,
and connected.

Climate action will contribute to this vision by addressing every aspect of our lives and city activity. From the houses we live in and the buildings we work in, to the way we travel about the city, the jobs that we hold, and the way we use our consumer power.

This strategy is about more than reducing greenhouse gas emissions. It's about creating a city which is cleaner, healthier and greener, with natural habitats helping wildlife to thrive and helping to protect the city from flooding and other climate change impacts, and where:

- People live in neighbourhoods with easy access to greenspaces and local services reducing the need to travel.
- Homes are well-insulated, energy efficient and heated and powered by low-cost, renewable energy.
- More people work from home or in local hubs more of the time.
- The city has a network of safe and attractive active travel routes, and an integrated world-class sustainable public transport system, which is affordable for everyone.
- Most citizens find they no longer need a car, and a network of car clubs and electric vehicle charging hubs is available to support those who do.
- The city centre is re-imagined as a place for people walking, cycling and wheeling, with excellent public transport accessibility and with the needs of the most vulnerable fully catered for.
- Edinburgh is a hub for net zero innovation, with a new breed of sustainable local businesses creating local jobs and skills development opportunities.

This strategy lays out how, as a city, we will enable, support and deliver action to meet our net zero ambition. This will require collaboration between a wide range of partners across the public, private and voluntary sectors, communities, and individual citizens, with governance and decision-making infrastructure that supports bold and decisive action at the scale and pace needed to respond to the climate emergency.

This strategy is supported by a detailed implementation plan which sets out actions partners are already committing to in the early stages of our journey to net zero. We will work with citizens and partners to develop, refine and expand this implementation plan as we learn from immediate actions and seize new opportunities as technology and innovation evolves at the local, national and global level.

Summary of the 2030 Climate Strategy approach and priority actions

This strategy sets out the clear and practical steps Edinburgh will take to tackle the challenge of climate change and achieve our aim of becoming a net zero city by 2030.

Figure 1 illustrates our strategic approach and principles, which will drive city-wide action on climate change. These underpin our seven priority actions and the wider actions set out in the thematic chapters which follow.

Throughout this strategy, the Council and key city partners are focused on putting in place actions we can implement now, using approaches that we know work, and drawing from learning and experiences from other cities.⁵

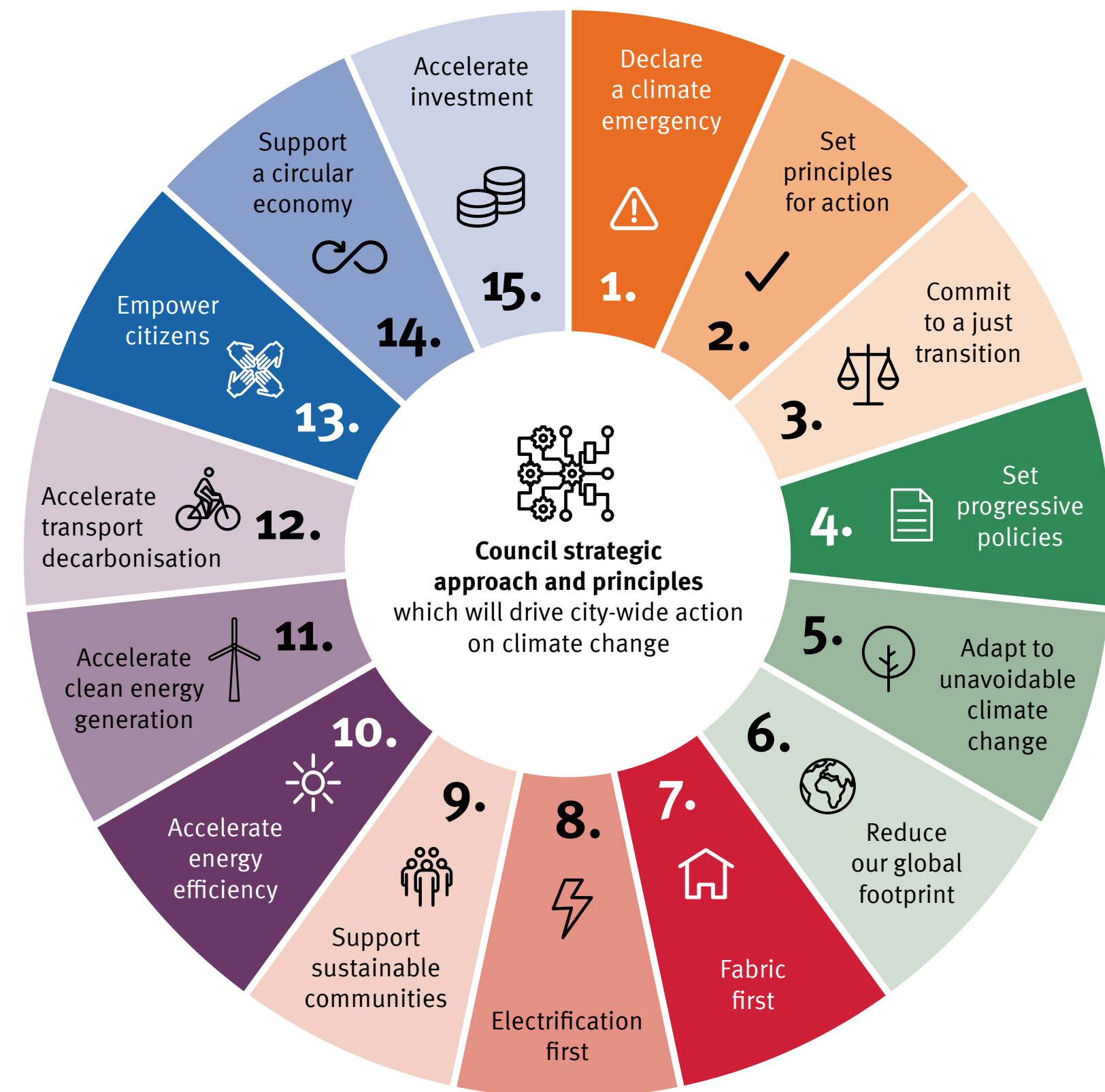





Figure 1: Council strategic approach and principles, which will drive city-wide action on climate change

⁵ Key city partners who have agreed to support the delivery of actions are named against the relevant actions and milestones as set out in the implementation plan.

Principles for climate action

In developing this strategy, our approach has been guided by seven core principles:





-  **A Just Transition:** Everyone must share in the benefits of the transition to net zero – focusing on fair work, tackling poverty and inequality and ensuring that everyone can share in the city’s success.
-  **Progressive policy:** We will work with the Scottish Government to develop regulatory frameworks that are progressive, promote innovation and create incentives for citizens and businesses to make practical changes in the way they live and work.
-  **Adapting to unavoidable climate change and preventing future emissions:** We will take actions and make changes to ensure the city is resilient to future climate change and prevent future emissions, as well as reducing those we currently produce.
-  **Reducing our global footprint:** We will create a more circular economy, supporting action to reduce emissions that occur in other parts of the world as result of purchasing and another activity within the city.
-  **Fabric first:** We will improve the energy efficiency of the city’s buildings, adopting fabric first approaches to reduce energy demand and emissions.
-  **Electrification first:** We will ensure the network’s capacity can respond to the substantive increases in the city’s electricity demand while keeping an open mind to innovation in other energy sources, such as green hydrogen.
-  **Creating 20-minute neighbourhoods:** We will make it easier for citizens to access the services and amenities they need locally.

The Council will play a leadership role

The City of Edinburgh Council has a key role to play in providing city leadership on climate change.

It will use the levers that are within the control or influence of the Council to enable net zero action in the city.

These levers include the ability to:

-  build strategic relationships and collaborations for change
-  deliver high-quality, low carbon infrastructure and services
-  make strategic investments to drive change
-  lobby for change as the capital of Scotland and a major UK city

Priorities for climate action

This strategy recognises that no one action will deliver a net zero city. We need to tackle climate change on all fronts as part of a whole-system approach. But we also need to be clear on our key strategic priorities for urgent action.

The following seven priority actions respond to the top sources of emissions within the city and the key enabling activities needed to support action to address them.

They are part of a comprehensive programme of action set out in the full 2030 Climate Strategy and supporting implementation plan.

Priority 1: We will accelerate energy efficiency in homes and buildings

Energy to heat and power the city’s homes and other buildings accounts for 68 per cent of the city’s emissions. Many of the city’s buildings will require energy efficiency upgrades (or ‘retrofitting’) if we are to reach net zero. Strategic actions to support this include:

- Developing a new mechanism and business plan to support Edinburgh’s citizens to affordably retrofit their homes.
- Outlining a collective programme of investment in retrofitting the city’s public buildings.

Priority 2: We will enable the development of a citywide programme of heat and energy generation and distribution

Demand for energy is set to increase as the city’s population grows. There is a need to ensure the city’s energy networks can meet this demand and provide clean, affordable energy for our citizens and businesses. Strategic actions to support this include:

- Developing a citywide heat and energy masterplan, supported by a pipeline of infrastructure proposals, with the BioQuarter and South East Edinburgh developments acting as exemplars.
- Working with Energy for Edinburgh to develop proposals for community energy generation schemes that deliver clean energy and help build community wealth.

Priority 3: We will accelerate the decarbonisation of public transport

The way we move people, goods and services around the city accounts for 31 per cent of the city's total emissions. To achieve net zero, we need to develop the city's public transport network to deliver affordable, integrated, net zero solutions for all trip types. Strategic actions to support this include:

- Implementing the City Mobility Plan, prioritising investment in expanding the active travel network, connecting communities to services and amenities in their neighbourhoods.
- In partnership with Lothian Buses, deliver two pilots for large vehicles on EV and hydrogen, then using the learning from these pilots to develop a costed plan for decarbonising the bus fleet.
- Developing a plan to maximise opportunities for shared public service charging hubs at strategic city locations.

Priority 4: We will renew the focus on climate resilience and accelerate adaptation of the city

Climate change will bring increased flooding, coastal erosion and more frequent severe weather – causing damage to the economy and disruption for citizens. We need to adapt our communities, economy and natural and built environments to be resilient to unavoidable climate change. Strategic actions to support this include:

- Setting new planning policy and guidance within the City Plan 2030, to support sustainable net zero development and growth of the city.
- Developing a costed climate change risk assessment for the city and a new city adaptation plan, recognising the full value of the city's natural assets.
- Developing a pipeline of adaptation investment proposals, collaborating with City Region Deal partners on regional approaches to adaptation and opportunities to enhance the natural environment.

Priority 5: We will support citizen empowerment, behaviour change and community activism

Action by Edinburgh's citizens is an essential and necessary part of reducing the city's emissions and securing a sustainable city for future generations. We need to support citizens to be informed and engaged and create spaces where we can design solutions together. Strategic actions to support this include:

- Sponsoring an independent Edinburgh Community Climate Forum, to be co-created by EVOC, Our Future Edinburgh and Edinburgh citizens.
- Delivering a series of public awareness raising campaigns, supported by climate action toolkits for citizens and community groups.

Priority 6: We will support business transition and a green circular economy

The climate emergency is the greatest threat Edinburgh's economy has faced since the pandemic. Planning for a green recovery from Covid offers an opportunity for the city to rebuild sustainably, increasing Edinburgh's resilience to future economic shocks. Strategic actions to support this include:

- Supporting and encourage city businesses to sign up to the Edinburgh Climate Compact and commit to reduce their emissions.
- Establishing a business-led Just Economic Transition Forum to convene the city business community and provide leadership on the sector's transition to net zero.
- Supporting the launch of a new Business for Good programme through Edinburgh CAN B to provide practical support for city businesses to transition to net zero.

Priority 7: We will collaborate to develop a citywide programme of green investment proposals

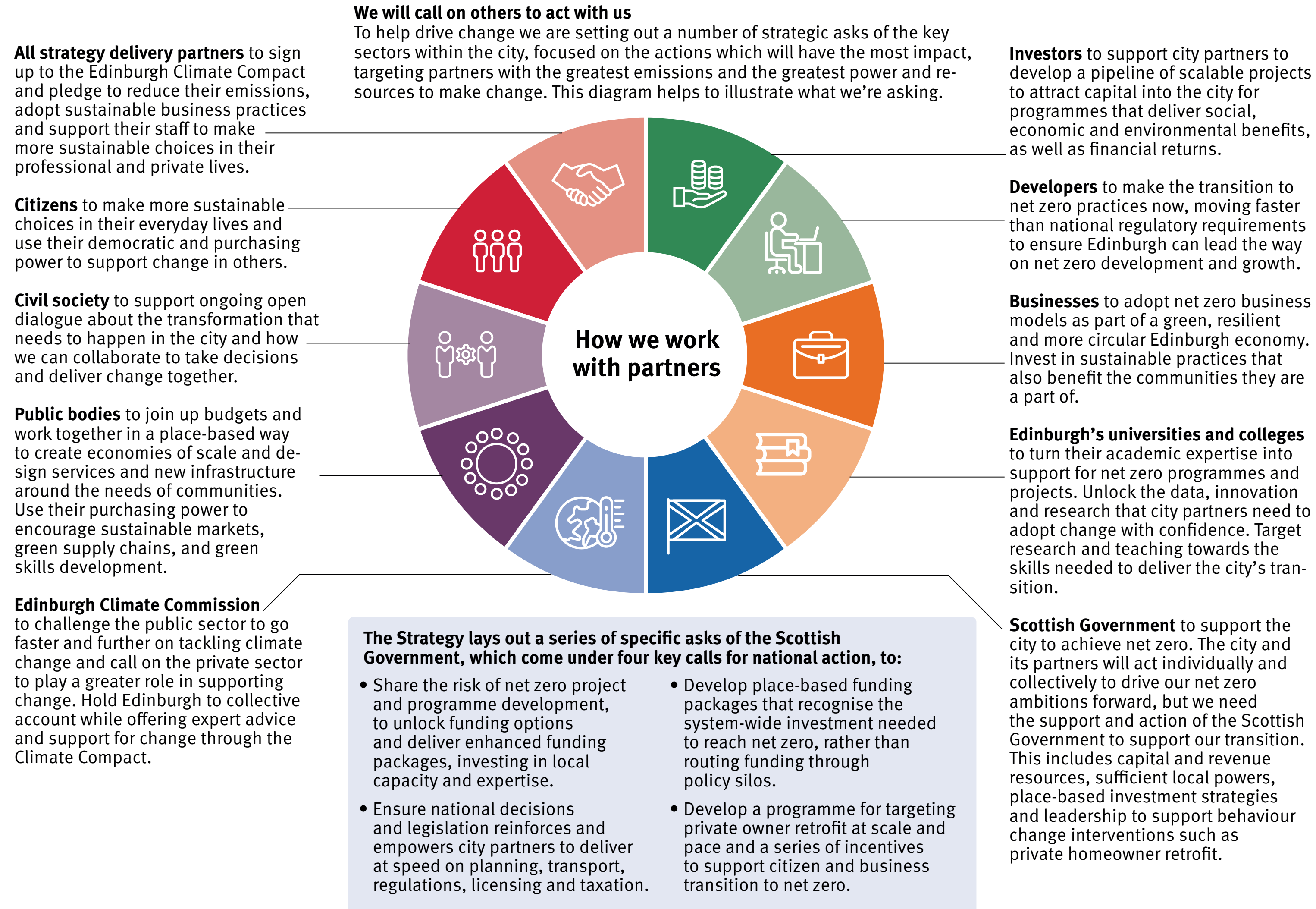
Research tells us that we can get 65 per cent of the way to net zero through interventions that pay for themselves over time. Yet the city faces challenges in developing projects at the scale required to attract investment. We need to align public sector budgets and connect investors to a portfolio of city green investment opportunities.

Strategic actions to support this include:

- Establishing a new Climate Strategy Investment Programme Board to consider, align and agree investment proposals.
- Developing a Green Investment Plan to support the city's transition to net zero.
- A full list of delivery actions is given in the 2030 Climate Strategy and its supporting implementation plan.

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How we work with partners



How we take decisions together

Creating a governance framework that supports effective action at speed and scale

Achieving net zero by 2030 will require city-wide collaboration at a level, depth and pace that exceeds the city response to Covid.

A new Climate Strategy Investment Programme Board will bring city partners⁶ together to:

- Provide city wide leadership in creating a green, clean and sustainable future for the city.
- Oversee, agree and drive delivery of five thematic workstreams tasked with developing the investment pipeline for the city.
- Develop a green infrastructure investment plan for Edinburgh.

The Programme Board would be accountable to the Edinburgh Partnership Board and comprised of senior officers with the authority to commit their organisation (subject to their own governance arrangements) to the investment proposals considered.

The Board will be supported by five workstreams, led by city partners, and responsible for the strategic approach and development of the project pipeline for that theme.

Workstreams will be led by key partners and will drive activity across the following priority areas:

- Adaptation
- Energy efficient public buildings
- Citywide heat and energy
- Transport infrastructure
- Just economic transition

The LOIP Delivery Group⁷ will contribute to driving wider strategic climate action as part of its work to make sure Edinburgh residents have enough money to live on, access to work, training and learning opportunities, and a good place to live.

City Region Deal partners will be represented throughout the structures, with responsibility for interfacing with the City Region Deal Partnership to identify and action opportunities for strategic collaboration at the regional level.

Edinburgh's Climate Commission will continue to work independently to influence and provide constructive challenge and expertise to all parts of the city as we work to deliver our net zero ambition.

The strategy's delivery will be informed and driven by citizen's views – through the Council's democratic processes, the work of the Commission, and a new **Edinburgh Community Climate Forum**, to be established by EVOC and Our Future Edinburgh to provide citizens with information, support, and a mechanism for collaboration on climate action at both the city and neighbourhood level to co-produce better outcomes for communities.

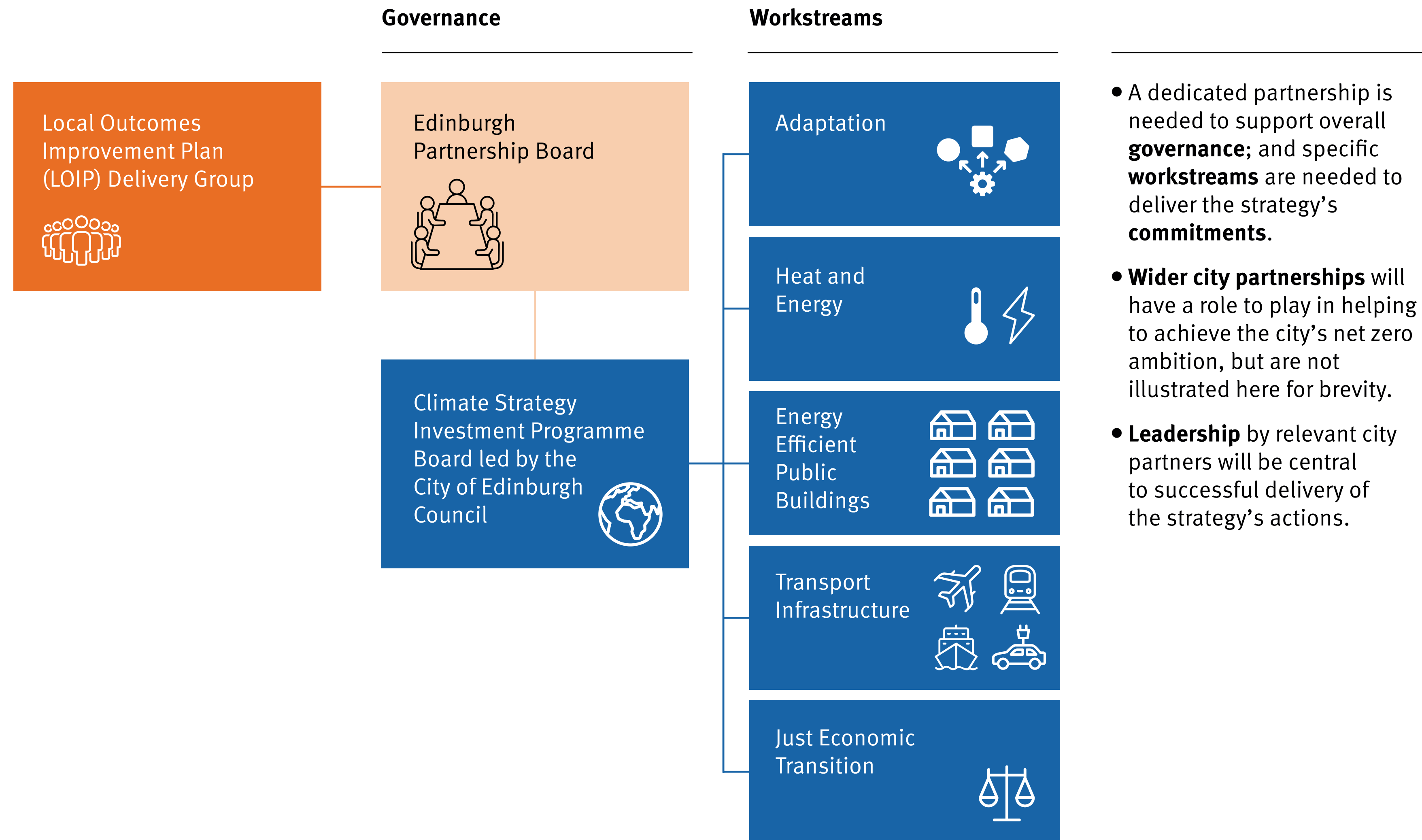
These structures are not exhaustive – there are many other groups that have a role to play in supporting whole-system climate action and the governance framework described in the strategy is intended to interact with that wider landscape as needed to drive forward city climate action at pace and scale.

Figure 2 on the following page, sets out proposed governance and delivery arrangements to support the city to deliver the 2030 Climate Strategy.

6 Full membership of the Programme Board is under discussion with city partners. Initial core members include City of Edinburgh Council; NHS Lothian; Edinburgh University; SP Energy Networks; Scottish Gas; Scottish Water; Scottish Futures Trust

7 The Local Outcome Improvement Delivery Group is part of Edinburgh Partnership

Figure 2: Proposed governance and delivery mechanisms



Listening to citizens and empowering communities in all we do

Citizens have the power to drive change

Edinburgh's citizens have huge influence over the city's emissions through their power to collectively demand change from national and local government, the private and public sector, local businesses and each other.

Citizens must be active participants, engaging in and designing the actions to deliver a net zero city. City partners need to engage, collaborate and listen to citizens to secure that trust and support for change.

Citizens also have the power to make choices in their own lives which can contribute to climate action.

We believe the Council in particular, has an important role in supporting all citizens to be able to make changes and ensure no one is left behind: delivering a fair and just transition.

We will collaborate to empower young people

Young people have been at the forefront of raising awareness on climate change and demanding change from those in power.

We will ensure young people are at the centre of decisions that will determine the kind of city they inherit. We will work with children and young people – through schools and in communities – to listen to their views, to ensure young people from all backgrounds are informed and able to have their voice heard.

We will engage to build and maintain consent for change

We will involve citizens in decisions about the targeting, scope and speed of large-scale change through a new Community Climate Forum and will ask for citizen support on changes which protect the city for future generations.

As the scale and complexity of actions increase, we will facilitate more in-depth engagement approaches, such as citizen juries or similar models, to ensure citizens' views are central in decision-making.

We will ensure a fair transition to net zero

We know vulnerable groups and people in poor health will be more affected by poor air quality, increased damp in buildings, and severe fluctuations in weather such as heatwaves.

Those on lower-incomes may also find addressing the impacts of climate change harder. For example, meeting the costs associated with flood damage to property, or of switching from gas to more sustainable heating systems.

We are committed to working with national and local government, public bodies, trade unions, the private sector and citizens and communities to ensure that climate change does not disproportionately impact anyone in our society.

We will ensure there is equal access to opportunities

It's estimated that Scotland's transition to a low-carbon economy could create up to 367,000 jobs, with Edinburgh being well-placed to secure a substantial share of these. We will work with city partners, to align skills development programmes to support Edinburgh residents to access new green jobs and target those at greatest risk of poverty.⁸

We will support the creation of net zero communities

Our vision is for all of Edinburgh's neighbourhoods and communities to be net zero.

The Council will work with communities, Community Councils, Edinburgh's Universities in one of the 20-minute neighbourhood hubs to scope and develop funding bids for local pilots to understand what it would take to become net zero. The pilot scope will be co-produced with citizens and will link to Local Place Plans.

We will raise awareness about climate change

We know from consultation and engagement that many Edinburgh citizens are not fully aware of their carbon footprint, or all the actions they could take to reduce it.

We will deliver awareness raising campaigns to ensure people have access to information about climate change, how to measure their carbon footprint, and where to access support to reduce their emissions. This will include information about where people can get financial and other help to make changes.

We will focus on making sustainable choices easier

We know that many citizens are very well-informed about climate change, but face barriers to making the changes they would like to.

The 2030 Climate Strategy sets out the actions we will take to create the conditions where sustainable choices are cheaper and easier for citizens to make. They include:

- Improving sustainable public transport and active travel infrastructure.
- Ensuring people can access the services and amenities they need locally.
- Developing sustainable models of public services which improve health and the environment.
- Developing projects to provide clean and affordable energy.
- Delivering energy efficient affordable housing.
- Developing funding mechanisms to support private owners to retrofit their homes.
- Creating new green and fair work and skills development opportunities.
- Improving support for businesses to transition to net zero.
- Supporting local food growing and ensuring citizens have opportunities to reduce, re-use and recycle.

The Council will also call on Scottish Government to improve existing support schemes and develop new approaches to incentivise change – especially in decarbonising homes.

The ask of citizens

The everyday choices we all make can achieve big emissions reductions, and citizens all have power to influence others, from big business to public policy.

We're asking citizens to:



Understand your carbon footprint:

Use online and other resources to learn about your impact on the environment.



Make the easy decisions:

Like leaving the car at home for shorter trips or reducing your food waste. These can often save you money or time and can often improve your quality of life as well.



Consider and explore investment:

Many changes, such as home insulation or heating, have an upfront cost but repay that cost over time.



Use your purchasing power:

You can send powerful signals to businesses by choosing products and services that are more environmentally friendly. This includes locally grown food, low-packaging items, and goods and services which use renewable energy and recycled materials.



Use your democratic power:

Make your voice heard in local and national decision-making and tell elected representatives what future you want.



Stay involved:

Keep engaging with local services, community groups and neighbours. Support the right changes when you see them, advocate for change when you don't.

Investing in change

Organisations and businesses across the city are already investing in climate action through their fleets, buildings, energy sources and work practices.

But new investment will still be needed, particularly to support access to upfront capital investment in buildings and infrastructure.

Aligning public sector budgets

Public sector organisations such as the Council, the NHS, the Scottish Ambulance Service, Edinburgh's universities, Police Scotland and the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service have legal duties to transition to net zero and are already investing in climate action.

Through stronger more focused partnership working and a new Climate Strategy Investment Programme Board, we will align our operational and investment plans – where that makes sense – to maximise the collective impact on carbon emissions, share knowledge, skills and capacity as well as investment and operational risks and opportunities.

Maximising national funding opportunities

We will make sure that Edinburgh is well placed to successfully access the funding which will be available over the coming years from the UK Government, the Scottish Government and other funding bodies such as the National Lottery.

We will focus on accessing funding streams that allow us to meet strategic objectives of:

- Adapting to new post-Covid realities such as changing how and where we work and enhancing active travel infrastructure.
- Preparing the city for the development of clean energy heat networks.
- Adapting to the effects of climate change by using ecosystem services and enhancing biodiversity.

- Partnering with Scottish Government to develop and test new financing models for transformational interventions, including the retrofitting of the privately-owned housing stock across Edinburgh.

Developing large scale place-based investment programmes

We will develop a Green Investment Plan for the city, including a pipeline of large-scale/aggregated investible projects that focus on delivering the major heat and energy, transport, EV, greenspace, and energy efficient housing infrastructure needed to make the transition to net zero.

These projects will provide an opportunity to create systemic change, enable rapid decarbonisation and adaptation to climate change, while creating new jobs, new green markets for local industry, and improving quality of life for citizens.

We will work with finance and academic experts across the UK to develop strategic approaches to mobilising place-based climate finance. We will call on the Scottish Government to work with us to connect national funding to a more strategic place-based approach.

Fostering Edinburgh's investment potential

Edinburgh is the financial capital of Scotland and a recognised leading global economic hub. Investment in green technology and business practices is increasingly at the heart of the finance industry and the city is uniquely placed to accelerate progress as a world leader in research and data innovation.

We will foster the investment potential of Edinburgh by working with partners to develop ambitious and attractive projects and proposals, test innovative finance models, including blended finance, and new approaches to sharing risk and reward.

We will create a portfolio of green investment opportunities that will enable us to easily match investors to suitable projects in Edinburgh.

We will identify opportunities for Edinburgh to develop demonstrator projects with citizens to solving the biggest challenges on the journey to sustainability while building local skills capability and capacity, and test new financing structures.

Unlocking private investment opportunities

We will connect investors to city opportunities, using models which share risk and reward more equitably, and allow much larger sums of money to be raised through private sector investment.

By working with providers of capital, such as the Lothian Pension Fund, we will identify compelling opportunities to match patient finance to large-scale net zero projects which will benefit both investors and citizens.

Measuring our success

Tracking and reporting

City emissions will be tracked on an annual basis and progress measured against a target trajectory to net zero.

We assume citizen and partner action will take time to build and will rapidly accelerate from around 2026 as learning from early action, innovation and investment come together to drive whole-system change at pace.

City and Council emissions will be monitored and disclosed publicly on an annual basis through CDP⁹ and the Public Bodies Climate Change Duties Report¹⁰. Signatories of the Climate Compact have also committed to monitor and disclose their organisational emissions.

We will track progress towards the Strategy's actions through the supporting 2030 Climate Strategy Implementation Plan, and establish a new governance framework for overseeing and monitoring delivery.

We will participate in a range of national and global schemes and initiatives, shown in *Table 1*, supporting climate action and contributing to transparent reporting of policy commitments and performance.

Table 1: Table showing the local, national and global initiatives which the City of Edinburgh Council are part of

Local	Edinburgh Climate Commission	
National	UK100	
Global	Cities Race to Resilience	
	Cities Race to Zero	
	CDP	
	Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy	
	Climate-KIC	
	Cities CAN B	

Carbon Scenario Tool

The Council has collaborated with the Edinburgh Climate Change Institute (ECCI) to develop an open source quantitative emissions calculation tool.

The 'Carbon Scenario Tool' has been designed to inform Council decision making, by giving councillors and officers validated data on emissions impact at project, programme or city level, presented as a dashboard which includes wider sustainability impacts, such as air quality.

Measuring co-benefits

Alongside net zero emissions we will monitor, measure and report progress against wider sustainability objectives and co-benefits. This will provide a comprehensive view of Edinburgh's wider sustainability progress.

Progress towards these wider outcomes will be monitored using the indicators set out in the 2030 Climate Strategy Implementation Plan.

⁹ [CDP Disclosure Insight Action website](#)

¹⁰ [Sustainable Scotland Network reports](#)



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