



BUILD THE FUTURE **TOGETHER**

Local Election
Manifesto 2022

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FOREWORD

ANAS SARWAR MSP, **SCOTTISH LABOUR LEADER**

This election comes at a crucial time – and for too many people, an incredibly difficult time.

The worst cost of living crisis in decades has left households struggling with unaffordable bills, rising fuel costs, and expensive weekly food shops.

It shouldn't be as hard as it is for people to get by. Families should be able to have hope for their children's future, businesses should be able to thrive, and all of us should have access to the services on which we most rely.

All across Scotland people are rightly optimistic for the future – they just want a bit of help to deliver the potential they see all around them.

This should be our driving mission at every single level of government, starting with the local councillors you are electing in May.

Scottish Labour are clear that these elections should be about bringing down bills, reinvigorating services, and building a better future for our communities – not division and political bickering.

So this May, when you go to the polls, you can choose Labour candidates who'll put the issues that matter to you, your family and your community first.

This manifesto is our vision on how to build safe, thriving, sustainable communities right across Scotland. It sets out Scottish Labour's commitment to do everything in our power, at every

level of government, to tackle the cost of living crisis.

We will make politicians in Edinburgh and London wake up to the harsh reality of rising bills, demand an end to brutal cuts to our local services, and fight for power to be pushed out into communities.

Scottish Labour will put your communities and your priorities first.

We will prioritise a real education recovery for children who've lost out on so much.

We will fight for a public transport system that gets you where you need to go and doesn't cost the earth.

We will jump start housebuilding plans – so that home ownership and a decent place to live aren't just distant dreams.

We saw during the pandemic what we can achieve when we work together. That's why politics must be about bringing our country and our people together – not the politics of anger and division.

We cannot go back to old politics and the 'us vs them' arguments of the past.

We can choose to do more. We can choose a better future.

On May 5th choose to elect local champions who will put you, your family and your community first.

Vote Scottish Labour and let's build the future together.

Anas Sarwar¹

COST OF LIVING

Across the country, households are facing a cost of living crisis. Bills are going up, the price of petrol is rising, and the weekly shop is more expensive than ever.

Neither of Scotland's governments understand how bad things are. The support being offered by the Conservatives and the SNP is nowhere near enough to tackle the rising costs that individuals and families are facing. If anything, the crisis is being exacerbated by government choices – the Conservatives have put up taxes, while the SNP have increased rail fares and upped water charges.

Scottish Labour believe that it should be the priority of every level of government – from local councillors to the Prime Minister and First Minister – to focus on bringing bills down.

Scottish Labour have set out a clear plan to tackle the crisis:

- **A windfall tax on the booming profits of oil and gas producers** to help reduce household bills by up to £600.
- **Grants not loans from the UK Government** – so that the £200 rebate on energy bills does not just stack up costs for future years.
- **In Scotland, a £400 Fuel Costs Payment for those who are hardest hit**, to ensure that financial support is targeted to those who need it most.
- **Reversing the rise to water charges and a £100 rebate for every household**, paid for by the huge cash surplus build up by Scottish Water.
- **Topping up the Welfare Fund**, so local councils can ensure that no one in need of support falls through the cracks.
- **Capping bus tickets and delivering half price rail fares for three months**, using the powers we have in Scotland to ease household travel costs.

Combined, our proposals would deliver over £1,000 of support to those who need it most. As the cost of living bites, families and households need support now. But we also want to keep household bills low in the longer term by:

- **Abolishing the unfair council tax** and replacing it with a fairer alternative based on properly values and the ability to pay.
- **Upgrading the energy efficiency of Scotland's homes**, protecting households from unaffordable, upfront costs and working towards every home having an energy efficiency C rating by 2030.
- **Creating a publicly owned energy company** to improve our energy security. A public company would direct investment in low carbon energy, help create high-skilled and green jobs for workers, tackle fuel poverty, and reduce costs for consumers.
- **Enshrining a right to food in law**, and ensuring every local area has a Good Food Nation plan, to tackle food insecurity and ensure that everyone in Scotland can access good, affordable, nutritious and culturally suitable food.



THRIVING & SAFE COMMUNITIES

The pandemic has shown us the importance of caring for the local areas in which we live.

As we look to the future, Scottish Labour want to build communities that well looked after and promote a good quality of life for all. So many of the key services we all depend on are run by local authorities. It is their responsibility to maintain and protect our shared public spaces, and they are the custodians of many of the sports facilities, libraries, museums, parks, community hubs and cultural festivals that enrich our lives.

To achieve our vision of strong, thriving communities across Scotland we need to protect these essential services. Across Scotland, Labour will:

- **Keep our streets clean and make our neighbourhoods places we can be proud of.** That means restoring the frequency of bin collections, tackling fly-tipping and investing in cleansing services.
- **Stand up for local libraries and promote reading and digital access for all.** We will fight for the reopening of libraries in local areas and ensure every child has access to a library membership.
- **Ensure councils are responsive to local people,** guaranteeing fast response times to enquiries and ensuring there is always an option to speak on the phone or face to face.
- **Protect the arts and cultural sectors in our communities,** by supporting the theatres, museums, galleries and cultural institutions in our local areas and ensuring they remain open and accessible for all.

- **Improve access to sports facilities within local areas.** We will ensure there are affordable hire rates for school and council facilities, explore the feasibility of taking arm's length leisure trusts back in-house and ensure every community has access to a free and safe space for exercise and recreation to support improved fitness and mental health.
- **Strengthen local democracy** by campaigning for local people to have the authority to decide how decision-making and power should be exercised.

We will only be able to create fairer and stronger communities if our public spaces are places where everyone feels secure and free from the fear of crime. **Scottish Labour want our neighbourhoods to be places that are safe for everyone by:**

- **Piloting physical space safety audits in our towns** and ensure local planners have guidance on creating public spaces that are safe with good street lighting, open spaces and priority on safe walking routes.
- **Prioritising workers' safety** by making provision of safe travel home a condition of licensing in the night time economy.
- **Roll out Equally Safe at Work**, by building on successful pilot schemes to help local authorities and employers improve employment practices so that tackling gender inequality and preventing violence against women is a key priority.
- **Tackling anti-social behaviour** with the proper resourcing of community warden services.
- **Restoring community policing** by giving councils the opportunity to veto the closure of local police stations, investing in specialist support staff to stop police officers from being taken away from operational duties, and campaigning for an increase to the number of police officers in local divisions.
- **Making policing responsive to local people.** We will continue to fight for local councillors to be majority members of the Scottish Police Authority, and for a statutory role for local government in local policing plans and divisional police commander appointments.

SUCCESSFUL & SKILLED COMMUNITIES

Local areas need strong economies if they are to develop and flourish.

Many of our town centres and public services may be in a fragile state following Covid-19 but Scotland's communities also contain a wealth of talent, resources and innovation. Scottish Labour councils have led the way in showing how local government can play a crucial role in nurturing this potential to help grow local economies and build wealth in their communities.

It is time for all councils to be empowered to invest in their local areas, so they can help restore local economies and build resilient public services upon which we all rely. To make this possible Scottish Labour will:



- **Support businesses in our high streets and town centres.** We have campaigned for a high street voucher scheme to help people get back to spending on the high street and in the long term want to fully reform businesses rates to deliver more targeted support and level the playing field between bricks and mortar retail and big online retailers.
- **Fight for fair funding** for local authorities, ending the cycle of austerity and cuts imposed on local areas. Local councils should be guaranteed funding that fairly corresponds to the services they provide and be given the certainty needed to set three-year budgets.
- **Take a “local first” approach to spending**, ensuring that local businesses have the best opportunity to win council procurement contracts, so we can keep council funding local and help reduce carbon emissions.
- **Prioritise well-paid, secure, jobs** by ensuring any business or organisation awarded a public sector contract is committed to not using zero-hours contracts, recognising trade unions, paying at least the Scottish Living Wage and working towards net zero. In hospitality we would promote the terms of Unite’s Hospitality Workers’ Charter and consider compliance in licensing decisions.
- **Develop community wealth building strategies**, working in partnership with the local employers and education providers to direct investment back into the local economy so that it benefits local people.
- **Encourage local job creation**, working with local businesses, industry, publicly-owned enterprises, and education providers to support growth, investment, and new apprenticeship schemes.
- **Promote business models that support wellbeing**, such as cooperatives, credit unions and social enterprises.
- **Recognise the contribution of our public sector key workers.** Local authorities have an important role as a large employer in our communities and many of their staff have been on the front-line during the pandemic. We will ensure all local authority staff are protected by good terms and conditions and are awarded a decent and fair pay rise so they can properly support themselves and their families in the midst of the cost of living crisis.

HEALTHY AND CARED FOR COMMUNITIES



Good quality care is crucial for our wellbeing. A first-class social care service can relieve pressure on the NHS and ensure that our neighbours and loved ones have the support they need to live life to their full potential.

Achieving this vision for care will require more than a name change or structural reform. It will need a transformation of both the culture within social care and its treatment by government. Care needs are intrinsically linked with health needs, so it is time we started treating health and care like one system.

Scottish Labour believe it is time that social care services are recognised for how crucial they are with the prioritisation, resources and fair pay they need. We want everyone in our communities to be supported to live healthy and happy lives, which is why Scottish Labour will fight for:

- **A £15 per hour wage for social care workers**, to end poverty pay within the sector and ensure skill and professionalism of social care is properly valued. We also want to see collective bargaining arrangements established in social care and the Scottish Social Services Council registration fee to be fully funded by the Scottish Government.
- **An end to care charges**, ending the postcode lottery in accessing care services and ensuring that there is no longer a disparity between health and care.
- **A strategy for unpaid carers** which includes the restoration and expansion of respite services, with entitlements to short breaks and wellbeing services, to ensure carers are properly supported.
- **Free residential care for all over-65s**, by investing the additional health and care funding coming to Scotland so we can have a health and care system which people can rely on their whole lives.
- **A National Care Service that is locally delivered and accountable.** Scottish Labour want to end the marketisation of care, increasing public provision and will alter the membership of integrated joint boards so there is greater representation and decision-making power given to elected members, carers and those who use care. Local people, not unelected officials, should be at the heart of how care services are designed.
- **Better support for foster carers**, including improvements to child allowances and access to respite, as well as measures to increase the number of foster carers and reduce the need for out of area placements.
- **Mental health workers in every GP practice**, as part of a wider plan to increase the number of community based mental health workers, to help combat long waiting times and inequalities in accessing mental health care and ensure people of all ages and backgrounds can receive mental health treatment close to home and in their community.
- **Better access to NHS dentistry**, especially in deprived areas to prevent the development of a two-tier system where dental care is only available to those who can afford to pay.

COMMUNITIES WITH HOMES FOR ALL

Housing is so much more than having somewhere to live. Good, affordable housing helps tackle poverty, improves health and wellbeing, and provides the stability and security people need for a successful life.

Scottish Labour believe housing should be a national priority. Every family in Scotland should have access to somewhere safe, warm and affordable that they can call home. To make this a reality across Scotland, Labour in councils will:

- **Take action to end rough sleeping.** The pandemic showed it was possible to provide shelter and accommodation to everyone who needs it, so we will prioritise homelessness services to prevent anyone feeling forced to sleep on the street.
- **Increase the supply of affordable housing,** helping to reduce long waits for people stuck in temporary accommodation and support the construction, across all tenures, of 25,000 homes every year.
- **Contribute to the building of social homes.** Scottish Labour want to see at least 120,000 new social homes built over the next decade, with at least 10 per cent being fully accessible, and parity of grant funding between councils and housing associations.
- **Campaign for land reforms** so that councils can more easily acquire land at existing use value to build social housing and support community-led development.
- **Ensure new housing developments are well connected and supported.** This means considering whether there are sufficient commitments to develop wider infrastructure such as transport connections, GP services and outdoor green spaces, in the approval process for new developments.

- **Support upgrades to keep homes warm and energy efficient**, investing in improvements to council-owned homes to tackle fuel poverty and working towards every home in Scotland having a minimum of energy efficiency C rating by 2030.
- **Take tough action against landlords who fail to maintain standards**, ensuring councils have the resource to assist tenants and pursue enforcement of necessary repairs.
- **Establish fair short-term lets licensing arrangements** which support the local tourism industry and the economy while protecting the local housing stock and community.



LEARNING COMMUNITIES

Our schools, colleges and universities create the foundations for people to succeed in life.

Over the course of the pandemic children and young people have experienced so much disruption to their education. Scottish Labour's first priority is to ensure that schools have the resources to help pupils catch up on lost learning.

It should be our aspiration for Scottish schools and education to be the best in the world. The opportunity to get a good education and learn new skills should be open to all. Scottish Labour will seek to support this with:

- **Education recovery plans, tailored to each child**, so that every pupil has an individual needs assessment of their learning and resources can be targeted to those most impacted by the lockdown.
- **A targeted tutoring programme** to deliver personalised support for pupils who need to recover lost learning.
- **Improved access to early years childcare**, by increasing resources to councils to help ensure provision is flexible to meet the needs of parents and families.
- **Digital learning embedded into schools**, so that every young person can learn skills in software development, content generation and digital security.
- **Anti-poverty measures to improve attainment** such as an expansion of the Challenge Schools funding, an increase in free school meals, and investment in Additional Support Needs staff for those who require that help.

- **Extra-curricular activities for all**, partnering with local organisations and sports clubs so that every young person has opportunities to access arts, sporting and recreational activities.
- **Support for the education workforce**, addressing the causes of staff shortages and tackling excessive workload by increasing the number of teachers and support staff, and ending the need for temporary contracts.
- **Safe, modern and high-quality campuses** that promote wellbeing and support our net zero ambitions.
- **Investment in youth work services**, including partnering with the voluntary sector and targeted support to areas with higher levels of deprivation.
- **Recognition and investment for our Universities and Colleges** who have had their funding limited or cut for years, so we can properly invest in the education and skills of our young people and students, enabling wider access to education and increasing skills for the future.



WELL CONNECTED COMMUNITIES



Our transport network is vital for connecting our communities and supporting local economies. A strong public transport system can also help reduce emissions, but Scottish Labour believe public transport could be working so much better – for the public, for transport workers, and for the planet.

We want to see decent transport provision in every local area and for public transport to be a viable and good choice for everyone. That is why Scottish Labour believe we need:

- **To improve roads and pavements**, by fixing potholes, repairing essential roads and paths, protecting maintenance workers jobs, and ensuring that our travel networks remain safe to use.
- **Bus services run for public good, not private profit.** Councils should be equipped to use the powers in the Transport Act to bring bus services under local ownership and control, ending the patchwork nature of services, protecting essential routes, and capping the cost of a bus journey at no more than £1.80. Across Strathclyde, our councillors have already committed to use the powers to bring Scotland's biggest bus network under public control, so revenue is reinvested in the network for the benefit of the public.



- **A rail network fit for the future and protected from cuts.** The ScotRail franchise coming back into public ownership represents an opportunity to invest in the quality and reliability of services. We will oppose all attempts to cut routes, close ticket offices, and reduce services, and are calling for three months of half price fares to help the cost of living crisis.
- **Integrated and affordable public transport,** with simple, smart, integrated ticketing systems similar to those available in large cities elsewhere in the UK and Europe, along with an end to unaffordable fare hikes.
- **To oppose the Workplace Parking Levy.** Scottish Labour will prioritise improvements to public transport so that leaving the car at home is a viable option for everyone. This should be the focus over unfairly penalising working people and those who have no other option but drive.
- **Support for shared and community transport initiatives** to help drive down emissions and reduce car use, while also supporting rural and low-income communities to stay connected. We support the expansion of car clubs in council areas across Scotland.
- **Better infrastructure to support electric vehicles** increasing the number of charging points to support projected demand, including in less well-served areas and at new homes, and ensuring local authorities have adequate maintenance resources.
- **Proper support for taxi and private hire drivers to adapt to Low Emission Zones,** promoting and improving scrappage schemes and ensuring that there is an adequate transition period.
- **Planning which prioritises public and green transport options,** identifying residential areas that would benefit from lower speed limits, creating safe cycle routes near schools and using the planning system to plan for reduced car use in urban areas and support great public transport reliability.
- **Promotion of active travel and to ensure each area has a local active travel plan.** These plans should support increased investment, improving the maintenance of paths and street lighting, and delivering more secure cycle parking and storage.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

Climate change is one of the biggest challenges we face as a country.

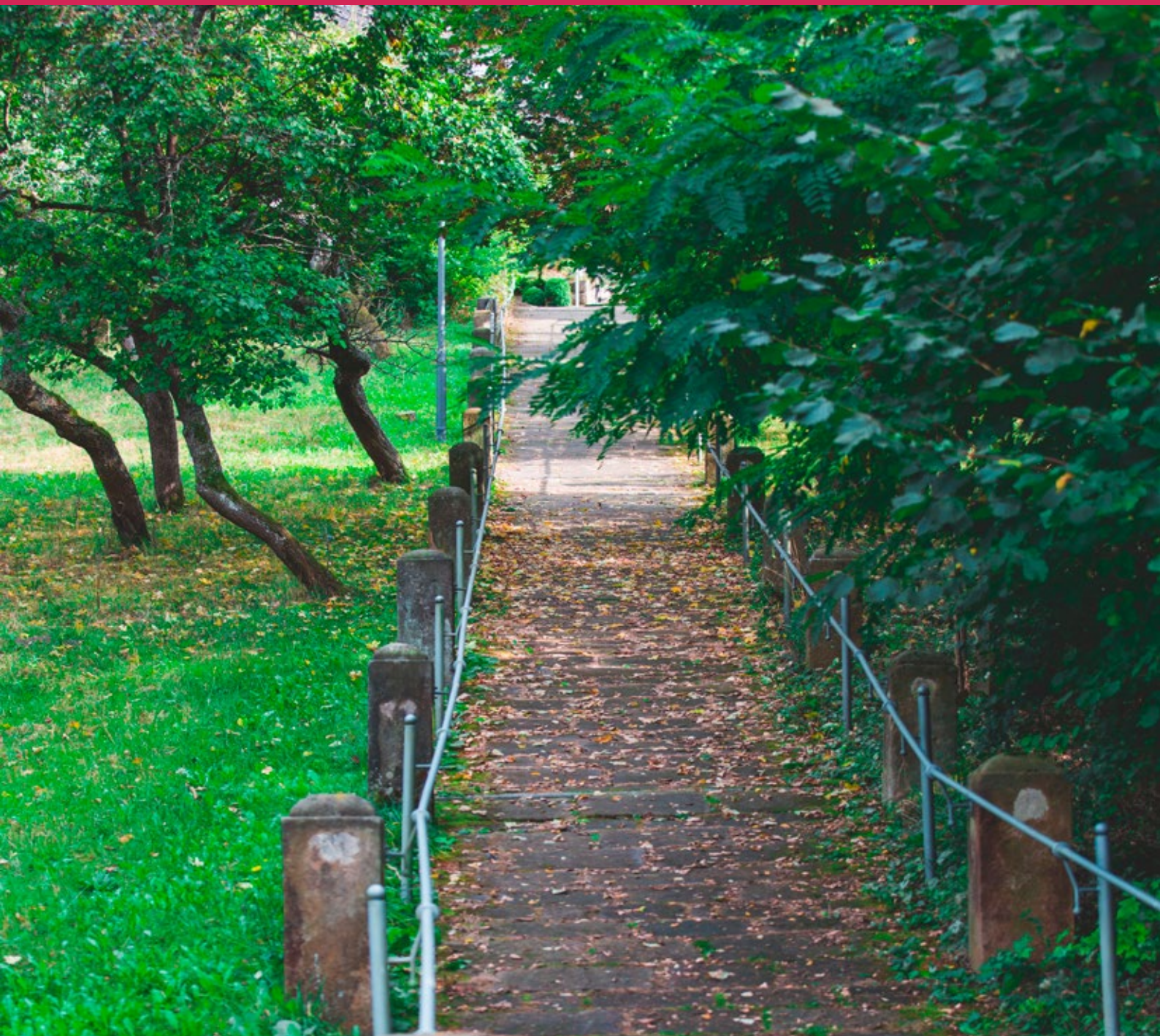
We need a bold and decisive action plan if we are to tackle the climate and nature emergency and reach our ambition of being a net zero nation by 2045.

This is a journey that includes everyone, in every region and community across Scotland. We must prioritise a jobs-first transition to net zero to ensure that no one is left behind.

Tackling the climate and nature emergency must be central to all our policies and investment to help create cleaner environments and protect our planet for future generations. To help deliver this Scottish Labour will:

- **Support local, renewable energy projects and cooperatives**, such as the Edinburgh Solar Co-operative and build community heat networks with all new social housing where possible.
- **Work in partnership with business to deliver climate action**, developing local supply chains for council procurement and requiring all suppliers and contractors to be committed to working towards net zero.
- **Protect and enhance our parks and green spaces**, improving the quality of play areas and investing in green spaces so that every local area has access to safe, outdoor spaces for walking and exercise to improve fitness and mental health.
- **Invest in Scotland's natural environment, protecting woodlands and local biodiversity**, contributing to national tree planting targets including an aim of 20% tree coverage in our towns and cities.

- **Make it easier for people to dispose of their waste responsibly** by increasing recycling and waste reduction opportunities and supporting a moratorium on large scale incinerators.
- **Reduce emissions across council infrastructure**, by ensuring new and existing council buildings and housing are energy efficient, installing zero carbon heating systems such as heat pumps and biomass, as well as increasing the use of electric and hydrogen powered vehicles and public charging points.
- **Invest pension funds in support of our transition to net zero**, leveraging this investment in initiatives that bring additional benefit to communities and jobs, such as social housing and renewable energy.





**Scottish
Labour**